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THE NATURE OF DRAMATIC CHARACTER

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1980

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[Signature]
Adviser
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For my Father

"One last thing, my son, 
be warned that writing books involves 
endless hard work, 
and that much study wearies the body."

Ecclesiastes 12:12
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My thanks to my adviser, Donald R. Glancy, whose countless hours of advice and attention have been of inestimable value in completing this study.
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CONVENTION PRESENTATION

"Needs Must Be Goe that Divils Drive: The Ethos of 

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**Cat.** The Categories, Aristotle

**CMA** Commentary on the *Metaphysics of Aristotle* (*In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum expositio*), Saint Thomas Aquinas

**CNE** Commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*In decem libros Ethicorum expositio*), Saint Thomas Aquinas

**DA** De Anima (On the Soul), Aristotle

**DMA** De Motu Animalum (Movement of Animals), Aristotle

**DMem.** De Memoria (On Memory and Recollection), the second part of *Parva Naturalia*, Aristotle

**DSen.** De Sensu (On Sense and Sensible Objects), the first part of *Parva Naturalia*, Aristotle

**DSom.** De Somno (On Sleep and Waking), the third part of *Parva Naturalia*, Aristotle

**DTC** Dramatic Theory and Criticism: Greeks to Grotowski, Bernard F. Dukore

**Meta.** Metaphysics, Aristotle

**NE** Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle

**Phys.** Physics, Aristotle

**Poet.** Poetics, Aristotle

**Rhet.** Rhetoric, Aristotle

**TPA** The Pocket Aquinas
CHAPTER ONE

A Survey of Theories and Opinions
of Dramatic Character

The first recorded definition of dramatic character, which appeared in Aristotle's Poetics (c. 335 B.C.), states simply that character in a play is that which reveals the moral purpose of the agents, i.e., the sort of thing they seek or avoid. Although Aristotle's definition is brief, it is not as a consequence superficial, because it assumes a knowledge and understanding of the treatment of human character that Aristotle presented in the Nicomachean Ethics. The two key terms of the definition, 'character' and 'moral purpose,' show the connection: first, ethos, the word that is translated above by 'character,' is the same term that Aristotle used in the Nicomachean Ethics to signify the moral character of a human being; second, Aristotle's conception of moral purpose is not only central to the

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1 An asterisk indicates that a term may be found in the glossary.

Nicomachean Ethics, it is developed to such an extent in the latter work that any reference to it, such as that in the Poetics, is understandable only in the terms in which it is expressed in the Ethics. The definition of dramatic character found in the Poetics is, thus, properly understood only in the context of the theory of human character that Aristotle articulated in the Nicomachean Ethics. At the same time, however, because the definition functions as part of a theory of drama, whatever part of it derived from a theory of the character of human beings is transformed by the understanding of dramatic action that Aristotle articulated in the Poetics.

In Aristotle's dramatic theory, character is but one of the six elements that constitute a drama. Four of those elements are the materials from which character is fashioned and to which it gives shape: *opsis,* or 'spectacle,'* (anything that is seen in the course of the action of a drama); *melopoeia,* or 'music,'* (anything that is heard in the course of the drama's action); *lexis,* or 'diction,'* (the elements of language that are part of the action of the drama); and *dianoia,* or 'thought,'* (the expression of whatever can be said in the course of the action of the drama). Character, on the other hand, is the material for and is given shape by the remaining element, *mythos,* or 'plot,'* which is the shape of the action of the drama as a whole. The character of a
personage,* according to Aristotle, does not, then, control the shape of the action; rather, the action of the drama as a whole determines the choices that are made, the point at which each is made, and the personage by which each is made. Furthermore, character is only one of any number of traits that serve to make one personage distinct from another: for example, the physical appearance of a personage, the sound of its voice, the dialect it speaks, and the emotions it expresses are not elements of character, but of spectacle, music, diction, and thought respectively. In Aristotle's theory, as a consequence, a personage is not properly referred to as a character because 'character' is used exclusively as a designation of those elements of the action of a drama that reveal the moral purpose of an agent.

Aristotle concerned himself in his dramatic theory not just with a play's parts, but also with its proper construction, which is necessary if a work is to be aesthetically pleasing. The attributes of beauty, according to Aristotle, are size and order.\(^3\) To be an ordered whole, a thing must have a beginning, a middle, and an end; in the case of ethos, order thus requires that the expression of purpose that an element of ethos embodies be at the outset possible, develop from that beginning in a probable manner,

\(^3\)Poet. 1450b37.
and come at last to a conclusion that is a necessary result of what has preceded it. In other words, dramatic character should be consistent. The size, or magnitude, of ethos is, just as the magnitude of plot, the extent to which it is developed; so, what Aristotle said about the magnitude of a drama in general may also be said about ethos: the greater its development, "consistently with its being comprehensible as a whole, the finer it is by reason of its magnitude." But because Aristotle's theory assumes that a structure of action rather than an exposition of personality is the essence of drama, it also admits of discussions of the appropriateness of the development of a given agent's moral purpose to a given plot; according to Aristotle's theory, as a consequence, plots may fail to function effectively not only because of too little character development, but also because of too much.

The theories of the nature of dramatic character that followed Aristotle's, fall into three broad groups. One group of theories is more or less like Aristotle's in that their basic premise is that dramatic character is the embodiment of moral or ethical considerations; the premise of the second group is that a personage is characterized by certain traits of a variety of natures that, once revealed,
remain for the most part fixed throughout the course of the drama; the third and most modern group sees the character-ization of a dramatic personage as the presentation of the psychological or sociological determinants that govern the personage's action. The groups are not, of course, mutually exclusive: a personage could be characterized, for example, by a fixed trait that is presented as the result of a sociological determinant or as the embodiment of a moral condition. Each of the groups, in fact, merely emphasizes one of the three elements that, as will be demonstrated later, constitute the pattern of behavior that characterizes the action of a real human being: a fixed habit of acting in a certain way, the environment in which such a habit was formed, and the principle according to which such a habit was formed. The remainder of this chapter has been organized, consequently, neither according to chronology nor according to the development of original thought about dramatic character, but in terms of the three groups described above. So, with complete disregard for their separation in time and place, theorists who have said the same or similar things about dramatic character have been placed together.

Character as a Fixed Set of Behavioral Traits
Aristotle was followed in the field of dramatic theory by Horace, who seems to have extracted the understanding of
the dramatic personage that he presented in the *Ars Poetica* from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* rather than from the *Poetics*. Horace was the first of the theorists who saw a dramatic personage as the formulation of a fixed set of traits.\(^6\) A dramatic personage is identified, in that theory, by a particular pattern of behavior that is associated variously with an age group, with social standing, with a particular occupation, with a disposition of the mind, body, or soul, or with a particular physical condition. Horace's discussion of dramatic characterization in the *Ars Poetica* is scant even if the inherent limitations of the theory are discounted. He limited the scope of the traits by which a dramatic personage can be characterized to those that are appropriate to the various age groups to which man succeeds in the course of life. His treatment of character is, in fact, simply a catalogue of the most salient features of each age bracket, a catalogue so restricted that it ignores even such traits that might serve to distinguish between personages within the same group.

So little development of aesthetic thought occurred during the next millenium and a half that in the Renaissance the theory of the fixed behavioral traits remained substantively unchanged; an interesting, although groundless,

distinction was however, made between personages of tragedy and comedy. Aristotle had observed that tragic poets generally dealt with historical subjects, while comic poets used invented stories; but, he specifically added the disclaimer that

one must not aim at rigid adherence to traditional stories on which tragedies are based. It would be absurd, in fact, to do so, as even the known stories are only known to a few, though they are a delight nonetheless to all.7

Franciscus Robortellus maintained, to the contrary, that when a personage was the imitation of a real figure, as most of the personages of tragedy were, it had to be represented "according to necessity," i.e., according to historical fact; while fictive personages, who appeared most often in comedy, were to be represented "according to the probable," i.e., according to the characteristics enumerated by Horace in the Ars Poetica and Aristotle in the Rhetoric.8 The names of comic personages were, consequently, to be fictitious while tragedy concerned itself with "certain well-known people, whose names must be declared."9 In the case of a historical figure, goodness or badness were considered traits that went along with the

7 Poet. 1451b23-28.
9 Ibid., p. 232.
name; thus, "if somebody is good, then the character assigned should be good."\textsuperscript{10} Because Robortellus accepted the personality of a historical figure— and those moral qualities that were an inseparable part of it—as a fact of history and therefore unalterable, and because he accepted such a personality as the object of imitation, he took no cognizance of the possibility that the moral quality of the personage should be developed within the drama. The case was quite different for comic personages. Robortellus translated Aristotle's term \textit{ethos} as 'mores' and explained that the personages of a comic plot had to "accurately express the manners of diverse people."\textsuperscript{11} Comedy was concerned with imitating, not specific individual personalities, but recognizable types. Julius Caesar Scaliger and Giovanni Battista Guarini independently codified a related concept that was nearly inviolable until the advent of the bourgeois drama in the Eighteenth Century. That tenet was that tragedy concerned itself with kings and great public personages while comedy dealt with rustics or private individuals.\textsuperscript{12}

Ben Jonson brought the Renaissance comic tradition to a clearer understanding of how to invest a comic personage with individuality. In a comedy of humors, a personage no longer reflected only a general trait peculiar to a given age group or even to a social class but "one particular quality" that so possessed a person,

that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their confluctions, all to run one way.\(^\text{13}\)

Such individuality was not, however, attained at the expense of the depiction of mores. The theory of humors created, in fact, not true individuals, but more precisely defined types; and Jonson was explicit about the social function that he felt comedy was obliged to perform:

Well, I will scourge those apes,
And to these courteous eyes oppose a mirror,
As large as is the stage whereon we act,
Where they shall see the time's deformity
Anatomized in every nerve, and sinew,
With constant courage, and contempt of fear.\(^\text{14}\)

While Jonson's attacks on peculiarities in behavior laid the theoretical foundation for individuality in any personage, regardless of whether it was comic or tragic, the theory itself could account only for personages that were too severely controlled by one trait to be totally individualized personalities.

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\(^{13}\) Ben Jonson, Introduction to *Every Man Out of His Humor*, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1920), lines 115-117.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., lines 127-132.
The French neoclassicists moved closer to individualization and added to the slow evolution of the recognition of psychological motivation with their concern for capturing human nature. Charles de Saint-Evremond observed that Corneille went to the bottom of the soul to find the principle of action and passion for his personages. Because Saint-Evremond conceived of all action as external, he claimed that to "be contented to know Persons by their Actions" was to condemn characterization never to progress beyond using the knowledge of vice, virtue, inclinations, and tempers that the ancients had had; his observation concerning Corneille is, nonetheless, a clear recognition of the process of internal action. Nicholas Boileau-Despreaux, fearing a too-rigid virtue in idealized tragic heroes, counseled that a little fraility be added to show "that of man and nature he has part." Corneille also considered moral goodness expendable if a personage possessed a "grandeur of spirit" that made its actions

16 Ibid.
admirable; and while Racine paid lip service to the moral utility of drama, he demonstrated more concern for passion than morality.

According to the common-sensed Abbe d'Aubignac, Francois Hedelin, the determinant of the individuality of a serious personage was not its moral stance. In The Whole Art of the Stage, he found deliberations of their nature unfit for the stage because they were too calm to succeed; those that were successful were actually pathetic discourses: in the process of presenting a dispute between opposite considerations, they showed more forcefully a mind agitated by different passions. As that opinion suggests, in Hedelin's theory, the features that actually characterized a personage were its passions and sentiments; Hedelin, in fact, considered the depiction of the latter to be the paramount test of a playwright. He praised Corneille as the best writer of his time, not because his personages were effective in terms of dramaturgy, but because Corneille fully expressed the passions that he introduced

into his plays.\textsuperscript{21} In Hedelin's estimation, the passions were even more important than the subject of the plot: while the same subject could not please an audience the second time they viewed a play, a good passion continued to be effective.\textsuperscript{22} Much as Jonson assigned a single humor to each personage, Hedelin suggested that it was better to continue to develop one passion throughout many incidents rather than to introduce a new passion in each new scene.\textsuperscript{23}

Despite such innovations in thought, many of the ideas of the past persisted. Both Saint-Evremond and Boileau maintained that particular moral traits, and manners peculiar to people living in certain climates had to be observed.\textsuperscript{24} Saint-Evremond and Boileau believed, as did the theorists of Renaissance Italy, that the personality of a historic figure when translated to the stage was inviolable;\textsuperscript{25} and Hedelin reserved tragedy for kings and comedy for rustics and commoners.\textsuperscript{26} Fictional personages, although grudgingly allowed, were frowned on in serious drama because they were too difficult to make believable.\textsuperscript{27}

Boileau's suggestion that nature could be mirrored more closely by combining good and bad traits in a dramatic

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., I, 13. \textsuperscript{22}Ibid., II, 69. \textsuperscript{23}Ibid., I, 47.
\textsuperscript{24}Saint-Evremond, I, 234-235; Boileau, p. 260.
\textsuperscript{25}Saint-Evremond, I, 239; Boileau, p. 260.
\textsuperscript{26}Francois Hedelin, Abbot of Aubignac, The Whole Art of the Stage, trans. anonymous (London, William Cadman, 1684); Fpt, in DTC, p. 246.
\textsuperscript{27}Saint-Evremond, I, 238.
personage was extended to comic personages in England. William Congreve described Valentine in *Love for Love* as being

a mixed character; his faults are fewer than his good qualities and as the world goes he may pass well enough for the best character in a comedy, where even the best must be shown to have faults.  

Congreve's observation was, however, motivated more by an instinct for self-preservation than by purely intellectual concern; he was attempting to answer the twin assaults of Jeremy Collier's *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* and the proponents of the nascent Sentimental Comedy, all of whom held that it was more proper to demonstrate good actions than to decry bad ones. Congreve, no doubt, defended the depiction of personages with character flaws not only because Sentimental Comedy flew in the face of a long comic tradition but also because Restoration playwrights—although they denied it—openly delighted in the vices of their personages. Whatever his motivation, Congreve's observation was a step toward an understanding of the proper magnitude of ethos as it appears in comedy: namely, that the moral qualities of the personages can never be given the weight

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they would bear in serious drama or in real life and yet remain the materials of a comic plot.

Sentimental comedy was a manifestation of the same world view that gave birth to bourgeois drama on the continent. Sebastian Mercier was one of the first theorists to suggest a new form for serious drama, the drame. Mercier contended that comedy had great limitations: it attempted to depict not individuals but a species; the action was organized in terms of the chief character, rather than flowing from the interplay of all the personages; and its personages were constructed with absolute characters and temperaments to which all the virtues or the vices of humankind were attributed. Drame made up for those deficiencies by permitting personages of mixed character, all of which were kept in equal perspective so that the action flowed from the interplay between them.29 Dennis Diderot likewise asserted that the personages of drame (or "serious comedy," as he sometimes called it) were a mean between the types of comedy and the individuals of tragedy. The failure of both Mercier and Diderot to recognize that comedy could accommodate mixed personages as Congreve had done, indicates that they, too, perceived

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the limited magnitude that ethos was permitted in comedy, but failed to discriminate precisely where that limitation lay.

In England neoclassical ideals survived along side the new theories of the bourgeois drama. Richard Hurd, in his commentary and criticism of Horace's Ars Poetica, stated that tragedy dealt with particular traits and comedy with general ones because only those characteristics of a tragic personage that were necessary to the action were represented, while all the features by which a comic personage was distinguished were brought out. Yet he also observed that comic personages failed when they presented only one trait because human nature is an admixture of passions, with one taking precedence over the rest. Hurd’s is a clear case of confusing a real personality with a dramatic personage. A historical figure may have characteristics that are not formulated in a play about him, but the personage that represents him exists, and its characteristics are known, only insofar as they are delineated in one way or another on the stage.

Under the influence of men such as Diderot and Hurd, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, in the Hamburg Dramaturgy,

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31 Ibid., p. 242.
re-examined in terms of the growing concern with keeping personages consistent with nature, the neoclassical postulate that tragedy presents individuals while comedy presents types. He concluded that theorists had spoken of personages as general in two different senses that had never been distinguished from each other. In one sense, 'general' meant that a personage was drawn as a personified idea of a character trait; in the other, it meant that a personage embodied a certain average. The latter, Lessing advanced, was what Aristotle meant by 'universal' and in that sense a tragic personage had to be as general as any in a comedy. Despite Lessing's incorrect understanding of Aristotle (who made it clear that by 'universal' he meant "what such or such a kind of man will probably or necessarily say or do"), Lessing concluded correctly that the possession of a "certain average" infused a dramatic personage with the illusion of being a real human being and was in that manner consistent with nature. Lessing delved more deeply into the nature of the dramatic personage by re-assessing the classical tradition of limiting the use of fictional personages to comedy and historical figures to tragedy. The names that are given to personages played an important part in his analysis. Lessing pointed out that, in both Greece and Rome, the particular trait that a comic

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32 Ibid., p. 251. 33 Poet. 1451b8-9.
personage embodied was suggested by the name that it bore.\textsuperscript{34} Much the same was true of the historical name of a serious personage, which identified a personage with the historical figure it represented and hence with the predominant trait commonly associated with that figure. Lessing, however, averred that the purpose of using a historical figure was not to write history, but to entertain the audience with the type of adventures that might and must occur to a man of such a character;\textsuperscript{35} the character of a historical personage was, thus, intrinsic to dramatic action while the facts from which such character was known were merely accidental.\textsuperscript{36} To create fictitious events that illustrated those character traits was, consequently, better than merely to repeat the actual historical incidents; the dramatic function of the historical names was only to make the invented story more credible.\textsuperscript{37} Lessing concluded that the character of a personage ultimately did not rest on historical accuracy alone, but on the natural course of necessity:

\begin{quote}
Not satisfied with resting their \textsuperscript{7} probability on historical accuracy, he \textsuperscript{7}
will endeavor so to necessitate one from another the events that place his characters in action, will endeavor to define the passions of each
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{34}Lessing, p. 233. \textsuperscript{35}Ibid., p. 238.  
\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., p. 96. \textsuperscript{37}Ibid., pp. 138-139.
character so that we shall everywhere see nothing but the most natural and common course of events.\textsuperscript{38}

Lessing granted that miracles might happen in the real world, but he insisted that everything had to retain its natural cause in the world of drama.\textsuperscript{39}

The Romantic period was marked by a great concern for identifying the singular personality of a dramatic personage. Samuel Taylor Coleridge equated passion with personality, observing that passion was not a changeable quality that distinguished an individual from himself at another time, but a permanent trait that distinguished an individual from all other individuals.\textsuperscript{40} Hazlitt said similarly of character that it was inborn, as immutable as the features of the face;\textsuperscript{41} permanence gave importance to individuality. Both Coleridge and Hazlitt agreed that Shakespeare's characterizations were masterpieces because they sprang from human nature\textsuperscript{42} and because they gave accurate expression to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{38}Ibid., p. 90.
  \item \textsuperscript{39}Ibid., p. 8.
  \item \textsuperscript{42}Ibid., VIII, 39; Coleridge, p. 595.
\end{itemize}
the passions. One of Coleridge's most interesting deductions about the nature of the dramatic personage grew from his perception that many of Shakespeare's personages were misunderstood because Shakespeare characterized by inference rather than by statement. He suggested that the spectator listen first to what a given personage's friends say, then to what his enemies say, and finally to what the personage himself says; then "perhaps," he concluded, "your impression will be right."

The concern in the Romantic Period with the individuality of fictional personages also led to an inevitable comparison of the personages depicted in dramas with those in novels. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe held that the particular virtue of the novel was its depiction of sentiments and events while that of the drama was its representation of personages and deeds, a distinction John Galsworthy reiterated some one hundred years later. While Galsworthy found drama lacking because of the distinction, Goethe took a more practical view of the nature of theatrical presentation. He frowned on merely reproducing historical figures in drama, saying that it was essential

43 Hazlitt, VIII, 39; Coleridge, p. 595.
44 Coleridge, p. 595.
to know the effect desired, and then to regulate the nature of the personages accordingly; the theatrical effect was, after all, more important than the moral purpose in making a point to an audience. One part of the regulation of a dramatic personage that Goethe emphasized as important to the theatrical effect was realizing its rhetorical potential. He held up as an example of the proper rhetorical treatment of personages Sophocles's masterly presentation of the reasons and seeming reasons for things that allowed the latter's personages to explain things so convincingly that the hearer was almost always on the side of the last speaker.

Friedrich Hegel and Søren Kierkegaard took note of the shift in emphasis toward the personality and the individuality of the hero. Hegel observed that in modern romantic drama a personage's greatness of passion became a substitute for its ethical substance. Ethical forces, those obligations that carry their own justification and that are

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47 Ibid., p. 489. 48 Ibid., p. 488.

realized through volitional activity, obtained only because they touched upon the protagonist's sphere of personal interest. Action was motivated, not by the ethical content of an objective, but by the gratification of the emotions and the personality that the attainment—or merely the pursuit—of the object provided. As a consequence, the action that constitutes the form that ethos assumes in a drama when it is enacted (which Hegel called the "formation of a resolve," i.e., a resolving to act) took place according to the personage's personal wishes rather than as an expression of its moral stance.50

Hegel's observations make an extremely important distinction. When the ethical concerns of a personage are absorbed by the concerns of its personality, then a matter that the personage should resolve in terms of an ultimate good (which is outside the personage) is resolved in terms of merely what is good for the personality (which is an immediate or an apparent good). In such a case, the magnitude of the personage's ethical substance, which gives it significance in a serious drama, is replaced by the magnitude of its personality; it is from the latter's outstanding traits, such as strength, charm, or vitality, that the personage then gains its importance. A moral good may be the end of an action by a personage of that type, but if the moral good is chosen by the personage primarily

50Hegel, pp. 542-544.
because such a choice gives the personage the opportunity to exercise its strength or charm or vitality or because it can be achieved only by exercising a trait the personage alone possesses, a resolve to act is done for the sake of or as an expression of the personality and ultimately is not moral at all. The personage may still manifest an element of ethos but it will be ethos on its lowest level—the implementation of a moral trait that is only one among many traits of personality—in contrast to a deliberation and a choice of action that reveal the formulation of a moral disposition. Hegel's analysis is singularly important in the history of dramatic theory because it identified the importance of an act of deliberation concerning the end of an activity by setting the latter up in opposition to the mere implementation of a moral quality that is reflective of a personage's personality.

Richard Wagner created dramatic personages that epitomize the romantic heroes that Hegel described. Whether a personage succeeded in a dramatic action in terms of solid achievements was unimportant; the true measure of its success was the development of its individual personality. Thus the will was enthroned and the substance of tragedy

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became the greatness of the soul in the presence of disaster. Wagner understood but rejected the subtle operation of human ethos in favor of the more primitive action of personality. He treated human character and dramatic character as identical excepting that

the dramatic-poet compresses the Surrounding of his personages into proportions easy to take in, in order to allow their Action . . . to issue from the essential 'idea' of the Individual, to allow this individuality to come to a head therein, and by it to display Man's common essence along one of its definite lines.

The 'idea' referred to in the above passage is the view of life held in common by men in a particular society; an individual's character is determined by the harmony between his action and that idea. The actuality of the human will (or instinct) reveals itself in the conflict between the individual, whose essence is its nature-necessity (its "life-bent" or "bent-to happiness") and the state and its laws, of which the former is the arbitrary formulation of the racial commonweal and the latter, the arbitrary formulation of natural custom. In the conflict between

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52 Ibid., p. 82.
54 Ibid., p. 155. 55 Ibid., p. 156. 56 Ibid., p. 158, n.
57 Ibid., pp. 179, 193.
58 Ibid., p. 158.
the state, which represented what man consciously recognized as good and right, and his nature-necessity, man became incomprehensible to himself.\textsuperscript{59} The Greeks tried to resolve that dilemma by taking refuge from the nature-necessity in the state, misinterpreting nature-necessity, however, as an impulse that robbed man of the freedom to do what he would have done through ethical habit. Sinning through ignorance seemed a curse that rested on a person without personal guilt, a 'curse' that was, however, only nature-necessity working through the unconscious, nature-bidden actions of the individual.\textsuperscript{60} As proof, Wagner offered the case of Oedipus, whose act was socially abhorrent because custom forbade marriage between a mother and her son, but not unnatural because instinct did not proscribe sexual love between a man and a woman.\textsuperscript{61} The Christian solution to the problem was the reverse of the Greek. A man suffered martyrdom for withstanding the law and the state: in submission to them, he vindicated the law and the state as outward necessities, but through his voluntary death he annulled them in favor of an inner necessity, the liberation of the individual through redemption 'into' God.\textsuperscript{62} Wagner's conclusion was that the complete harmony of a person's idea and his action—and hence the fulfillment of his

\textsuperscript{59}Ibid. \textsuperscript{60}Ibid., pp. 179-180. \textsuperscript{61}Ibid., p. 182. \textsuperscript{62}Ibid., pp. 158-159.
character—could be effected only by bringing the unconscious part of human nature to consciousness within society, and that in such consciousness nothing need to be known "other than the necessity common to every member of Society, namely of the Individual's own free self-determining."\(^3\)

Whether the freedom of natural instinct can form a better state than the control of ethos is properly a metaphysical rather than an aesthetic concern, but Wagner's argument pinpointed the essential nature of human ethos as a distinctive pattern of behavior formed through the attempt of the conscious mind to control natural desires.

The will was cast in the central role in Arthur Schopenhauer's dramatic theory, in which he defined tragedy as the conflict of the will with itself. He meant not internal struggle within a personage, but the external struggle of individual personages with each other: "it is one and the same will that lives and appears in them all, but whose phenomena fight against each other and destroy each other."\(^4\) That conflict, said Schopenhauer, eventually gives way to the knowledge of the nature of the world, which sees through both mere appearance and the principle

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\(^3\)ibid., p. 194.

of individual upon which egoism rests; such knowledge thereby destroys egoism and the motives that grow from it and produces the surrender "not merely of life, but of the very will to live."\textsuperscript{65} Schopenhauer's notion that personages produce only the phenomena of the will indicates that he perceived them as complete from the outset, and the remainder of his theory confirms that notion. The end of drama, he said, was to exhibit the extraordinary action brought about through significant personages placed in significant situations. That end was effected by first introducing into a plot personages in a state of peace "in which merely their general color became visible;" next was added a motive that produced an action, which in its turn introduced a second motive, and so on; that process evolved in an ever growing spiral until an important action was reached, in which, finally, "the qualities of the characters which have hitherto slumbered are brought clearly to light."\textsuperscript{66}

Like Hegel, Augustus William von Schlegel perceived that there were different levels of characterization that were the result of the various functions that the personages performed within a plot. He noted that Shakespeare often differentiated personages through purely external

\textsuperscript{65}\textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{66}\textit{Ibid.}, III, 212.
means: manner of dress, the duty engaged in, and so on; and that because characterization is only one ingredient of drama it was wrong to draw attention to traits that were super­fluous to the action at hand.\(^{67}\) Schlegel's observations were grounded in a formal approach to dramaturgy, in a concern for artistic function rather than for objective truth. He pointed out that realness has nothing to do with effective characterization; the personages of classical tragedy and old comedy found truth in their significance not in their realness, while the "portrait-like truthfulness of new comedy resulted in the depiction, not of individual­ity, but of class features.\(^{68}\) He held in especial contempt the anatomical style of exhibition, which enumerates all the motives by which a man determines to act, would abolish individuality, and make character only the effect of external influences.\(^{69}\)

His ideal for dramatic characterization was to contrast diverse personages to bring out the peculiarities of each; such an ideal indicates that he saw as the basis of characterization a trait that was justified by its function in the plot. He also appears to have considered comedy to

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\(^{68}\) Ibid., p. 178.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., p. 362.
be formally deficient in comparison to tragedy. Comedy, he theorized, must hold the audience aloof from the moral appreciation of its personages by treating men as mere physical beings with mental, but not spiritual, powers; the implication is that ethos is totally lacking in the structure of comedy. Schlegel's theory is singular in that it admits of a complete range of characterization; however, he did not, unfortunately, go so far as formulating a comprehensive system for differentiating among its components.

Character as the Result of Sociological and Psychological Determinants

Schlegel's was perhaps the most complete of the theories that saw dramatic character as one or more traits by which a personage could be readily identified. While dramatic personages, in practice, continued to be constructed around fixed traits of behavior, theorists began to turn away from the simple cataloguing of such traits when the development of psychology offered a more sophisticated and more scientific method for categorizing human behavior. Emile Zola rejected the theatre's conventional embellishment of virtue and de-emphasis of vice, maintaining that the only edification that was possible as a result of drama was provided by its presentation of unidealized

70Ibid., p. 185.
truth;\textsuperscript{71} he declared that drama should present "real characters, the true history of each one, the story of daily life"\textsuperscript{72} and that the characters should be shown to be determined by their surroundings.\textsuperscript{73} Zola's objective was to effect a scientific analysis of man\textsuperscript{74} through the action of the drama, and he contended that analysis in action was the most striking form action could take; the perfect analysis was the demonstration in a play of the double influence of personages over facts and facts over personages.\textsuperscript{75}

In the opposing camp, Oscar Wilde went so far as to allege that Shakespeare, as the first to be concerned with the psychological development of dramatic personages, began the decay of the modern English drama.\textsuperscript{76} He clearly had the weight of opinion on the side of his premise, notwithstanding that it was inaccurate insofar as it was incomplete (Shakespeare was as much concerned with the ethical development of his personages as he was with their

\textsuperscript{72}Ibid., pp. 114-115.  \textsuperscript{73}Ibid., p. 143.
\textsuperscript{74}Ibid.  \textsuperscript{75}Ibid., p. 151.
psychological growth); the conclusion, however, was singularly his. Wilde said that virtue and vice were "to the artist materials for an art," but he was certain that characterization was not a matter of the representation of external reality:

Modern English melodramas do not succeed in producing even that impression of reality at which they aim, and which is their only reason for existing. As a method, realism is a complete failure...

... Art finds her own perfection within, and not outside of, herself. She is not to be judged by any external standard of resemblance.

On behalf of science, C. G. Jung likewise condemned as inappropriate the use of the procedures of clinical psychology as a methodology for literary criticism. He protested that causalistic psychology could do no more than reduce the individual to one of a species because its range was limited to what is transmitted by heredity and derived from sources outside the individual.  

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78 Wilde, Intentions, p. 25.

79 Ibid., p. 31.

Theorists, most of whom were playwrights, nonetheless espoused the theory of behavioral traits for a variety of reasons. On the one hand, Alexandre Dumas, fils, had reasons that were totally pragmatic: a successful play was one in which the spectators saw themselves; to write a successful play, consequently, one had only to create personages with the characteristics of the spectators. The motives of William Butler Yeats, on the other hand, were entirely artistic. The substance of drama, he said, was not man, but "passion, the flame of life itself;" dramatis personae, consequently, act upon one another as they are bound by their natures to act: will against will and passion against passion. When the playwright relied on incidents instigated by the conflict of will and passion, Yeats concluded, such personages no longer needed particular characteristics. John Galsworthy reached much the same conclusion, and sniffed that such were the unavoidable drawbacks of writing in an art form whose personages were restricted by a set scenario, the physical limitations of a stage, and eventual

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82 William Butler Yeats, "First Principles," in Samhain (December, 1904); selections rpt. in DTC, p. 655.

83 Ibid., p. 656.
presentation by actors. With the exception of a few personages such as Falstaff and Hamlet, he said, those determinants led necessarily to types rather than individuals. Galsworthy's misconception that character shaped action and his insistence that highly developed dramatic personalities were more properly novelistic than dramatic blinded him to the fact that personages such as Hamlet and Falstaff were proof that the representation of psychological and ethical action is possible in drama. In The Playwright's Art, Roger M. Busfield, Jr., reiterated Galsworthy's discussion of dramatic character with virtually no alteration; however, even while admitting the same limitations of the stage that Galsworthy enumerated, he gave no indication that he thought the creation of a complete personality on stage impossible.

F. L. Lucas also agreed with Galsworthy that the drama could not keep pace with the novel in the field of psychological elaboration; he took a more moderate stand on type characters, however, suggesting that personages should be typical enough to be intelligible, but untypical

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85 Ibid., p. 16.
enough to be individual. Lucas's analysis of the Poetics led him to conclude that Aristotle preferred action to characterization and that Aristotle's preference bespoke a behaviorist view of drama; Lucas himself thought that the relative importance placed upon the development of dramatic character in the work of some playwrights vis-à-vis that placed upon the development of plot in the work of others was determined more by individual taste or national temperament than anything else. He ultimately rejected Aristotle's definition of ethos as the product of habitual action; he claimed that it may be that Aristotle forgot a little the reactions of audiences—how they spontaneously build up an organized impression (a Gestalt) of a personality, as of a fact, from individual features, and concluded that all that mattered in drama, as in life, were states of mind.

Characterization through behavioral traits in some cases survived as but one part of a larger system of dramaturgy. Both Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg recognized that levels of differentiation were necessitated by the impossibility—and the undesirability—of creating a complex

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88Ibid., pp. 140, 138. 89Ibid., p. 140.
90Ibid., p. 141. 91Ibid., p. 140.
personality for every personage who happened to cross the stage. Strindberg, moreover, defended his approach as consistent with the Naturalistic intent of *Miss Julie*:

That some have found my minor characters one-dimensional is due to the fact that ordinary people while at work are to a certain extent one-dimensional and do lack an independent existence, showing only one side of themselves in the performance of their duties.  

Strindberg's observation revealed that amid his concern for the representation of the real psychological process in Julie and Jean was a primarily formal concern for those personages that were characterized only by their function in the action of the piece. The significance of Strindberg's observation, like that of Schlegel's that certain of Shakespeare's personages are characterized merely by the duties they perform, lies in its recognition that no matter how life-like characterization is intended to be some personages will be identified purely by the function their external activity serves in the plot. Ibsen, every bit the psychologist that Strindberg was, took an equally formal approach under similar circumstances. To Edmund Gosse, who had suggested in a review of *Emperor and Galilean* that the play ought to have been written in verse, Ibsen wrote:

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The many ordinary, insignificant characters whom I have become introduced into the play would have become indistinct, and indistinguishable from one another, if I had allowed all of them to speak in one and the same rhythmical measure. Ibsen did not say that he could not have written the play in verse, but that he would not. To realize its potential most fully he decided that some individualization of the personages was necessary, and he chose to accomplish that through the peculiarities in the language he assigned to each of them.

Thornton Wilder considered dramatic characterization a simple matter of concocting highly characteristic utterances and concrete occasions in which a personage defined itself through action. He considered the dramatist's principle interest the movement of the story; characterization was merely a blank check he handed to the actor to fill in with some indications of individuality.

Perhaps the most unusual use of behavioral traits as part of a larger system was contrived by Georges Polti in enumerating thirty-six dramatic situations, the number that Italian playwright Carlo Gozzi suggested covered all

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95 Ibid.
possible plot outlines. Polti derived his situations from "the thirty-six emotions," which he claimed encompassed the whole scope of the passions. The essential elements of each situation are usually certain forces that are in conflict, and such forces are often embodied in personages. The identifying characteristics of the personages fall into a number of categories: they may be expressed in psychological terms (e.g., in the Seventeenth Situation, Fatal Imprudence, the main personage is identified as the Imprudent and then distinguished by one of three lesser traits, imprudence, curiosity, and credulity); in sociological terms (e.g., the Thirteenth Situation, Enmity of Kinsman, is subdivided by familial ties, Father for Son, Grandfather for Grandson, and so on); in purely functional terms, both as the agent of an action (e.g., in the Thirty-fourth Situation, Remorse, there is the Interrogator) and as the patient of an action (e.g., in the Fifth Situation, Pursuit, there is the Fugitive); in biological terms or even in terms of degree (e.g., in the Twenty-fourth Situation, Rivalry of Superior and Inferior, not only is the obvious distinction between the superior

97 Ibid., p. 93. 98 Ibid., pp. 74-76. 99 Ibid., p. 188. 100 Ibid., p. 43.
and the inferior made, but one between the sexes as well. Although Polti's distinctions create categories that seem rather too discrete and rather too prescriptive, they are probably no more so than the categories of action and types of personages that Northrop Frye catalogued in *Anatomy of Criticism*. Polti's approach, however eccentric it may be, nonetheless offers a basis for differentiating one manifestation of characterization from another, a basis that considers human agency in its baldest possible form: as a functional unit in a scheme of action. Such a basis is certainly valid despite its limitations since a characterization increases in complexity only as it shows the reasons that a personage acts as it does. Those reasons are themselves in some way enacted and, consequently, become a necessary part of the scheme of action that constitutes the plot.

Two post-Freudian theorists revived the notion of behavioral traits when they found psychology inadequate for the description and analysis of dramatic characterization. Luigi Pirandello's approach to dramatic character, although it is sometimes labeled psychological, is, more accurately, metaphysical because it is not based on a scientific analysis of the psychology of the human mind, but rather on a view of the nature of the human soul. Pirandello posits a man composed of many souls (instinctive, moral,

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101Ibid., pp. 126-133.
social, hereditary, affective, and so on\textsuperscript{102}, each of which contribute traits of behavior to the whole man. Each of those souls is in continual conflict with the others, but, as a composite, they form the real man that is in conflict with the illusion of integrity and stability that the external man attempts to cultivate.\textsuperscript{103} Eugene Ionesco held that Pirandello's contribution was less to psychology than to the quality of drama because his discovery of the conflicting aspects of human personality was less important than what he did with that conflict dramatically.\textsuperscript{104} Ionesco himself rejected the realistic representation of psychology because it prevented the transformation of reality that is essential to drama.\textsuperscript{105} He maintained that drama lies in the extreme exaggeration of feelings and that psychology is only appropriate to drama if it is given a metaphysical dimension.\textsuperscript{106}

In contrast to most contemporary critics, Alan D. Mickle, in \textit{Six Plays of Eugene O'Neill}, de-emphasized


\textsuperscript{103}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{105}Ibid., pp. 18, 26.

\textsuperscript{106}Ibid., p. 26.
the depiction of a unique personality and contended that 'humanity' was the trait that all dramatic personages should represent. The playwright's task, in his view, was to extract the universal from the particular by converting the individuals used as models into types representative of all men; he observed that in the best dramas everything was subordinated to the interpretation and revelation of man. 107 Mickle is representative of a class of critics whose concern is primarily with identifying what makes a spectator appreciate a personage rather than with how the construction of the personage elicits that reaction. Ben Ross Schneider's computer analysis, The Ethos of Restoration Comedy, heralded a new methodology in dramatic criticism and analysis, the nature of which forced Schneider of necessity to reduce dramatic personages to a series of easily identifiable traits. The work, unfortunately, offered no unified theory of dramatic characterization, and because the main purpose of the study was to investigate whether Restoration Comedy advocated morality, its approach provided more data analysis than dramaturgical insight.

The analysis of dramatic personages according to psychological and sociological determinants is dramaturgically little more than a sophistication of the categorizing of dramatic personages according to behavioral traits. It differs from the latter primarily in that its main concern is not so much a certain trait itself as an identification of the causes or motivations that result in the manifestation of such a trait in a personage. George Lukács, for example, traced a path between the sociological environment of a personage and its individual psychology that leads from ideology to pathology. The fundamental conflict that modern drama concerns itself with, he maintained, arises from the external forces that bourgeois society brings to bear on its individual members. Modern drama thus consists not only of passions in conflict, but of ideologies at odds as well; from the latter, modern drama derived, according to Lukács, a new determinant for the action of its personages: value judgment. Lukács, however, cited little proof to support that contention. To the contrary, he insisted that the personality can become the fundamental problem of a modern drama because the hero is more passive than active.

109Ibid., p. 934.
This is the dramatic conflict: man as merely the intersection point of great forces, and his deeds not even his own. Instead something independent of him mixes in, a hostile system which he senses as forever indifferent to him, thus shattering his will. And the why of his acts is likewise never wholly his own.110

Although a value judgment would seem integral to Lucak's system insofar as an act of will is the source of the protagonist's conflict with his universe, Lucaks further explained that not the direction taken by the will, but the bare act of willing, the mere realization of personality, is the substance of serious conflict.111 In that context, a value judgment possesses no potency whatsoever in determining the direction of the action; it merely serves as a device, like the stolen letter of a melodrama, to spark the action. Ethical concerns in general appear to be incapable of realizing the potential of a psychological theory such as Lucaks's. Because realistic drama did not admit of the gods, Lucaks said, the essential role that mythology had played in supplying motives for the personages in ancient tragedy had to be filled by characterization in modern drama:

when the motivations are wholly based upon character, however, the wholly inward origin of this destiny will drive the character relentlessly to the limits of pathology.112

110Ibid., p. 935. 111Ibid., p. 937.
112Ibid., p. 104.
And granting the trivial nature of bourgeois drama, Lucaks was forced to conclude that "in pathology and in it alone lies the possibility of rendering undramatic men dramatic;" he quoted, in conclusion, German critic Alfred Kerr's observation that "in disease we find the permitted poetry of naturalism."

Anton Chekhov accepted the methodology of naturalism with little elaboration of its basic premises. He reiterated its stance that the artist was not to be a judge of his personages but an impartial witness, adding that the playwright's function was to elucidate the personages and speak their language. He was typically unconcerned with the spiritual essence of his personages' personalities and interested himself instead in how those personalities operated. He did not go so far, however, as the pathology that Lucaks suggested as the terminus of naturalism, contenting himself rather with studies of the inefficient operation of the will.

Strindberg asserted in the Preface to Miss Julie that his dramatic personages were for the most part characterless.

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113 Ibid. 114 Ibid., p. 941. 115 Ibid.


A person's character, he insisted, was defined, whether in life or on the stage, by one or a limited number of traits that were associated with and unchangeable within him. Strindberg, on the contrary, was trying to create, not character, but

agglomerations of past and present cultures, scraps from books and newspapers, fragments of humanity, torn shreds of once-fine clothing that has become rags, in just the way that a human soul is patched together;

he went to great pains in his preface to delineate not only what the personages were, but why they were what they were in terms of sociology, psychology, biology, heredity, and environment. While the effect of A Dream Play differed radically from Miss Julie, Strindberg's intent was much the same: to get at the heart of how the mind works. His unorthodox methodology of characterization, in which "the characters split, double, multiply, dissolve, condense, float apart, coalesce," was the result of Strindberg's attempt to "imitate the incoherent but ostensibly logical form of our dreams." The apparent chaos of the plot is unified—and the play itself stands as a paradigm for all

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119 Ibid., p. 103.


121 Ibid.
such plays—solely in terms of one personage; moreover, the play is formulated in its entirety to delineate one aspect of the primary personage—its subconscious.

The psychological theorists' treatment of a dramatic personage as a human personality led them to a common understanding that the personality of a personage could control the shape of a plot as, in real life, the character of a human being controls his actions. William Archer accepted that understanding as a major premise of his dramatic theory, dismissing action as wholly unimportant; he nonetheless insisted that deeds and not words are the test of character and that the theatre must consequently exhibit character in action. The apparent contradiction lies in Archer's limiting dramatic action to the broad, external movement of the play rather than recognizing it as any change that takes place in the play, including those within a personage. Archer, however, did not think that a dramatic personage admitted of substantive change. He defined character as "a complex of intellectual, emotional, and nervous habits" whose development consisted of disclosure, not change. Hence he did not find character drawing necessarily inferior to psychology, merely

123Ibid., p. 372. 124Ibid., p. 373.
different in function: character drawing was synthetic, presenting certain commonly recognized and accepted characteristics, while psychology was analytic, exploring the moral conditions and mental processes that made up the personages. Archer judged the importance of a personage by its function within the thematic structure of a drama: essential personages were those without which the theme was impossible, while auxiliary personages were those which were convenient for filling in character and for carrying on the action. Despite Archer's concern for theme, he faulted George Bernard Shaw for being neither a drawer of character nor a psychologist, but a dealer in personified ideas. Shaw, however, recognized the need for more than just cerebration in a personage. The personality of the great individual, he said, was marked by a cold, essentially human passion that embodied itself in objective purposes and interests and by attachments formed out of an objective interest for others. Shaw also perceived that, if characterization was to be based on personality, it could not merely describe a personage as the ordinary man saw and judged him, but had to create a personage that judged the world from the personage's own perspective.

125 Ibid., pp. 375-376. 126 Ibid., p. 74.
127 Ibid., p. 378.
George Pierce Baker, avoiding Archer's confusion about action, held that the greatest kind of drama was that which used action to reveal mental states. Baker theorized that the essence of drama was that which was creative of an emotional response; the permanent value of drama, consequently, rested on characterization, because the latter was responsible for audience sympathy. He further disagreed with Archer that character drawing was equal to psychology. Dramatic characterization had become more sophisticated as it moved from abstractions and personifications through types to individualized personages, from the known to the less known to the unknown. Thus, he explained, on one hand, a dramatist who engaged in character drawing could create a lifelikeness that was immediately recognizable; on the other hand, however, a dramatist whose concern was the psychological constitution of his personages could not achieve such immediately recognizable lifelikeness in the most complex characterizations because of the seeming self-contradictions inherent in them, but achieved it rather over the course of a drama by throwing light on a personage with illustrative action.

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131 Ibid., p. 43. 132 Ibid., p. 234.
133 Ibid. 134 Ibid., p. 239.
While most of the theorists who espoused the psychological approach saw it primarily as a way of representing an individualized personality, at its heart the method was concerned, as Zola had stated, with the analysis of human behavior. The object, then, was not the study of idiosyncratic behavior, but an understanding of common patterns of behavior, which were revealed through depicting individual personages in particular circumstances. Louis Flaccus attempted to explain that phenomenon, but, as had Alan D. Mickle, he succeeded more in describing the reaction that took place toward it. He defined 'character' as the quality possessed by an individual member of a species that has all the characteristics of its species' form.135 All the things that concerned the naturalist—heredity, the gradual revelation of the personage's traits, the fluctuating influence of social currents—were necessary to translate a personage from a particular (a given man) to a concrete universal (any man).136 Personages were no longer "complete and self-closed as billiard balls spinning about and banging against each other;" rather, each was "the point of an angle whose sides straddle the universe."137

135 Flaccus, p. 123.
136 Ibid., p. 114.
137 Ibid., p. 118.
Henry Arthur Jones's special contribution to the theory of the dramatic personage was his reconciliation of the contemporary thought on the nature of man with the recognition that a dramatic personage was quite different from a human being and was accordingly entitled to different treatment. In a human being, 'character' was some especial and individual mark... that Nature has stamped on a lump of human putty, to make it distinctive, individual, recognizable; its fundamental instrument and mechanism was the nervous apparatus of the human body, which worked independently of beliefs and in defiance of religious notions. As a consequence of such thinking, human character was seen as little more than the highest expression of the working of the nervous system. But Jones emphasized that a fundamental difference existed between the ways that character was treated by nature and by drama: nature had nearly seventy years to portray every detail of character, while the dramatist's time was limited to minutes. Jones upheld conflict between human wills as essential to drama, and he maintained that although free will had been

139Ibid., p. 183. 140Ibid., p. 182.
141Ibid., p. 185
disproved by science it was a necessary assumption of drama;\textsuperscript{142} likewise, he insisted that, while nature showed human character as inconsistent, a dramatist had to depict it as concise, homogeneous, purposeful, direct, and moving toward a self-conscious end.\textsuperscript{143} The one parallel that still obtained, according to Jones, was that in drama, as in life, words and actions often differed; consequently, a personage's character had to be presented in action because it was so expressed in life. From that he concluded that, while the plot might not be the chief thing in a play, the portrayal of a personage would almost inevitably be shaped and directed by the action.\textsuperscript{144} Jones's theory is by no means a rejection of the psychological approach, but rather a realization that, because drama is an artificial creation, it demands the creation of a special psychology for each dramatic personage, one that will make him function most effectively under the special and ultimately non-real conditions of the stage.

Gustav Freytag and Ferdinand Brunetiere both treated characterization as the delineation of a personality through the manifestation of the will. The cornerstone of Freytag's theory was that the essence of drama consisted in those emotions of the soul that steel themselves to will and to

\textsuperscript{142}Ibid., p. 191. \textsuperscript{143}Ibid., p. 186.  
\textsuperscript{144}Ibid., p. 189.
do, in the fashioning influence of the world on the inmost being, and in the inner process leading from perception to desire to action.\textsuperscript{145} Brunetiere similarly defined drama as primarily the spectacle of a will, conscious of itself and of the means it employs, driving towards a goal;\textsuperscript{146} he also followed the fashion in allowing that a play was controlled by characterization rather than action. Freytag, on the other hand, while he weighed a particular motive of a hero more heavily than a mere network of events,\textsuperscript{147} recognized that organizing the action around one person was not enough to unify the plot\textsuperscript{148} and that every dramatic personage had an exact, circumscribed personality, which played a definite part in the whole.\textsuperscript{149} His most important insight was that the idea of a personality was formed from external evidence, and that, no matter how few the number of traits were, they were perceived as a whole.\textsuperscript{150} He, furthermore, discerned two types of characterization: chief personages, which must manifest internal qualities to avoid artificiality,  


\textsuperscript{147}Freytag, p. 42. \textsuperscript{148}Ibid., p. 37. 

\textsuperscript{149}Ibid., p. 22. \textsuperscript{150}Ibid., p. 248.
and lesser personages, which rely on the actor for their dramatic life. Freytag's second significant contribution was his apprehension that, even in the chief personages, the rich individual life that was created by putting together a few vital expressions that were perceived as an entity by the actors and the audience was only an artistic illusion. He stressed that in number those vital expressions were actually very few and that the impression of unity was possible only through suggesting a whole personality to the imagination of a receptive spectator. The observations of both Freytag and Henry Arthur Jones bespoke an understanding of the practical side of dramaturgy that was absent from psychology in general and from psychoanalysis in particular when the latter were put into service as literary tools.

Sigmund Freud fundamentally altered the nature of psychological characterization, not only because of his revolutionary advances in the theory of mental disorders, but because he applied his theories to the personages of drama and literature and thereby established a convention

\[151\text{ Ibid., pp. 22-23.}\]

\[152\text{ Ibid., p. 249. Elisabeth Woodbridge's The Drama: Its Law and Its Technique (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1898) was originally planned as a supplement of Freytag's Technique of the Dramatic Art and designed to clarify the latter through reorganization (p. v.). Although Woodbridge gave up that plan, she freely admitted her indebtedness to Freytag (p. vi.) and, for the most part, what there is of value in her study is drawn more or less directly from Freytag's work.}\]
that for better or worse was accepted and imitated by many of his followers. Freud's literary theory consisted of three cardinal points: analysis of a personage as if it were a real human being; treatment of the personality of the playwright as an integral part of his play; and emphasis on the subconscious control of both the playwright and the personage. Whatever the value of his clinical theory, Freud's literary criticism was to rise or fall on those three points; C. G. Jung, with all deference to Freud as a scientist, found the latter's role as a litterateur a failure. Jung concentrated on Freud's second premise—that the personality of the playwright is an integral part of the play—but succeeded in impugning the other two tenets tangentially. Jung pointed out that psychological scrutiny was proper only to the process of artistic creation, which has nothing to do with the innermost essence of art. Moreover, he postulated that if the creation of art was explained in the same way as a neurosis—as it was by Freud—either art was neurosis or neurosis, art. Jung concluded that personal causes are the soil out of which art grows, but that they are not an essential element of

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153 Jung, p. 836. By "the process of artistic creation" Jung clearly meant the interior activity and not the external execution.

154 Ibid., pp. 836-837.
art; that a work of art is not a human being (and, by logical extension, neither is a single part of a work of art, such as a personage), but something supra-personal transcending the personal concerns of its creator; and finally that a work of art is not transmitted or derived from the subconscious, heredity, and other sources, but is a creative re-organization of those very conditions to which the psychologist must reduce them.155

After the works of Freud and Stanislavski appeared, the emphasis in psychological characterization moved toward the treatment of a dramatic personage as a human being. In The Art of Dramatic Writing, Lajos Egri stressed, as Zola had, the importance of the sociological and psychological aspects of a personage and maintained, as Archer had, that a plot was controlled by its personages. But the cornerstone of his theory was that a dramatic personage was not merely to be treated as, but was, in fact, a human being.156 He provided a chart listing the facts a playwright should know about each of his personages (ranging from the color of its eyes to its hobbies and IQ) whether he ultimately used those facts or not;157 he added that the playwright should know

155Ibid., p. 838.
157Ibid., pp. 36-37, 42.
a personage not only as it appeared in a play but as it
would be in years to come.\textsuperscript{158} Josefina Niggli took an
approach similar to Egri's in her book, \textit{New Pointers on
Playwriting}. She first divided all personages into three
types: one-, two-, and three-dimensional.\textsuperscript{159} The protagon­
ist of every play must be of the three-dimensional variety;
"we know literally everything about him," she wrote,
supplying a check list, much like Egri's, which indicated
what 'everything' entailed.\textsuperscript{160} Two of the musts on her
list are a protagonist's major desire and its fatal flaw,\textsuperscript{161}
the latter of which must be quite jolly in a comedy. Niggli
carried the treatment of personages as human beings one
step farther than Egri, offering such advice as

> when a difficult crisis appears, and the writer
> is not completely sure how the protagonist will
> react, he may keep a day-by-day diary of the
> protagonist, putting down his reactions to even
> the slightest incident.\textsuperscript{162}

Such a statement implies that, in Niggli's understanding,
a dramatic personage can act of its own volition.

Eugene O'Neill's place among the psychological
theorists was determined largely by his practical experience
as a playwright and his attempts as such to sound the

\textsuperscript{158}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 60.

\textsuperscript{159}Josefina Niggli, \textit{New Pointers on Playwriting}

\textsuperscript{160}\textit{Ibid.} \textsuperscript{161}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 59.

\textsuperscript{162}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 59.
depths of men's minds and souls. Of *Desire Under the Elms* he said:

> I never intended that the language of the play should be a record of what the characters actually said. I want to express what they felt subconsciously.  

His interest was not with the construction of whole personalities and even less with the creation of real human beings, but with the depiction of the forces that were at work within men. O'Neill realized—as Strindberg, who influenced O'Neill greatly, had before him—that psychological processes, especially those of the subconscious, are of their nature so obscure that they cannot be treated realistically if they are to be the substance of a drama. O'Neill, consequently, contrived two radically unrealistic methods for the presentation of the sort of dramatic personage whose primary function is to act as a sounding board for the subconscious. By adapting the classical Greek use of masks to several of his plays, O'Neill attempted to formalize the expression of psychology. On the simplest of levels, for example, Brown's stealing of Dion's mask in *The Great God Brown*, was, according to O'Neill, an attempt to dramatize the transference of

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164 Ibid., p. 217.
personality.165 But the significance of the masks could be much more sophisticated than that. The masks in The Great God Brown, O'Neill explained, represented not merely hypocrical and defensive double personalities in personal relationships, but also the abstract, mystic forces behind the personages;166 Dion's mask represented the defensive facade of a super-sensitive artist as well as the integration of that facade with his personality as an artist: the inner division represented by the mask was a sign of the life and the creativity necessary to Dion's artistry.167 O'Neill somewhat varied his pattern in Lazarus Laughed, using a half mask to indicate dual personality; that had the advantage of allowing the contrast between the mask and the face to be continually apparent.168 He formalized the differences in the levels of characterization by giving the secondary personages full masks. They enabled him to express mob psychology, the illusion of a collective whole, with a crowd mind and crowd emotions, rather than a collection of individuals; he concocted a Chinese menu of age groups and psychological traits, each of which had seven types, and by combining one element from each category in a single mask various kinds of crowds could be

composed. His simplification of psychology was so severe it seems almost a return to Horace's treatment of characterization. It was not, however, a regression, but merely a realization that in formal terms a single trait is often all that is necessary. In Strange Interlude, O'Neill introduced thought asides in an attempt to dramatize the internal forces that lay behind the external actions; whatever their limitations, they are probably the most realistic method for reconstructing the process of conscious thought. O'Neill himself, however, was far from convinced of their efficacy as a dramatic device; he eventually dismissed their use as an attempt to reduce the chance of an actor's misunderstanding the significance of the speeches. While not all of O'Neill's practical experiments were successful, they at least made it apparent that, if characterization was to consist primarily of psychological processes, the personages could not be treated realistically.

Arthur Miller was concerned not with the presentation of psychological processes, but with a personage's struggle to realize its own personality. Miller saw tragedy as the consequence of man's total compulsion to evaluate himself justly; man's destruction posited a moral wrong in his environment and at the same time provided a particular

\[169\text{Ibid., p. 130.} \quad 170\text{Ibid., p. 207.}\]
instance for the discovery of the moral law. In Miller's theory, the will did not mainly define the personality; it was the instrument through which a personage claimed its due as a complete personality that was capable of interaction with all aspects of the world in which it existed.

The main thesis of J. Leeds Barroll's study, Artificial Persons: The Formation of Character in the Tragedies of Shakespeare, is not nearly so interesting as an almost parenthetical assumption that he made about the enactment of dramatic character. His study is concerned primarily with the personalities of Shakespeare's dramatic personages, and his premise is that they were "made not begotten." He consequently sought not to view the personages in terms of modern psychology, but to recover some notion of the psychological organizations conceivably familiar to Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

Characterizations, Barroll explained, are structures determined by such cultural generalizations as might have surrounded any given dramatic artist in the history of world literature.

172 Ibid., p. 896.
174 Ibid., p. 251.
175 Ibid., p. 253.
He characterized the Renaissance as a culture imbued with a transcendentalist philosophy, with a belief that in man existed an unrealized and often unconscious drive for unity with a higher condition of Being.\textsuperscript{176} His conclusion is that such an ideological background may have given Shakespeare a language of thought with which to approach the complexity and ambivalence of human drives toward self-realization in this life.\textsuperscript{177}

Barroll, however, without apparent reason, crippled himself in his investigation: he claimed that the meaning of a drama was ambiguous when only the text remained because, although speeches give statements of principles, reactions to situations, and opinions, such "evidence can never be definitive without some awareness of the accompanying physical minutiae" that contemporary actors had supplied to the script.\textsuperscript{178} Why and how physical minutiae defines, rather than derives from, the text of a play is not made clear; how physical minutiae could define the text of a play is, in fact, inconceivable: the definition of a drama by physical minutiae suggests that any gesture that an actor might choose to make at a given point in a play is as appropriate to the text at that point as any other gesture. Both reason and experience, however, make it clear that such is not the case.

\textsuperscript{176}Ibid., p. 262.  \textsuperscript{177}Ibid.  \textsuperscript{178}Ibid., p. 5.
Bertolt Brecht added as significantly to sociological characterization as Freud had to the psychological, with a social-activist strain of dramaturgy inspired by the doctrines of Marxism. Brecht was an ardent iconoclast, and while much of his theory was indeed unique, many of the sacred cows that he led to the altar of sacrifice had been desanctified sometime beforehand, were they ever consecrated at all. He claimed that the personages of the traditional dramatic theatre (in contrast to his revolutionary epic theatre) were established from the outset and were merely exposed by the actor.\(^{179}\) While his assessment is certainly true of many, possibly most, dramatic personages, it is not true of the best of them. Brecht said that the personages of the epic theatre were, in contrast, allowed to grow before the spectator's eyes;\(^{180}\) it was, in fact, necessary—if epic drama was to achieve its end of effecting social change—to show each personage as changeable. The key lay in ignoring the consistency expected of traditional personages and in presenting contradictions instead. Each personage's peculiarity lay in the particular contradiction that it embodied; stripped of all its peculiarities (its contradictions) a personage would be reduced to the generic.


\(^{180}\)Ibid.
'man,' which could be altered no further. Moreover, the traditional theatre had always been more successful with rogues and minor figures, because they were individualized, than with the protagonists, who had to remain generalized so that audiences could identify with them. A contradiction, in Brecht's theory, supplied a personage with its unity and coherence because it was the behavioral trait that defined the personage. Brecht pointed, as an example, to the peasant in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* who overcharged Grusha, the heroine, for milk and then helped her with her child: the contradiction demonstrated that he was not mean, but poor. Vis-a-vis his concern with individuality, Brecht professed that he showed only what was typical. He explained that even though different people will respond differently to the same situation according to their class, the circumstances, and so on, and even though the same person will respond differently according to different factors, a given person will respond the same as anyone else influenced by the same factors. Consequently, the "unmistakable man himself" will be brought out through his particular contradiction, but he will respond to that

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181 Ibid., p. 60.  
182 Ibid., p. 188.  
183 Ibid., pp. 100, 196.  
contradiction in a manner typical of human nature. Brecht also pointed out that the reason for a contradiction within each of his personages was not mere whim:

I am not so discouragingly chaotic as people think.

. . . Even when a character behaves by contradictions that's only because nobody can be identically the same at two unidentical moments. Changes in his exterior continually lead to an inner reshuffling. The continuity of the ego is a myth. Whether Brecht actually succeeded in drawing personages that underwent that inner reshuffling in his plays, in theory at least he provided a formulation of the highest level of dramatic character.

Character as a Set of Moral Traits

Although Aristotle's treatment of ethos in the Poetics when read in light of the Nicomachean Ethics offers a basis for a complete and extremely practical theory of dramatic character, the same treatment read without the Nicomachean Ethics and taken a bit too literally has led a number of theorists to define dramatic characterization as the embodiment of a moral principle and to identify a dramatic personage by the moral or ethical virtue or vice that it exhibited. The striking thing about such theories was that they also managed to confuse moral purpose, which Aristotle said was the determinant of ethos, with the magnitude of

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185 Brecht, Brecht on Theatre, p. 191.
186 Ibid., p. 15.
ethos, which is the property whereby comedy made its personages less, and tragedy greater, than men actually are. In Renaissance Italy, for example, Giovan Giorgio Trissino said that the personages of tragedy should be made better than the historical figures actually were to make them more beautiful; so it was that virtue came to be considered proper to tragedy and vice to comedy.

The same opinion was popular in Seventeenth Century France. The French Academy faulted Corneille for his overzealous concern for the truth in The Cid:

We maintain that not all actual occurrences are suitable for the theatre and that some of them are like those crimes whose trial records the judges burn with the criminals. It is chiefly in such instances that the poet should prefer probability to possibility and work with material that though fictitious is probable, rather than with that which is actual but excessive. The changes to be made in the plot of The Cid were of bad examples in the historical account that, in public interest, poetry might have reformed.

The French were so taken with embodying moral principles in dramatic personages that they formalized the concept of poetic justice. According to La Masnardiere, the catastrophe of a tragedy had to show the perfect equity of

187 Poet. 1448a17-18.
Divine Justice, with a necessarily happy outcome for the good and an unhappy one for the bad. In such a system little room for moral ambiguity or even moral deliberation remained.

With the rise of bourgeois drama, however, a subtle shift in viewpoint occurred. The essence of the drame was, according to Beaumarchais, a moral lesson that was more direct than either tragedy or comedy. He also maintained that an audience's empathy had to be aroused before they could be touched by a lesson and that, because empathy was a result of the audience's putting itself in the place of the protagonist, the personages had to be, not kings, but men like themselves. Diderot said frankly that a class rather than an individual should be presented on stage because an audience was able to identify more easily with the former. Pallissot, however, disagreed, protesting that a class figure had to have a recognizable attribute to transform it from a metaphysical abstraction into a real being; resting on an individualized personage, the intrigue and the moral of a play would then have a concrete figure as their foundation. The shift in emphasis from the

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190 Wheatly, p. 230.
nobility in tragedy to the middle class in the *drame* left little doubt that the virtues that were being taught were those of the bourgeoisie. No longer was the purpose to make men better than they were; to the contrary, Diderot counselled the poet to keep virtue and virtuous people in his mind so that he could bring into his work characteristics that the spectators would have. Diderot found even comedy more suited to instructive scenes than tragedy because it could provide models of good and evil for all scenes of human life, which tragedy could not. Yet Jean-François Marmontel, who contributed to Diderot's *Encyclopedia*, suggested that, when tragedy showed man at the mercy of his passions and the passions of others, it succeeded in teaching a moderate set of manners and morals (which had hitherto been the office of comedy) and presented a political lesson as well.

In England at the end of the Seventeenth and well into the Eighteenth centuries, opinion shifted decidedly toward the French viewpoint. Both Thomas Rymer and Jeremy Collier faulted the stage for failing to present personages who

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196 Ibid., pp. 290-291.
were idealizations of human character. Repeating almost verbatim the opinion of the French Academy, Sir Richard Steele said that a playwright, to edify the audience, should choose incidents illustrating the good qualities of a dramatic personage. He maintained, in addition, that the character of a dramatic personage should be founded on superior thought and maxims of conduct and that the greatness of such a personage appeared in the greatness of its sentiments.

Despite Lessing's advances in analyzing dramaturgy, he accepted the moral utility of drama without question. Even that concept, however, was transformed by his understanding of dramatic structure. He transferred the moral significance of a play from the character of its personages to the relationship between the personages and the action of the play; he said that moral instruction lay not in the facts of a drama alone, but in the recognition that given personages in given circumstances would and must evolve


such facts. Lessing's insight laid the foundation for the more complete understanding of the function the moral stance of a personage played in the action of a plot that was to be developed by Hegel and Schiller.

Charles Lamb made a key discovery about the treatment of morality in comedy that enabled him to succeed, where the Restoration comic playwrights had failed a century earlier, in defending Restoration comedy against its critics by denying the applicability of standard morality. Lamb pointed out that the comedy of manners of the late Seventeenth Century lost its popularity because audiences began to judge the dramatic personages as real persons and their dramatic action as real action. The personages could not stand the test because they lived their lives on that neutral ground of character, which stood between vice and virtue; or which in fact was indifferent to neither, where neither properly was called in question; that happy breathing-place from the burden of a perpetual moral questioning.

Without realizing it (or at least without stating it) Lamb dispelled the confusion about morality and magnitude that had existed for so long. Comic personages were not necessarily more evil than ordinary men; they were merely to be taken less seriously when they formulated a moral stance.

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200 Lessing, p. 96.


202 Ibid., pp. 198-199.
Maurice Maeterlinck envisioned a type of drama that extended the use of personages as moral principles to its furthest limits. Modern drama, Maeterlinck noted, was concerned less with external action than internal action: the heroic was not natural in modern times and it was only reasonable that the passions of the modern stage be modern. Thus modern drama had turned to psychology and to moral problems as substitutes for external life. The result was less activity; and eventually, when action had moved from the psychological to the spiritual (in which man is confronted with his own soul), the situation would no longer admit of any conflict. All supposed duties were external and false, Maeterlinck said, except one: to love others as oneself. But, he observed, if personages were to embody that duty, there would be no conflict and consequently no drama. Because men had not yet reached that point in real life, Maeterlinck suggested that the characteristic drama of modern times would show personages embodying the struggle of ignorance and egoism with the duty to love one another. His ideal remained, however,

204Ibid., pp. 121-123.
205Ibid., p. 126.
206Ibid., pp. 129-130.
207Ibid., pp. 132-133.
208Ibid., p. 133.
209Ibid., p. 135.
the theatre without conflict, in which the dramatis personae were characterized by brotherly love, "a theatre of peace, of beauty without tears."²¹⁰

Character as a Form of Action

Surprisingly few theorists have taken cognizance of the fact that the highest level of dramatic characterization takes the form of action: that action is a process of moral deliberation and choice that a dramatic personage executes and by which it is thereby characterized. Those who failed to do so were led astray by the assumption that a dramatic personage is a package of unalterable traits, whether moral or psychological, or that the nature of a dramatic personage shapes the action of a plot. Although the close relationship between dramatic character and the action of a plot was never lost sight of, some misinterpreted the relationship between the two, while others slavishly reiterated Aristotle without understanding the substance of his statement; still others, such as Castelvetro, threw up their hands at ever understanding Aristotle and said that whichever was the controlling factor did not matter.²¹¹ Theorists seem to have been put

²¹⁰Ibid.

off the scent by so many red herrings that few thought to consider moral deliberation and choice as aspects of dramatic characterization. Most were limited to observations like that of John Dennis, who noted that "tragedy instructs chiefly by its design, comedy instructs by its characters."\(^{212}\) Dennis's recognition that at least in tragedy the personages' moral stances have something to do with the course of the action was a step in the right direction, but the antithesis to comedy indicates that he did not perceive that dramatic characterization could be formed by action. The same is true of Gerald Weales's approach in *A Play and Its Parts*. He appropriately observed that drawing a line between action and characterization was an artificial process and that the method of characterization (whether one-dimensional abstractions, stock characters, or individualized personalities were to be used) depended upon the kind of play being constructed.\(^{213}\) Yet he would go only so far as to say that an act helped define a personage's character; that, because an action could lie as easily as words, the ultimate determinants were the things that were said and the deeds that were done.


considered together. \(^{214}\) Several centuries earlier, however, John Dryden had put his finger on what was missing from considerations of character when he maintained that the crimes of tragedy should be shown to be voluntary "since our passions are, or ought to be, within our power;"\(^ {215}\) the essence of character, to paraphrase, was in the rational control of the irrational.

Friedrich Schiller also perceived that moral action was "action comprehended in the field of free will,"\(^ {216}\) and in his essay, The Pathetic, he went one step farther than any theorist before him by considering moral action not in terms of morality, but purely in terms of aesthetics. He began his complex argument with the observation that moral discipline must be discriminated from mere insensibility in a personage by establishing that the latter is 'sensuous,' that it represents a human being susceptible to normal human passions;\(^ {217}\) that fact is necessary for proving that

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\(^{214}\)Ibid., pp. 40-42.


a personage is reasonable, and both its sensibility and reasonableness are prerequisites for establishing its strength of will.\(^{218}\) Strength of will, a personage's moral and independent force (which Schiller called "the supersensuous element"), is discovered in the representation of a clash between those faculties of man that are disposed by his will and those that are affected by suffering (i.e., the passions); the strength of his will, consequently, can be judged only according to the force of the attack and the resistance of his will.\(^{219}\) Supersensuousness, which is the independence of a spiritual being amid a state of suffering, can, therefore, manifest itself in two ways. A negative manifestation occurs when the specific feelings that affect a personage's sensuous nature do not challenge its spiritual nature. Nobility, for example, can maintain itself in time of sorrow because it is not properly connected with sorrow. Schiller called such a manifestation "the sublime of disposition." A positive manifestation occurs when a personage's spiritual nature is challenged by its sensuous nature, and the personage subjects its passions to the control of its moral character. Such a manifestation exemplifies the sublime of action.\(^{220}\) In the sublime of

\(^{218}\)Ibid., p. 139.  
\(^{219}\)Ibid., pp. 148-149.  
\(^{220}\)Ibid., p. 155.
disposition, the suffering and supersensuousness are co-existent rather than causal; however,

in order that the sublimity of action should take place, not only must the suffering of man have no influence upon the moral constitution, but rather the opposite must be the case. The affection is the work of his moral character. 221

The sublime of action also has two manifestations. In its immediate, or direct, manifestation an agent expiates by moral suffering the violation of a duty. 222 The immediate sublime of action shows moral weakness because, even though an agent perceives the right end, it does not carry that end out; while such a personage is not morally great, it can nonetheless be aesthetically great. 223 In the mediate, or indirect, manifestation, an agent performs a duty and suffers as a consequence; because duty is its motive and suffering is a voluntary act, a mediate manifestation shows the moral character of the personage. 224 Schiller's most important observation--the one that pointed to the highest formulation of dramatic character--was that man's will is absolutely independent of moral instinct; 225 man is sublime from a moral point of view, as a consequence, not because he possesses a moral faculty or aptitude, but because he uses that faculty in determining his conduct. 226

221Ibid., p. 156. 222Ibid., p. 157. 223Ibid.
224Ibid. 225Ibid., pp. 159-160. 226Ibid., p. 157.
Friedrich Hebbel lived into the early years of Naturalism, and his theory reflects concepts that Schiller was unaware of. He said that a personage had to be moulded by a social as well as a moral environment and had to be, simultaneously, impelled to sustain an attitude critical to the life process. Hebbel, nonetheless, kept himself aloof from the predetermination of Naturalism, maintaining that the full stature of a personage as a spiritual being was attained in a conflict for an ideal. A personage was not merely an exponent of such an ideal, however; both personage and ideal grew through the course of the action. That observation led Hebbel to the conclusion that a personage should not appear ready made, but should have an active inner essence of its own.

John Howard Lawson traced all the faults he found in the traditional dramaturgy of characterization to Aristotle, whose theory he unfortunately misunderstood and to whom he attributed things the latter did not say. He thought that Aristotle's conception of a dramatic personage was static and that it admitted of only a collection of qualities that were not part of the action of a plot. Yet Lawson came independently to the conclusion that dramatic

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227 Israel Knox, The Aesthetic Theories of Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), p. 120.

228 Ibid.

229 Ibid.
characterization is a mode of action. Unlike Aristotle, he gave great weight to psychological and sociological factors in determining the significance of action and made useful distinctions among the various elements of psychology, distinctions that he thought should be maintained in drama as well. He discriminated between three aspects of human will: conation, the theoretical element that gives rise to the will; the will, the intellectual and emotional elements that bring the desire to act to the level of consciousness; and volition, the immediate impulse that initiates bodily activity. He noted likewise that consciousness involved both an active element, the will, and a passive element, the sense impressions; and he distinguished between behaviorism, which is concerned with mechanical necessity, and psychoanalysis, which is concerned with subconscious and psychic determinants. Lawson also maintained that, because the human personality found its fulfillment in social activity, a social framework is necessary in a drama; the more thoroughly an environment is realized, the more deeply the character of a personage is understood. Nonetheless, he faulted the modern theories that treat a personage as a bundle of characteristics, more intuitive

\[^{230}\text{Lawson, pp. 5-6.}^{231}\text{Ibid., p. 97.}^{232}\text{Ibid.}^{233}\text{Ibid., p. 98.}^{234}\text{Ibid., pp. 434, 280.}\]
than rational, and that use the environment merely as the arena in which to display a personage's qualities.\textsuperscript{235} Lawson disagreed with Galsworthy that a dramatic situation should be based on a personage, maintaining that that would necessitate characterizing personages through illustrative action, which would violate the unity of the plot.\textsuperscript{236} The purpose of dramatic character is, to the contrary, to determine the significance of the events of the plot by the degree and kind of conscious will exerted and by how that will works.\textsuperscript{237} Lawson concluded that personages have depth as they make decisions within a system of events.\textsuperscript{238} His scheme for characterization was as complete as that of any of the other theorists, but he had an unfortunate blindspot that was created by his elevating sociological concerns from an accidental to an essential part of drama and that prevented him from considering whether they were indeed the ultimate concern that a dramatic personage could embrace.

While Sam Smiley concerned himself for the most part with the personality of the dramatic personage, he was careful to distinguish a personage from a human being and

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{235}Ibid., p. 114. \textsuperscript{236}Ibid., p. 281. \\
\textsuperscript{237}Ibid., p. 167. \textsuperscript{238}Ibid., p. 286. 
\end{flushright}
to give ethos a special place in his consideration. He defined personality as the form or overall unity of the individual that admitted of behavioral potentials that transcend all attitudes and actions.\textsuperscript{239} The personality possesses, furthermore, an intellectual factor, which functions to incite and inhibit bodily processes and to balance the demands of biological instinct and the social environment. Smiley distinguished six kinds of traits in the dramatic personage. Biological traits are the simplest, indicating only whether a personage is human or animal, male or female, while physical traits consist in any specific physical quality, state, or other factor that gives visual distinctiveness.\textsuperscript{240} Dispositional traits, which reveal a personage's customary mood and life attitude, contrast with motivational traits, which indicate the desires that impel a personage to activity; the latter are subdivided into instinct (subconscious need), emotion (semi-conscious desire), and sentiment (conscious goal).\textsuperscript{241} Deliberative traits indicate the quality and the quantity of the personage's


\textsuperscript{240} Ibid., p. 84.  \textsuperscript{241} Ibid., p. 85.
reasoning processes and can be distinguished as expedient thought (how to do something) or ethical thought (whether to do something). A decisive trait marks a personage who chooses or does not choose a thing for a reason; a choice is expedient when it is directed toward the means to an end and ethical when directed to the end itself. Smiley held that decisive traits are the highest level of differentiation because decision forces change and change is the essence of drama.

Both A. S. Owen and S. H. Butcher in their commentaries on Aristotle's *Poetics* agreed that the psychological analysis of character and motivation had marred the dramatic effect of modern drama by producing type characters and dramatic biographies rather than dramas. Owen observed that "character without action is null and void," while Butcher more precisely pointed out that the significance of dramatic character is in the link of cause and effect it forges as it expresses itself in action, and that an artistically compacted plot is due to a vital relation

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242 Ibid., pp. 86-87. 243 Ibid., pp. 87-88.
245 Owen, p. 17. 246 Butcher, p. 347.
between action and dramatic character. Although allowing that the rules Aristotle laid down for the goodness of tragic personages were "too rigorous on their ethical side," he demonstrated that Aristotle flew in the face of tradition in holding that the end of art was to give pleasure rather than to teach moral conduct. Butcher defined drama generally as a will or an emotion in action, a definition that is most reminiscent of Freytag's theory. He defined praxis, the action of drama, as action in its proper and inward sense; hence, a deed, an incident, an event, or a situation is a praxis only insofar as it springs from an inward act of will or elicits some activity of thought or feeling. He noted, again like Freytag, that personages reveal their personalities not in all their fullness, but only insofar as the natural course of the action may require. And because in Aristotelian theory ethos must be united with another distinct factor, dianoia (thought) "to constitute the concrete and living person," the English term 'character' in its widest sense (that which reveals a person's personal and inner self, his intellectual powers

\[247\text{Ibid., p. 224.} \quad 248\text{Ibid., p. 213.} \quad 249\text{Ibid., p. 123.} \quad 250\text{Ibid., p. 341.}\]
no less than his will and his emotions) goes beyond the meaning of ethos. Butcher, consequently, defined ethos as the moral element in the personage, the revelation of a certain state or direction of the will, and the expression of moral purpose, of permanent dispositions and tendencies, and of the tone and sentiment of the individual.\textsuperscript{251}

Humphrey House offered a wealth of insights into the nature of dramatic character by supplementing the Poetics with a careful study of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics. He pointed out that character is not merely displayed by action, but rather that it is actually formed by enactment; that only in action does character—in its full and proper sense—occur.\textsuperscript{252} The importance of Aristotle's scheme is that its basis is man's desire for an end; that desire not only distinguishes human ethical action from the undirected movement of circumstances but is also the mainspring, the sustaining force of dramatic action.\textsuperscript{253} House noted, as others had, that dramatic personages existed "only in their dramatic context and by their dramatic function,"\textsuperscript{254} but he gave that observation added

\textsuperscript{251}Ibid., pp. 332-333.  \textsuperscript{252}House, pp. 70-71.  
\textsuperscript{253}Ibid., pp. 70, 78.  \textsuperscript{254}Ibid., p. 72.
significance by pointing out that throughout the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle was implicitly protesting against the Platonic tendency to generalize ethical judgments. Aristotle maintained that conduct has to do with individual cases; judgments about actions, consequently, must take account of circumstance and fact—circumstance and fact, which in a dramatic situation, are the plot.\(^{255}\)

While the studies of Butcher, House, and Smiley are remarkably superior to the vast body of tracts on dramatic character, they nonetheless all share an identical drawback. They all agree, as House put it, that "from the point of view of drama, 'character' in its full and proper sense occurs only in action"\(^{256}\) and, as Butcher observed, that an action (*praxis*) is not necessarily a process extending over a period of time but a change that may realize itself in a single moment.\(^{257}\) But none of them pinpoint precisely the moment at which *ethos* realizes itself in the action of a dramatic personage; that, consequently, will be the central concern of this study.

\(^{257}\) Butcher, p. 123.
CHAPTER TWO

Ethics and Teleology:

The End of Man as the Cause of Ethical Action

Dramatic personages have been examined and analyzed in a variety of ways, and yet common to all of the methods of observation and analysis discussed in the foregoing chapter is the recognition that all dramatic personages are representations of human beings or, at the very least, of human qualities. Some critics, such as those who have attempted to psychoanalyze dramatic personages, have been so taken by the resemblance of a dramatic agent to a human being that they have lost sight of the more fundamental difference that exists between a representation and the thing it represents; they have mistakenly assumed that, because a dramatic personage resembles a human being on the surface, it possesses of its nature all the intangible powers that operate within the mind and the soul of a human being, and that the operation of such powers is, as in a human being, determined and disposed by heredity and environment. A
dramatic personage is not, however, a human being; it, rather, holds the mirror up to man. Its capacity to represent a human being resides in the clarity with which it can reflect the movements of man's body and soul; yet it is recognizably human only insofar as it reflects into man's eyes his image of himself. A dramatic personage represents and resembles man because it functions as a personal agent (as opposed to an impersonal agent such as an oracle or a tempest) of the things said and done in a drama; as such it is the physical embodiment of the activity of the emotions and the senses, of the operation of reason and of thought, of the act of the will, and of the external deeds of man that constitute the essential action of drama. Ethos, a personage's characteristic pursuit or avoidance of a certain type of conduct, is one among the many human actions represented in drama and one among the many aspects of man that may be reflected in a dramatic personage. To function effectively, dramatic ethos must bear a recognizable resemblance to human character, and, to do so, it must mirror the ethos and the ethical action of real men. The function of dramatic ethos can be established and its dramaturgical effects analyzed, consequently, only after
the operation and the effects of real human ethos have been delineated.

A study of Aristotle's ethical theory in the Nicomachean Ethics is a logical point of departure for an analysis of dramatic character not merely because Aristotle's comments on dramatic ethos in the Poetics and his scrutiny of human conduct in the Nicomachean Ethics are accidentally related by their having come from the same hand; on the contrary, the Poetics is essentially related to the Nicomachean Ethics because Aristotle saw in nature the model that art imitated. In the Physics, he noted that anything developing through stages is guided by a purpose:

if natural products could be produced by art, they would move along the same line that natural processes actually take.¹

With that in mind, Humphrey House has suggested that Aristotle's definition of dramatic ethos be read in the context of the traditional order of the Aristotelian corpus;²


²House, p. 35.
the placement of the Poetics after the Nicomachean Ethics implies, therefore, that a knowledge of the latter is necessary to a full understanding of ethos as it is explained in the Poetics. The Nicomachean Ethics contains, furthermore, not only the outline of every ethical system that has followed it, but also, according to John Wild, the kernel of any conceivable ethical system in the future; Aristotle's ethical theory thus constitutes a sketch of man's traditional and enduring image of himself.

The spareness of Aristotle's definition of dramatic ethos in the Poetics is the result of the extensiveness of his treatment of human character in the Nicomachean Ethics. The definition of dramatic character in the Poetics, "that which reveals the moral purpose of the agents, i.e., the sort of thing they seek or avoid," is constructed in such

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5Poet. 1450b8.
a way that it leads back to the **Nicomachean Ethics** for clarification. The focal point of the definition is 'moral purpose' (*proairesis*). A moral purpose implies, as any purpose does, that an end exists toward which it is directed. That implication raises the question of what the end of an agent's moral purpose might be, and that question, in its turn, leads to the opening sentence of the **Nicomachean Ethics**:

> Every art and every investigation, and likewise every practical pursuit or undertaking, seems to aim at some good: hence it has been well said that the Good is That at which all things aim.⁶

The ultimate good for which man strives by means of the things he characteristically pursues or avoids in his conduct, Aristotle reasoned, is happiness.

Happiness (*eudaimonia*) is not, in Aristotle's view, a state or an emotion, but rather an activity in which man functions most fully according to his nature, in which he does best those things that man is uniquely capable of doing. Man is a unique being, a rational animal; because

of that essence, he has a unique function, which consists in the dual and combined operation of the rational and the irrational parts of his soul (psyche). Man's irrational soul is the source of his various desires, and they alone can move him to act; but, because man's desires are not the result of the full exercise of his unique nature, they cannot alone form the sum of his functional capabilities, nor can the actions that are solely the result of his desires be by themselves the source of human happiness. Man's desire must be fused with his reason for his natural capabilities to operate fully; the inevitable result of that union is not, however, the attainment of happiness, but only a wish (i.e., a rational desire) for those actions that constitute the activity known as happiness. Rational desire leads man to use his reason further to deliberate about which of the means that he possesses he can use to attain happiness; he subsequently chooses to perform (he pursues) those acts that will lead to happiness and chooses not to perform (he avoids) those acts that will be detrimental to his happiness.

A choice, as an act of pursuing or avoiding, is thus an expression of an agent's purpose. The pattern of an
agent's choices makes apparent the manner in which he seeks after happiness and in so doing reveals the moral purpose of the agent; as that which reveals his moral purpose, an agent's pattern of choices is his character. An agent's moral purpose as a whole is, consequently, the result of his practice of making individual choices of a certain type. If the choices he makes are in accord with what is rationally desirable, the practice of making such choices leads to the cultivation of a moral virtue, which is a quality of habitually desiring the proper things in the proper way; such a quality will, consequently, determine that an agent's future choices will be of the proper sort because the force of habit will lead him to choose as he has in the past. By assuring that the choices that a person makes conform to reason as well as desire, virtue assures that the manner in which a person functions will fully exercise both reason and desire; virtue thus leads to happiness and so attains the end of moral purpose.

While the concept of moral purpose is the cornerstone of Aristotle's definition of ethos in the Poetics, in the Nicomachean Ethics the emphasis falls on the process and the consequences of choice. The differing treatments in
the two works do not signify an essential difference in Aristotle's views of human and dramatic ethos, but are simply two perspectives of the nature of ethos that disregard whether its origin is life or art. Nor are the two perspectives themselves at odds. The distinction between choice and moral purpose is made only in translation; Aristotle's use of a single word, proairesis, for both choice and moral purpose indicates that the two constituted one concept for him. Proairesis, when synonymous with choice, signifies an individual act embodying moral purpose; when synonymous with moral purpose, it indicates not only a pattern of choices that can be identified retrospectively, but a prospective plan of an entire lifetime as well.\(^7\)

The differing perspectives suggest, not two divergent views of ethos, but a unique conception of a single moral choice that contains something sufficiently powerful and positive to make it identifiable with the moral plan of a lifetime.

**Teleology**

The importance that Aristotle placed on the purpose of a person's life can be appreciated only if the role that

teleology plays in Aristotle's works is first understood. The whole of the *Nicomachean Ethics*—and all of Aristotle's considerations of human knowledge—is colored by his teleological view of nature and life. Like Plato, he distinguished the sciences according to the ends that they seek. The major distinction that he made separates the theoretical from the practical sciences; the former are concerned with knowledge for its own sake and are prompted by intellectual curiosity, while the latter are pursued for guidance in life and seek knowledge as a means to action. Theoretical science is, further, concerned with things that are necessary, while practical science deals with things that are contingent, things that may be otherwise; thus, practical science aims at devising rules for successful intervention into a course of events in order to produce results that, without such intervention, would not have come about. The practical sciences are further divided into the productive sciences, which involve making and whose aim is some product or result, and the practical sciences proper, which involve doing and whose end is their

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9Ibid., p. xv.
own exercise. All of the productive endeavors of man--his arts, crafts, professions, and fields of study--aim ultimately at the well being of man; they are all, consequently, included in or controlled by the one supreme practical science, the science of human affairs, which employs them for the attainment of its own end, the happiness of man.

As a practical science, the science of human affairs is the study not merely of what happiness is, but also of how it is attained. Happiness, as Aristotle maintained, is not merely a product of action, but consists itself in an activity of a certain sort; happiness is, thus, a mode of life. The science of human affairs, as a result, aims at the discovery of two things: the mode of life in which man's happiness consists and the mode of government and social institutions by which that mode of life can be secured. The latter requires the investigation of the right constitution and is the subject of politics, while the former is to be decided by the study of a person's character and is the subject of ethics.

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10 Ibid., pp. xv-xvi.
11 Ibid., p. xvi.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., p. xvii.
The End of Human Action and its Attainment

Teleology is, however, far more appropriate to a study of human ethos as a device for understanding the nature of man and his actions than as a means for differentiating between the sciences; that is so because not only does the science of human affairs seek as its telos*(that is, as its end) a definition of happiness and the mode of life that attains it, but it also postulates that both of the latter are to be found in the telos that man strives for. The end of human action takes on primary importance in Aristotle's theory of human conduct, as a consequence, not only because it is the point from which the search for knowledge about human conduct begins, but because it is the source of human conduct as well.

The end or purpose of a thing is one of the four causes14 Aristotle distinguished by which existence may be effected;15 in such a context, that for the sake of which a thing exists is called its final cause. Any of the four

14The four causes (aitia*) of being are: the formal cause,* the essence or essential formula of a thing; the material cause,* the matter or substratum in which the essential formula resides; the efficient cause,* the source of the first beginning of change, i.e., that by means of which a thing is generated; and the final cause,* the end or purpose of a thing. (Meta.983a30-983b1; Phys. 194b24-195a12).

15Meta. 1013a33.
causes, including the final cause, can be the beginning of the existence of a thing if it is the point from which that thing can best come into being.\textsuperscript{16} Such is the relationship between happiness and human action: happiness generates human action best simply because man always and naturally desires happiness. Happiness is, thus, paradoxically both the final cause and the first principle of any action that a person undertakes because his potential for happiness must necessarily precede his desire to actualize such potential; his desire, in its turn, necessarily precedes his action because action can be effected only through the agency of desire. Man's desire for happiness, in that way, directs human ethical action and distinguishes it from the undirected movement of circumstances,\textsuperscript{17} much as the concern of practical science with those things that are contingent in nature directs it and distinguishes it from theoretical science.

The bald assertion that man always and naturally desires happiness and, moreover, that such desire guides ethical action seems clearly contrary to common experience. In an

\textsuperscript{16}Meta. 1013a1. \textsuperscript{17}House, p. 70.
extreme case, of course, a person may kill himself. But even under the most mundane circumstances, human appetites often appear self-destructive; man is given to eating and drinking and smoking too much, while the things that are clearly best for him he too often finds unpalatable. Man's good and what he desires are, nonetheless, indeed identical. Such a statement implies neither that whatever someone may find pleasureable is the best thing for him (which is manifestly false), nor that a person must resign himself to finding happiness in what is truly best for him (which would not be true happiness at all). The meaning of the statement hinges, rather, on a full understanding of the term telos. Telos refers not only to an external end that a thing strives for, but also to its chief goal, the perfection and completion of the thing itself. The aim of a living organism—the final cause of its being—is to actualize all of the potentiality of its nature by growing into a perfect specimen of its species.¹⁸ The good of man is, therefore, not something outside of himself, but something inherent in his function as a rational animal.

¹⁸Rackham, p. xxii.
For just as for the flute-player, a sculptor, or any artist, and, in general, for all things that have a function or activity, the good and the "well" is thought to reside in the function, so would it seem to be for man.¹⁹

A good sculptor is one who performs the function of a sculptor well; the good that he desires is not a good statue, but the skill to perform his function well, of which a good statue is merely a consequence. So, the good of man is to function well, and in that activity resides happiness. A person may perform an act that is consciously self-destructive, as a consequence, because he feels unable to function as a man should and so prefers the oblivion of death to an unhappy life; on the other hand, he may act in a manner unconsciously self-destructive because he misconstrues the actions that will best satisfy him and so strives for happiness through false means. Or like Socrates, he may perform an act that is outwardly self-destructive because he thinks it is, under the circumstances, the best that he can do; such an act is the consummation or completion of a life rather than its destruction.

¹⁹NE 1097b26-29. (Commins and Linscott, p. 12.)
The premise from which Aristotle's ethical theory begins—that man's good and the object of his desires ideally are identical—is not, then, indefensible. It indicates, on the contrary, that the completion inherent in the telos of man is not the separate perfection of reason and desire (which would not be a completion at all), but rather their integration into a mutually complementary functional unit. Such integration is the result of the perfection of man's unique function, which is the activity of his rational principle. The integration is possible—and solely possible—through the rational principle because both the lower (animal) and the higher (rational) functions of man take part in its activity: the lower by being obedient to it, and the higher, by possessing and exercising it. Although Aristotle's ethical theory has

20NE 1098a5. The nature of the human species is defined and differentiated from all other classes of beings as "rational animal." The genus of the species is "animal." and the differentia (the specific difference), "rational." The genus of a being is derived from its material principle, and its differentia from its formal principle. The material and formal principles of a thing can be separated from the actual being of that thing only in thought; in actuality, the thing exists only as a composite of its material and formal principles. Man does not, therefore, have two distinct natures, one rational and one animal. His actual being, as it always appears when in existence, consists in one nature that possesses rational and animal faculties, and, hence, rational and animal functions. Yet, because the rational is the formal principle of man, his animal functions take the shape of rational functions; what is uniquely natural to man is not animal desire (instinct) but rational desire.
flaws that are the result of his overemphasis of the
rational, only if an inherently schizoid human nature is
postulated is the integration of the rational and the
emotive functions of man impossible.

Man is not compelled by his nature, however, to
exercise reason either fully or well in every situation in
which he finds himself; and, even when he does so exercise
it, his desire does not always follow the path that reason
has indicated. Moral purpose is paramount in Aristotle's
theory of human conduct because it embodies the fusion of
desire with, and therein its perfection by, the proper
exercise of reason. Moral purpose is neither merely a
person's desire for happiness nor merely his understanding
that happiness is attained through the proper exercise of
his natural faculties, but rather, his desire to achieve
happiness through such an exercise of his faculties; as a
result, moral purpose cultivates the activity that is most
proper to the human animal in both senses of the word
'proper': it cultivates the activity that best suits the
nature of man at the same time it cultivates action that
is morally right. The desire embodied in moral purpose,
moreover, takes a form other than just an intention to act
well, because the latter is no more efficacious in bringing about such a result than an intention to become a good sculptor is enough to produce the skill that a good sculptor possesses. On the contrary, just as an apprentice sculptor cultivates his skill by the actual practice of carving individual statues, a person cultivates the skill of acting well by the actual practice of acting well in particular circumstances. He does so in part by the proper exercise of reason: by deciding not only what the best action is under such circumstances, but also the best manner in which to carry that action out. But such decisions about his purpose are not alone enough to effect it; he must rationally and deliberately desire—that is, he must will—to do the action that he has decided upon. Such an act of choice—an efficacious desire of a course of action proposed by reason—is the sole mechanism by which an intended act can be transformed into a deed. Choice, so defined, is, consequently, the critical instant in which moral purpose manifests itself in reason's fusing with and perfecting of desire.

Thus choice, as the only entity that can span the gap, however great or small, between intention and action, is
the central structure of ethos and the single path by which happiness may be reached. In such an understanding of choice, furthermore, Aristotle found sufficient reason to identify choice and moral purpose as the dual aspects of proairesis, the fundamental expression of a person's ethical nature. Most importantly, however, in the dual nature of proairesis is found both the mechanism (choice) and its pattern of use (moral purpose) which jointly complete and perfect—the former, in a given instant, and the latter, throughout an entire lifetime—the faculties that are proper to man even when he engages in action. Proairesis is thus not a step toward happiness, nor is happiness an end separate from the path that leads to it; happiness is forged, rather, by and from proairesis' shaping of the activities that constitute the function of man.
THE FUNCTION OF COGNITION IN HUMAN ACTION

The function of man, as described by Aristotle, consists in "the active exercise of the soul's faculties in conformity with rational principle;" as such it is wholly determined by the constitution of the human soul. The Greek equivalent of "the active exercise of the soul's faculties" is psyches energeia,* which means literally the actuality (as opposed to the potentiality) of the soul; it denotes the state in which an entity is doing whatever it is that it does. Aristotle's conception of the soul, and of the relationship between soul and body, is characterized most succinctly by his thesis that psyches energeia is also energeia somatos,* the actuality of the body. That perspective sets Aristotle clearly apart from Augustine,

1NE 1098a7, 14-15. 2Meta. 1045a36.
Descartes, Locke, Kant, and the like, from the modern conceptions of body and soul as mutually separable and independent realms of being. Aristotle held that the soul is, by the nature of its operation, properly inseparable from the activity of the body, just as the power of cutting, by the nature of its operation, is properly inseparable from the activity of a knife; the operation of the soul and the activity of the body are merely two different aspects of the same thing.

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3Frederick J. E. Woodbridge, *Aristotle's Vision of Nature*, ed. John Herman Randall, Jr., et. al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 134. The failure of perhaps the most widely accepted theory of perception, the Representative Theory (which explains perception as the mind's awareness of representations of external objects causally transmitted by such objects to the percipient's brain), and the failure of modern science in general to account for consciousness have lead to a revival and to various restatements of Aristotle's theory of the soul. The mind is rejected as an entity that is discrete from the body and is seen, rather, as the conscious power of the human organism. Perceiving is, thus, a 'whole' activity of a person manifesting itself in two aspects: outer, physical (including brain) activity, which is in principle externally observable; and inner, mental activity, which is accessible only to the person himself. G. M. Wynburn, R. W. Pickford, and R. J. Hirst, *Human Senses and Perception* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964), pp. 248-249, 318-321.

4DA 412b10-15.

sharpness, it loses the essential quality that not only controlled its design and construction, but that also gave it a reason for being. In a manner much the same, when a living being loses the essential powers that are the principle of its being, although its body can be preserved for sometime afterward, the organism is treated as if it had gone out of existence. Even the physical substance of the body, which remains after death, does not, despite its concreteness, amount to actual being as a perfect entity; its shape and arrangement, having been dictated by the functions its members served, derive purposeful existence only from the source of those functions, the psyches energeia. The soul is, consequently, the form that not only determines but also explains all the contingent factors of the existence of the body, just as the power of cutting explains the design of a knife and accounts for the differences between a knife and a spoon, or a knife and a napkin; to the extent to which the soul accounts for contingent factors, it also acts as the principle by which a living organism is knowable.⁶

⁶Ibid., p. xliv.
An understanding of man's function and the ethical nature that derives from it makes necessary a determination of which faculties the soul possesses and of what their activities consist in. Aristotle acknowledged that any attempt to divide the soul into discrete powers was fraught with anomalies\(^7\)--anomalies, moreover, that he apparently felt were unresolvable since, in four separate texts, he analyzed the powers of the soul into four different classifications.\(^8\) As a consequence, he presents divisions that are clearly intended to be regarded not as real divisions, but only as convenient intellectual distinctions dependent on the point of view from which the soul is regarded, rather than on the actual separability of its faculties.\(^9\)

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle made a distinction between two parts of the human psyche: the rational, that part capable of reason, and the irrational, that part

\(^7\)DA 432a23-b5.

\(^8\)DA 413b13, 414a32, 432a22-b5; NE 1102a30-b32.

composed of the vegetative faculty, which causes nutrition and growth, and of the appetitive faculty, which is the seat of desire. The vegetative part of man's psyche is not unique to man since he shares its function with all other living beings; and so it is, as a result, totally a function of the irrational psyche. The appetitive faculty, on the other hand, bridges the gap between the rational and the irrational parts of the psyche because it belongs to the irrational part while, at the same time, it admits of control by man's innate rational principle; consequently, although man shares the possession of an appetitive faculty with other animals, it functions in him in a unique manner.

The materials from which ethical choices spring (i.e., the pursuit of what is perceived as good and the avoidance of what is perceived as evil) are the activities of the appetitive faculty; because Aristotle regarded the soul from that perspective in the Nicomachean Ethics, in it he counted the appetitive faculty as one of the soul's major divisions. In De Anima, however, where his view was broader,

10 NE 1102a30, 1102a34-1102b1, 1102b32.

he included appetition as but one of three (with perception and movement) intrinsically related powers of the sensitive part of the soul. As with all of Aristotle's analyses of the parts of the soul, a fundamental assumption of the analysis in De Anima is that a given faculty can be understood rightly only with reference to the whole. The placing of desire within a triad of powers points to the fundamental role that perception plays in the genesis of desire and the potential inherent in desire that evolves into movement. The following of desire upon perception is as much a matter of course as natural desire's accompaniment of natural form: just as the form of a seed has inextricably joined with it a natural drive that impels the seed to grow, so perception has inextricably joined with it a desire that impels its subject toward movement. The union of natural drive with natural form and of desire with perception is such because the actuality of the latter member of each of the pairs is the potentiality of its

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13 Wallace, p. liv.

14 Brentano, p. 69.
complement: the actuality of perception possesses within it the potential of desire, just as the actual form of an ungerminated seed possesses within it the potential of the drive that will impel it to grow. The actual essence of desire and that of perception are, of course, different, but the same capacity— that which allows an organism to be acted on by the form alone of material objects— gives rise to both. \(^{15}\) Wherever perception is found, desire is surely to be found as well; \(^{16}\) as a consequence, whenever appetition is spoken of, perception is presumed.

The parts of the soul animate the human organism each with its characteristic activities, and in the natural scope of the exercise of the activities of each, interactions with appropriate objects are generated that are similarly characteristic of their source. From the vegetative part of the soul spring the purely material reactions with material objects that are necessary to the perfection and the preservation of an organism and its species: the processes of nutrition, growth, and procreation. The characteristic manner in which vegetative processes

\(^{15}\text{DA 431a13.} \quad ^{16}\text{DA 413b23.}\)
operate is a physical absorption and an assimilation that occur on account of the material nature of the objects (or their constituents) on which such processes operate: a plant, for example, takes in molecules of carbon dioxide and water and from their component carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen constructs carbohydrates. The activity of the vegetative principle operates, consequently, because of the existence of a material likeness between the organism and the object to which that part of the soul's activity is directed.

The sensitive part of the soul also directs certain activities of the human organism in which man comes into contact with material objects, but the sensitive principle causes such objects to be assimilated in an immaterial rather than a material manner. Unlike the vegetative principle, the sensitive part of the soul concerns itself with matter only insofar as the latter possesses the form of a sensible quality: the eye, for example, takes in the blueness of the sky and that of a lake without regard for the fact that the chemical composition and constitution of the two, especially as atmospheres for life, are utterly different; vegetative activity, on the other hand, causes water and air to be taken in and put to use by the body
solely on the basis of the chemical composition and constitution that goes unnoticed by sensitive activity. Like the vegetative part of the soul, however, the sensitive part also functions because a likeness exists between the sensitive activity of the human organism and the objects to which it reacts. The likeness between the two resides, on one hand, in a form possessed by an object that is capable of being transferred to human consciousness and, on the other hand, in the matterless form of a sensory representation, as which the object's form is transferred to consciousness; Aristotle compared such a transfer of form to the way in which the shape of a signet ring is impressed upon wax without any transfer of the ring's matter.¹⁷

The rational soul generates those activities of the human organism by which man is made capable of grasping immaterial objects in an immaterial manner. Both the sensitive and the vegetative principles interact with objects only insofar as the latter are particular and concrete; the rational principle, however, allows man to grasp the abstract nature of a thing, the essential formula

¹⁷DA 424a18-20.
by which the thing is known and understood. From such essential formulas are also derived the universal ideas by which a rational being is able to bring past experience to bear on present action, and to anticipate in present action future consequences.\textsuperscript{18} The abstract nature that the rational part of the soul is conscious of in a phenomenon is, like a sensory representation, a matterless form; but a universal idea as such cannot be embodied in matter as the sensible form that a sensory representation represents can and must be; furthermore, the essential formula of a thing is not the result of the rational principle's conforming itself to its object, but of reason discovering itself in its object.\textsuperscript{19} An abstract idea does not by its own action impress itself on reason as a sensible form does on the sensible part of the soul: to the extent that a sensible form is that by which something is sensible, its cause and origin is physical; to the extent that an abstract idea is a formula by which something is intelligible, although such an idea is contained within the vehicle of a sense object, its cause and origin is reason.\textsuperscript{20} For those

\textsuperscript{18}Wallace, pp. cxvii, cxix.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. c.

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., pp. cxiii-cxiv.
reasons, Aristotle compared the cognition of the senses and that of reason to a line that is straight in one instance, bent back upon itself in the other: the senses know their objects (the sensible forms determined by the physical properties of things) directly and immediately; reason, on the other hand, not only apprehends in one of its aspects the forms and categories of existence, but it also in its other aspect as the constitutive form that determines such forms and categories maintains the intelligible world for experience to operate on. The intelligible world that thus resides in external objects is present potentially in the world of thought that resides in the rational part of the soul, but it is present, in its potential state, only as mere forms without the actual experience that will give those forms reality. The likeness that allows reason in its passive aspect to grasp an external object is, then, an idea made manifest in the object through the activity of creative reason; through such ideas, reason makes objects

\(^{21}\)DA 429b16-18. \(^{22}\)Wallace, p. cxiv. \(^{23}\)Ibid., p. xcviii. 

\(^{24}\)DA 429a28-30; Wallace, p. cii.
intelligible as light makes objects visible,\textsuperscript{25} and solely by means of them can rational experience be acquired.\textsuperscript{26}

The differences in the proper objects of the sensitive and the rational parts of the soul (i.e., those in the likeness of which they participate) account for the ability, noted earlier, of the appetitive faculty to bridge the gap between the rational and the irrational principles within the soul. No gap, of course, really exists between the parts of the soul since outside of theory they constitute a single entity; but once separated in theory, such a connection exists only between the parts of the soul as actualities: their respective activities alone—not their potential for those activities—are connected. The activity that the sensitive and the rational principles each exercise because of the likeness of each to its proper object is the characteristic apprehension of such objects; as a consequence, whatever connection exists between sensitive and rational apprehension exists because the proper objects that sense and reason apprehend are predicated of a single

\textsuperscript{25}DA 430a15-17.

\textsuperscript{26}Wallace, p. civ.
entity. The proper object of the sensitive part of the soul is related to that of the rational (and the parts, for that matter, are themselves related in the same way) as the concrete is to the abstract, or as an immediate phenomenon is related to its essential nature. The rational and the irrational parts of the soul are joined by means of the appetitive faculty, consequently, because the objects they comprehend are simply two different aspects of the same object, either of which may make the object deserving of pursuit of avoidance.

The Nature of Perception

The appetitive faculty opens the sensitive part of the soul to control by the rational principle, on one hand,

27Ibid., p. xcix.
28Ibid., p. c.
29The vegetative part of the soul may also find a proper object in some aspect of the same entity and, through its drive for that object, interact with the other parts of the soul. A person, for example, often desires the taste of what he needs physically; in such a case, the sensitive representation is another manifestation of a biological need. But, although reason can control the desire caused by the sensitive representation, it cannot control the biological need. The rational principle's control over the irrational part of the soul is not absolute: reason can exercise control over the sensitive principle, but not over the vegetative.
because desire is the material of ethical choice, and, on the other, because the material of desire is perception. Perception is that aspect of the sensitive soul in virtue of which human consciousness possesses the potential to take in the sensible forms of objects. Potentiality, according to Aristotle, can mean either the sort of potentiality that inheres in an entity because of the class to which it belongs (for example, the potential that man has for knowledge because he belongs to a class of beings capable of learning), or the sort of potentiality that inheres in an entity when it actually possesses an attribute but is not in the circumstances in which that attribute is manifested (the potential that a person has, for example, when he possesses knowledge of specific facts, but is not actually exercising that knowledge). Perception is the latter type of potentiality: a person does not have to acquire it, as he does knowledge, because he is born in possession of the ability to perceive; yet, it remains a potentiality to the extent that he does not continually exercise it. Even after making such a subtle distinction in the nature

\[^{30}DA\ 417a22-b2.\]
of the potentiality of perception, however, Aristotle used the equivalent of 'perceiving' (to aisthanesthai*) rather than the term for 'perception' (aisthesis*), because his focus is the actuality of the soul, its activities rather than its faculties.31

Aristotle classified perceiving as an affection (pathos*), a term that designates, among other things, either a type of quality possessed by an entity in virtue of which an alteration in the entity is possible, or such an alteration already realized.32 Sentience is one quality in virtue of which a change in an organism is possible, perceiving, such a change already realized; the potentiality for both affections is, however, the result of the organism's possessing the power of perception. The circumstances of perception are, thus, paradoxical: an organism must possess a power in order to be acted on. That paradox, as will be seen, is explained—or at least accounted for—by the equally paradoxical nature of the change that occurs.

31F. Woodbridge, p. 116.

32Meta. 1022b15-19.
during an act of perception: a change that is both a passive reaction and an active response.

The ability to perceive is born of the fact that sentient beings possess certain physical qualities that may be changed by contact with certain physical objects and processes of the external world: a hand, for instance, when it comes into contact with something that is hotter or colder than itself is changed thereby, and such a change, according to Aristotle, is the basis of perception. The activity of perceiving is, thus, a process in which an organism is moved or affected by an external object; the latter object is, moreover, the active principle of perception, and apart from it the sensitive principle cannot operate. (Man, consequently, does not have the same freedom to exercise his sensitive principle as he has to exercise his rational faculty.)

The mere action of an external object on an organism does not alone, however, account for perception. If it did, plants as well as animals would be sentient since they, too, are acted on by

33 DA 424a1-6. 34 Wallace, p. lvi.
35 Brentano, p. 66. 36 DA 417b14.
heat and cold, light and darkness. But plants and all other sentient beings are acted on without responding with perception because they do not possess the power of perception, the ability to be affected by the form of an object without being affected by its matter. The first principle of such a power, according to Aristotle, is the possession of a mean:

For perception is a form of being acted upon. Hence that which an object makes actually like itself is potentially such already. This is why we have no sensation of what is as hot, cold, hard, or soft as we are, but only of what is more so, which implies that the sense is a sort of mean between the relevant sensible extremes. That is how it can discern sensible objects. It is the mean that has the power of discernment; for it becomes an extreme in relation to each of the extremes in turn.  

Two aspects of perception can, consequently, be identified: sensation, the ability to receive the form of an object without the accompanying matter; and sensitivity, the ratio of the mean possessed by a sense to the sensible extreme embodied in an object. While the functions of sensation and sensitivity are part of common experience, Aristotle's

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38 DA 424a27-28.
explanation of their relationship—his making the mean the principle of perception's apprehension of form—is understandable only in terms of Empedoclean physics. The elemental constitution of every physical object (the tissues of the body included) was regarded as a certain ratio of air, earth, fire, and water. Such a ratio was the equivalent of form, and form, in the case of an organ, is the equivalent of faculty. According to Aristotle's understanding of physics, certain organs possessed by sentient beings are capable of sensation (apprehending form without matter), first, because the ratio of the elements in each is a mean (a finger feels heat and cold, for example, because its constitution gives it a certain temperature that is between the extremes it is ultimately capable of perceiving); and, second, because the same ratio constitutes each as a faculty by creating in each the peculiar ability to vary between those extremes.\(^{39}\)

Aristotle observed that perception (i.e., the consciousness of sensation) does not itself reside in the individual organs of sense.\(^{40}\) Both sensation (the

\(^{39}\)Hicks, p. 11.

\(^{40}\)DA 431a19-20; DSen. 449a9-11; Brentano, p. 59, n. 35.
apprehension of form) and sensitivity (the mean), on the other hand, clearly must reside in them since the experiencing of certain sensible extremes can cause pain or even injury to a sense organ without causing damage to the brain. The sensitive faculty is thus distinguished from both the vegetative and the rational faculties in being a logos enhylos,* a form mixed with matter. unlike the vegetative faculty, it apprehends form without matter, but unlike the rational, such an apprehension is an essentially physical activity. Perception is not, as a consequence, simply the effect that the action of certain physical phenomena has on sentient beings; perception is, rather, a relationship between a sensible object and a sense organ. Non-sentient beings lack perception not because they are not acted on by or do not react to sensible objects (plants, for example, both are acted on by and react to light); rather they are unable to perceive because they lack the body and the soul for it: they lack the physical configuration that accompanies the capacity to apprehend the form

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41 Pan 424a29-35.

42 Brentano, p. 65.
of a sensible object without its accompanying matter, just as a spoon lacks the physical configuration that accompanies the power of cutting. What ultimately distinguishes perceiving from the activities of the vegetative and the rational principles is not that it is either a type of consciousness or a physical response alone, but that it is both: a type of consciousness (a physical event) permitted by a certain disposition of the soul and equally and fully, in Aristotle's view, a physical response permitted by the special nature (the form of the physical constitution) of an organ of sense.

Although perception is essentially mechanical in Aristotle's view, it is not wholly or even primarily so. The sense organs and the potentiality for receiving impressions are identified with each other to the extent that a sense organ is that in which potentiality for receiving impressions lies, but they are not in essence the same; simply put, the mechanism of perception is not the same thing as perception. The changes that affections permit fall into two categories: one marked by the

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43DA 424a26. 44F. Woodbridge, p. 132.
destruction of a form by its contrary (as in the discoloration that takes place in the flesh of an apple when exposed to the air), the other by the preservation of a potential form by something actual that is like the form and that brings it from potentiality into actuality (as in the change of the skin of an apple from green to red as it ripens). 45

The change in the first example, is clearly the result of decay; in the second, the change is the result of the activity of the apple in response to its environment, according to the form specified in its genes. Although an apple cannot ripen without the action of the sun, the sun is a causal factor without being a determining one; it is an efficient rather than a formal cause. Ripening is not a change imposed by the sun on an apple against the latter's nature, but a change that completes the apple's form. Although both are necessary, the agency of the sun is clearly secondary to the form of the apple (which, embodied in the genetic material of the tree, pre-existed the apple itself) in determining the nature of actual change.

45 DA 417b2-5; Wallace, p. 11x; Brentano, p. 54.
A perception is an affection of the same sort as the ripening of an apple; although each element in the example above cannot be equated with a corresponding element in a case of perception, the overall process can be. In both cases, the potentiality of the affected entity becomes actualized—the affected entity exercises its activity—in its being acted upon; the passive affection involved in perception is, thus, the equivalent of active energy.

The conditions of perception (the external object and the physical circumstances that are essential to perceiving) do not, as a consequence, constitute the process of perception despite the active role that they play; they are not so much a condition, in fact, as an occasion of perception: they merely give man a chance to perceive, and in perception he avails himself of the opportunity. So, even though perception occurs in response to the presence of an external object, it is neither a mere reflex action, nor the operation of an external object on a perceiving organ.

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48 Wallace, p. lix; F. Woodbridge, pp. 43-44.
49 Wallace, p. lix. 50 F. Woodbridge, p. 41.
Perception is the energizing of the soul's power in response to certain circumstances that are the conditions of perception;\textsuperscript{51} it is, to the extent that the presence of a perceptible object is involved, the actualization of such an object in a perceiving subject;\textsuperscript{52} on the other hand, to the extent that perception involves an internal faculty, it is the realization of the latter in response to its proper object.\textsuperscript{53} Perception is primarily something internal and immanent that is only called into action by an external object.\textsuperscript{54} So it does not involve merely a change in an outward organ, but a movement of the mind through the body.\textsuperscript{55} Man perceives, as a consequence, not just because he has undergone a change, but because that change exists in him as a cognized object.\textsuperscript{56}

Perception does not occur continuously, nor, when it occurs, does it take place instantaneously upon a sense organ's contact with a field of perception. Perception comes to be in its fullest sense when the power of the sensitive soul passes first from an ability to perceive

\textsuperscript{51}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 42.  \textsuperscript{52}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 41.  \textsuperscript{53}Wallace, p. lix.
\textsuperscript{54}\textit{Ibid.}  \textsuperscript{55}\textit{Ibid.}, p. lxxv.  \textsuperscript{56}Brentano, p. 54.
(dynamis*) to such an ability in operation (energeia*), and then from active operation to a state of completion (entelecheia*) in which the ability, its exercise, and its result appear together. Just as, even when a person is not actively exercising his power of persuasion, it remains in him in the form of a capacity (dynamis) to contrive and put forward a series of statements with the intent of convincing someone of something, perception exists at times only as the ability to receive the forms of sensible objects. When a person is in the process of presenting an argument, his power of persuasion passes to a state of actuality (energeia) since it is, at such a point, in operation. Yet, if he were to stop in the middle of his argument, despite the fact that his power of persuasion had existed in actuality (i.e., had been in operation), he would not have completed his persuading—nor, consequently, have fully exercised his power of persuasion—either in act or in effect. Even though an entity such as persuading or perceiving, whose essence is an activity, is characterized by its operation, such an entity in operation is,

57 F. Woodbridge, pp. 127, 32-36; see also Hett, pp. xi-xii.
nonetheless, distinct from the same entity having fully operated: the actuality of the process of persuasion is different from the fully realized act of persuasion. That difference is precisely what separates energeia from entelecheia. The energeia of perception is, however, especially difficult to grasp because no experience by which it may be comprehended is accessible: perception is a state of consciousness, but it is only fully realized (experienced) as such at the point at which the process of perception is fully realized (completed), i.e., at the point at which the process of perception passes to a state of entelecheia; thus, energeia, even though translated as 'actuality,' is by definition, in the case of perception, a pre-conscious state. When perception exists in actual operation, it consists, as noted before, not only in a passive reaction, not only in being acted on by the form of a sensible object, but also in an active response, in impressing such a form on the sensible object. So, just as the power to persuade is fully realized only by the drawing of a conclusion at the end of an argument, i.e., by

58 Wallace, p. lviii.
nothing more than making explicit the relationship that already exists implicitly among the facts that have been stated, the operation of perception perfects its ability only by both receiving from and imposing on a sensible object the form without which that object could not otherwise by consciously perceived; that is, the operation of perception is completed by an explicit (conscious) recognition of the form that has existed implicitly in an object from the beginning, and by virtue of which form a specific sense organ has been affected in the first place.

Although little distinction was made in Aristotle's time between sensation (the electrical impulses produced by the excitation of a sense organ) and perception (the filtered and arranged pattern of impulses recognized as a whole in the consciousness)^{59} the difference between the roles they play in constituting conscious sentience was nonetheless recognized. According to Aristotle's theory, sensation is the activity of the particular senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell) which consists in their individual apprehension of the sensible qualities of an object rather than a consciousness of such an object as a specific sense organ.

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^{59}Hicks, p. xlvii.
whole. Each of the senses has its own proper class of objects: each such object, which is a particular property of a perceived thing, is the origin of an alteration in its uniquely corresponding sense and, consequently, determines the nature of that sense; a proper object, moreover, is a property that the appropriate sense can alone perceive and about which the latter cannot be mistaken. If an eye senses redness, then redness must be present; an error about such redness can be made only when it is predicated of something, and such a predication is part, not of the act of sensation, but of the act of perception. A person may be wrong, then, in that he ascribes the redness to a flash of light when in reality the external cause (external insofar as it is not the sensation itself), is disease or a momentary malfunctioning of the eye; but, whatever the case, the redness—the sensation—must be present to the organ that has sensed it. Sensation cannot be wrong,

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60 Brentano, p. 56.

61 DA 418a12; Wallace, p. liii; Hicks, p. liii; Brentano, p. 57.


63 See DA 428b11-429a9.
because it apprehends its object implicitly as a universal; that is, a sense organ is affected not by its object's identity, but by a certain quality possessed by the object in virtue of its form. When a person looks at an apple, his eye senses redness not because the apple possesses a particular identity, but because it possesses, as an accident of its particular identity, the sensible form called redness. Sensation cannot be wrong, consequently, because, insofar as a universal is the same wherever it appears, a sensible form present in a sense organ as a sensation is identical with the sensible form present in its object.

Perception differs from sensation first in that it consists not merely in the reports of the particular senses, but in such reports held before the mind. Aristotle observed that, "it is not by sight that one is aware that one sees;" consciousness of a sensation is not simply the result of the activity of the particular

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64 DA 424a22; Wallace, p. lxii.
65 DA 425b26; Hicks, p. xlviii.
66 Wallace, pp. lxxi-lxxii.
67 DSom. 455a18.
sense that accounts for that sensation in the first place. The simple activity of the particular senses fails, in fact, to account for a number of things: it fails to account for the perception of common 'sensibles' (*koina aistheta*) (motion, number, shape, and magnitude), which cannot be called proper to any one of the particular senses; it fails to account for the ability to distinguish between the sensations of the various senses (to distinguish, for example, that one thing is white while another is sweet, which neither sight nor taste alone can do); and it fails to account for the ability to judge which sensations are accurate and which are not, which are real and which are not. To explain not only such perceptions, but perception in general, Aristotle posited a central sense (*koinon aistheterion*), a single faculty that is a necessary concomitant of the particular senses individually and that performs a unifying function for them.

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68 Da 425a14-17; Wallace, p. lxxviii; Hicks, p. lii; Hammond, p. liv.

69 Da 426b18-19; Wallace, p. lxxvi.

70 Hammond, p. liv.

71 DSen. 449a3-20; Da 425b27, 426b18-20; Wallace, p. lxxv; Hammond, p. lii.
collectively.\textsuperscript{72} The central sense is not, however, an entity separate from the particular senses, but the basis of the entire perceptive faculty.\textsuperscript{73} Just as the soul may be broken into theoretically different parts in order to distinguish its various functions more easily, the sensitive faculty may be analyzed for the same reason. But neither such an analysis nor the understanding of the parts that derives from it explains the sensitive faculty completely.\textsuperscript{74} The sensitive faculty is, as the soul is, a single entity, whose higher functions occur in virtue of its unity rather than because of its multiplicity.\textsuperscript{75} The central sense is Aristotle's acknowledgement that the sensitive faculty is, as a whole, more than the sum of its parts.\textsuperscript{76}

Perception differs from sensation further in that it consists not only in the sense reports of the particular senses held before the mind, but also in such reports held before the mind as a particular identity\textsuperscript{77} (i.e., as form

\textsuperscript{72}\textit{Dsen.} 449a8-10; Wallace, p. lxxx.
\textsuperscript{73}Wallace, p. lxxxi. \textsuperscript{74}Hicks, p. lii.
\textsuperscript{75}\textit{Tbid.} \textsuperscript{76}\textit{Tbid.}
\textsuperscript{77}Hammond, pp. lii-liii.
inhering in particular matter). Every particular object is made up of several sensible forms that belong to it in virtue of its nature as a concrete entity; an apple, for example, has a certain color, taste, smell, hardness, and so on. But because each such formal quality is proper to and affects not more than one of the particular senses, the particular senses' reports of such qualities can be brought together for knowledge and seen to inhere in a single entity only through the unifying function of the central sense. Under such circumstances, however, the central sense again acts as more than the sum of its parts. To merely combine reports of the formal qualities of an apple, for example, would result only in a perception of 'appleness,' in a perception of a number of formal qualities that constitute not an apple, but the sort of thing an apple is; on the contrary, however, although Aristotle failed to explain how

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78 Hett, p. xii.

79 The nature of a thing is synonymous with its form, according to Aristotle. Such a form is not, as it is regarded by Plato, primarily an idea. It is, rather, the real being of a thing existing primarily in the particular object and only secondarily in the mind as an idea or a universal. See pages 148-154 for a further discussion of this point.

80 Hammond, p. liii.
such a transition takes place, the synthesis of such formal qualities, because it takes place through the activity of the central sense, results in the perception, not of a universal, but of a particular thing.

Any modern examination of the distinctions that Aristotle made between sensation and perception (or of any other aspect of his psychological theory) is inevitably colored to some degree by modern conceptions of such subjects, because modern conceptions are, unless explicitly discounted, quite naturally taken as implicit assumptions by a modern reader; an articulation of such conceptions is called for, as a consequence, as a way of marking them as post-Aristotelian. The distinction between sensation and perception was itself first articulated only in the Eighteenth Century by Thomas Reid. Concepts of perception have, over the past four centuries, centered on three basic theories: the Representative Theory, which states that,

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81Wallace, p. lviii.
82DeSen. 449a6-10; Hammond, p. liii.
84Psychological Idealism, the Two-world Theory, and the neurological Sense-datum Theory are all variations of the Representative Theory.
in perception, a person is directly aware only of a representation, which is distinct from the external physical object that the person thinks he perceives, but which is, under normal circumstances, generated by the brain in response to the stimulation of a sense organ by the presence of such an external physical object; Phenomenalism, which states that a person perceives only what he thinks is present, i.e., that behind the representation that he is directly aware of no external physical cause exists; and the Common-sense Theory, which states that perceiving is, just as it appears, a simple and straightforward relation between the perceiver and the object perceived.

Aristotle's psychology is free from such notions of perception, however, (even the Common-sense Theory, because it presumes the other two) because he saw no distinction, in a properly functioning act of perception, between an object and a person's consciousness of it. Yet Aristotle's

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85 Solipsism and Berkianism are closely related to Phenomenalism.

86 The Common-sense Theory is closely allied with the philosophical Sense-datum Theory.

87 Wyburn, Pickford, and Hirst, pp. 249, 258, 281.

88 F. Woodbridge, p. 133.
perspective cannot be dismissed as naive realism.\textsuperscript{89} He concluded rather than assumed that a difference exists between an object and the perception of it;\textsuperscript{90} that a sensible object, even when not perceived, remains the cause of perception;\textsuperscript{91} and that such an object is more permanent than the perception that may reveal its existence.\textsuperscript{92}

Perception, in Aristotle's view, is essentially objective cognition;\textsuperscript{93} his psychology is, as a consequence, free from modern epistemological questions such as to what extent man may derive knowledge from what he perceives.\textsuperscript{94} Nonetheless, he is not ignorant of such concerns;\textsuperscript{95} his analysis, however,

attempts to get back of these questions, and having done so, finds that the questions either have no meaning or are questions, not about perception, but about the physical world. For example: The fact that we sometimes see two moons and sometimes one is never explained by perception, but only by the fact that we have two eyes.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{89}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 136. \textsuperscript{90}\textit{DA} 425b26–426a2.

\textsuperscript{91}\textit{DA} 426a21–27; Hicks, p. xlix.

\textsuperscript{92}\textit{Cat.} 7b37; Wallace, p. lx.

\textsuperscript{93}Hicks, p. xlvii. \textsuperscript{94}F. Woodbridge, p. 48.

\textsuperscript{95}See \textit{DA} 418a7–26, 427a17–b28; \textit{DSen.} 446b17–26.

\textsuperscript{96}F. Woodbridge, p. 137.
Aristotle's theory does not set the content of an actual perception against a field of potentially perceptible objects; it distinguishes between an external physical object and the potential perception of such an object not as two fields, but as a field and a power that can act in conformity with that field. The faculty of perception in action is seen, as a consequence, as nothing more than the field of perception realized as such.

The Nature of Pleasure and Pain

Movements of pursuit or avoidance, which are together the source of ethical choice, are necessarily dependent on sensation: a person must, at the very least, sense the existence of something before he can be moved to pursue or to avoid it. Neither sensation nor perception by itself is enough, however, to account for movements of pursuit or avoidance, because even perception is not invariably accompanied by a tendency to spontaneous action; a person can perceive food, for example, without being moved to eat it if he happens not to be hungry. The generation of

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97 Ibid., p. 136. 98 Ibid., p. 133. 99 Ibid.
100 Wallace, p. cxx.
movements of pursuit and avoidance requires, in addition to perception, desire, a seeking to pursue or to avoid. Action does not invariably follow upon perception, then, because perception is not always accompanied by desire; desire is possible only because perception may be accompanied by pleasure or pain, or by the memory or the expectation of pleasure or pain. Sensation, nonetheless, remains the ultimate ground of action and, hence, of moral choice: "where sensation is," Aristotle said, "there is also pain and pleasure, and where these are there must also be desire."  

Aristotle defined pleasure as the unimpeded activity of "our natural state," i.e., of one of the sensitive or intellectual faculties of the human soul; pain is, conversely, the result of a thwarted or constrained activity of such a faculty. When the operation of a faculty is unimpeded, its activity is most perfect because "the sense-organ being in the best condition is directed to the best of its objects." Those objects are best that

102DA 413b23. 103NE 1153a13-15.
104Wallace, p. cxviii. 105NE 1174b19.
present to a given sense a harmony (or a mean ratio) of the qualities proper to the sense.106 Pleasure and pain are, moreover, a sort of assertion and negation: "to feel pleasure or pain is to adopt an attitude with the sensitive mean towards good or bad as such."107 The sensation of pleasure or pain involves, in other words, not merely the sensing of a good object, but the recognition of its goodness as well; to get too much sun on the beach is to know that the sensitive mean adopts quite different attitudes towards the direct effects of the sun and those that follow. Such an act of recognition is perceptual more than sensitive and takes place, consequently, in the central sense rather than in the sense organs. The act of recognition that is part of the sensation of pleasure or pain also makes such sensations, according to Aristotle, analogous to thought:108 pleasure and pain constitute the forms in which the sensitive capacity comes, in a sense, to conclusions about the goodness or badness of the nature of sensible things.

H. H. Joachim has attempted to summarize Aristotle's explanation of pleasure and pain by equating pleasure with

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a sense of a good object as good and pain with that of a bad object as bad. Joachim's phraseology, unfortunately, makes his explanation ambiguous. A person can have a sense of the goodness of an object without actually experiencing that goodness; in such a case he cannot feel pleasure, only at best the anticipation of pleasure, and at worst the pain of frustration. Pleasure is, consequently, the actual experience of the perceived goodness of a good object; without actual experience, perceived goodness is the material of desire rather than pleasure.

Desire cannot be elicited by the present experience of pleasure or pain because a person cannot, in any sense, seek something that he already possesses (although he may seek to possess more of it), nor can he seek to avoid something that is already occurring (although he may seek to avoid what is still to come). Desire is, thus, the result not of a person's present experience of pleasure or pain, but of his perception of the potential that a given set of circumstances may have for one or the other. The formation of desire, furthermore, is not contingent upon a person's

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knowing (or deluding himself) that a potential can be actualized: nothing prevents a person from wanting to be Pope even though she knows her election is highly improbable. A person's perception of potential pleasure or pain derives not from his direct sensation of such potential (since, by virtue of the fact that something potential is not actually present, potentiality can only be inferred), but from remembering, imagining, or reasoning that pleasure or pain is likely under given circumstances.\textsuperscript{110}

\textbf{The Nature of the Imagination}

Remembering, imagining, and reasoning are governed, insofar as the perception of the potential for pleasure or pain is concerned, by the \textit{phantasia},\textsuperscript{*} which, although the word is translated simply by 'imagination,' Aristotle conceived of as a faculty whose powers are much more extensive than those attributed to the imagination as it is thought of today. Like sensation, imagination exists because of the soul's power to be affected by sensible

\textsuperscript{110}Even a biological need, such as thirst, is ultimately transformed through memory, imagination, or reason into a desire for a specific thing: whatever a person finally drinks, he drinks only because he first thinks it capable of slaking his thirst.
forms. In fact, an image (phantasma*) of the imagination is in itself the same as the representation of a sense perception; they differ only in that the representation that marks the perception of a sensation is an impression of something present, while an image of the imagination results from the persistence of a sense perception after the actual cause of the sensation has ceased to affect the faculty of perception. A phantasma is, consequently, the residuum of a sensation. Such a residuum accompanies every sensation and continues to be propagated unless it is inhibited by a subsequent sensation; it grows gradually weaker, however, like the ripples that spread out from the point where a stone has been dropped into a pool of still water. The distinctions that exist between a phantasma and the representation of an immediate sensation derive from the fact that imagination, unlike sensation, originates in the central sense rather than in the sense organs; although sensation is a prerequisite of imagination, imagination is

113 Hammond, p. lvii. 114 Ibid., p. lvi.
free from the operation of the sense organs themselves. In imagination's freedom from the operation of the sense organs lies its primary importance. Without it, the mind would be "only the ever-shifting scene of kaleidoscopic sense-impressions which, once gone, could never be revived." With it, on the other hand, a person can compare the past with the present, and the present with the future; he has, consequently, the power to discover the causes of things, and, because of that, the ability to act purposefully.

An element essential to such a power is memory, which is the result of the imagination's presentation of images to the consciousness as that activity is exercised in concert with a perception of time. Although any mental picture presented to the consciousness, whether a representation of sense or an image of the imagination, may be regarded merely in itself, some images of the imagination are likely to be recognized as copies of things that are no longer present; such recognition is the function of memory. Because the images of memory are like sensations, they themselves can cause pleasure or pain. Nonetheless,

117Ibid., p. 110, n.1. 118Ibid., p. 1vii. 119Hicks, p. lv. 120Ibid., p. lvii. 121Rhet. 1370a31-33.
because the images of the imagination are weaker than actual
sensations, such memories always possess the potential
to be the source of desire: in the very act of recognizing
that an image is a copy of a past sensation, a person
cannot help but realize that the actual experience was more
affecting than the memory (a person who is thirsty is not
satisfied simply by remembering that water once quenched
his thirst; nor is a dethroned monarch necessarily satisfied
simply by remembering his past glory; and, certainly, a
person who avoids the pain of thinking about an embarrassing
experience does not thereby avoid another embarrassing
experience). Such a realization of its nature possesses
the potential to move a person to desire to pursue or to
avoid whatever similar experience he may possess the power
to bring about or to prevent. Man's ability to act purposefully derives, however, not from the faculty of memory that
Aristotle identified as mneme, the ability to merely
recognize an image as a copy of a past sensation, a power
that all animals possess, but from anamnesis, or
recollection, the capacity to consciously and

122 Rhet. 1370a28.
deliberately reproduce such images, which belongs to man alone. 123

Thoughts as well as sense perceptions can be retained in human memory because thoughts, although they are intelligible forms, can be apprehended by reason only if they reside in sensible forms:

since apparently nothing has a separate existence, except sensible magnitudes, the objects of thought—both of the so-called abstractions of mathematics and all states and affections of sensible things—reside in the sensible forms. And for this reason as no one could ever learn or understand anything without the exercise of perception, so even when we think speculatively, we must have some mental picture of which to think; for mental images are similar to objects perceived except that they are without matter. 124

The creation of such mental images necessitates the operation of the imagination: through that aspect known as the "generalizing imagination" 125 the pictures of perceived things become generalized conceptions of objects that schematize the abstractions of thought. 126 The ability of the imagination to produce both the images of sensation and the ideas of thought is accounted for by dividing it

124 DA 432a3-11. 125 Wallace, p. xciii.
126 DA 403a8, 431a16; Hammond, p. lxiii.
accordingly: when it propagates images after sensation
(which operation also accounts for the residual images of
both memory and recollection), it takes its receptive form,
the phantasia aisthetike,* when it acts as the prerequisite
of reasoning, as the free and intuitive power that results
in the logical construction of the general notions that
serve as the images of conceptual thought, it takes its
productive form, the phantasia logistique.** Imagination,
consequently, takes part in the nature of both thought and
sensation: like thought, it is a subjective, internal
activity, while like sensation, it is a passive receiver
of images from the external world.***

The ability of imagination to function in response to
both sensation and reason is one of the cruxes of the
mechanics of moral action. Voluntary movement can occur
only if a desire to pursue or to avoid something has
occurred, and only something that has been recognized as
good or bad can elicit such desire. Every form of
cognition—a sense perception, a memory or a recollection

**\(^{127}\)DA 433b29; Hammond, p. lix-lxi, p. lxi, n. 1.

***\(^{128}\)Hammond, p. lvii.
of a past perception, a notion freely invented in the
imagination, or an idea grasped by reason—ultimately draws
its material from, and so depends on, the reception of
sensible forms. Yet such diverse forms of cognition exist
because each of the cognizing faculties of the soul perceives
an object according to the dictates of its function; it
recognizes goodness or badness in an object according to
the same dictates. The sensitive capacity's recognition
of the goodness or badness in a representation of a direct
sensation thus takes the form of physical pleasure or
pain; although reason requires sensible forms for its
operation, the representations of sense perception are not,
unfortunately, directly accessible to reason, nor can reason
experience physical pleasure and pain as such. Moral action
is possible, however, only to the extent to which a person
can bring his power of self-movement, whatever its source,
under the guidance of his intellectual capacity; thus, moral
action requires the existence of some common ground on
which reason and sensation can meet on equal terms. To the
extent that images, which take the place of direct perception
for the intellect,\textsuperscript{129} are the same in essence as the

\textsuperscript{129}DA 431a15.
representations of sense-perception, the imagination serves as such a common ground; it performs the task of translating the ideas of thought into a form compatible with sense perceptions\(^1\) and thereby opens the motive power of the sensitive capacity to the control of the rational.

**The Nature of Reason**

In spite of the fact that mental images, products of the sensitive capacity, are the sole means by which reason may exercise control over movement; in spite of the fact that such images are the sole terms in which reason can conceive of the future consequences of an action and so judge whether to act or not to act in the present; and in spite of the fact that such images are the sole objects upon which reason can exercise its powers, the existence of reason is not dependent on the existence of such images, nor on the sensitive capacity, from which they spring, nor is its operation determined either by such images or by the sensitive capacity. Reason relies on the sensitive capacity only to the extent that the latter provides it with the material on which it operates. Upon such material,

\(^{1}\)Hammond, p. lxiii.
however, reason imposes its own form, and from such material, it creates its own world in terms of itself.\textsuperscript{131}

Aristotle adopted empiricism, according to Hammond, as a middle way between the extreme sensualism of the Sophists and the extreme rationalism of Plato.\textsuperscript{132} Empiricism holds that, while sense perception is the basis of all knowledge, knowledge is a created content distilled from such perception by an act of reason;\textsuperscript{133} as a consequence, "thought and sense-perception are neither identical nor are they to be completely sundered."\textsuperscript{134} So, at the same time a person perceives an apple through his senses, he can conceive of it as an apple in his mind: potential and immanent in a concrete, sensible apple is a form, 'apple,' which is accessible to reason.\textsuperscript{135} Every sensible object, because of the form potential and immanent in it, possesses objective reality: that is, it possesses an intelligible content whether or not anyone is actually comprehending it. Actual comprehension occurs, however, only when reason gains access to the sensible forms of a given object that constitute the

\textsuperscript{131}Ibid., p. lxxix.  \textsuperscript{132}Ibid., pp. lxxvii-lxxviii.

\textsuperscript{133}Ibid., p. lxxviii.  \textsuperscript{134}Ibid., p. lxxix.  \textsuperscript{135}Ibid.
content of perception. At the juncture in a process of rational comprehension where such access occurs, thoughts and sense perceptions reach the point of being neither completely distinct nor completely identical: to the extent that sensible forms, in the form of mental images, are the objects upon which reason acts, thought and sense perceptions are in practice synonymous; but to the extent that sensible forms, as sensible entities, are merely the materials from which thoughts are shaped and not themselves fully formed thoughts, sense perceptions and thoughts remain distinct. Despite the practical synonymy of the two, the distinction between them is necessary because reason may actually receive mental images without actually grasping their intelligible content. Such a simultaneously synonymous yet antithetical relationship is most understandable if it is seen to exist not between sense perception and thought, but between that which possesses potential intelligibility and that which embodies such potential fully realized. Such a relationship indicates--and this fact is of particular importance in moral action--that something that is potentially intelligible, when it occurs in circumstances that make it accessible to reason, is properly intelligible as well.
Although the intelligible content possessed by a thing exists independently of the act of reason by which an intelligent being comprehends it as a thought, without such an act, the thing's intelligibility exists only potentially. Intelligible content is, thus, some property possessed by a thing that is a proper object of reason: it is something that is a part of a thing's act of existence, that can be grasped only through reason, and that comes into actual existence only through such apprehension. Such a property is the first principle of a thing's being, its formal cause.

The being of any given thing can be grasped in several ways, all of which are essentially related, although not necessarily identical; the first is form. Plato approached the topic of forms with an assumption of their reality and then asked how a single form could be one and the same in many individual sensible objects; he concluded that every sensible object is only an imitation of a form that is itself intangible and that exists separately from the object,

136Ibid., p. lxxix; see also DA 429a13-17.

137Wallace, p. cxii.
but that is the cause of the object's reality nonetheless. Aristotle, on the other hand, began with an assumption of the reality of individual objects and asked what allowed many individuals to be known as one and the same.\textsuperscript{138} Aristotle was an empiricist to the extent that he realized that physical evidence cannot be overlooked; but he also observed that approximate principles based on enumerations of particular instances—no matter how exact such principles might be—are experience, rather than universal knowledge (that is, knowledge of the necessary). He maintained that universal knowledge is grounded on the knowledge of an \textit{eidos,*} or form, because the latter is the necessary and unchanging element in an individual being;\textsuperscript{139} such knowledge is most useful because it holds good not only for every instance a person has actually experienced, but for every possible instance that conforms to a given pattern.\textsuperscript{140} Aristotle assumed that located within every sensible thing was the permanent principle of its existence,\textsuperscript{141} the


\textsuperscript{139}Ibid., p. 179. \textsuperscript{140}Ibid., p. 158. \textsuperscript{141}Ibid., p. 193.
principle by which the thing remained the same in essence
even though it might undergo various changes in its acci-
dental attributes. Plato's idea of the Form was thus
replaced in Aristotle's theory with a concept of form as
a separate entity, as the principle of knowability and
permanance residing individually and independently in every
sensible thing. Entity itself (ousia*) Aristotle defined
with a rather convoluted Greek phrase, "to ti en einai," which,
literally translated, means "the what-was-being." En
implies more than its best English translation, 'was,'
because it can suggest not merely a past action but timeless
being as well. Entity is, consequently, being essen-
tially or of necessity, without the contingency of matter
and change; form, not matter, constitutes such funda-
mental being of a thing and from it whatever else that may
exist in a thing derives.

Although every individual sensible thing possesses
within itself the necessary principle of its being, each
such sensible thing by itself provides only actual

142 Ibid., p. 190. 143 Ibid., p. 134. 144 Ibid., p. 182.
147 Ibid., p. 185.
knowledge of the specific fact of its own existence, rather
than knowledge of its necessary principle—knowledge that
is universal. An individual sensible thing cannot, as a
consequence, be the primary instance of entity, of essential
and necessary being divorced from the contingency of matter
and change. Being is not immediately known in a sensible
thing because the latter is a composite of form and matter.
Being is known rather qua mobile: it is known according to
and on account of the permanent form that a thing possess,
but the permanent form itself is not known as such; being
qua mobile is a permanent form known through the matter
that embodies it. In nature, form does not and cannot appear
separate from matter;\(^{148}\) the two, in individual sensible
things, are identical. They are identical, however, in the
sense that matter is form potentially.\(^{149}\) Hydrogen and
oxygen are, for example, the matter of water, and
materially nothing else can be found in the latter: a
molecule of water is identical with two atoms of hydrogen
and one of oxygen. Nonetheless, two atoms of hydrogen and
one of oxygen can exist separately without constituting

\(^{148}\text{Ibid., p. 174.}\) \(^{149}\text{Ibid., p. 225.}\)
a molecule of water; the form of water is thus found not in the atoms themselves, but in their arrangement, for which they, as matter, always possess the potential. While entity is thus identical with an individual sensible thing, the latter as sensible is also corruptible, and reason cannot possess universal knowledge (i.e., knowledge of being apart from the contingency of matter and change) of a corruptible thing.\textsuperscript{150}

Knowledge of the essential being of an individual sensible thing may be provided by another instance of the latter's entity, its universal definition. Form is a physical constituent of a sensible thing and is never found without sensible matter except in thought,\textsuperscript{151} where it is clothed in intelligible matter, provided by the imagination; nonetheless, a form is knowable in and of itself, and it constitutes the principle of knowability in the singular thing in which it inheres because, as the actuality of the thing\textsuperscript{152} (the thing's act of existence), it of necessity demarcates what the thing is and what it is not. A form, thus, defines a given singular thing and

\textsuperscript{150}Ibid., p. 230. \textsuperscript{151}Ibid., p. 243. \textsuperscript{152}Ibid., p. 242.
as a general definition may then be applied universally to all the singular things that fall within the boundaries it marks out.\textsuperscript{153} But because a universal is a formula that merely epitomizes the entity of a sensible thing,\textsuperscript{154} it cannot be the primary instance of such an entity.\textsuperscript{155} An entity is a form that, joined with matter, inheres in a singular sensible thing;\textsuperscript{156} as a consequence, the primary instance of an entity must be a 'this,' and cannot be, as a universal is, a 'such.'\textsuperscript{157} Moreover, even though, on account of a form's ability to be separated in notion though not in actuality, a universal can nonetheless manifest entity, the very same separability of form makes it, not in time, but in necessity, prior to both an individual thing and the latter's universal definition.\textsuperscript{158}

Thus, a universal cannot be the primary instance of entity--of being essentially or of necessity, without the contingency of matter or change--because it is simply a formula that epitomizes the individual form common to many singular things; nor, on the other hand, can an individual

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\textsuperscript{153}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}, p. 243.  \textsuperscript{154}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}, p. 223.  \textsuperscript{155}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}, p. 227.  \\
\textsuperscript{156}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}  \textsuperscript{157}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}, p. 229.  \textsuperscript{158}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}, pp. 241, 244.\textsuperscript{Ibid.}
form be the primary instance of entity, in spite of the fact that it is the entity of a singular thing, because, by virtue of the fact that its act of inhering in matter is, by definition, the activity that constitutes it the entity of a thing, it is physically inseparable from the matter in which it inhere. The primary instance of entity, unlike individual form, must be able to be separated from the contingency of matter and change; unlike a universal, however, it must inhere in a singular thing. Form may, however, be taken neither as the actuality of an individual thing nor as the definition by which all such things are known, but as the cause of both the existence of a thing and the universality of its formula; as such it presents a third instance of entity: formal cause. Formal cause constitutes the primary instance of entity because, by virtue of its synonymy with individual form to the extent that the activity of the latter is the causing of actual existence in a thing, formal cause inhere in an individual thing; at the same time, it is in notion separable from the contingency of matter and change because it is a rational conception of such causality.

Formal cause and individual form are identical and interchangeable in every application except as instances
of entity accessible to knowledge; as aspects of knowledge, however, the two are distinct. As the primary instance of entity, formal cause is the source of universal knowledge, of knowledge of necessary being. Such knowledge cannot be derived solely from the fact of a thing's existence because even knowledge that a given event always happens does not require knowledge of what makes such an event necessary.\textsuperscript{159} A person may know from the most elementary observation, for example, that the seasons change in a regular pattern without knowing that such change is caused by the earth's orbiting around the sun, or beyond that, that the cause of the earth's orbiting around the sun is the joint operation of gravity and momentum. Knowledge of what is necessary is thus based on an apprehension of causality; such knowledge transcends mere facts by establishing the reasons that things are as they are.\textsuperscript{160} An apprehension of causality, then, requires reasoning; the operation of reason, as a result, is the determining factor in the distinction that obtains between individual form and formal cause. The fundamental tenet of Aristotle's understanding of

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\textsuperscript{159}Ibid., p. 161. \textsuperscript{160}Ibid., p. 172.
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knowledge is that reason creates the world it apprehends in terms of itself;\textsuperscript{161} so, at the same time that an individual form, the principle of being that inheres in a thing, is the sole cause of the thing's actual existence, reason's apprehension of the actual, inhering causality of the individual form is the formal cause of the thing's existence. Because the actual inherence of an individual form is, in fact, its act of causality, an individual form is of its very nature inseparable from the matter it keeps in existence; as a consequence, the being of a thing in its purest form (distilled from the matter with which it is fused in the thing) can be grasped only by abstracting from the fact of an individual thing's existence the reason that the thing is not other than it is. Such an abstraction is clearly both the work of reason and the only source of the knowledge of the necessary.

The contention that reason creates the world it apprehends in terms of itself means, then, that reason's apprehension of formal cause in a thing is nothing more than reason finding itself in that thing;\textsuperscript{162} the discovery of

\textsuperscript{161}Hammond, p. lxxix. \textsuperscript{162}Wallace, p. cxiii.
causality is, in other words, reason finding the reason for a thing. Causality is, thus, the intelligible content that a thing possesses: as the part that reason has found of itself in a thing, as 'the reason' for a thing that resides in the thing itself, causality is reason's proper object and, as such, comprehensible to reason alone. As Wallace has demonstrated, no contradiction exists in holding both that reason requires an object for its exercise and that it must illuminate such an object in order to think it. On the contrary, the two principles demonstrate two separate aspects of the work of the intellect: reason's illumination of its object is the fundamental and primary act by which the conscious mind interprets the universe, while the exercise of reason that requires an object is the practical manipulation in logical thought of the materials so determined. Aristotle's empiricism thus results in a dual view of the nature of reason that posits both passive reason, which receives experience through the agency of the senses, and active (or creative) reason, which creates from that experience an intelligible world.\textsuperscript{164}

\textsuperscript{163}Ibid. \textsuperscript{164}Hammond, p. lxxix.
A human being can become conscious of a thing (whether the latter is a tangible object or a set of circumstances) either through his senses, which he possesses in virtue of his sensitive faculty and shares with all creatures having an animal nature, or through reason, which he as a rational being alone possesses in virtue of his intellectual faculty. A person who grasps a thing through his senses, however, will be conscious only of those attributes in it that are the proper objects of the senses; on the other hand, if he apprehends it through reason, he will be conscious of those attributes in it that are the proper objects of the intellect. Outside of theory, of course, the operations that result in human awareness are not independent of each other; a human being exists as a single entity in which the activities and the actuality of an animal nature are fused and infused with the activities and the actuality of a rational nature. The activities that are, in theory, proper to one intellectually distinguishable side of human nature are, in actuality, organically complementary to those proper to the other sides: for example, perceiving food, an activity of the sensitive faculty, is distinct from but necessary to ingesting food, which is an activity of the
vegetative faculty. A human being possessed of his proper attributes cannot, then, be capable of sense perception without also being capable of reason. As a consequence, not only does the activity of sense perception provide the objects necessary to the exercise of reason, but every act of sense perception, because of the intelligible content that perceptible objects innately possess, also and of necessity elicits an exercise of reason. The nature of the operation of human consciousness suggests that a person should act according to reason, then, simply because he can: anything that has the potential for an activity exists most fully when it actually exercises the activity. As a knife that actually cuts when cutting is called for is more knife-like than one that does not, a person who exercises reason when reason is called for is more human than a person who does not.

The conclusion that man should act according to reason because he possesses the potential to do so does not by itself prove that reason is intrinsically better than sense perception in guiding action. The standard against which the practical value of both reason and sense perception must be measured is the extent to which each guides an
organism possessing it to pursue or to avoid things in such a way that the organism may ultimately act in the way that is best for it. According to that criterion, too, however, a person should act as reason guides him: practical reason apprehends a phenomenon's essential being where sense perception grasps only its particular existence and contingent attributes; reason thus permits a person a fuller understanding of the circumstances that are present, a fuller understanding of what is best pursued or avoided, and, thereby, a greater hand in determining through his actions the circumstances of his existence.

Such understanding and the control that stems from it are the direct result of reason's apprehension of causality; to the extent, then, that reason's apprehension of causality can be increased, the control a person can exercise over the circumstances of his existence can also be increased. Of the four principles of existence that may be found in a thing, formal causality, which allows a person to know the intrinsic nature of a thing, is but one; a person may also discover in a thing its efficient cause, that by means of which it is brought into existence. A person may perceive, for example, that to send medicine to
the scene of a disaster is intrinsically good; but if he
cannot discover the means by which such an action may be
effected, he has, in actuality, little control over what
he does. His ability to effect what he perceives as
intrinsically good is further increased by a knowledge of
material causality. Although he might succeed in discover­
ing the means by which he may send medicine to the disaster
victims, he has still failed to effect the true nature of
his action if he unknowingly sends medicine that has
spoiled; he fails because he does not know that the material
cause of the medicine has degenerated to the point that it
no longer possesses the potential to retain the form that
causes it to be salubrious. The ultimate control that a
person can rationally exercise over his actions is derived
from his knowledge of final causality, the end at which all
his actions aim. The control a person exercises in virtue
of the final cause he has discovered is clearly different
from the control that derives from the knowledge of the
other causes: knowledge of the final cause constitutes
the standard against which all the other causes are
measured. Form, matter, and efficacy are discovered, as a
consequence, for the sake of the end: the fundamental
nature of a thing (its formal cause) must be known to
determine whether it can serve the purpose for which it
is sought; efficient causality must be known so that the
desired end may actually be achieved; and material causality
must be known to determine if the form that the final cause
dictates can in fact inhere in the matter that is present.
Taken together, then, the four causes of existence
constitute the range of reasons for which a person may act.
Regardless of how many reasons a person has to act, his reasons alone are insufficient to move him to do so: reason, by itself, is incapable of compelling action.¹ The single faculty that produces voluntary movement is, rather, desire.²

The function of desire is to bring about a movement of pursuit or avoidance directed at some object. The nature of the objects that are proper to desire reveals much about the nature of desire itself because of the essential role such objects play in the generation of desire: a person's possession of the goodness that an object of desire embodies is the final cause of desire (that for the sake of which desire exists), while his lack of such goodness is what first calls desire into existence. An object of desire

¹DA 432b27-32; NE 1139a36.
²DA 433a21, 433a30.
is usually thought of as an entity external to the person desiring it; the sort of thing that a person desires is supposedly money, or a good job, or perhaps a wife or a husband. However, on closer examination, the ultimate object of all desire proves to be not an external entity, but happiness. As a consequence, because happiness is an activity in which man functions most fully according to his nature, the specific object of every act of desire is an activity of at least one of the powers of the soul. Thus, a person who wants something he perceives as good to eat, wants it so that he can eat it and eats it so that he can thereby taste it or satisfy his hunger with it or satisfy his mind that he is eating something that is healthful; an activity of the soul is, as a consequence, the true object of desire because an external object is never more than that on which such an activity operates. For the same reason, even when an activity of the soul is obscured by the external object of desire with which it is associated, the activity remains the essence of the external object's desirability; external objects become objects of desire only to the extent to which they contain something necessary to the realization of an activity of the soul. The use of the verb 'want' as an expression of desire is a
common illustration of the fact that desire is inextricably linked with a sense of privation; in fact, put most simply, desire is essentially a person's feeling that he lacks, in the circumstances in which he finds himself, something he ought to have.

Goodness is the most fundamental attribute of the nature of the objects proper to desire because the Good, as Aristotle said in the first sentence of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, is that at which all things aim. The adjective 'good' describes an object as being "as it should be,"\(^3\) as possessing "those characteristic qualities which are either admirable in themselves or useful for some purpose."\(^4\)

Formal goodness, goodness that is attributed to something on account of its being as it should be, is the simplest and most direct way in which a thing can possess goodness. Formal goodness is essential goodness, i.e., goodness that is characteristic of the very essence of the thing that it describes, rather than of the thing's relationship to something else. Formal goodness is, unfortunately, easily

\(^3\) *Webster's New World Dictionary*, s.v. "good."

confused with what might be called 'goodness of form.' A form in itself can be neither good nor bad: it is the necessary element inhering in a thing, causing it to be what it is. On the other hand, when a certain form is described as a good form, what is meant is that such a form is useful or necessary for some purpose. Oxygen might be called a good form of matter because it is necessary to life, and arsenic, a bad form because it is extremely poisonous. Neither is in itself, however, better or worse than the other; only indirectly and non-essentially is one good and the other bad. Formal goodness, on the other hand, means well formed or naturally complete; it indicates not that a certain form is good for something, but that a particular thing is complete in terms of the form that defines it. Thus, formal goodness indicates simply that a specific table, say, possesses, in their fullness, the attributes that make a table a table; such a table is good, as a consequence, because it is as a table should be.

The highest good that a person can aim at is to be as a human being should be: nothing more is possible, nothing less is sufficient. Aristotle, as a consequence, described happiness, the ultimate object of human desire, not as a state or an emotion, but as an activity in which a human
being functions most fully according to his nature. Happiness is 'an' activity rather than 'the' activity because no single, specific activity exists in which a human being may be said to function most fully according to his nature: the activity so described changes as often as do the circumstances in which a person finds himself. As a result, because man and the world of events in which he lives are both subject to the passage of time, happiness, viewed over an entire lifetime, is made up of many distinct activities. Nonetheless, each activity that is a constituent of happiness is the same as every other such activity in that each is the activity most appropriate to the person who exercises it under the circumstances in which he finds himself at a given moment: each is identical in that each is the shape that natural completeness takes, under the circumstances, for the person involved. Happiness is, thus, a measure of formal goodness; and the highest good at which a person can aim in a given situation is the activity that, by its inherence in him, will constitute his formal goodness.

Not only is a person's formal goodness, which is embodied in the activity appropriate to the moment, the highest good at which he can aim; his formal goodness is
the ultimate good at which he cannot help but aim in his every expression of desire regardless of whether or not he is conscious of doing so. Consequently, the second attribute characteristic of an object proper to desire is that it be perceived as necessary to a person's formal goodness. That characteristic is the fundamental truth at the heart of Aquinas's observation that only a good perceived acts as an object of desire. Aquinas's statement seems obvious: no one, even if he is aware of a thing, whether it is an external object or an internal activity, will be moved to pursue it if he is not aware of the goodness that it occasions. Yet, however obvious the statement seems, it is misleading to the extent that it fails to distinguish between the several ways in which a thing may be recognized as good or bad. Anything may be so recognized in terms of each of the four categories of causes: a thing may be good or bad in its completeness according to the form that defines it, as already noted; it may also be good or bad in its possession of an appropriate material cause (the potential that must be realized by its form), in its relationship to its end cause (that for the sake of which

5Aquinas, CNE, no. 386; (p. 175).
it exists), or in its function as an efficient cause (as that by means of which something is brought about). Furthermore, not only may a single thing be recognized as good or bad in terms of some or all of the categories of causes simultaneously, but the goodness or badness perceived in a thing as it appears under one category may also be either related to or independent of the goodness or badness perceived in it under any other category. Steel, for example, is bad as the material cause of a table napkin, but good as the material cause of a knife. If a person who has a knife that is formally good uses it to eat soup, the end to which he puts it is inappropriate; if he uses it to slice bread, however, the end is good. If he uses the knife to murder his neighbor, the end is good in the sense that cutting something that can be cut is a use to which a knife may appropriately be put, but bad in the sense that murder is an inappropriate activity for a human being.

The fact that something may be good in different ways at the same time, or good in one way and bad in another simultaneously, would, if the mere perception of goodness were the mechanism by which desire was inevitably generated, create situations in which essentially unresolvable conflicts between mutually exclusive desires would render action
impossible. The goodness possessed by a thing may be perceived, however, without generating desire: a person may perceive that a knife is good for (i.e., possesses the formal goodness appropriate to) cutting bread and may, in fact, buy or make a knife specifically for that end; yet, he need not desire to use the knife to cut bread at any moment in which he becomes conscious of its goodness for doing so. He does not desire to use the knife to cut bread until the bread needs to be cut, and the bread does not need to be cut until the man needs the bread. As a consequence, the mechanism by which desire is generated lies elsewhere: a good acts as an object of desire not merely because it is perceived, but because the person who perceives it also recognizes it, in the circumstances in which he finds himself, either as a good proper to himself (i.e., as a necessary component of his formal goodness) or as the means necessary for achieving such a good.

Since a good perceived in something is capable of generating desire only to the extent to which it manifests in a particular object under particular circumstances a component of a person's formal goodness, desire may be generated in a person without his perception of any goodness other than his own formal goodness. Desire is not, in such
a case, the result of a person's perception of his possession of formal goodness, as his desire for an object is a result of his perception of the object's possession of a component of his formal goodness; rather, desire is the result of the fact that he lacks something that he needs to be complete. In such cases, moreover, desire manifests itself simply as a sense of the latter, i.e., simply as a person's sense that he lacks something that he needs to be complete. A very simple instance is the experience probably everyone has had of being hungry and yet not being able to identify the thing that would best satisfy that hunger; since desire exists, in such a case, although nothing desirable has been perceived, the source of desire is clearly the privation of formal goodness. Desire's manifestation of itself as the particular sense of the privation known as hunger is a further indication of its source.

A sense of privation is no less central when a person knows the object that will satisfy him: everyone desires an occasional day free from work because the time that a person must spend working deprives him of the opportunity to engage in other activities that he finds natural and fulfilling, i.e., in which he finds natural completeness.
A person's desire is a result of his perception that he lacks something necessary, not only under such circumstances, but under any circumstances, because a person feels no impulse to acquire something that he already possesses in full measure. Even a person who desires something that he may grant that he does not need does so because he is convinced that he, in fact, in some way needs it: when a person acknowledges that he is pursuing something because he 'wants' it rather than because he 'needs' it, his action is possible only if he has decided at some point that a person's pursuing what he wants simply because he wants it is an appropriate activity. Once he has come to such a conclusion, the pursuit of what one wants simply because one wants it is, in his eyes, a necessary part of formal goodness. The force of desire is, thus, not in the attraction of the presence of a good without but in the impetus of the privation of a good within.

A person's sense of a privation of his formal goodness is, then, by definition a sense of need. A person can perceive a good, recognize that he lacks it, and yet not be moved to desire it if he does not perceive it as necessary to his formal completeness; in such a case, he simply does not sense a need for it. The need that a person
senses is not necessarily, however, the proximate privation of some absolute necessity, i.e., of something without which a person would cease to be a functioning human being; nor does the element of formal goodness that a person feels deprived of need to be a true attribute of formal goodness to generate a sense of need. A sense of need is, rather, an experience of the privation of any element, real or imagined, that a person perceives, either through his sensitive or his rational capacity, as a necessary component of his natural completeness. Such a sense of need is the essence of desire. So, just as "to feel pleasure and pain is to adopt an attitude with the sensitive mean towards good or bad as such," to feel desire is to adopt an attitude with the sensitive capacity toward a lack of formal goodness as such. A sense of need is, moreover, one expression of the capacity exhibited by every living organism by which the latter strives for completeness according to the form that defines it, the form in which is embodied the best plan for survival that evolution could devise for the organism that possesses it. Desire is, thus, the sensitive capacity's expression of an essential

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6 DA 431a10-13; see Ch. Three, pp. 135-137.
characteristic of living matter, its disposing of itself to formal goodness.

In order for desire to be effective as a disposition of self to formal goodness, an object proper to it must possess a third characteristic: it must be a practical good. A practical good is neither the type of good that occurs of necessity nor the type whose existence is impossible; it is, rather, "that which may be otherwise," a good that may be brought about by some human action. Practical goodness differs from the other attributes of the proper objects of desire in that it is characteristic only of those objects that are proper to desire when the latter is efficacious in disposing itself to formal goodness.

Because desire is sometimes efficacious and sometimes not, two discrete forms of desire may be identified: active desire and passive desire. Passive desire is in its most rudimentary form a person's adopting of an attitude with his sensitive capacity that he lacks formal goodness; passive desire thus manifests itself as a sense of need, such as hunger or loneliness. In its more highly developed forms, passive desire is also an attitude about the measure

\[DA \text{ 433a27-30}.\]
of the good that is sufficient for completeness, and it is more highly developed the more precise the measure of such a good is. Passive desire is most fully developed, consequently, when it constitutes an attitude of the sensitive capacity both toward the activity of that faculty of the soul necessary to formal completeness and toward the special object necessary to the exercise of that faculty.

Active desire, or volition, is a person's determining of the actualization of the good that is sufficient for his formal completeness by means of a sense of necessity, i.e., by means of an attitude of the sensitive capacity that a certain good is not only sufficient but necessary to such completeness. Volition is, thus, the means by which one type of necessity, the immediate need for a certain activity, brings about another type, the actual existence of that activity. A thing is necessary if, under certain conditions, it cannot be otherwise. Volition can operate only when passive desire is fully formed: not only must a person sense an unrealized potential for formal goodness, he must also sense the full measure of the good that is sufficient for completeness. The lack of such a good is transformed from a need into a necessity when a person perceives that, in the absence of immediate actualization, the unrealized
potential for being that is expressed in the need will become a privation of being that cannot be made whole; such potential for being is, thus, necessary because its actualization constitutes that which cannot be otherwise if formal goodness is to be attained. Formal goodness itself is necessary when form and matter are in immediate proximity to each other: in such proximity, form cannot fail to actualize matter. A living organism is unique in that, if it finds itself in circumstances in which inheres a certain potential for being, it can exercise certain activities to bring such potential into immediate proximity with that aspect of the organism's form that can actualize such potential; such is an organism's power to dispose itself to formal goodness. But since a given set of circumstances may contain potential for activities whose actualizations are mutually exclusive of each other, neither the mere existence nor even an organism's awareness of one such potential will make the actualization of the latter necessary. Rather, the criterion by which the actualization of any potential for being is determined is that which constitutes the most fundamental characteristic of an organism's existence: wholeness. The nature of a living organism is, consequently, such that an activity that is
necessary to wholeness (that is, to formal goodness) is simply necessary: the form of such an activity is brought into immediate proximity with its potential for operation, at which point it cannot fail to exist. The two conditions upon which the immediate proximity of the essential elements is contingent are that an organism possess the information that such an activity is necessary to formal goodness and that the organism possess the power to bring the potential for such an activity into immediate proximity with that aspect of its form that can actualize such potential. The essential mechanism of self-disposition is, thus, that by which the information that a certain potential for being is necessary to formal goodness is presented in a usable form to the organism. One such mechanism is volition: the adopting of a sensitive attitude that such an activity is necessary.

A sense of necessity, as a consequence, can fail to mediate the actualization of the good that is sufficient for completeness only if such a good lies beyond a person's power to accomplish it. Thus, practical goodness is an essential characteristic of an object proper to active desire. Moreover, practical goodness is the only attribute that distinguishes an object proper to volition from an
object proper to appetition because the entire function of volition is to be the means by which an action that may be effected by a human being is actualized.

The foregoing analysis of the objects proper to desire reveals that, in essence, only one object of desire exists: the formal goodness of the person in which desire manifests itself. Desire is, thus, a manifestation of the disposing of self to formal goodness that characterizes the activity of all living organisms, and its nature is comprehensible only in terms of its relationship with formal goodness. Formal goodness is, most simply, matter completely actualized by form. As noted above, form cannot fail to actualize the potential of matter if the two are in immediate proximity; the immediate proximity of the two can, however, fail to occur, and such a failure, rather than the failure of form to actualize matter, is the cause of a lack of formal goodness. A disposition of oneself to formal goodness is, then, a disposition of form and matter to actualization: it is a principle inhering in an organism by means of which the immediate proximity of the latter's form and matter is brought about; it is, as such, the efficient cause of an organism's formal goodness.
Final causality is that aspect of the existence of a thing that necessitates a means, while efficient causality is, conversely, that aspect of the existence of a thing that is necessitated by an end. Ends and means are, moreover, complementary to form and matter: form and matter are the causes of being while ends and means are the causes of generation. Not every instance of efficient causality is, however, a manifestation of a disposition of self to formal goodness. The latter is manifested, rather, only by an instance of efficient causality that is embodied in an activity of a living entity, an activity by means of which that entity maintains the integration of functions from which it derives the nature of its being as an organism. Because the activity that embodies such efficient causality is, as is each of the activities of a living organism, an actuality of the organism's soul, such efficient causality is no less an actualization of the organism's formal causality than any other activity is. In a living organism, then, inherent efficient causality and formal causality are simply two aspects of the same actuality. Moreover, because the activity that embodies such an efficient cause is part of the same actuality that its exercise brings about, a manifestation of a disposition of self to formal
goodness and the formal goodness that it effects are, similarly, not two discrete actualities, but two aspects of the same actuality. The complementarity that obtains between the several pairings of the causes of being and of generation holds the potential for the integration of those causes within a single entity. A disposition of self to formal goodness is a realization of such potential: it is manifested in an efficient cause that is an expression of the complete integration of functions that is the essential characteristic of a living organism.

Because a disposition of self to formal goodness is an actualization of an organism's formal causality and, thence, a part of an organism's formal completeness, such a disposition is a part of both the form and the end of the organism in which it inheres. Thus, insofar as the formal and the final causes are capable of activity, a disposition of self to formal goodness is an expression of the activity of each of them. Formal causality is fundamentally the actuality of an entity; the activity of form is, then, the actualization (the bringing into actual existence) of the potential in matter. Final causality is such actualization, i.e., not the metaphysical actuality of form, but form fused with matter in actual existence. Formal
causality is, thus, the actuality of matter; final causality is the actuality of the proper relationship between form and matter. The actualization of matter by form is also that aspect of a thing known as formal goodness. Although formal goodness and final causality are both identified with the same actuality, they are distinct aspects of such actuality: formal goodness designates the state of being of such actuality insofar as the completeness of the fusing of the formal and the material cause is concerned; final causality designates the activity of such actuality to the extent to which such activity is the making necessary of the means to such completeness. Thus, although final causality is identifiable with formal goodness, its activity as a cause occurs prior to the actual existence of such completeness.

Final causality, thus, designates the activity of formal causality's priority of being. Material causality is formal causality's potential to act, and, consequently, each of those causes is properly said to exist only in a real entity: the act of being is potential being actualized. Therefore, if material and formal causality alone are considered, form does not exist as a cause at all if it is not actualizing matter; nor can there be such a thing
as form that has yet to actualize matter, or matter that has yet to be actualized by form. Nonetheless, many things have potential for development beyond their actual state of being: carbon, for example, has the potential to be a diamond. But to use the term potential to refer to something definite is a contradiction in terms since potential is the amorphous aspect of a thing that is given definite being by form. Such a use of the word potential clearly refers not only to the unrealized matter in a thing, but also and primarily to its latent form. Formal causality is, thus, not only prior in being to material causality when the two are in actual existence, it is also prior in being to material causality before it has actualized the latter and, hence, prior in time to such actualization. The activity of both types of priority is designated, however, not as formal causality, but rather as final causality because without such priority the process of the actualization of material causality could not reach its end.

Final causality is, as a consequence, virtual formal goodness: it is the completed actualization of an entity in essence though not in actual fact. Final causality thus differs from formal causality in that it is not, as the latter is, simply the actuality abstracted from the
completed actualization itself, i.e., the matter of an entity fully actualized by the latter's form. Final causality differs from formal goodness, however, in that it manifests such completed actualization not in actuality, but in effect. The completed actualization of matter by form is a state of being in virtue of the fact that it is a state of finitude: whatever exists simply is, and, to the extent that a thing actually exists, nothing about it is undefined. Unrealized matter can be brought into immediate proximity with latent form, then, only through a definite means; and, while many things may have the potential to be the means by which such proximity is brought about, only the thing whose potential has been defined as the means can actually do so. The definition of such a means is, thus, the effect of the completed actualization of the entity that it mediates: that which defines a thing's existence is that which causes it to be; that which causes a thing to be a means is that which is brought about through its mediation; that which is brought about by a means is completed actualization. Thus, because the actuality of a means must exist before the completed actualization that it mediates can, a thing is defined as a means not by such actualization in actual fact, but by
such completed actualization in essence; the definition of a means is, consequently, a manifestation not of formal goodness, but of final causality.

Just as the power of formal causality is manifested paradoxically in the actuality of matter, the power of final causality is manifested in the actuality of a means; and just as formal causality exists only because matter must be realized, final causality exists only because a means must be defined. A means that manifests an organism's disposing of itself to formal goodness is an instance of essential efficient causality in that the power by which its final cause defines it as a means is different in function, but not in actuality, from the power by which its formal cause brings its matter into existence; as a result, its own actuality is part of the completed actualization of matter by form that its activity mediates.

A means that manifests a disposition of self to formal goodness is, then, part of the actuality of formal causality to the extent to which it is an actualization of potential; it is a part of the actuality of final causality to the extent to which, as such an actualization, it is part of the very formal goodness that it seeks. The actuality of such a means as an instance of efficient causality is,
consequently, both an activity of the final cause and an activity of the formal cause of an entity. The possibility that it can be both simultaneously is not excluded, because the activities of formal and final causality operate not each to the exclusion of the other, but in parallel: as the activity of form is to determine matter, the activity of an end is to determine a means; as the actual existence of material causality is inseparable from formal causality, the actual existence of efficient causality is inseparable from final causality. More importantly, however, the activities of the final and the formal causes are each the necessary complement of the other. Since a final cause ultimately effects the proper relationship between matter and form by its determination of the efficient cause by means of which form and matter are brought into immediate proximity, final causality acts only to the extent to which it is different from the present state of formal causality's actualization of material causality; form and matter exist to be brought into a proper relationship (i.e., potential exists to be actualized) only to the extent to which the actual existence of a thing is not identical with the end for which it exists. Thus, efficient causality actually functions (i.e., a means is made necessary by an end) only if an entity exists in a
state of actuality that lacks formal completeness. As a consequence, a means that manifests an organism's disposition of itself to formal goodness is an expression of the activity of final causality—the actual effect of form's priority of being—insofar as its actuality complements the activity of the formal cause: its actuality, which occurs in virtue of the activity of final causality, defines a lack of formal goodness precisely to the extent to which formal causality has not actualized material causality, and its nature as the means by which form and matter may be brought into a proper relationship is determined, also in virtue of final causality, precisely to the extent to which such a relationship does not exist. On the other hand, however, because a means that manifests a disposition of self to formal goodness not only mediates the actualization of an organism's matter by the latter's form, but itself is part of such actualization, it itself is also part of the activity of the organism's formal causality. In virtue of the part of the formal cause that it constitutes, as a consequence, it also constitutes a part of the activity of an organism's final causality: a means that manifests a disposition of self to formal goodness, by the priority of being of its form, itself defines a lack of formal goodness
and itself determines the nature of the means by which its proper existence may be effected.

The complementarity that obtains between formal causality and material causality, between final causality and efficient causality, between the causes of being and the causes of generation permits rather than accounts for the unique integration of activities that characterizes a living organism. So, too, although an organism's disposing of itself to formal goodness is the actuality that manifests and maintains such integration, it is not the source of such integration. Integration is, rather, an indispensable property of the principle that causes an organism to be; integration is not the result of things that are integrated, but the principle according to which they are so ordered.

Thus, the principle of integration that inheres in the cause of an organism's being is the source of the integration of activities that characterize the actual existence of an organism. Integration, in other words, makes an organism an organism, and, as a consequence of that fact, integration is prior in being to the organism's actuality.

Integration is not, however, unique to living organisms: everything that is recognizable as an entity is recognizable as such in virtue of an inherent oneness of
being. Such inherent unity of being is simply the manifestation of the integration of the actuality of form and the potentiality of matter that constitutes existence; an integration more fundamental than that of form and matter in existence is, in fact, impossible to conceive of. The integration of form and matter constitutes, moreover, not only existence, but also, as a necessary property of the latter, a state of finitude, which resides in the completeness of form's actualization of matter. Such finitude designates the state of being beyond which an entity has no power to develop, and, at the same time, it designates that state of being as the point of development that alone constitutes wholeness. Such finitude is, thus, in both senses, the end of the process of actualization; because it resides in the completeness of form's actualization of matter, it is, moreover, integral to such actualization. Every entity possesses, as a consequence, not merely an inherent integration of its form and its matter, but an inherent integration of its form, its matter, and its end. Unlike inanimate entities, the integration that is characteristic of a living organism is unique in that it consists in the inherence of efficient causality in union with the other three causes as essential aspects of a single entity.
Because the being of final causality is inseparable from that of efficient causality, any special circumstance characterizing the actuality of one might be expected to be complemented by a special circumstance in the actuality of the other. Such an expectation is fulfilled with regard to the circumstances that surround the generation of the actuality that embodies efficient causality. The generation of every such actuality occurs in one of two sets of circumstances: in one case, the generation of such an actuality has no causal connection with the final cause that determines its efficacy (for example, the generation of the pressure that is the efficient cause of the transformation of carbon into a diamond has no causal connection with either the carbon or the diamond); in the other case, the final cause that determines the efficacy of such an actuality also causes its generation (a piece of sculpture, for example, is not only the result but also the cause of the generation of the carving that brings it about). The final causes that correspond to each set of circumstances are distinguishable accordingly: the final causality that corresponds to the formal situation is a simple end, while the causality that corresponds to the latter is a purpose. A final cause is an end if it is nothing more than the
terminus of form's actualization of matter. Such an end, as noted in the paragraph above, is both the point beyond which no further actualization is possible and the state that alone constitutes wholeness. Even a simple end, consequently, exercises final causality by determining efficient causality: for example, the latent form of a diamond that exists in a deposit of carbon, although it does not cause the generation of pressure, is nonetheless the factor that determines that such pressure is the actuality that will dispose such matter to be actualized by such form (just as the actual forms that exist in a rubber ball and a vase are the factors that determine that, if both are dropped, one will bounce and the other break). Final causality is, on the other hand, a purpose if, as the terminus of form's actualization of matter, it not only determines efficacy, but is also the cause of the generation of the actuality that embodies such efficacy.  

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8Final causality, even as the cause of generation, is still distinct from formal causality, the cause of existence: although the form that causes the existence of a piece of sculpture may dictate the necessity for and the generation of carving in bringing the former about, the form that defines the being of a piece of sculpture is clearly different from the form that defines the being of carving.
Purpose bears another mark that distinguishes it from a simple end: while an end is never manifested in any actuality other than that of the means it has determined, a purpose, on the contrary, is actualized in the form of a plan. The nature of a plan is derived from the fact that final causality is the activity of formal cause's priority of being: the plan that manifests a purpose is the actualization of that which exists before all else in the being of an entity. An entity whose actualization is brought about by means that have been generated by a purpose, consequently, is a result rather than an embodiment of the actuality of such purpose; so, for example, the purpose that generates the carving by which a piece of sculpture is brought about is not embodied in such a piece of sculpture, but rather in the idea of it that exists in the sculptor's mind. A plan is, moreover, the primary efficient cause of the purpose that it embodies: while it is the actuality of the activity of a formal cause's priority of being as such, it is at the same time an effect of such activity and, thereby, a simple efficient cause. In addition, the fact that final causality, when it is manifested in a plan, is manifested in actuality (not merely in effect, as it is in a means) accounts for the ability of the final cause of a living organism to be an integral part of the latter's actuality. A living organism is, as a consequence,
set apart from all inanimate and artificial entities in that it alone possesses, in its genetic template, the actualization of its form's priority of being as a part of its own actuality.

A living organism is, thus, a unique form of entity in that it is of its essence purposeful. Such purposefulness derives from the integration that is the principle of its being. Such integration is, however, more than the minimal integration of form, matter, and end that is necessary for the existence of any entity. The integration that accounts for organic wholeness is the integration of both the causes of generation and the causes of existence within a single actuality: the actuality of the form's priority of being, which constitutes final causality, and the actuality that brings about the immediate proximity of the form and matter of an organism are inseparable from the actuality of the organism itself. If an organism were deprived of each of the powers by which it keeps itself healthy and sound and of the organs through which such powers function, nothing of the organism would remain. An organism exists, then, in order to maintain itself in existence; it is not only essentially purposeful, but wholly so.
Paradoxically, inanimate entities are incapable of manifesting purposefulness because no inanimate entity either can or does exist in a state in which it suffers any privation of its formal goodness. The reason for the latter is quite simple: an inanimate entity is nothing more than that which results from an interaction of fields of force at a given moment in a given place; since such fields cannot fail to interact when they are in the circumstances in which they are able to do so, an entity that results from their interaction possesses potential to be nothing other than what it is. The mutual interaction between fields at a

\[9\] "A field is simply a quantity defined at every point throughout some region of time and space" (Gerard 't Hooft, "Gauge Theories of the Forces between Elementary Particles," *Scientific American*, June 1980, p. 109); a field is, thus, a device for expressing how a fundamental force is conveyed from one place to another. (Ibid.) Not only is each of the fundamental forces embodied in a field (as the electromagnetic force, for example, is embodied in an electromagnetic field), every physical particle, including a photon, the particle of light, can be represented either as a field (Ibid.) or as an instantaneous and local manifestation of the interaction between such forces. (Gary Zukov, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* / New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1979 pp. 217-218.) Moreover, every physical entity that is not itself a particle is constituted of such particles and the interactions between them, and every physical process is constituted of such interactions. If such interactions are in a state of constant flux, then an entity must be nothing more than an interaction that persists long enough to be perceived and defined.
given moment and in a given place thus causes an entity's existence; moreover, the definite way in which such fields interact defines an entity's being. The mutual interaction between fields is, thus, the form of an inanimate entity. As a consequence, insofar as formal goodness is an entity's completeness according to its form, an inanimate entity cannot be anything but formally complete. An inanimate entity that is supposedly incomplete, such as a flawed diamond is, thus, not incomplete according to the cause of its existence, but rather according to some form more properly Platonic than Aristotelian that exists only as an abstraction in the human mind.

When genetic material first came into being on earth, it did so in the manner of an inanimate entity: 

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it was merely the result of the mutual interaction of the physical fields that happened to be present. The interaction of fields that characterized genetic material was different from the interactions that characterized inanimate objects that were formed under the same circumstances in that the animate interaction possessed the power to cause an

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interaction of fields identical to itself under circumstances in which such an interaction would not otherwise have come about. Thus, when the unique conditions ceased that allowed animate matter to be generated through the accidental interactions of physical fields, the generation of animate matter did not. The cause of the existence of an animate object is, thus, not an interaction of fields that comes about by accident, but such an interaction brought about because of and according to a pattern that exists in actuality prior to the actuality of the interaction itself. Thus, the matter that constitutes an organism does not possess a purpose because it is animate, rather it is animate because it possesses a purpose.

The most fundamental property of the nature of a human being insofar as he is a living organism is, as a consequence, purposefulness. Thus, in spite of the fact that reason is the most unique characteristic of human nature, the manifestation of a person's purpose not the quality of his intellect, is what characterizes him. Purpose admits of degrees of quality because, although the possession of purpose by a person is inevitable, the efficacy of the activity of purpose (the determination of the means by which formal goodness may be effected) is not; purpose
exists, in fact, only because the formal goodness of an organism is anything but inevitable. The quality of purpose is judged, then, by the extent to which it does what it is designed to do: that is, by the extent to which it causes a person to attain formal goodness. The design of human purpose is, of course, an intrinsic part of the design of man as a whole; purpose is, thus, inseparable from reason because reason is inseparable from the nature of man. Reason and purpose are each, as a consequence, pervaded by the other: human reason is purposeful because purpose is fundamental to the nature of every organism, and human purpose is uniquely rational because reason is unique to the nature of man. Just as man has a body and a mind in virtue of the physical and rational aspects of his being, his purpose, in virtue of its innate rationality, is actualized not only in a physical template, but in a rational template as well; thus, man has, as an intrinsic and inevitable property of his nature, an idea of his own formal goodness that pervades every conscious expression of purpose. Purpose is rational, then, because as a manifestation of human nature it cannot be otherwise.

Yet, both purpose itself and the means it generates are parts of the actual existence of man and, hence, parts
of his formal goodness; and, like every other aspect of formal goodness, purpose and its means can fail to be complete according to the nature that defines it. Because the rational template is, unlike the genetic template, (which is virtually unchangeable once an organism is in existence) capable of constant modification, the activity of human purpose is to maintain and perfect the rationality of both itself and its means. Such purpose derives from the integration that is the principle of man's being as an organism: such integration means that a human being is formally complete only in an instance in which all of the faculties that he possesses and that have the power to operate in such circumstances are not only operating, but operating as a whole. Thus, desire manifests the self-disposing of the being of man as a whole to formal goodness; and, as a result, in order for an object to be proper to desire, it must also be an object affirmed by reason as good. When a person desires what sound reasoning affirms, then, he is characterized as good because he is functioning fully according to his nature; in such a state of formal completeness, he also attains the end of his being and, thereby, happiness.
CHAPTER FIVE

Volition and Virtue:

Their Natures and Interrelationship

In practice, reason and desire are inseparable: the desire for something induces a person to reason by what means it can be attained.\(^1\) Circumstances exist, of course, in which a desire is for something immediate, the means are self-evident, and so reason need not be consciously exercised in attaining the end; a person may, for example, be thirsty, and the means to slaking his thirst is to drink a glass of water. But, because man's rational and irrational functions are, by his nature, integrated in his psyche, reason is necessarily obtruded on desire even when the higher faculty is not being consciously exercised. Aristotle pointed out that the perception of time often brings desire and reason into conflict;

for the intellect bids us resist on account of the future while our wants bid us act on account of what is immediate; for what is immediately pleasant seems both absolutely pleasant and absolutely good because we do not see the future.  

Such is the dilemma of a person who wants to have his cake and eat it, too. The perception of time, moreover, when it is applied to mere appetite (which is the form of desire concerned directly and exclusively with pleasure and pain) reveals that the pleasure that appetite seeks when left to its own devices is accidental. The same person may think different things pleasant at different times, or the same thing pleasant at one time and unpleasant at another; different people, furthermore, think different things pleasant. Such pleasantness is not an essential part of the object to which it is attributed because it is not a permanent aspect of that object; it is found in a thing, rather, as the result of a particular frame of mind, of a passing affection (pathos), in the person who perceives it.

Thus, an appetite, the result of the perception of pleasantness, is a temporary condition and is opposed to reason,

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2DA 433b9-11.


4NE 1099a12-13; Rackham, p. 40, n. b.
which is the permanent aspect of man and is distinguishable from appetite by virtue of its permanence. Desire, none-theless, need not spring only from the irrational soul's perceptions of things pleasant, because some forms of perception are dependent on the rational principle; as a consequence, the existence of some form of desire better suited than mere appetite to motivating human conduct may be postulated.

The Species of Desire

Aristotle, in fact, distinguished three species of desire (orexis) in terms of the degrees to which the power of appetite may be responsive to reason. The irrational forms of desire are appetite (epithymia), which is closed to reason, and passion (thymos), which heeds reason only partially; wish (boulesis) is the sole form of rational desire and is formed in total co-operation with reason. As desire in general causes the pursuit (dioxis) or the avoidance (phyge) of objects perceived as good or bad, each...

5Stewart, p. 246.
7DMA, 700b20-25; Milo, pp. 22-23; Stewart, p. 88.
of the species of desire has motives of pursuit and of avoidance that are proper to it. Appetite causes the pursuit of the pleasant and the avoidance of the painful; passion, the pursuit of the expedient and the avoidance of the harmful; and wish, the pursuit of the noble and the avoidance of the base.  

Appetite is the lowest form of desire, consisting in those wants necessary to the maintenance of life that man shares with the animals. As the cause of all actions that pursue what appears to be pleasant and avoid what appears to be painful, appetite is, most simply, the impulse toward pleasure. Passion, on the other hand, because it encompasses such a mixed bag of emotions, is the most difficult of the forms of desire to define. Ronald Milo has said that passion is often synonymous with anger (orge*), but he has suggested that all strong emotions that lead to action, such as hate, love, and revenge, should be subsumed under it. James Walsh, while agreeing with Milo that passion

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8 *NE 1104b30-33.*

9 *Milo, p. 24; Walsh, p. 87.*

10 *Rhet. 1369b15; NE 1119b8; Stewart, p. 246.*

11 *Milo, p. 24.*
most probably refers to anger, has added that it might mean a desire for honor or for victory as well.\textsuperscript{12} The last two passions, the desires for honor or for victory, suggest Aquinas's interpretation of \textit{thymos}: passion is a person's inclination to resist agents that oppose objects that are beneficial to him and that favor those that are harmful.\textsuperscript{13} As disparate as the emotions classified under passion may be, the trait that is common to them all and that differentiates each of them from \textit{epithymia} is their association with reason; the outline of the typical passion remains fuzzy, however, because the passions are not all associated with reason in the same way.

Some passions are open to reason insofar as the exercise of the rational faculty is necessary for their formation. A person who, for example, is angry with someone has a strong feeling of displeasure toward that person; yet, such a feeling is far different from a simple aversion caused by \textit{epithymia} because it is the result of some quite

\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Walsh}, p. 87.

conscious reason, such as an insult. An aversion caused by epithymia has behind it no such rational cause; a person who dislikes brussels sprouts because he thinks they taste bad, would no doubt be at a loss, if pressed, to give the reason that they taste bad. Thus, whereas the pleasantness or the painfulness of an object of epithymia is perceived by the irrational part of the soul, the objects of certain passions are perceived as pleasant or painful only through the agency of reason; an insult, which is painful to one's self-esteem, can be apprehended as pain only by reason because reason alone can conceive of self-esteem. Furthermore, the intensity that is customarily attributed to passion is, in those passions formed in association with reason, the result of the operation of reason in perceiving the pleasure or the pain that arouses the passion. An insult is likely to arouse greater anger than another of equal offensiveness if it is perceived as the latest in a long line of injuries; the anger aroused under such circumstances will be greater because reason alone is capable of associating the series of wrongs and finding in the aggregate a cause for greater anger.

The passions formed in association with reason are irrational, nonetheless, because they—and all the other
passions as well—have the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain as their ultimate goal. But passion is said to pursue the expedient and to avoid the harmful because it evolves as a feeling of emergency character under circumstances in which a desired object is perceived as difficult to avoid or to attain. Passion is, thus, in Aquinas's description, "the battler for and defender of" the appetite: it arouses a person to apply himself, against the inclination of his appetite, to a painful object so that, in accord with the inclination that his passion has aroused, he may overcome the opposition of the painful object to the satisfaction of the pleasure that he pursues. A person who is awakened in the middle of the night by the barking of his neighbor's dog may be angered enough to get out of bed (which is against the inclination of his appetite) to do something to stop the dog's barking (which is in accord with the inclination of his anger) so that ultimately he can get to sleep. The person perceives the dog's barking not merely as painful, but also as harmful.


15 Aquinas, Summa, I, 81:2, in TPA, p. 132.
to sleeping, which is the pleasant object that he pursues. The agent, consequently, desires not merely sleep, the object of epithymia, but also, as an object of thymos, the expedient means that will stop the dog's barking and allow him to sleep.

Although the exercise of reason is proper to the nature of a passion, reason clearly does not operate in the formation of anger in the foregoing example. Reason may, however, be exercised in association with passion in a second way by assisting in the formation of the reaction of a passion to a harmful object and may, moreover, serve both functions (the formation of the passion itself and of the passion's response) in association with a single passion. Reason determines the means that will most quickly and efficiently achieve the desired end and, by doing so, leads to the choice of the expedient means that will dispose of the harmful object. The man who is bothered by the barking dog may decide to solve the problem by shooting the dog or by throwing his shoe through his neighbor's window. Hence, passion is said to heed reason hastily and inaccurately;\(^{16}\) reason may lead to the choice of the quickest and most

\(^{16}\)Walsh, p. 88.
efficient means, but it does not always lead an agent to choose the means that are right; and, even when it does, the means are chosen not because they are right, but because they are expedient.

Passion, finally, may be the desire for a pleasant object that an agent perceives as difficult to attain. Passion once again appears as the battler for epithymia and is differentiated from mere appetite because it functions in concert with reason to discover the means by which the object that will satisfy appetite may be attained. Thus, if a man sleeps with a married woman because she has seduced him, he is merely gratifying an appetite insofar as he attains a pleasant object that is immediately present. But if he concocts a plan to accomplish the difficult task of seducing a married woman, he is moved to do so by passion; he desires not the pleasant object alone, but also the expedient means—no matter how unpleasant or how difficult they may be in themselves—that will secure the object of his desire. Passion is unlike epithymia, consequently, because it always operates in conjunction with reason; but it is unlike boulesis because the expediency it aims at makes reason subaltern to appetite.
The appetitive faculty is capable of causing an agent to pursue an object only if it perceives the object as a good. Boulesis is thus the most highly developed species of the appetitive faculty because, as desire shaped to fit the design of the rational principle, it alone seeks objects that are truly good. As noted, earlier, the good that is perceived in an object by epithymia is the pleasant. Such pleasantness does not inhere absolutely in an object because it is only the result of a temporary affection in the perceiver; the good that is perceived by epithymia is not, consequently, a permanent aspect of the thing to which it is attributed and is, as a result, only accidental to the object that a person's appetite causes him to pursue. Such objects may seem to be both absolutely pleasant and absolutely good because a person who acts on account of epithymia does not consider whether the object will remain pleasant and good in the future; if a person seeks the gratification of an appetite, he is concerned only with an immediate good. The good that is perceived in an object by thymos is, similarly, accidental. Passion causes a person to pursue the expedient, which is by definition not good in itself, but good merely as a means to the attainment of a pleasant object. Even though thymos causes a person to use his
power of reasoning to see beyond the present, he looks to the future, not to determine the permanence of an object's goodness, but merely to discover the means (each of which, in its turn, becomes an immediate object) by which a distant object may be made immediate. As a result of the essential irrationality of the appetitive faculty and because, when it acts alone as epithymia or with reason subordinate as thymos, appetition can perceive only the immediate or the apparent good in an object, neither epithymia nor thymos can discern the true nature of the desirability of things, and so they cannot lead to true happiness. The discernment of the true nature of things is, rather, the function of the rational powers. As a consequence, because boulesis is formed according to the dictates of reason and is thus essentially rational, it alone can perceive the real good. In boulesis, reason and desire are at last integrated as the interdependent components of a single human function. Reason cannot alone cause an agent to pursue or to avoid an object; it can only reveal the desirability of an object by marking it as the best end, thus making its goodness perceptible to the appetitive faculty. Boulesis and not

reason alone is, consequently, necessary for the attainment of a real good because only desire in one of its forms can produce movement.\textsuperscript{19} But \textit{boulesis} is similarly dependent on reason: it comes into being as a species of desire only when the goodness of an object is perceived through the agency of the rational faculty.

Happiness results from the perfection of man's inherent function as a rational animal, which consists in the operation of his appetitive faculty as it has been shaped to conform to reason through the operation of his rational faculty; \textit{boulesis}, rational desire, is the embodiment of that function. Because of the commanding role taken by reason in the operation of \textit{boulesis}, the object of \textit{boulesis} is not merely the pleasant or the expedient, but the noble; and the attainment of the noble is the only, though not the inevitable path to the attainment of happiness. Although \textit{boulesis} seeks both happiness and the noble, the two are no more synonymous than are happiness and the pleasant or happiness and the expedient. Happiness is desirable not merely as one among many goods, but rather as the supreme good: it completely fulfills the good of the irrational

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{DA} 433a17.
function of the psyche as well as that of the rational by being pleasant as well as noble. A noble object, on the other hand, does not necessarily appeal to epithymia: fighting to protect one's homeland may be noble, but it is not pleasant. (Aristotle said, however, that a noble action, while it may not be pleasant, can never be painful.\textsuperscript{20} Although he did not make the reason explicit, his logic implies that a thing that is naturally painful to the appetite becomes palatable, that is, painless though not pleasant, because the mind recognizes it as noble.) A noble action does not, however, lead inevitably to happiness: great or frequent misfortune, Aristotle pointed out, may seriously hinder the activities that constitute happiness.\textsuperscript{21} Nonetheless, the way to happiness, whether it is actually attained or not, is through the noble alone since only the noble offers an object in which the ends of desire and those of reason are integrated.

Both Aristotle and Aquinas marked degrees of perfection in an end; the three specific differences Aquinas distinguished were: first, a most perfect, or supreme good, which is absolutely final because it is desired for its own

\textsuperscript{20}NE 1120a27. \textsuperscript{21}NE 1100b29.
sake and never as a means to anything else; a less perfect
good, such as a sweet medicine, which is desired on account
of its own formal goodness but also as a means to some other
end; and last, an imperfect good, such as a bitter medicine,
which is an end that is desired not on account of its own
formal goodness, but only insofar as it is useful as a means
to another object.\textsuperscript{22} Consequently, though an object is
pursued by an agent and is called an end for that reason, it
need not be absolutely final; some ends are sought merely
as means to more desirable objects. An end that is useful
solely as an instrument in attaining another end is an
expedient means to that end; as such it is regarded as
external to the real good being sought. On the other hand,
an end that is sought partly for a real good in itself and
partly as a means to a greater good is a constituent of the
real good being sought; as a necessary means to such an end,
it is also a necessary component of the greater good.\textsuperscript{23} In
the case of happiness, which is lost or won through the
activities a person undertakes throughout an entire

\textsuperscript{22}Aquinas, \textit{CNE}, no. 109 (p. 48); \textit{NE} 1097a27, 1097a35.

\textsuperscript{23}Greenwood, p. 47.
lifetime, the greater end is partially fulfilled in each of its components and totally fulfilled in all of them.

A noble object is, consequently, the culmination of both the pleasant and the expedient as objects of desire. Fighting, as an example, is noble only if it is an expedient means to protecting one's homeland. It is in itself, however, external to the real good being sought and is noble only if desired as an imperfect good, as a bitter medicine that is desired not on account of its own formal goodness, but solely as a means to bringing health to the state; fighting merely to fight is not, however, noble because it is not in itself a rationally desirable end. Serving one's country as president, on the other hand, is an act that is inherently pleasant as well as innately noble. But seeking the presidency merely because it is pleasant is not noble; serving as the president is a noble end only when sought as a less perfect good that is desired justifiably for its own formal goodness, but also for a greater good, the well being of the country. According to Aristotle, then, happiness is the only truly supreme good because it is the only good that is always sought as an end and never as a

24 *NE* 1101a17. 25 Joachim, p. 103.
means to anything else. Because it is the sum of all the constituent ends (those objects both noble and pleasant) that a person has sought after through the course of his life, it is the ultimate term of desire: it is pleasant in itself, and yet it is desirable according to right reason (logos orthos*). Happiness, is, consequently, not only the perfection of man's reason and his desire; it is also final and self-sufficient as an integral good.

Deliberation: The Determination of the Means to the End

Although desire in any of its forms is the only source of a movement toward an end, it is merely the source of such movement; neither boulesis, thymos, nor epithymia is in itself capable of attaining or avoiding that object which it moves an agent to pursue or to avoid. To attain an end, desire must be translated through volition into movement, which takes the shape of a practical action through which the object may be attained. Some objects are immediately attainable because the practical actions by means of which they may be secured are self-apparent; in other instances,

26 NE 1097a33.

27 Aquinas, CNE no.107 (p. 48); no.156 (pp. 68-69); NE 1097b20.
however, in which an agency is involved that operates but
does not always produce the same result, the practical means
to an end can be discovered only through a process of deliber­
ation. Deliberation, insofar as it is concerned with
discovering the means to effect an end, searches out the
causes of things; but it operates within a severely limited
province. Of the four possible causes listed by Aristotle
for the existence of things—nature, necessity, chance, and
intelligent human agency—only the last is subject to
deliberation; within the realm of intelligent human agency,
moreover, a person deliberates only about those things that
he possesses the power to execute. Furthermore, because
an end is always assumed before deliberation begins, deliber­
ation is concerned only with discovering the best means to
an end, not with judging whether the end itself is best.  

28 NE 1112b4.  29 NE 1112a32-35. 30 NE 1112b1.

31 NE 1112b13-14. The only end whose absolute priority
man assumes and which is, consequently, never the subject
of deliberation, is the supreme end, happiness. All of the
actions that fill a lifetime, although, as individual
instances of right conduct (eupraxia*), they are the compon­
ents of happiness and, as such, are taken as ends, may be the
subjects of deliberation because they are also the means
through which happiness is attained. Though an orator does
not deliberate whether he is to convince his audience, he
has likely deliberated about whether the thing of which he
wishes to persuade the audience is worthy of the effort;
before convincing his hearers to go to war, he will have
determined through deliberation that, under the circum­
stances, war is a means to happiness.
An orator, for example, does not deliberate about whether he is to convince his audience, nor does a physician deliberate about whether he is to heal his patient; rather, they take some end for granted, and consider how and by what means it can be achieved. If they find that there are several means of achieving it, they proceed to consider which of these will attain it most easily and best. If there is only one means by which it can be accomplished, they ask how it is to be accomplished by that means, and by what means that means can itself be achieved, until they reach the first link in the chain of causes, which is the last in the order of discovery.32

Successful deliberation, consequently, results in the discovery of an action that may be undertaken immediately by an agent toward the attainment of an end.

Unlike epithymia, thymos, and boulesis, deliberation is a purely intellectual process and consists in the operation of logos* and dianoia*.33 Both logos and dianoia lend themselves to a variety of translations into English terminology,34 but, in the context of the passage in which Aristotle applied them to the deliberative process preceding proairesis,35 simple translations do not adequately explain

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32NE 1112b16-20; cf. Aquinas, CNE nos. 475-476 (p. 208).
33NE 1112a15-17.
35NE 1112a16-17.
their meaning. Logos has been rendered in that passage as "reasoning." and as "a rational principle," and dianoia, as "some process of thought," and simply by "thought." J. A. Stewart has attempted to clarify the connotations of the terms by describing logos as "an association of ideas, a train of thought, an intellectual process" and dianoia as "the faculty of joining and separating thoughts;" but his explanations shed no light on the way in which the two are joined to constitute deliberation. The difficulty with the terms— both in English and in Greek— is that they can mean so many things that, to mean anything specific, they must be defined in some manner within the context in which they are used. Aristotle supplied such a definition through the use of an analogy:

For when deliberating one seems in the procedure described to be pursuing an investigation or analysis that resembles the analysis of a figure in geometry— indeed it appears that though not all investigation is deliberation, . . . yet all deliberation is investigation— and the last step in the analysis seems to be the first step in the execution of the design.41

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36 NE 1112a16. 37 Commins and Linscott, p. 46.
38 NE 1112a17. 39 Commins and Linscott, p. 46.
40 Stewart, p. 250. 41 NE 1112b20-24.
Dianoia is, thus, an investigative process of thought, a "joining and separating of thoughts" in the sense of collecting one's thoughts on a matter, applying those that are pertinent and rejecting those that are not; logos is the power of ordering in a logical form the thoughts that have been collected so that a conclusion about the subject under investigation may be reached. The result of deliberation is the selection of an action that is immediate, possible, and first when a series of actions is necessary for the attainment of the end; but deliberation may also reveal that the means to an end are not in an agent's power to undertake, that an end is not worth the means,\textsuperscript{42} or that the means to a desirable object are too ignoble in themselves to be employed.\textsuperscript{43} Deliberation, therefore, employs dianoia and logos in such a way that together they constitute a review of the circumstances of a case in terms of the possibility and the advisability of taking action under those circumstances.\textsuperscript{44}

Deliberation presumes that an agent possesses a capacity to distinguish between real good and apparent good.

\textsuperscript{42}Stewart, p. 262. \textsuperscript{43}See NE 1110a29-32. \textsuperscript{44}Stewart, p. 250.
and that he has the ability to recognize that some pleasures and some pains are greater than others (the evaluation of what is good and what is not is more complex in man than in other animals simply because his powers of discrimination are greater).\(^{45}\) The faculty that is most important in deliberating well is, consequently, practical wisdom (\textit{phronesis}\(^\ast\)), the ability to reason well about what is in one's own best interest.\(^{46}\) Although the virtues of Aristotle's ethics aim at a happiness that is attainable here on earth and have, as a consequence, no need of transcendental sanction, practical wisdom is not meant as a euphemism for an every-man-for-himself-and-may-the-devil-take-the-hindmost egoism. On the contrary, man, in Aristotle's zoology, is a social animal, and a prerequisite for each man's achieving individual happiness is that society be rightly organized to promote the welfare of men in general.\(^{47}\) The good of society, consequently, is always placed above that of the individual.

\(^{45}\)Milo, pp. 16, 19, 21-22.

\(^{46}\)Ibid., p. 58.

\(^{47}\)Rackham, pp. xvi-xvii.
Wisdom, whether the practical species (phronesis) or the speculative (sophia*), is the most perfect mode of knowledge,\textsuperscript{48} according to Aristotle, because it is not just particular knowledge acquired through experience, but a universal knowledge of causes and principles.\textsuperscript{49} Speculative wisdom is a function of the theoretical (epistemonikon*) part of the rational psyche, the part that is concerned with the pursuit of pure knowledge and whose object is necessary things (those things that must be according to natural law). Practical wisdom, on the other hand, is a function of the deliberative (logistikon*) faculty; the object of the deliberative faculty is contingent things and, for that reason, it directs human conduct, which has nothing fixed or invariable about it.\textsuperscript{50} Practical wisdom is concerned with action only as it is related to things that may be seen as good or bad for human beings;\textsuperscript{51} and, because the attainment of truth is the function of every part of the intellect, and just as the function of boulesis is to desire

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{48}] NE 1141a16.
  \item[\textsuperscript{49}] Meta. 982a2-3.
  \item[\textsuperscript{50}] J. Donald Monan, Moral Knowledge and its Methodology in Aristotle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 64; NE 1104a5, 1141a1.
  \item[\textsuperscript{51}] NE 1140b5-7.
\end{itemize}
only what is truly good, the specific function of phronesis is the attainment of truth about the means by which a rightly desired end is achieved. 52 To deliberate successfully about the means to a real good, consequently, a person must be able to discern through his rational faculty not only what is possible, but also what is proper. Practical wisdom is, thus, not merely the rational capacity that enables a person to calculate accurately the effectiveness of the alternative courses of action open to him; it is, beyond that, reason that is right, a person's ability to select an immediate plan of action while keeping an eye on the distant mark that indicates what is ultimately best, and to measure his plan of action by that standard. 53 Phronesis operates at least in part through intelligence (nous*), the rational intuition by which an undemonstrable first principle is apprehended through induction. 54 The principle that practical wisdom apprehends is the first principle of an action, i.e., the end to which such an action as an instance of human conduct is a means 55 (and that end is, ultimately, 

52 NE 1139a30-31. 53 Greenwood, p. 59.
54 NE 1140b31-1141a8.
55 NE 1140b17.
always happiness). But a moral agent also seeks a good that inheres in each action in itself. That good is the moral mean, and, as a component of happiness, it makes the action that embodies it not only a means to, but also a constituent of happiness.

Happiness is the supreme end of man's actions because, as he naturally desires it, it is the object of his appetitive faculty, and, as he regards it as truly good, it is the object of his rational faculty; happiness is, thus, desirable as an end because it is sought as the perfection of man's singular function as a rational animal. Happiness is the natural object of the appetitive faculty because it is, of its essence, pleasant; but the rational principle by which happiness is measured as truly good is less obvious. The element that forges, in Aristotle's chain of logic, the link binding together happiness and rational goodness is the mean (to meson*).

Aristotle first attempted to explain the mean through a mathematical analogy:

Now in everything that is continuous and divisible it is possible to take the larger part, or the smaller part, or an equal part, and these parts

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56 Greenwood, p. 58.
may be larger, smaller, and equal either with respect to the thing itself or relatively to us; the equal part being a mean between excess and deficiency. By the mean of the thing I denote a point equally distant from either extreme, which is one and the same for everybody; by the mean relative to us, that amount which is neither too much nor too little, and this is not one and the same for everybody.57

The mathematical mean of a thing is, according to H. Rackham, a part that, when removed from the whole, is equal to the part that is left, i.e., a half; it is the mean that is exactly in the middle between all or none.58 Aristotle maintained, however, not that the mean is the mid-point between all and none, but that it is the mid-point between excess and deficiency; for example, if ten pounds is excess and two pounds deficiency, then six pounds is to meson because six minus two is equal to ten minus six.59 But such a mean is based on a proportion that is relative to an arbitrary arithmetical progression, while Rackham's, on the other hand, is based on the absolute proportion of one half to the whole. Whatever the case, W. F. R. Hardie has

57NE 1106a27-32.

58Rackham, pp. 90-91, n. c.

59NE 1106a33-35.
suggested that Aristotle's mathematical example is mere "lecturer's patter" and should not be taken too seriously; and Aristotle himself admitted that "we cannot arrive by this method at the mean relative to us." The mean relative to man alone possesses ethical significance, however, because its habitual observance constitutes virtue. Rackham, in a note on his translation of the passage above, has also pointed out that Greek comparatives, 'larger,' 'smaller,' etc., may also mean 'too large,' 'too small,' etc.; and there is the same ambiguity in the words translated 'excess' and 'deficiency.'

Meson, furthermore, is a synonym for metrion, 'moderate' or 'of the right amount,' and ison can be translated by 'equitable' as well as by 'equal.' So "to d' ison mésonti hyperbolês kai élleipseos," which sounds rigidly mathematical when translated "the equal part being a mean between excess and deficiency," may also mean that the mean is a moderate or suitable amount between what is more than is equitable and what is less than is equitable.

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61 NE 1106a36. 62 See NE 1106b36-1107a2.
63 Rackham, p. 90, n. c. 64 Ibid. 65 NE 1106a29.
For example, one can be frightened or bold, feel desire or anger or pity, and experience pleasure and pain in general, either too much or too little, and in both cases wrongly; whereas to feel these feelings at the right time, on the right occasion, towards the right people, for the right purpose and in the right manner, is to feel the best amount of them, which is the mean amount—and the best amount is of course the mark of virtue.66

Conduct, consequently, chiefly fails to conform to the mean quantitatively if the intensity of an emotion is either too great or too little.67 (Under certain conditions and in terms of certain virtues, however, action can also quantitatively fail to keep to the mean; if a person eats or drinks too much, for example, not only is the amount both of the emotion ἐπιθυμία he experiences and of the substance he consumes excessive, but he also, literally performs the action too much.)68 But no absolute proportion between the amount of an emotion that a person experiences and the amount that he is capable of experiencing exists by which the mean amount, which he ought to experience, may be determined merely quantitatively. On the contrary, a

66 NE 1106b18-22.
67 Hardie, pp. 132-133.
68 Ibid., p. 132.
person's conduct achieves a quantitative mean only when his actions and emotions are marked by a qualitative mean, which occurs when he acts and experiences emotions at the right time, on the right occasion, towards the right people, for the right purpose, and in the right manner. Thus, the ethical mean, unlike the mathematical mean, does not consist arbitrarily in one half of a whole because it is not concerned exclusively with quantity; it is concerned also and primarily with a quality: the suitability both of emotions and of the actions that are their consequences (which together constitute human conduct) to the circumstances in which they occur.

Just as the ethical mean, because it is a relative amount suitable under the circumstances rather than an absolute proportion, is not one and the same for all situations, neither is the ethical mean, because it is relative to every person individually, one and the same for all men. With that in mind, Aristotle suggested guidelines for each person's attaining the mean relative to himself. He observed that, because there are many degrees of excess and deficiency but only one mean, hitting the mean is very

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69 Ibid. 70 NE 1106b35.
difficult (which is the reason that it has value as a goal) and that often one extreme is worse than another; he suggested that, as a consequence, a person should aim at the mean by avoiding the extreme that is the more opposed to it, since the commission of a lesser evil is better than failing entirely. The agent should, second, take note of the errors to which he himself is most prone; and, third, he must in everything be most of all on guard against what is pleasant and against pleasure; for when pleasure is on her trial we are not impartial judges.

"The ethical mean," as Hardie concluded, "must be appropriate to circumstances including facts about the agent himself." 74

Choice: Efficacious Rational Desire

But neither wish, deliberation, nor practical wisdom alone or in combination is the means by which ethical action, the action characteristic of the moral purpose of an agent, is effected. Desire may occur without reasoning,

71NE 1109a30-1109b2.
72NE 1109b2-7. 73NE 1109b7-9.
74Hardie, p. 135.
and reasoning without desire; but it is only when the two are— or ought to be— combined that they are ethically important. When joined with a view to an end, they are the efficient cause of choice, and choice, in its turn, is the efficient cause of ethical action.

Aristotle defined choice as a voluntary action preceded by deliberation. Not all voluntary actions are, however, choices: "choice, then, seems to be voluntary, but not the same thing as the voluntary {to hekousion}; the latter extends more widely." Any action may be called voluntary merely if it is caused by a movement of the appetitive faculty (such a movement presupposes that the appetitive faculty possesses a knowledge of a perceived good through reason or the senses). Children and animals thus share with rational man the capacity for voluntary action, Aquinas said, in the sense that they operate by their own spontaneous motion. Yet they do not share in the act of choice, because their actions are not performed

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75 Greenwood, p. 55. 76 NE 1139a25, 31-32.
77 NE 1112a15. 78 NE 1111b7-8.
79 Aquinas, CNE, no. 366 (p. 175).
as a result of deliberation, which is a prerequisite for choice.\textsuperscript{80}

For the same reason, Aristotle differentiated between the 'sudden acts' of a rational agent and his choices;\textsuperscript{81} while sudden acts are voluntary "because their source lies within us," Aquinas explained, "they are not said to occur by choice, because they are not done deliberately."\textsuperscript{82}

Although a process of deliberation is essential to the formation of a choice, Aristotle's definition of choice as a voluntary action preceded by a deliberation does not satisfactorily delimit the nature of choice primarily because of the ambiguity of the term 'voluntary action.'

The voluntary action from which both he and Aquinas differentiated choice is not, in fact, properly comparable to choice at all, but rather to the sort of action that is the object of choice. A spontaneous, non-deliberative voluntary action of an animal, a child, or a rational agent is the result of a movement of the appetitive faculty: desire, which is internal, generates external voluntary action. In

\textsuperscript{80} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Exposition of Aristotle's Ethics} (\textit{In decem libros Ethicorum Expositio}), no. 435, in \textit{TPA}, p. 188.

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{NE} 1111b10.

\textsuperscript{82} Aquinas, \textit{Exposition of Aristotle's Ethics}, no. 436, in \textit{TPA}, p. 188.
the same way, choice, which is internal, generates external ethical action. Choice is comparable, consequently, not to the external action that is the result of a movement of the appetitive faculty, but to the appetitive faculty itself. Choice must, in fact, be by definition a function of the appetitive faculty because desire alone can cause movement; for that reason, Aristotle, in his final definition of choice, called it "a deliberative desire [bouleutike orexis*] of things in our power." 83

Deliberation is an essential element of proairesis because to proaireton,* the object of choice, is the kind of voluntary action (i.e., ethical action) that deliberation has marked out before the agent's appétition adopts it. 84 Choice is, consequently, not mere preference; the function of determining which of a number of alternative means will best secure the desired end belongs, rather, to deliberation. As a consequence, to proaireton is to probebouleumemon,* that which has been decided on by previous deliberation, 85 while choice itself is the desire to adopt to

83 NE 1133a11.
84 Joachim, p. 100.
85 Ibid., pp. 100-101.
probebouleumenon, the means that have been judged most efficacious in attaining the end. Choice is, therefore, more than a voluntary action preceded by deliberation; it is rational desire assenting to the result of deliberation.\textsuperscript{86}

Yet choice is not the same thing as boulesis, although Aristotle admitted that choice "seems near to it"\textsuperscript{87} when described as 'rational desire.' Their resemblance is, however, only familial: both boulesis and choice belong to the same faculty, "the rational appetite which is called the will."\textsuperscript{88} Boulesis is the function of the rational appetite when it is directed toward the good without qualification; one can, for example, wish for something that is impossible, such as immortality. Choice, on the other hand, is the function of the rational appetite when it is directed toward a good that an agent possesses the means and the power to achieve. Boulesis is, consequently, the act of desiring an end, while choice is the act of desiring the means to an end.\textsuperscript{89} Beyond that, choice, as the accumulation

\textsuperscript{86}Ibid., p. 100.

\textsuperscript{87}NE 1111b20.

\textsuperscript{88}Aquinas, Exposition of Aristotle's Ethics, no. 443, in TPA, p. 188.

\textsuperscript{89}Aquinas, CNE, no. 443, no. 446 (p. 196).
of boulesis, a process of deliberation subsequent to boulesis, and the desiring of the single means (or the most proximate means in a series) that has been both distinguished as the best and judged to be within an agent's power, is efficacious, having the power to bring its object into being. As a consequence of its efficacy, proairesis is distinguished from a mere wish.

Aristotle's analysis of the nature of the will, however, has one aspect that makes it markedly different from the common understanding of man's autonomy. While philosophers and psychologists may question the very freedom of man's will, their dispute would be pointless were it not for the two commonly held assumptions, first, that man at least appears to possess a conscience (the faculty with which he judges whether an act is right or wrong and thereby knows whether he ought or ought not to do it) and, second, that he then appears to be free to follow or not to follow his conscience by choosing to do or not to do the act. The independence of man's exercise of his will from the judgment of his conscience is the source of the most common of ethical anomalies: that a man may know what is right and yet

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90 Joachim, pp. 102-103.
choose what is wrong. Aristotle, however, by reason of what R.-A. Gauthier has labeled his "optimistic humanism," attempted to construct a theory of volition in which the independence of the will from the conscience was abrogated, in which action followed judgment as the night the day. Aristotle was not acting in ignorance of what are now and were then the standard understandings of conscience and will: the Greek society of the Fourth Century B.C. possessed both the concept of synesis,* or antecedent conscience (which commands a person before he acts to act well), and that of syneidesis,* or consequent conscience (which causes remorse in a person when he has acted badly). Aristotle, however, rejected both because both presume

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91 R.-A. Gauthier, p. 27.
92 Because Aristotle wished to make the judgment of the conscience compulsory, he transferred the power to command from synesis to phronesis, and re-interpreted synesis as merely the power of making judgments. (NE 1143a9-10) According to Aristotle, synesis is, consequently, neither the possession nor acquisition of phronesis, but rather the faculty of opinion that judges rightly about matters that are in the sphere of phronesis and so allows an agent to understand those matters.
93 Gauthier, p. 24.
and he believed that sin could be suppressed; with them went the common concept of a will independent of conscience, because, for sin to be logically possible, choice must be separate from judgment.\(^{95}\)

Aristotle, as noted above, conceived of choice as the cumulative product of boulesis and deliberation. Man innately desires happiness, but, in order to discern which particular actions constitute happiness, he must exercise his reason.\(^{96}\) Yet desire rather than reason is the faculty that motivates a person to pursue an end effectively; consequently, the two function jointly as boulesis. Because boulesis cannot itself determine the means necessary to achieving a desired end, however, a person again employs his rational faculty,

\(^{94}\)Sin (peccatum\(^*\)) is, according to Aquinas, the privation of good in a (human or non-human) act, but it is usually used as a synonym of fault (culpa\(^*\)), an evil human action. (Henri Grenier, Thomistic Philosophy, Vol. IV: Moral Philosophy/Charlottetown, Canada: St. Dunstan's University, 1950\textsuperscript{7}, 882:1, p. 104). Culpa, which is translated by 'fault' or 'blame' (Cassel's New Latin Dictionary), also connoted guilt, which peccatum, 'error,' 'fault,' or 'sin' (Ibid.), does not. The distinction is retained in English in 'peccant,' 'sinful' (Webster's New World Dictionary) and in 'culpable,' 'blameworthy' (Ibid.).

\(^{95}\)Gauthier, pp. 24, 27.

\(^{96}\)The form of reason that is necessary to know the ends that are the components of the supreme good is phronesis. (NE 1142b32-33).
in the form of practical wisdom, to discover the means to the end. **Phronesis** recognizes the best means not only by the latter's efficiency in accomplishing an end, but also by its moral rightness in doing so; **phronesis**, consequently, is the faculty by which a person knows that he ought to take a certain course of action and that he ought to take it, not merely because it is the most efficient, but because it is his duty to do so under the circumstances. The juncture between the moral imperative of **phronesis** and the act of choice is the point in the process of **proairesis** at which Aristotle thought the gap between the dictates of conscience and the exercise of the will could be closed. Although he did not maintain that knowledge of an end invariably includes desire for it, he postulated that knowledge of the means to a desired end is of itself efficacious: at the moment in the process of deliberation when practical wisdom discovers the means to an end, the desire for the end that provoked the agent's deliberation at the outset is already present and sufficient to effect the agent's implementation of such means.\(^98\)

\(^97\)See Gauthier, pp. 20-21.

\(^98\)Ibid., p. 26.
Aristotle's interpretation of the action of the will does not, however, destroy the free character of volition. A person remains free to wish for what he will, but, in Aristotle's view, whatever he wishes for, he wishes for because reason has judged it as best. Similarly, a person is free to do or not to do a certain act that is a means toward an end, but if he chooses to do it, he so chooses because reason has determined that it is the best means to the end. Although Aristotle's outline of the process of moral choice does not seem at odds with the customary conception of free will, it has one major flaw: it does not admit of a case in which a person clear-headedly forms an intention of acting against his convictions.  

Neither Aristotle, Socrates, nor Plato thought that appetite or passion could really overcome reason. 

Although Aristotle attempted to integrate the body and the mind of man much more than they were in Platonism, the Platonic view that the mind is the essential part of man remained latent in his ethics; thus, despite his attempt to escape from


100 Milo, p. 75.
intellectualism, he retained reason as the sole source of value.101

Aristotle's assumption of reason as the sole source of value led him to postulate that a practical syllogism* is the mechanism by which a rational desire for an end is made efficacious in particular circumstances; a practical syllogism is that which causes a moral choice to follow inevitably from ethical deliberation. Aristotle did not propose the practical syllogism as the mechanism that effects all voluntary actions; that is clearly impossible since animals and children, which are non-rational agents, are also capable of voluntary actions. The practical syllogism is, rather, the mechanism that causes a proairesis, a person's choosing the means that will attain the ends that he has perceived as components of happiness and that he desires by virtue of boulesis. The practical syllogism, G. E. M. Anscombe has pointed out, was born of two strands in Aristotle's thought: first, that human action is set in motion by thought; and second, that such thought must have a starting point.102 The starting point takes the form of

101Gauthier, p. 29.

102Anscombe, p. 66.
of a 'grand universal premise,' which states that an agent should perform those actions that embody his idea of eupraxia, or 'acting well';\textsuperscript{103} for each instance in which he may act well or badly (and when a good man attains his idea of eupraxia by acting well, such an action is a component of happiness), there is a universal premise that is a specific application of the grand universal premise. From such a universal premise, consequently, a person reasons that he should or should not do a particular thing. As an example of the practical syllogism, Aristotle suggested the following:

\textit{All sweet things ought to be tasted. (Major premise.)}\n\textit{Yonder thing is sweet. (Minor premise.)}\n\textit{Therefore, I ought to taste yonder thing.}\textsuperscript{104}

Aristotle reasoned that the nature of the practical syllogism enables it to serve as the mechanism that compels the will to complement the judgment of the conscience:

\begin{quote}
when the two premises are combined, just as in theoretic reasoning the mind is compelled to affirm the resulting conclusion, so in the case of practical premises you are forced at once to do it.\textsuperscript{105}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{103}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 67. \textit{Eupraxia} is also often translated 'right conduct.'
\textsuperscript{104}\textit{NE} 1147a28-30.
\textsuperscript{105}\textit{NE} 1147a26-28.
The practical syllogism is, thus, the mechanism in the operation of the will that accounts for the fact, in Aristotle's view, that whatever reason affirms as true in regard to action, desire invariably pursues.

Aristotle's practical syllogism is complicated by the fact that it may be understood either in a literal sense or as an analogy; which of the two understandings is correct is not clear. If Aristotle meant the practical syllogism to be taken literally, its essentially rational nature is the very thing that, according to the fundamental premises of the Nicomachean Ethics, makes such a syllogism unworkable as the mechanism of ethical action. While the conclusion that "I ought to taste yonder thing" in fact follows logically from the combination of the major and the minor premises of the syllogism, the conclusion does not possess the power to compel a person to act. Logic appeals only to reason, and reason, as Aristotle had already asserted, cannot alone move a person to act. The practical syllogism in and of itself, consequently, possesses the power only to bring the appetitive faculty to the threshold of choice.

Aristotle's concept of the practical syllogism, if it is to

\[\text{\textsuperscript{106}} \text{NE} \text{ 1139a36.}\]
be taken literally, assumes the very thing it is meant to demonstrate: it assumes that desire brought to the threshold of choice inevitably becomes efficacious.

If Aristotle's concept of the practical syllogism is meant to be understood, on the other hand, as an analogy for the operation of the transformation of boulesis into choice, its success as an explanation depends on an understanding of each of the elements of the syllogism as possessing not only rational content, but emotional content as well. Aristotle said that the major premise of a practical syllogism is an opinion (doxa*)\(^{107}\) that expresses an agent's idea of eupraxia. As noted in Chapter Three, Aristotle also said that pleasure and pain are a sort of assertion and negation: "to feel pleasure or pain is to adopt an attitude with the sensitive mean towards good or bad as such;"\(^{108}\) the activities of the sensitive capacity called pleasure and pain are, thus, analogous to those activities of the rational capacity called opinions. The practical syllogism presents an analogy for a process by which, for every rational element formed in the part of the consciousness that is rational, a

\(^{107}\)NE 1147a25.

\(^{108}\)DA 431a10-13.
sensitive element is formed in the part of the consciousness that is sensitive; as a result, when the rational faculty concludes that a given action is necessary, the appetitive faculty 'feels' the same. The appetitive faculty's feeling that a given action is necessary is, in essence, the definition of volition given in the preceding chapter. What makes a practical syllogism the mechanism of rational choice rather than of mere volition is that the images in the imagination to which the appetitive faculty responds with its opinions have been presented to it by reason rather than by the senses.

**Virtue: A Habit of Right Desire**

Aristotle was aware that, for his ethical system to work, both the perception of acting well as one's moral duty and the desire to act well had to be compulsive; as a consequence, he sought to account for such compulsiveness by the presence of ethical virtue. Virtue compels a person to act because it is a fixed habit (*hexis kuria*) of the faculty that causes human action, and it is the cause of goodness in those acts that it compels because it is an excellence (*arete*) of that faculty.

While the English word 'virtue' denotes only moral goodness, *'arete,'* its Greek equivalent, means, in addition
to moral goodness, any human excellence that is cultivated through training. As a consequence, the Greeks differentiated one class of virtue from another according to whether it was a quality of the mind or of the body: an excellence of the body was, thus, a biological (physikos*) virtue; an excellence of the rational faculty, an intellectual (dianoetikos*) virtue; and an excellence of the appetitive faculty, an ethical (ethikos*) virtue. The term 'ethikos,' consequently, distinguishes a thing not from something that is immoral or unethical, but rather from something that is intellectual or biological. An excellence is defined as a quality that is cultivated only through training because it is a habit through which the faculty that possesses it acquires the perfection of its function; a habit of excellence is not necessary for an act to which a power is inclined by its very nature. Man, for example, naturally possesses the power of locomotion;

109NE 1103a4-6; see also Bourke, p. 214, and Stewart, p. 169.

110A Greek-English Lexicon, 1849 ed., s.v. ἠθικός.

but to develop the ability to run a four-minute mile requires a cultivation of the *physike arete* of his physical capacity (*dynamis*). Similarly, reason makes man naturally capable of counting, but to develop the ability to understand and employ the principles of calculus requires a cultivation of the *dianoetike arete* of his intellectual capacity.

Man is, in the same way, naturally capable of feeling emotion, which Aristotle defined as any state of consciousness that is accompanied by pleasure or pain.¹¹² A person does not, as a consequence, need to cultivate an *ethike arete* simply to pursue pleasure or to avoid pain; the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain are the natural powers of his appetitive faculty. But beyond the natural power to feel emotion, man has a capacity (*dynamis*) for feeling pleasure and pain; he may feel too much, too little, or an appropriate amount, and because of that capacity he is liable for the degree and the propriety of his emotions.¹¹³ In cultivating an ethical excellence of that capacity, a person develops the ability to feel pleasure and pain in the right amount (i.e., according to the mean) and to feel pleasure in what is truly good rather than in what offers

¹¹² *NE* 1105b23. ¹¹³ *NE* 1105b24-25.
only immediate gratification. Because the supreme good, happiness, consists in "the active exercise of the soul's faculties in conformity with excellence or virtue,"\textsuperscript{114} i.e., in acting well (\textit{eupraxia})—acting well is truly good and gives pleasure to the good man.\textsuperscript{115} The function of all men is to reason and to desire, and a good man performs that function well by exercising desire in association with reason.\textsuperscript{116} He brings desire under the control of reason by cultivating an excellence of appétition that is beyond the natural power of his appettitive faculty and that enables him to desire what reason tells him is truly good.

To label virtue, without any further explanation, as a habit may be misleading because of the equivocacy of the latter term: 'habit' may be used to translate both 'hexis,' a habit that is a fixed disposition, and 'éthos,'\textsuperscript{117} a habit that is a customary practice. The term is doubly troublesome when used to describe ethical virtue; unlike an intellectual virtue, which is the product of instruction, an

\textsuperscript{114} \textit{NE} 1098a17-18. \textsuperscript{115} \textit{NE} 1113a25.

\textsuperscript{116} \textit{NE} 1098a14-16.

\textsuperscript{117} \textit{Éthos}, (\textit{έθος}), practice, is not to be confused with \textit{éthos} (\textit{ἔθος}), character.
ethical virtue is a habit (hexis) that is the result of habit (ethos) i.e., a fixed disposition that is the result of practice. But 'disposition' is also an unsatisfactory translation of 'hexis' because it may imply that an ethical virtue is an innate tendency. Ethical virtues are not, however, inborn, for no natural property can be altered by habit ethos. For instance, it is the nature of a stone to move downwards, and it cannot be trained to move upwards, even though you should try to train it to do so by throwing it up into the air ten thousand times; nor can fire be trained to move downwards nor can anything else that naturally behaves in one way be trained into a habit hexis of behaving in another way.

Nature can only supply a person with the capacity to receive a habit; a habit is not like a sense, which must be present before it can be used, but rather like a skill, which is acquired only by actually practicing it. To add to the confusion, 'disposition' may also be translated 'diathesis,' a quality a person may possess that undergoes change much more quickly than a hexis; it is a hexis in the making, a pattern of behavior in a comparatively unstable state.

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120 NE 1103a25-32. 121 Cat. 8b25, 9a10.
122 Joachim, p. 85.
Ethical virtue is formed, consequently, first by cultivating a capacity through practice (ēthos) into a disposition (diathesis) and then by bringing such a disposition through further practice to maturity as a hexis kuria, a fixed or established condition.\textsuperscript{123}

It is the fixedness of ethical virtue, joined with its excellence in desiring what is truly good, that compels man to act well. A hexis kuria, Aristotle pointed out, is not voluntary as an action is; the latter is controlled consciously from beginning to end and at each stage throughout while a hexis kuria is controlled only at the beginning: "each separate addition to \textit{it}\ is imperceptible, as is the case with the growth of a disease."\textsuperscript{124} Consequently, while the practice of voluntarily choosing actions of a certain type in a number of discreet and unrelated instances is the ēthos from which a hexis kuria is formed, once fixed, the hexis kuria, because it embodies an inclination to choose the sort of action that fits an already established pattern, determines a subsequent choice far more readily than volition alone.

\textsuperscript{123}NE 1106b36.

\textsuperscript{124}NE 1114b30–1115a2.
The Interdependence of Virtue and Practical Wisdom

The function of virtue is, consequently, to assure that a person habitually desire what reason has pointed out as truly good, and such a habit of desire is fixed through the practice of choosing the type of actions that keep to the mean. An individual choice of a particular action, however, is dependent not so much upon the presence of virtue as upon the operation of practical wisdom, which, in a precedent process of deliberation, has determined that the action being chosen is the best means to the end. Phronesis, in fact, serves a dual function in the moral activity that culminates in a choice. The process of deliberation in which practical wisdom operates had been set in motion beforehand by boulesis, the appetitive faculty that is the product of desire suffused with the rational principle that identifies those ends that are truly good; the form that reason assumes to accomplish that function is practical wisdom. Practical wisdom, thus, not only enables a person to distinguish the action that is the means to one of the component ends of happiness; it is also the faculty that enables him to determine which actions constitute happiness.¹²⁵

¹²⁵NE 1142b32-33.
and, hence, is the faculty that, when joined with desire, forms boulesis. Because practical wisdom determines the means that are best for attaining a particular end and because the ends that are the components of happiness may also be looked upon as the means to happiness, just as practical wisdom functions in deliberation to distinguish the immediate means that ought to be undertaken to attain an end, it also joins with desire in the form of boulesis to distinguish the ends that ought to be wished for. Furthermore, just as the best means to an end is determined by measuring it according to the mean, the mean is also the standard by which practical wisdom determines the end that ought to be wished for; and, as L. H. G. Greenwood has noted, because attributing the quality of being the mean to a moral action is the same thing as attributing the quality of being the best means to an end, moral actions that best lead to happiness are best in themselves.126 The ends of human conduct, as a consequence, are formed not by desire alone, but by desire operating in concert with practical wisdom.127 An action that is objectively morally good (because it keeps to the mean) but that is done for some reason other than its

126Greenwood, p. 59. 127Monan, p. 70.
moral goodness is not, then, a mark of virtue. Morally responsible action must be more than simply volitional; it depends not only upon performing an action that keeps to the mean, but also upon knowing that the reason that such an action is morally good is on account of its keeping to the mean.\textsuperscript{128} Virtue may be described as moral inertia: once the momentum of right desire (\textit{orexis orthe*}) has been established it is more difficult to stop or to change direction than it is to keep going along its present path; but setting it in motion on the right path in the first place is wholly dependent upon first perceiving and then pursuing those actions that embody the right amount. The functioning of moral virtue is dependent, consequently, upon the functioning of prudence.

The functioning of practical wisdom is, however, similarly dependent upon the functioning of virtue. \textit{Phronesis} is a critical faculty, and the mean, the standard by which it measures human actions, is not entirely objective; it is not a mathematical mean, but the mean relative to the emotions and the actions of a person, the experiencing of

\textsuperscript{128}Ibid., p. 80.
pleasure and pain . . . at the right time, on the right occasion, towards the right people, for the right purpose and in the right manner, . . . [i.e.,] the experiencing of the best amount of them. 129

As a consequence, moral knowledge (the knowledge of the mean), by which practical wisdom judges actions, must at some point be dependent upon morally good conduct. While a person may acquire a knowledge of the mean for the most part through the example of others or through an acquaintanceship with moral conventions, it is unlikely that, in the course of an entire lifetime, he will escape being faced with at least one question of moral conduct to which neither conventions nor the example of others apply. He will know the 'best amount' of pleasure and pain to feel and, consequently, the proper action to take in such a situation only because of his inclination to desire the right amount, which is the result of his practice of doing so.

Moreover, even moral knowledge acquired from example and convention can be traced to virtue. Examples of morally good conduct come naturally from men who possess virtue; a convention, similarly, is established when a certain dilemma for which no precedent exists is solved in a way that is

129 NE 1106b19-21.
considered best, and the candidate for finding such a solution is, logically, a person who is inclined to virtuous action as a result of his practice of acting according to the mean. Even natural ethical virtue (physike ethike arete), which is a natural goodness of desire, an innate tendency to keep to the mean,\(^\text{130}\) cannot account for the knowledge of the mean that is essential to prudence. Although the aretai of all the classes of human capacities develop only as the result of training, the development of a physike arete (a natural or biological excellence) is not contingent upon its subject being conscious that he is developing an excellence. A person may, for example, cultivate the physical excellence to run a four-minute mile without setting out, with forethought, to do so. He may simply enjoy running, and, because he enjoys it, he does it as often as he can; as a result of his practice of running, he develops the ability to run well, which is an arete. Although no essential difference in the running of a four-minute mile can be detected whether it is the result of an ability that has developed accidentally during the practice of a naturally pleasant activity, a distinction must, on the

\(^{130}\)Greenwood, p. 56.
other hand, be drawn between those actions that are the result of natural ethical virtue and those that spring from moral goodness that has been cultivated with forethought—from ethical virtue per se. Actions performed according to a person's inborn ethical goodness fall short of being true moral conduct because they are chosen, not because they keep to the mean, but only because they are naturally pleasant to the person performing them; for an act to be morally good, as has already been demonstrated, an agent not only must act according to the mean, but he must also act with the knowledge that he is keeping to the mean. Furthermore, because moral knowledge is not a constituent of natural ethical goodness, the latter cannot, as cultivated ethical virtue can, transmit moral knowledge to the rational faculty for the formation of phronesis. Only the presence of an established habit (hexis kuria) of ethical action can fully account for the presence of practical wisdom.

Just as virtue without practical wisdom is nothing more than a natural goodness of desire, practical wisdom, when it operates without the influence of virtue, is not phronesis but mere cleverness (deitones*), an excellence of the rational faculty that enables a person to hit the mark.

\[131\]

\[1105a32.\]
for which he has aimed in his actions; only under the influence of natural virtue does cleverness become phronesis, and only under the influence of cleverness does natural virtue become a fixed disposition of conduct. Both cleverness and natural virtue are, however, excellences in themselves: cleverness is a goodness of reasoning that has been developed from the natural capacity of the rational faculty and fixed, and natural virtue is a goodness of desire that has been developed from the natural capacity of the appetitive faculty and fixed. In themselves, then, they are hexeis (fixed conditions) of reasoning and desire respectively; but they are excellences only so long as desire occurs without reasoning, and reasoning without desire. Reasoning and desire, when combined, become ethically important, and, in such a relationship, cleverness and natural virtue are capacities capable of further development.

In fact, as Greenwood has demonstrated, the functional goodness or badness of neither reasoning nor desire is its real goodness or badness when it operates under ethical

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132 Milo, p. 63; NE 1144a20-30. 133 Greenwood, p. 56.
134 Ibid. 135 Ibid. 136 Ibid., p. 57.
circumstances; rather, the moral character of either of those components is determined by the character of the reasoning or the desire with which it is joined in the process of choice. Thus, functionally good reasoning combined with evil desire (i.e., desire that is morally bad but functionally good) results in effectual villainy because an agent, in such a case, is clever enough to attain the evil object that he pursues; moreover, the product of such a union is morally worse than functionally bad reasoning combined with the same evil desire, because the latter combination results in only ineffectual villainy. Similarly, functionally good desire combined with morally bad reasoning (i.e., reasoning that is functionally good, but that is not cognizant of the mean) leads to effectual fanaticism because an agent, under such circumstances, chooses the wrong means to the right end; the result of such a combination is, similarly, morally worse than the union of functionally bad desire with the same bad reasoning because the latter union produces only ineffectual fanaticism.

137 Ibid., p. 56.
138 Ibid.
139 Ibid.
Proairesis: The Perfection of Reason and Desire, and the End of Virtue

While Greenwood's analysis is useful for the distinction it makes, more useful is a distinction that it implies but fails to articulate: the difference among the meanings of 'goodness' and 'badness' when the latter terms are predicated of different features of practical reasoning and desire. 'Goodness' and 'badness' can, in fact, describe the possession or privation of the proper form of three significantly, but quite subtly different aspects of practical reasoning and desire: their essential natures, their natures as aretaic, and their moral natures. Because both desire and practical reasoning are functional entities, the essential goodness or badness of each is the same thing as its performance or its failure to perform its proper function. Since desire is the power that moves a person to act, desire will be good, qua desire, if it is efficacious, i.e., if it moves a person to pursue an object that he perceives as good; practical reasoning, which is the power by which a person discerns the means by which he may effectively pursue an end, will be good, qua practical reasoning, if it enables him to perceive such means correctly.
Goodness or badness can further be attributed to reasoning and desire to the extent that they admit of degrees of excellence. 'Cleverness' (deitones) denotes simply the functioning of practical wisdom when it achieves an accuracy and efficiency that only practice can produce; similarly the excellence that the functioning of desire achieves in causing the pursuit of an object is what is commonly known as will-power. However, because desire must perceive an object as good before it can move a person to pursue that object, the discernment of good is also part of the proper activity of desire and also admits of degrees of excellence. While the appetitive faculty always and necessarily attempts to secure for man what is good, its powers of discernment are not acute and it is capable of causing him to pursue only what is merely pleasant. Natural ethical virtue is an excellence of the discriminatory aspect of desire because, even though it is that condition of the appetitive faculty in which a person is moved to pursue only what is pleasant, the things that desire finds naturally pleasant in such a condition are those things that keep to the mean; and the things that keep to the mean, as has already been demonstrated, are the things that are truly good. Natural ethical virtue is, consequently, a state in which desire
functions in such a way that, by being inclined to pursue what is truly good more readily than is natural to the power of desire, it approaches more closely the ideal function of the appetitive faculty, i.e., moving man to pursue what will benefit him.

Finally, because desire and practical reasoning are the causes of human conduct, goodness and badness may be predicated of their moral natures. Practical reasoning is morally good when it discerns the means not only by which a person may effectively pursue an end, but also by which he may keep to the mean in the process. Morally good desire, on the other hand, is not merely desire that causes a person to pursue the mean (naturally good desire does that); rather, morally good desire causes a person to pursue the mean because he recognizes both that it is the mean and that the mean is the mark of morally good action.

Moral goodness is clearly accidental to the essential functions of both desire and practical reasoning: desire does not cease to move a person to act nor does practical reasoning cease to enable him to perceive the means by which he may effectively pursue an end simply because those
powers, by failing to keep to the mean, are morally bad. But that does not make the moral goodness of reasoning and desire non-essential to the human organism as a whole. Both desire and practical reasoning are limited, as are all man's powers when taken individually, to a specific function within man. When one faculty functions independently of the others, even though it may function well insofar as it operates according to its essence, it does not alone fulfill the essence of man in its independent function; the function and goodness of desire may be in moving man to act, but the function and goodness of man do not lie in being moved to act—nor do they lie even in reasoning, although man alone possesses a rational faculty. Because the various powers that man possesses are limited in their respective functions and are limited, consequently, in the extent to which they individually effect his formal goodness, they are inter-dependent: desire could not exist without practical reasoning or the nutritive faculty, nor they without it; nor, for

On the other hand, when desire or practical reasoning are essentially bad, they fail to perform their essential functions; although they are still termed 'desire' and 'practical reasoning,' they suffer a privation of the essential forms of practical reasoning and desire.
that matter, could a person exist as a human being if he lacked desire, practical reasoning, or any other of the essential faculties of the human organism. Consequently, although moral goodness is not essential to the functioning of either desire or practical reasoning, it perfects them beyond the natural potential that each possesses apart from the other: the motive power of desire can be cultivated so that it causes the pursuit, not only of physical pleasure, but of rational good, and reason can be adapted to judge not only abstract truth but practical truth as well. Because moral knowledge, which is a function of the rational faculty, has become an integral part of a particular state of the appetitive faculty, that state, virtue, is characterized as a condition in which a person desires a certain type of conduct because he recognizes the quality of the mean in it; phronesis, in a reciprocal manner, assumes a function of the appetitive faculty by pointing out the desirability of a certain action when it judges such an action as the best. Moral choice, consequently, causes the powers involved in human conduct to advance from interdependence to integration; and, as the powers possessed by the human organism

141 See Anscombe, p. 69.
operate more as one, the organism as a whole grows more perfect. Man's unique function as a rational animal is, consequently, fulfilled in ethical activity because moral goodness is the perfect, mutual development of an intellectual factor (cleverness) and an emotional factor (natural virtue) through their integration as phronesis and as moral virtue in the process of choice.\footnote{\textsuperscript{142}}

Any analysis of the moral character of reasoning and desire cannot ignore the influence that each has on the development of the operation of the other under moral circumstances; desire does not lie fallow while practical reasoning is cultivated with chicanery, nor does practical reasoning remain chaste while desire gives itself over to vice. Moreover, the function of phronesis and of virtue is so completely interdependent that, as J. Donald Monan has stated, any attempt to establish a logical order of precedence of one over the other in the formation of choice results in an argument that is ultimately circular:\footnote{\textsuperscript{143}} practical wisdom is right reason (logos orthos)\footnote{\textsuperscript{144}} and its standard is the mean; the mean, in its turn, is

\footnote{\textsuperscript{142}}See Joachim, p. 70. \footnote{\textsuperscript{143}}Monan, p. 83. \footnote{\textsuperscript{144}}Greenwood, p. 39.
distinguishable only as that which is in accord with right desire \((\text{orexis orthe})\); right desire, however, is the desire for the best means to an end, and the best means to an end is distinguished by practical wisdom. So virtue and practical wisdom are, in practice, inseparable in right human conduct; virtue, as Aristotle said, "is not merely a disposition \((\text{hexis})\) conforming to right principle, but one co-operating with right principle."\(^{145}\) The ultimate norm for right action is, then, the fusion of right reason and right desire; and, because only in a person who is practically wise \((\text{a phronimos}^*)\) are right reason and right desire synthesized and only in his conduct do they appear simultaneously, the ultimate norm for right action is found only in the \textit{phronimos}.

Aristotle’s complete definition of moral virtue, in which he concentrated the essential features that the foregoing pages have attempted to elaborate, is as follows:

\begin{quote}
virtue then is a settled disposition \((\text{hexis kuria})\) of the mind determining the choice \((\text{proairesis})\) of actions and emotions, consisting essentially in the observance of the mean relative to us, this being determined by principle, that is, as the prudent man would determine it.\(^{146}\)
\end{quote}

\(^{145}\) \textit{NE 1144b28.}  
\(^{146}\) \textit{NE 1106b36-1107a3.}
The cornerstone of such a complicated definition is easily overlooked, as it is in Joachim's translation of Aristotle's definition into a 'scientific' form: virtue, he proposed, is a formed state—a *hexit*—(its genus) which is established in the appetitive soul of man (the subject in which it inheres) owing to his responding to his feelings (the cause of virtue's inherence) in accordance with a certain proportion, which fixes them at the mean amount (the general nature of which virtue is a specific form). Missing from Joachim's treatment is not, it is true, an element proper to either the genus or species of virtue, but rather the *raison d'être* of virtue, its final cause: the determination of choice (*proairesis*). Were man not capable of making moral choices, there would be no such thing as a prudent man just as there is in actuality no such thing as a prudent animal; nor would man, were he not capable of *proairesis*, have any use for a habit of desire or for the observance of the mean. *Proairesis* is, moreover, the efficient as well as the final cause of moral virtue: virtue is a habit (*hexit*); a habit is brought into being by means of a practice (*éthos*); and the specific practice through which moral virtue becomes fixed as a habit is the choice of actions of a certain sort.

147 Joachim, p. 80.
The dual function of *proairesis* as both the efficient and final causes of virtue not only points the way to answering the question raised in Chapter Two concerning Aristotle's reason for using the term *proairesis* to mean both 'choice' and 'moral purpose,' it also reveals that choice is the point upon which human conduct turns. *Proairesis*, on the one hand, when it takes the form of an individual choice is the efficient cause of virtue; on the other hand, when it constitutes the moral purpose of a lifetime, *proairesis* is virtue's final cause. *Ethos*, a person's characteristic conduct, reveals his moral purpose, but only insofar as his conduct is the implementation of his resolution to act. Such a resolution is brought into actuality from the realm of mere intention in the form of an individual choice that is made under a specific set of circumstances. The moral purpose that is revealed is,
however, greater than any individual choice that the person may make; moral purpose is the sum of the will and the standard that is embodied, not in a single act of choice, but in the comprehensive pattern that a person's individual choices create. So *proairesis*, when it takes the form of moral purpose, is the final cause of virtue because the goal of virtue is to dispose an agent's appetitive faculty to consistently choose actions of a certain sort. The pattern of choices that constitutes moral purpose is, furthermore, the very practice (*ethos*) from which virtue is formed: each individual choice that takes place under a particular set of circumstances is a separate addition to a tendency (*diathesis*) that results in the latter's being fixed as a habit (*hexis*). Moral purpose is identical with choice; and both are called 'proairesis,' therefore, because moral purpose is the aim of a person's life that is both embodied and expressed in individual choices, which are the agency that actualizes such an aim.

Aristotle's definition of choice as the deliberative desire of the means that are within an agent's power to execute does not, however, entirely support the identification of moral purpose with choice, but only because the definition does not fully express the nature of choice.
What it does not reveal is, first, that the reciprocal identification of the two is contingent upon a highly technical understanding of choice and, second, that a choice is in and of itself an action.

G. E. M. Anscombe, Humphrey House, J. A. Stewart, and Aristotle himself have stated that virtue (or character) is formed by performing actions. Such statements are not untrue, yet they tend to be misleading because they divert attention from the point on which it should be focused: the act of choice. In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle said that a rationally capable agent, once he has chosen something of which he has the capability, and in the circumstances in which he has the capability, must do that thing. The statement seems patently false: it is not uncommon for a person to choose to do a thing only to decide not to do it or to be unable to do it when the time comes. But to make such an objection is to confuse choice with intention. Choice is, under the conditions Aristotle names, necessarily efficacious; intention is not. Efficacy is the fundamental distinction between choice and intention, and, in some

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1Anscombe, p. 61; House, p. 70; Stewart, p. 225; NE 1103b8.

2Meta. 1048a11-15.
cases, it is the only externally observable factor that distinguishes the two. A moral action, consequently, presumes that a choice has been made; furthermore, because an action must be done with and on account of moral knowledge for it to be moral, virtue (and character) are formed by performing acts of choice.

The process of ethical action was outlined earlier as consisting in a person's wish for an end, his deliberation about the best means to achieving that end, and finally his choosing—i.e., his act of willing that is efficacious in implementing—the first means in the process of achieving the end. Although that outline is accurate, it does not specify the point at which the actual efficacious act of will takes place in such a process. Just as a person does not deliberate about those means to an end that are self apparent, the volition that effects the implementation of an immediate, self-apparent means may be automatically included in the choice of something that is not immediate. A person may, for example, wish to aid the victims of a flood. After deliberation, he may realize that sending food or clothing or going to the scene of the disaster itself are impractical; he may therefore decide that sending money to a relief organization would be the best means to
the end. His deliberation would most likely end there, and yet he would not have reached the first means that he must implement in order to effect his end: before he could send money, he would have to write a check, and stamp and address an envelope. But he does not deliberate separately about those things because they are assumed in the means that he has chosen. Similarly, he does not make three separate acts of choice to write a check, to address, and to stamp an envelope. His choosing to send money to the flood victims is sufficiently efficacious—if it is indeed a choice and not a mere intention—to cause the implementation of those self-apparent means. An act of choice occurs, consequently, when an agent makes a decision that is sufficiently efficacious to cause the thing decided upon.

While empirically an expressed intention can be seen as a choice only after it has effected the thing intended, a choice does not depend upon the action that implements it for its being; an intention is not suddenly transformed into a choice when the intended action is carried out. A situation is conceivable in which a person—a physician, for example, who is about to perform emergency surgery on an accident victim—has chosen to do something of which—barring any extraordinary and unexpected occurrence—he has
the capability. But the extraordinary and unexpected happens: the physician is stricken with a heart attack and dies. Two objections can be raised to calling the physician's resolution a choice, the first of which is that a choice, as noted above, is necessarily efficacious. But the necessary efficacy of choice is contingent upon two conditions: that an agent have the capability of the thing that he has chosen and that he be in the circumstances in which he has the capability of the thing that he has chosen. Clearly, the physician does not have the capability to do the thing that he has chosen if he is dead; consequently, because one of the conditions has not been fulfilled, his decision may be a choice even though it was not efficacious.

The second objection is that if choice is, as it has been defined from the outset, the deliberative desire of a means within an agent's power to execute, then the physician did not desire a thing in his power; consequently, his decision could not have been a choice. Such a case is, however, actually a matter of priority. An act of choice is clearly separate from the deed that implements it; so such an act—the willing, not the intending, of something that is within a person's power—must be prior to its implementation. The physician's decision was a choice,
therefore, because, at the moment he chose, he both had the capability of the thing he chose and was in the circumstances in which he had the capability. His execution of the choice was, however, prevented by a sudden change in the circumstances that he could not reasonably have foreseen at the moment of his choice and that was not subject to the control of his volition. Since man is neither omnipotent nor omniscient, he may will— not merely intend— an action that circumstances prevent his implementing.

The highly technical understanding of choice that is necessary to make it identifiable with moral purpose as proairesis is inhibited by the inherent equivocacy of choice as an English word. Proairesis does not mean preference, simple volition, or intention, while choice may; proairesis implies a precedent process of deliberation, while choice does not. Yet even those restrictions on the meaning of choice do not limit it enough to make it unequivocally identical with moral purpose; to them must be added a further qualification.

The nature of proairesis is not the same as that of simple volition because proairesis is a deliberative desiring (orexis bouleutike), that is, an act of will that follows upon a process of deliberation. But the deliberation that accompanies an act of volition does not alone mark such an act as a choice. Proairesis is the choice of an action that has been determined as the best means to an end not
simply by deliberation, but by deliberation directed toward attaining an object of rational appetition (boulesis).\(^3\) Boulesis is the appetitive power that is subject to and suffused with the rational principle that embodies an agent's idea of eupraxia. Eupraxia is a person's conception of the sort of conduct that will result in a life well spent;\(^4\) by that standard, he measures the end that he may pursue and the means that he may employ to secure them. An act of volition is a proairesis, then, only if it is the choice of the means to an object of boulesis, i.e., only if it is the willing of an action that realizes the notion of eupraxia that the rational principle has delimited.

A choice (here limited in meaning to a volitional act in the moral realm) must, consequently, be positive for it to be a proairesis as the term is used in Aristotelian ethics. Proairesis is properly positive because, rather than being a merely momentary desire, it embodies the purpose of a lifetime; it is not a temporary affection that may be replaced in a moment by a contrary desire, but a species of volition that has, of its essence, the consistency and the relative permanence that characterize rational judgments. Thus, a person who, in a particular instance, wishes to act in a way of which he in general disapproves, who deliberates about the means to such an end, and who at last

\(^3\) Anscombe, p. 57. \(^4\) Ibid., p. 61.
successfully achieves it, exhibits, according to Aristotelian norms, cleverness (deitones) and volition, but not proairesis.5

Because proairesis is a term that can be applied to an act of volition only if by that act of volition a person wills an action that is in accord with his idea of what is right, proairesis cannot be applied to every case in which the English word 'choice' is used; even when 'choice' is limited to the moral realm, a person may be said to 'choose' not only actions that are in accord with his principles but also those that are contrary to them. An advantage that the use of 'proairesis' has over the use of 'choice' is that 'proairesis,' when it denotes an act of a person of a given character, is morally unequivocal; 'choice,' under the same condition, is not. The use of 'proairesis,' moreover, explicitly links the role that each individual choice plays in the formation of a person's pattern of behavior with the implementation of his moral purpose (proairesis) in life.

On the other hand, a person's pattern of behavior is characterized by virtue or vice: virtue is the product of good choices; vice, of bad ones. While the difference between a good choice and a bad choice is usually clear, the moral contrary of proairesis (because proairesis is

5NE 1152a10-17; Anscombe, p. 59; see also NE 1111b14-15.
limited by its nature to positive choices) is not so easily identifiable. *Aproairesis*, the inverse of *proairesis* consists in an agent's failure to choose an act that embodies his idea of *eupraxia* when the potential for such a choice exists. An *apairoiresis* does not have to be an act of volition; it can merely be a person's failure to choose to perform a certain action when such an action is the object of his wish (*boulesis*) to act well. More often, however, *apairoiresis* takes the form of an act of volition that is opposed to and exclusive of the choice of an action that embodies *eupraxia*. It possesses its greatest magnitude when it is, like *proairesis*, deliberative, and when its agent is actively conscious that in exercising such an act of volition he is failing, for whatever reason, to choose an action that he knows is the type of behavior that constitutes a life well spent. The most serious difficulty with the use of *proairesis* as Aristotle conceived it is that, because it derives its efficacy from reason rather

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6 The moral inverse of *proairesis* will be demonstrated, in this passage, to consist, not in a positive state and form, but in a privation of the form of *proairesis* in the matter to which it is proper by virtue of the potential inherent in the matter. The term *apairoiresis* has been chosen because privation is customarily indicated in Greek by the negative prefix 'a-.' (Meta. 1022b33) A distinct term for the moral opposite of *proairesis* is warranted since no other term adequately expresses its essence: 'vice' refers to a habit of choosing evil, and *akrasia* (which will be discussed in the text) to the condition of the will that allows the choice of evil; *apairoiresis* is, however, neither a habit nor a condition, but an act or a failure to act. *Sin* is also an inadequate term for reasons that will be treated in the text.
than the will, it admits neither of the last case of aproairesis, that in which a person with full and active knowledge of what he ought to do, nonetheless chooses to do what is wrong, nor of the case in which a person simply fails, when in circumstances that call for it, to exercise his volition to act well.

The use of the theoretically best proairesis in the preceding paragraph suggests that aproairesis is synonymous with sin; that is not the case. While a person who chooses an evil action when his reason tells him that it is wrong is guilty of both a sin and an aproairesis, an evil person who chooses to do the same action may be guilty of a sin, but not of an aproairesis. Proairesis is always positive, but it is not necessarily good. It is positive insofar as it is the choice of an action not only that the appetitive faculty desires, but also that reason distinguishes as good. But just as someone may try to solve a mathematical problem with the wrong formula, a person may try to guide his life by a rational principle that is wrong. A person may steal a wristwatch, not because he succumbs to a temptation to steal it even though he thinks stealing is wrong, nor because he thinks stealing is virtuous, but simply because he thinks that stealing is the thing to do; it is his conception of eupraxia, of a life well spent. He desires, as does the just man, what he rationally believes are the
best means to happiness,\(^7\) and he expresses a moral purpose in seeking those means. Yet he is radically different from the just man in that he is mistaken both about the true nature of happiness and in his *proairesis*; he is deceived about the ends he sees as the best because he has acquired a false principle of human conduct through habitual gratification of his appetite.\(^8\) An aproairesis is, as a consequence, quite a different sort of action for a wicked man than it is for a virtuous man; if the wicked man's idea of *eupraxia* is stealing, failing to steal when he has the opportunity (which may be caused by fear, in his case, rather than by moral scruples) is an aproairesis. While sin is the same for the just and the unjust alike, aproairesis is for a good man the failure to choose good and for a wicked man the failure to choose evil.

If the use of the word 'choice' is restricted, for the sake of the present argument, to the limited, positive meaning of *proairesis*, an aproairesis that comes about through an act of the will is not a choice that is contrary to one's principles, but rather an act of volition that suffers a privation of the proper form of *proairesis*.\(^9\)

\(^7\)Milo, p. 29.  \(^8\)Ibid., p. 29-30.

\(^9\)The proper form of a thing is its principle of knowability and permanence, by which it has existence and which makes it what it is by distinguishing it from all other things.
The inverse of proairesis is, therefore, either a person's complete failure to choose according to his principles or his failure to so choose by willing to do an action that is contrary to them. A person with a properly formed rational principle might, for example, admire, and hence, desire another's wristwatch; if he were to find himself in a particular set of circumstances in which he would have the opportunity to steal it, his reason, in the form of his idea of eupraxia, would tell him not to do so. In such circumstances, only one of two actions is open to him: either he must succumb to his appetite for an immediate good and will to steal the watch, or he must choose (proaireisthai*) not to steal it. Choosing not to steal the watch is a realization of the person's moral purpose in life; willing to steal it is not. Another person's knowledge of the mean may tell him that giving money to the poor is a noble end. In a particular set of circumstances in which he is convinced that giving money to the poor is the right way to act, either he must choose (proaireisthai) to donate money (and so realize his moral

10 'Proaireisthai' ('to choose') and 'to proaireton' ('the thing chosen') are correlatives of 'proairesis' and are qualified in the same positive sense it is; Aristotle, however, lacked terms for 'to will' and 'a willing' that would express the act of simple volition that results in 'to hekousion' ('the voluntary'). (Anscombe, p. 59.)
purpose in life), or he must succumb to his desire for an immediate good and will to retain his money.

With one exception, Aristotle attributed all of the actions or types of actions that he spoke of in the *Nicomachean Ethics* as being willed contrary to one's principles to *akrasia*, i.e., a lack of self-restraint or a weakness of will. Just as an act of *aproairesis* is specifically distinguished from an instance of vice in that it is, unlike vice, contrary to one's moral purpose in life, an *akratos* (a weak-willed person) is specifically distinguished from an *akolastos* (a licentious person) in that a weak-willed person has a properly formed rational principle\(^\text{11}\) and, consequently, a properly formed moral purpose. The rational principle immanent in an agent's moral purpose gives rise to *boulesis*, rational appetition, which in its turn calls for a particular *proairesis*, an act of choice, which is also of its essence rational. *Proairesis* thus complements *boulesis* by effecting, as the rational species of volition, the ends of rational appetition; as a willing of an immediate action rather than a wish for an end, moreover, the essential characteristic that sets *proairesis* apart from *boulesis* is its efficacy: while the experience of a *boulesis* does not of itself secure the end that is wished for, the exercise of a *proairesis* properly effects the action that is willed.

\(^{11}\) *NE* 1151a24-26; Anscombe, p. 59.
A weak-willed person, according to Aristotle, fails to translate his moral purpose into action, however, not because of a lack of will power, but because of a failure of reason: in a specific instance, although he possesses knowledge of the appropriate universal premise (e.g., "one should not become drunk"), he allows an appetite or a passion to cause him to lose his understanding of or to fail to see the applicability of the particular premise (e.g., "drinking this martini will make me drunk") that obtains under those circumstances. An akrates is weak-willed rather than wicked, consequently, because he does not even know the right in the sense of one who consciously exercises his knowledge, but only as a man asleep or drunk can be said to know something. Also, although he errs willingly, . . . his moral purpose is sound, so that he is only half-wicked.

Aristotle's ascription of the cause of aproairesis to a lack of self-restraint suggests that willing an action contrary to one's principles is primarily a result of a privation of efficacy in a potential act of proairesis; on the contrary, however, according to Aristotle's

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12 Milo, p. 69; Walsh, pp. 103-104.

13 Rackham has rendered 'proairesis' by 'moral choice' in the passage cited. The translation of that term has been amended to read 'moral purpose' since that is clearly the meaning of 'proairesis' in the context, and since 'moral choice' is ambiguous and may be misunderstood as a synonym for 'rational volition'.

14 *NE* 1152a15-17.
explication, *akrasia* (as well as the *aproairesis* that results from it) is the consequence of a failure to exercise a rational principle. The apparent contradiction is, however, another manifestation of Aristotle's theory that action is compelled by the judgment of reason: the privation of efficacy in a potential act of *proairesis* is not only synonymous with a failure to exercise a rational principle, but necessarily contingent upon it as well.

The only actions mentioned in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that are not attributed to *akrasia* although they may be interpreted as *aproairesis*, given the terms in which they are described, are acts of cowardice (*delia*). Although Aristotle, in general, treated cowardice as a vice (i.e., a habitual pattern of behavior), he specifically set aside particular instances of such behavior for separate consideration; in doing so, he made possible the treatment of each as an *aproairesis*: insofar as one instance of behavior of any sort cannot be said to constitute a habit, such an instance may be construed an *aproairesis* as easily as a vice.

Unlike an *aproairesis* that is the result of a lack of self-restraint, an isolated incident of cowardice, Aristotle maintained, is not voluntary:

particular accesses of cowardice are so painful as to make a man beside himself, and cause him to

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15 *NE* 1119a28-29.
throw away his arms or otherwise behave in an unseemly manner; so that cowardly actions actually seem to be done under compulsion.  

A cowardly action is, thus, compelled by a desire to avoid pain. Aristotle attributed much more power over the will to pain than to pleasure:

Profligacy seems to be more voluntary than cowardice. For the former is caused by pleasure, the latter by pain, and pleasure is a thing we choose, pain a thing we avoid. Also pain makes us beside ourselves: it destroys the sufferer's nature; whereas pleasure has no such effect.

Yet pain does not alone invariably possess the power to compel action, nor does pleasure invariably lack it. On the contrary, Aristotle stated elsewhere that

it is not surprising that a man should be overcome by violent and excessive pleasures or pains, . . . but we are surprised when a man is overcome by pleasures and pains which most men are able to withstand. . . .

The only logical middle ground between the two positions is that, while both pleasure and pain may possess the power to compel action, pain reaches the point at which it achieves the necessary violence and excessiveness much more quickly than pleasure.

If that is so, two conclusions may be reached: first, that the pain that in a particular instance compels a person to an act of cowardice of the sort that Aristotle

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16NE 1119a29-31. 17NE 1119a21-25.
18NE 1150b7-8, 13-14.
speaks of *is a priori* violent and excessive; and second, that, just as pleasure that is neither violent nor excessive may nonetheless cause an *akratos*, without compelling him, to act against his principles, pain that is neither violent nor excessive may similarly cause a weak man, without compelling him, to act against his principles. Hence, just as one form of weakness of will may be characterized as a lack of self-restraint because it occasions an agent's failure to restrain himself from pursuing what is pleasant rather than what is right, a second species of weakness of will may be characterized as a lack of self-constraint because it occasions an agent's failure to constrain himself to pursue what is right in spite of what is painful.

Because a lack of self-constraint is a species of weakness of will, if Aristotle's theory that reason compels action holds true in all cases (which, to be valid, it must, since no alternative is provided), then the failure of efficacy in an agent's desire to constrain himself to act must be contingent, as it is in parallel cases of lack of self-restraint, upon the agent's failure to exercise a rational principle. How an agent's moral purpose can fail to be actively exercised under all such circumstances without exception is, however, unclear. A person is naturally attracted by the pleasant, naturally repelled by the painful. He need never be compelled to perform a pleasant action, consequently, simply in order to avoid
what is right; on the contrary, while he may pursue a pleasant action on account of its inherent attractiveness in spite of what is right, he may also pursue it without any cognizance that in doing so he is failing to pursue the proper course of action. On the other hand, a person may be compelled to perform a painful action solely because of his desire to pursue what is right; furthermore, a person whose recognition of his duty has brought him face to face with a painful act cannot have failed to exercise a rational principle, although he may nonetheless fail to constrain himself to perform such a duty. Nor can a failure to exercise reason alone account for all the cases in which a person wills a pleasant action although it is contrary to his idea of what is right. A person's failure (or even his refusal) to recognize that a particular action is a specific instance of something that he in general disapproves of, no doubt accounts for a part of the class of actions that are pursued in spite of their incompatibility with his moral purpose, but such actions are subsumed under rather than define the class. Weakness of will and a failure to exercise a rational principle are certainly the fundamental causes of the failure to choose to act well; but Aristotle's explanation of weakness of will, in making inefficacy contingent upon a failure of reason, not only does not account for all cases of aproairesis, but also depends upon a formula for aproairesis that is not strictly defensible in terms of the nature of proairesis.
In any circumstances in which the potential for an agent to enact a proairesis exists, the potential for him to fail to enact a proairesis exists as well. Such a statement can be made concerning everything that may come to be: potential in the matter of all things are two contrary states of being: a positive contrary, the possession of a proper form (the principle of knowability and permanence, which makes a thing what it is and distinguishes it from everything else), and a negative contrary, the privation of such a proper form.\(^{19}\) As has been stated previously, the generation and existence of all things are determined by four principles: a formal, a material, a final, and an efficient cause. Not all such causes are present in all things,\(^{20}\) but each cause that is present for a certain thing in some way defines the being of that thing. The species of proairesis (i.e., 'rational volition') reveals its formal and material causes: its genus, 'volition,' is the matter from which it is formed, and its differentia, 'rational,' indicates that in proairesis volition takes the form of a rational entity.\(^{21}\) The genus of proairesis can be further analyzed in a similar fashion: volition is defined as 'efficacious

\(^{19}\)Meta. 1044b33-34.

\(^{20}\)Meta. 996a23.

\(^{21}\)Aquinas, **CMA** no. 2115 (p. 759).
desire,' because desire, its matter, assumes in volition the shape of an essentially efficacious type of striving. The formal and material causes of proairesis consequently limit and specify it in the following ways: for a thing to be a proairesis, it must be desire that is essentially both efficacious and rational; similarly, desire, whenever it is both efficacious and rational, must be a proairesis and only a proairesis; conversely, such desire, if it fails to be efficacious or rational when it possesses the potential to be, suffers a privation of its proper form; furthermore, proairesis, insofar as it is efficacious and rational desire, cannot be brought into existence in the absence of those causes that are capable of generating such an entity and, conversely, in the presence of such causes must be brought about.

The final cause of a proairesis is a good (good being the object of desire, and desire being a material constituent of proairesis). Before a good can be pursued, however, it must be perceived as a good; such a perception consists in an act of recognition (e.g., a student's realization that going to the library today is good) that has been preceded by an autonomous organization of sensation (e.g., the student's hearing his professor assign the reading of a certain book) and perhaps an interpretation of intermediate perceptions (e.g., the student's realization that he does not have enough money to buy the book, that he does
not have enough time to go to the library tomorrow, and so on). Perception of a good is an efficient cause of desire because it is one of the agencies through which desire comes into being; it is, of the four types of efficient cause that Avicenna identified, an advisory efficient cause, and as such it specifies the form that the activity of appetition will take (epithymia, thymos, or boulesis) and the end toward which it will be directed (the desired good). Because perception specifies the form that appetition will take, an understanding of its operation is crucial to a discussion of aproairesis: a perception is not, of necessity, an accurate appraisal of the object observed, and, insofar as the circumstances surrounding an action are inaccurately perceived, the potential for aproairesis may fail to be realized.

Like aproairesis, perception may suffer a privation of its proper form when its matter, the content of the conscious mind, fails to be properly organized. (Because perception is the awareness of an object, i.e., of that

\[\text{Ibid., no. 770 (p. 306).}\]

\[\text{Ibid., no. 769 (p. 306).}\]

\[\text{The analysis of perception that follows in the text is formal rather than mechanical: it is intended not to describe the actual operation of the physiological and psychological processes of perception, but rather to note the formal distinctions that can be discerned in the result of an act of perception, however such a result might come about.}\]
which is other than the subject perceiving *qua* perceiving subject, what is proper to it is that which is in accord with the actuality—the form—of the object perceived.)

The conscious mind may contain, at any given moment, information about the external world that has been newly received through the senses, recalled from the past by the memory, suggested by the imagination, reasoned to by the intellect, and so on. In its most rudimentary form, a perception is a person's consciousness of the brain's organization of electrical impulses that it has received through the senses, recalled from the past by the memory, suggested by the imagination, reasoned to by the intellect, and so on. In its most rudimentary form, a perception is a person's consciousness of the brain's organization of electrical impulses that it has received from a sense organ; by the imposition of form upon such impulses, the brain transforms them into a recognizable whole. In such a manner, the electromagnetic waves that are sensed by the eye are organized in the brain and, subsequently, perceived in the form of color in the conscious mind. Appetition comes into being when all or part of such content is organized in such a way that a good becomes recognizable. Perception was described above as the advisory efficient cause of appetition; as such, it specifies the end toward which the appetition caused by a given perception is directed. Perception specifies the end, i.e., it
Imposes form on the good that an appetition seeks, because it is the very organization of data in which a good (or any other knowable entity) is recognizable. As a result, if the information that is possessed by the conscious mind is organized simply in terms of its sensual pleasantness, the perception is of a physical good, and the end is the attainment of a physical pleasure; on the other hand, if similar information is organized in terms of a rational principle of good conduct, the perception is of a rational good, and the end is the attainment of a true good. Furthermore, because perception determines the good that is recognized and because the good is the end for the attainment of which appetition comes into being, perception, again as the advisory efficient cause of appetition, is the means by which the form that appetition will take is specified: if the perception is of an immediately pleasant good, appetition will take the form of epithymia; if of an expedient good, thymos; and if of a rational good, boulesis. The circumstances in which an agent possesses the potential for a proairesis, consequently, consist of such consciously held information as may properly be organized by any rational agent so that in it is perceived a rationally desirable good. However, because the positive and the negative contraries of a thing are always potential in its matter, if the proper form (organization) of such information is the conscious perception of a rational good,
then such information may also suffer a privation of that proper form, i.e., an agent's organization of such material may fall short of that which makes the rational good in it recognizable.

The proper, proximate matter of a thing determines the being of the thing as much as its formal principle does: a thing cannot be properly constituted, even in the presence of its formal cause, if the specific material from which it is formulated is lacking. The material principle in the abstract does not, of course, determine the being of a thing at all; it is, rather, that which by definition is determined by the formal principle. Most things do not, however, come into being by the fusion of a completely undetermined material principle with a formal principle; they are, on the contrary, constituted when a formal principle specifically determines a thing's proper, proximate matter, i.e., matter that already has a quite definite form but that is further determined by the imposition of another, more highly specific form through a natural or an artificial process. The carbohydrates that are produced in a plant through photosynthesis, for example, can be formed only in the presence of carbon dioxide and water. Carbon dioxide and water are the proper, proximate matter of such carbohydrates: although oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon are the elements that constitute carbohydrates, carbohydrates cannot be formed from such elements—at least
not through the photosynthetic process—if the latter are present only in a free state; those elements must first have been formed into water and carbon dioxide through some other process. Although some things cannot come into being at all in the absence of their proper, proximate matter, others come into being, but suffer a privation of their proper form: a cobbler, for example, lacking leather, might make a pair of shoes out of cardboard; while such cardboard shoes might function in a limited way as shoes, they would, merely by being cardboard rather than leather, lack many of the qualities that are essential to a pair of good (i.e., 'well formed') shoes. Furthermore, a material that is the proper, proximate matter of one thing may be used in the formation of another, but, by virtue of the inherent form that makes such material the proper matter of the one thing, the other may fail to fully actualize the potential possessed by such matter. Gold, for example, since it is a good conductor of electricity, might be used rather than copper in the manufacturing of wire; but because gold has many attributes other than conductivity that are inherent in its form, manufacturing such a mundane thing as wire from it would be a failure to realize its proper potential.

The content of the conscious mind, consequently, as the proper, proximate matter of perception, limits the constitution of the perception that comes into being. But
just as wire made of gold fails to actualize fully the potential in its matter, a perception may fail to take into account all of the pertinent information about the object being perceived and may, thus, fall short of recognizing the actuality of its object. Or, just as to make shoes of cardboard assumes in such matter a potential it does not possess, a perception may fail to recognize the actuality of the object being perceived by treating as pertinent, information that is not concerned with the object and that, consequently, is not properly a part of the matter being organized. On the contrary, just as carbon dioxide and water can be formed through photosynthesis into nothing other than carbohydrates, and just as carbohydrates can be synthesized only from carbon dioxide and water, the material of perception is appropriate to only one formulation, that which is in accord with the actuality of the object being perceived.

Only one formulation of the material of perception concerning a given object is accepted as accurate regardless of the perceiver, if the object is concrete and external to the perceiver and if the conditions under which the object is perceived remain constant; consequently, a person who has identified salt as sugar has perceived it wrongly. A given object can, on the other hand, occasion the perception of several mutually exclusive goods, goods that appear, in spite of their incompatibility, to reside simultaneously
in the object; such goods usually take the form not only of the sort of goods for which something is sought, but also those goods for which something is avoided. For example, a vain, middle-aged actor who is in imminent danger of a heart attack may perceive that the apple pie his mother has placed in front of him on the dinner table should be sought because of its intrinsic sweetness and because eating it will make his mother happy, and that it should be avoided because it is fattening and because it contains too much cholesterol. Such mutually exclusive goods are able to come into being despite their incompatibility because they are not necessarily contained in the object perceived, but merely occasioned by it: in the above example, the actor seeks the pie on account of its intrinsic sweetness and for the sake of his mother's happiness, but he seeks to avoid it for the sake of slimness and good health. In none of those cases is his eating or not eating the pie a good, but only the means by which a good may be attained. The element that is common to each of the actor's perceptions of goodness and that causes each of those perceptions to come into existence is the perception through which the actor recognizes a given object as apple pie. To that basic, recognitory perception are added other perceptions concerning the various attributes of the object (e.g., its sweetness and its high caloric content) and any actions that the object and its attributes may occasion (e.g., to eat it or
not to eat it). Each such addition evokes a new organization of the matter of perception that refines the original, recognitory perception in light of the new information, and each such organization results, at least in such cases as the above, in the recognition of a distinct good.

The criterion by which one of the perceived goods is adjudged the true good (differentiating it from the immediate or the apparent goods) is the same as that by which a perception is judged as properly formed: if a perception of a good organizes the information in the conscious mind in such a way that it is in accord with the actuality of the object being perceived, then the good is true. Part of that actuality may be the ethical norm to which the percever ascribes. An ethical norm may seem to be too subjective to be considered part of the actuality of an object, but, if it is properly formed in a nomos* (an intellectual environment), it is as real as anything is able to be; reality, even according to its scientific usage, is simply the common element in the content of the conscious mind that "cannot be placed in one man's consciousness rather than in another's ..."25 and that, as a result, is attributed to an external world.

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The perceptions of those goods in a given set of circumstances that are not its true good are not wrong in the same sense that the perception of a mirage as an oasis is wrong. Such perceptions are, on the contrary, usually accurate so far as they go: apple pie is sweet, but also fattening; the actor's eating it will please his mother, but may also lead to a heart attack. They are wrong, rather, in that they fail to order all the aspects of the circumstances that have given them birth; they fail to impose the most appropriate form on the matter that is present. Apple pie may be sweet, but it is also fattening; for the actor not to eat a single piece, however, because he is more concerned about his appearance than his mother's feelings is inappropriate; yet, the actor's mother would be made more unhappy by his death or sickness than by his not eating her pie. Similarly, the incompatibility of such perceived goods does not necessarily arise because all or any one of them has been falsely perceived in its intrinsic nature; each, taken individually, may be appropriately desirable. Nor does their incompatibility occur because such goods are necessarily and inherently exclusive; making one's mother happy does not, for example, necessitate putting one's self in danger of a heart attack. Just as the perceptions of such goods are wrong only because they fail to account for all the circumstances in which they arise, the incompatibility of the goods itself is accounted
for by those same circumstances. Yet, such goods can be perceived simultaneously in spite of their incompatibility because they are not, even during their state of incompatibility, intrinsically contradictory. To be contradictory, two goods must be incompatible concerning the same aspect of the same object; the simultaneous existence of two contradictory goods is, as a consequence, impossible. In saying that both eating pie and not eating pie are good (not insofar as they are means to incompatible ends, but insofar as they are desirable ends in and of themselves) an agent literally contradicts himself; but for him to perceive tasting sweetness and remaining slim simultaneously as goods is possible even though they are incompatible, because those perceptions are concerned with entities that are distinct from each other and from the object whose presence occasions their perception. Consequently, while the incompatibility of incompatible goods is contingent upon the particular confluence of circumstances which occasions them, contradictory goods are inherently incompatible. The perceived goods are prevented from all being true and from all being compatible not because any of them is necessarily wrong or necessarily incompatible with any other, but because the circumstances which give rise to them also make the attainment of all of them impossible. The function of a perception is the recognition of the form (the actuality) of a thing; the object of recognition in a case in which incompatible goods are perceived is the sum of the
circumstances, because only in the circumstances taken as a whole are all the necessities and the contingencies affecting each perceived good present. The true perception of the good in such an object (i.e., the perception of the true good in such circumstances) is merely the recognition of the form (the actuality) that orders the circumstances as a hierarchical whole toward which a person can act according to reason. Any other organization of the various perceived goods fails to take into account that they are all necessarily related to a whole insofar as the perception of each was the direct result of the recognitory perception of the circumstances; the perception of any other order, consequently, fails both to accord with reality and to recognize the true good.

The determination of the true or greater good does not, however, change the recognition of the lesser goods nor make them less desirable; from each of the perceived goods develops, according to its constitution, a form of appetition. The actor's desire to eat the pie because it is sweet is an epithymia since its concern is with the immediately pleasant; his desire to avoid eating the pie because it is fattening is a thymos since he does so on account of his vanity; his desire to eat the pie because doing so is an expedient means to pleasing his mother is also a thymos under the circumstances, since reason tells him that his eating the pie and having a heart attack will be far more detrimental
to his mother's happiness than his not eating the pie; his desire to avoid eating the pie for the sake of his health is a boulesis, however, because of the possible courses of action it is the clearest instance of eupraxia. Such desires are, like the goods that they seek, incompatible only because of the circumstances in which they develop. Like the goods that they seek—and, moreover, because of the goods that they seek—they are not contradictory because they are directed toward ends that are discrete entities; as noted earlier, to desire two incompatible things and, hence, to feel two incompatible desires is possible, but to desire two contradictory things or to feel two contradictory desires is impossible. Consequently, just as the determination of the true good does not make the lesser goods less desirable, the fact that an agent feels a boulesis does not in and of itself resolve, as Aristotle argued, the conflict that the pull of various goods has generated within him.

The conflict between the desires felt for the various goods is resolved only by an act of volition. Perception and appetition do not exist for their own sake; they exist, rather, because goods are objects worthy of attainment and because perception and appetition are the prerequisites of volition, which effects attainment. The simultaneous existence of the perceptions of incompatible goods and of incompatible desires is possible because both perception
and appetition operate in the realm of potentiality: perception marks out that which is potentially desirable, and appetition, that which is potentially attainable. Volition, on the other hand, is properly that which actually (although not necessarily) attains; consequently, because each incompatible good that gives rise to an incompatible desire demands a separate act of the will to effect it, such acts of the will are necessarily contradictory. The actor cannot at the same time will to eat the pie (although he may want to) so that he may taste its sweetness and will not to eat it (although he may want to) because it will endanger his health. Under no such circumstances can two such acts of volition be exercised at the same time by one person.

An aproairesis, as pointed out earlier, may come into being in one of two ways: either as an act of volition whose exercise precludes a potential act of proairesis, or as a failure to enact a proairesis when the potential for one exists. Every movement of appetition corresponds, according to its constitution, to a form of volition through which the good that it seeks may be attained: epithymia operates through simple volition,* which encompasses all acts of the will that properly effect the attainment of the immediately pleasant and that do not properly admit either of the exercise of reason or of the consideration of ethical standards (eupraxia); thymos operates through complex volition,* which encompasses those acts of the will that
properly effect the attainment of the expedient and properly admit of the exercise of reason but not of the consideration of eupraxia; and boulesis, operates through choice (proairesis). In those cases in which an aproairesis comes about through a failure to enact a proairesis, all that is necessarily present prior to the aproairesis is a boulesis. For those cases in which an aproairesis occurs when an act of volition precludes a proairesis, however, an epithymia or a thymos that is incompatible with the boulesis must also be present, and the act of volition that embodies such an aproairesis will, consequently, take the form of simple or complex volition.

In ethical terms, however, epithymia and thymos are not of their natures opposed to boulesis, nor simple or complex volition to proairesis. Epithymia, thymos, and simple volition and complex volition are all essentially non-moral and are formed properly without moral considerations. Neither the desire to eat a piece of pie nor the exercise of the volition necessary to eat it can be considered inherently morally right or wrong; such actions do not in and of themselves admit of moral qualifications. A person's desiring or willing to do such an action is of moral consequence only when doing so prevents or promotes his desiring or willing to do another action that he is morally obligated by his idea of eupraxia to carry out. Consequently, even though small children and animals
experience *epithymia* and *thymos* and exercise simple and complex volition, all the actions that they perform are considered *a priori* non-moral because, insofar as they are incapable of the active exercise of reason, they are not in any way morally bound.

Moreover, because such forms of appetition and volition are not inherently moral, an agent may be distinguished either as moral (or immoral) or as amoral. An agent who is properly concerned with the moral consequences of his actions is moral if he acts appropriately regarding such concerns or immoral if he acts inappropriately. An agent who is amoral, however, simply does not consider the moral consequences of his actions; the standard of *eupraxia* against which he measures all courses of action is, at its highest, expedience. Because his purpose in life is synonymous with the gratification of *epithymia* and *thymos* and so limits him to the desire and the pursuit of immediate or expedient goods, his *proairesis* are indistinguishable from acts of simple or complex volition, and, hence, the same as they. He is amoral, consequently, not because his desires and acts of volition are truly non-moral, but because he has so limited himself in his perceptions that he is capable only of *epithymia* and *thymos*, of simple and complex volition, responses that of their natures lack moral consequence.

An act of simple or complex volition may, consequently, be the shape that an *aproairesis* assumes when it comes about
through an act of the will; but such an exercise of simple or complex volition does not change in essence by taking on, in addition to its own proper characteristics, the trait that marks an act of the will as an aproairesis. Aproairesis is not a positive state, nor an actualizing principle that causes the potential in matter to take a definite shape. On the contrary, 'aproairesis' is a term indicating a lack of such a positive state, a privation of such an actualizing principle. Moreover, not only is an aproairesis a privation that occurs in matter in which an actualizing principle is properly found, but because such matter is proper to an actualizing principle, when the latter is not found in it, it is recognizably deficient in its proper form. Such a recognizable deficiency is the mark that characterizes aproairesis. Consequently, an individual act of simple or complex volition may appropriately be called an aproairesis, not because such acts are, as a class, in and of themselves opposed to proairesis; rather one such act embodies an instance of aproairesis if its enactment precludes the full formulation of the potential for and the enactment of a proairesis that is proper in a given set of circumstances. Such an act of volition is thus, insofar as it manifests a recognizable deficiency in the form proper to such circumstances, opposed to and distinguishable from a similar act of the will that occurs properly in non-moral circumstances. A
person who drinks a couple of glasses of wine is exercising simple volition; if such an act of volition is exercised by a surgeon a few minutes before he is to perform a serious operation, it ceases to be merely an act of simple volition and becomes, because of its inappropriateness to the circumstances, an aporiairesis.

All the cases of aporiairesis that come about through an act of volition occur because a person has exercised his will in response to a perception that has failed to comprehend, in the scope of its organization, matter that, by its constitution, can be ordered comprehensively only through the imposition of a rational form. In the example cited earlier, the actor's perception that his mother's apple pie is good because it tastes sweet cannot at the same time account for the facts (which the actor actively exercises knowledge of) that the pie is also fattening and that his eating it may lead to a heart attack.\(^\text{26}\) Such a perception of an immediate good cannot by its very nature order any factors except those concerned with the immediate goodness of its object; to the extent to which the effects that the actor's eating the pie will have upon his waistline and his cardio-vascular system are not immediate, those effects

\(^{26}\) At issue here is not the opposition of two incompatible goods, but the impotence of a given form of perception to organize circumstances that are not its proper matter; to isolate that concern, consequently, concurrent perceptions of goods proper to the same form of desire have been ignored.
are factors that cannot be comprehended—either in the sense of to be included or to be understood—in or through the perception of an immediate good. Similarly, the actor's perception that eating the pie is good because doing so will please his mother cannot account at the same time for the fact that eating it may lead to a heart attack. Such a perception of an expedient good cannot by its very nature order any factors except those concerned with the expedient goodness of its object; to the extent to which the actor's eating the pie is not a purely expedient step, such an action cannot be comprehended in or through the perception of an expedient good. Moreover, expediential perception, regardless of the extent to which it employs reason in its operation and regardless of the true goodness of the end for the sake of which it operates, can recognize only things expedient because it does not, of its nature, operate under the guidance of a rational principle of eupraxia; at its most fully formulated, expediential perception is rational only to the extent of discerning means, not to the extent of discerning ends.

The limitations of a particular perception do not, however, affect that perception alone. Every perception of a good, as an advisory efficient cause of determinate desire, specifies the form of appetition that seeks the good therein perceived, and every appetition, as an advisory efficient cause of efficacious desire, specifies the form
of volition that is capable of attaining the end thereby desired. Just as a perception that does not fully accord with actuality (i.e., that fails to order the circumstances in such a way that a person can act purposefully toward them as a whole) suffers a privation of its proper form, so the appetition that is caused by such a perception (although it is the form of appetition proper to the good perceived) suffers a privation of the form proper to desire under those particular circumstances, and so also the volition that is elicited (although it is the form of volition proper to the appetition that calls it up) suffers a privation of the form proper to volition under such circumstances. As noted earlier, an act of simple or complex volition is, under such circumstances, an instance of aproairesis because its enactment prevents a proairesis: even though it is the proper response to the good that is desired, it nonetheless suffers, as an act of the will, a privation of the proper form of volition necessary under such circumstances. Because the only circumstances in which the formation of a proairesis is appropriate are those that may be ordered according to a rational principle of eupraxia, the characteristic deficiency in form by which an act of simple or complex volition is recognizable as an aproairesis is the lack of the formal principle of proairesis, its rational aspect.
The type of aproairesis that comes about through a failure to enact a proairesis when the potential for one exists is, on the other hand, the result of the privation not of the formal principle (or rational aspect) of the potential act of proairesis, but rather of the proper constitution of its material principle (or volitional aspect). The genus of a thing may in itself be malformed because, even though it is derived from the material principle of a thing, it possesses its own formal and material principles; a genus is malformed, consequently, when it suffers a privation of its own formal principle. Volition, the genus of proairesis, has as its material principle desire, and as its formal principle, efficacy. Thus, when an aproairesis comes about not because of an exercise of volition that precludes an exercise of proairesis, but because of the simple failure to exercise proairesis, such an aproairesis suffers a privation of efficacy, the formal principle of volition, and, consequently, lacks volition altogether. A person who has stolen a wristwatch even though stealing is against his principles may decide later, because of those same principles, that he must make restitution for the theft. For one reason or another, he decides that the best way to act in such a situation is to return the watch in person; he finds, however, that he cannot bring himself to do so. Because performing such an action is his idea
of eupraxia, his failure to do so is an aproairesis; he fails, however, not because he wills to do something else in its stead, but because in spite of his rational conviction that he must act in such a manner, efficacy is wanting in his desire to do so.

Such an aproairesis as the above—one in which the failure to act according to one's proairesis is the result of a lack of the efficacy of desire—cannot occur in the ethical universe of Aristotle: desire backed by rational conviction cannot fail to possess sufficient efficacy. Such an aproairesis may be tailored to Aristotelian norms if it is looked upon not as a simple failure of volition, but as an agent's willing to avoid a duty that is unpleasant rather than his choosing to do what is right. As noted on page 280, however, even in that interpretation of events Aristotle's explanation of weakness of will—that it is the failure to perceive the particular application of a universal premise—is untenable because the unpleasantness of the particular application of eupraxia (i.e., his specific duty) is the very thing that the agent seeks to avoid.

Nonetheless, akrasia, as Aristotle drew it, is sufficient to account for those cases of aproairesis in which an agent's behavior can be explained indisputably by his failure to perceive eupraxia's applicability to the particular circumstances in which he finds himself; it can account even for those cases in which an agent (just as he might, if biased,
willfully suppress, in favor of a prejudiced view, the intellectual affirmation of a manifestly logical conclusion that contradicted it) willfully suppresses his knowledge of a universal principle's applicability to his particular circumstances so that he does not have to face the consequences of the conflicting desires aroused by such an acknowledgment; Aristotle's explanation of weakness of will cannot, however, account for those cases of aproairesis in which an agent, in spite of his recognition of the true good and his active knowledge of what eupraxia consists in under given circumstances, wills nonetheless to pursue an immediate or an expedient good because of its sheer attractiveness or convenience. If those cases in which desire fails to be efficacious are excluded entirely (and they may be since they are not at issue here), all acts of volition are generated through the same process: the formulation of the species of volition that operates is determined by the

27 The contention that, in the last case, an agent is necessarily so intoxicated with the attractiveness of the immediate good that he is indeed not fully aware of the true good, forces the discussion of volition to turn to the problem of free will: the implication is that man does not possess free will and, therefore, cannot truly master his passions through the use of reason. The argument unfortunately cannot move beyond that assertion because free will can be neither proved nor disproved; but the denial of the existence of free will is a product of the absolute determinacy characteristic of scientific thought in the late Nineteenth Century, which has been transcended by modern physics' espousal of the principle of indeterminacy. See Eddington, pp. 293-315; and James Jeans, Physics and Philosophy, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), pp. 205-217; see also the discussion of free will below, pages 317-337.
species of appetition that is experienced (because appetition is the advisory efficient cause of volition), which, in its turn, was determined by the species of good that had been perceived (because the perception of a good is the advisory efficient cause of appetition). An aproairesis, which, by definition, is the result of a failure to impose the form of proairesis (rationality) on the matter in which it is potential, occurs when the species of volition that operates is deficient in the rationality necessary to order action purposefully under a given set of circumstances; such a deficiency in volition may occur only when a similar deficiency in the perception of a good has preceded it. The ultimate cause of willing an action contrary to one's principles is, consequently, the failure to perceive a set of circumstances according to reason.

Those are, of course, the terms in which Aristotle couches his explanation of akrasia: weakness of will is the result of an agent's failure to see the particular application of a universal premise to a given set of circumstances. Where Aristotle's interpretation of akrasia fails is that it does not take into account that perceptions, unless they are concerned with the same aspect of the same object in the same way, are incompatible, not contradictory, and that, consequently, mutually unattainable goods can be perceived at the same time by the same person. Furthermore, the failure to perceive a set of circumstances according to
reason is a part of an aproairesis only retrospectively: because volition is ultimately specified by the perception of a certain good, the first cause of an act of volition that is an aproairesis is the perception that fails to operate according to reason. But the incorrect perception need not be, as Aristotle's explanation of akrasia unfortunately implies, the only perception that has taken place; on the contrary, the example cited earlier concerning the throes of moral deliberation that the actor suffers over whether to eat a piece of his mother's apple pie indicates that the simultaneous occurrence of more than one perception is possible. Moreover, insofar as the perception of a good, in and of itself as a perception, has the same reality to the perceiver as any other perception of a good regardless of its accord with actuality, the perception of a true good (e.g., the perception of a particular application of a universal principle) may exist simultaneously with the perception of a lesser good without eclipsing it. Clearly, then, the perception of a true good is not alone enough to cause a proairesis.

What alone suffices to bring proairesis into existence is the actuality of its essence. The essence of a thing is not its form alone, but rather the composite of both its

28See NE 1140b17.
genus and differentia, its material and formal principles; and the actuality, both of a genus separate from a differentia and of the two as a composite, resides in the formal rather than the material principle of the entity. As noted earlier, volition, the genus of proairesis, consists of its own material and formal principles, desire and efficacy, respectively. Desire, in the sense in which it is used here, cannot exist by itself because, as a material principle, it is mere potentiality. 'Desire' alone may be spoken of, but only in a generic sense; if 'desire' so used is not meant as a synonym for a specific form of desire, an actual desire is not at issue, but only an intellectual abstraction. For desire to be actual it must take on a determinate form through the activity of a formal principle. Such a formal principle is not identified solely with the formal aspect presented in the specific difference of a species (man, for example, is not solely rational); it consists, rather, in its totality, in all the essential characteristics that define a thing. Thus, a penultimate formal principle specifies the nature of the genus that the

\[ \text{29} \text{Aquinas, CMA no. 902 (p. 349).} \]

\[ \text{30} \text{Meta. 1050a15-16; Aquinas, CMA no. 1278 (p. 498). Actual- \text{ality is not, however, synonymous with existence. Form is actuality, and matter, potentiality; but only a composite, generated from matter according to a certain form, exists. Aquinas, CMA nos. 1423-1425 (p. 541)} \]

\[ \text{31} \text{Aquinas, CMA no. 1413 (p. 536); no. 1473 (p. 559).} \]
actual form of desire will assume: it may shape desire as indeterminate (passive desire that lacks the measure of the good that is sufficient for completeness), determinate (passive desire that possesses the measure of such a good), or efficacious (active desire, in which the need for a good has become a necessity). Of those several forms, consequently, volition is that in which the potentiality of desire has been actualized by efficacy. But a genus cannot of itself exist in actuality: for example, no such thing as an 'animal,' the genus of man, exists in actuality except joined with rationality or some other formal determinant. Volition cannot actually exist, consequently, without the activity of another formal principle, a differentia that specifies its actual being. Of the several forms that volition may assume, proairesis is that actualized by rationality. Proairesis, as a consequence, cannot be brought from the potentiality of desire into actuality without the presence of both its actualizing agents, rationality and efficacy. Without the simultaneous activity of both, proairesis simply cannot be. The privation of any aspect of the proper formal activity of proairesis results instead in an aproairesis, which may, consequently, consist either of the operation of efficacy without reason, or of reason without efficacy.

32Ibid., no. 764 (p. 305).
Despite the limitation of Aristotle's theory of akrasia, it nonetheless demonstrates his application to his ethical system of the two cardinal assumptions of human psychology, that man is essentially rational and that he is predominantly consciously self-determining. If a person acts against reason, the most direct conclusions that may be drawn about such behavior from those assumptions are either that he is insane (i.e., he acts in general against what is commonly considered reasonable because he has lost the use of his rational faculty entirely) or that he simply is not thinking (i.e., he acts against his own idea of what is reasonable because he fails at that instant to exercise his rational faculty). Because Aristotle's treatment of akrasia in the Nicomachean Ethics deals only with the actions of sane men (and, furthermore, only with the actions of sane men who have a properly formed rational principle) his conclusion is the latter one: akrasia is the result of a failure to exercise a rational principle.

From the assumption of man's essential rationality and his conscious self-determination may also be directly deduced that every man of his nature possesses a proairesis; a person's behavior is thus characterized by virtue or vice, established habits (hexis kuria) that become fixed by the practice (ethos) of choosing certain types of action for a certain reason (namely, to accord with his idea of eupraxia). No such hexis kuria can correspond to akrasia.
In Aristotle's system, however, because akrasia, by virtue of its causing a person to will an action contrary to his rational principle, is at most a temporary condition. The very transitoriness of akrasia, however, makes it tend toward one of two permanent resolutions. Insofar as no one's virtue is perfect, akrasia may be temporary in that anyone may be subject to a momentary lapse in which he wills an action that is contrary to his principles and yet is, at the same time, a truly uncharacteristic event in the moral pattern of his life; a prudent man will neutralize the tendency toward moral deterioration inherent in such behavior by recognizing it as a manifestation of moral weakness and consequently adjusting his knowledge of the mean relative to himself by taking note that he is prone to that particular error. At the end of the continuum where any instance of akrasia is highly uncharacteristic, akrasia is an aberration; on the other hand, however, akrasia that is not checked by the remedial influence of prudence and whose manifestations appear with such commonness that the agent may be characterized as unrestrained may serve as the mechanism through which a virtue or a tendency (diathesis) toward virtue is destroyed and vice, established. Aristotle pointed out that the actions from or through which any virtue is produced are the same as those through which it also is destroyed. . . . It is by taking part in transactions with our fellow-men that some of us become just and others unjust; by acting in
dangerous situations and forming a habit of fear or of confidence we become courageous or cowardly. And the same holds good of our dispositions with regard to the appetites, and anger.33

Akrasia, when it no longer is an isolated, uncharacteristic incident, but has approached the regularity of a practice (éthos), is able to promote the perversion of a weak-willed man's sound rational principle, which is necessary to good human conduct, because such an agent has failed to adjust his knowledge of the mean relative to himself. He has, on the contrary, as the instances of a certain type of conduct caused by weakness of will have evolved into an established pattern of behavior, adjusted his understanding of the mean (that is, his idea of eupraxia) to accommodate his actions. A proairesis, which every man naturally and of necessity develops because of his essential rationality, is properly formed through a rational and logically correct examination of what constitutes acting well (eupraxia). A person who lacks the strength of will to live by what he thinks is right is, however, equally compelled by his nature to formulate a moral purpose in his life; he will devise, as a consequence, a rational principle that will accommodate his behavior and a logical argument that will corroborate such a principle. Thus behavior motivated by any sort of prejudice, passion, or appetite can be justified.

The reasoning behind Aristotle's explanation of akrasia that accounts for its failure to admit of conscious

33NE 1103b8, 14-18.
aproxairesis conversely allows it to admit of a case in which an agent manages to preserve his rational principle at the same time that he allows himself to engage in actions contrary to it. An agent may, for example, consciously resist thinking about the moral principle that applies to the circumstances in which he finds himself. Just as a person may intuitively grasp an outline of the solution to a mathematical problem before he has gone through the logical process of solving it, he may also intuitively grasp an outline of the action that is appropriate in a given set of circumstances. The exercise of reason is a conscious process, and, as an agent may consciously initiate a process of thought, he may also consciously terminate such a logical process in moral circumstances before it reaches the conclusion that, in Aristotle's terminology, would compel him to act. Such an action does not truly avoid an ethical dilemma, however, but merely replaces it with another: that a person should always seek a rational principle in whatever circumstances he finds himself is in itself a rational principle. The ethical question then becomes whether an agent, in consciously supressing the exercise of a rational principle, is conscious of and responsible for the failure to exercise the rational principle that governs that sort of behavior. An attempt at circumvention that goes to the heart of the flaw in akrasia, on the other hand, is an agent's conviction that, because, as the victim of an
instinct he cannot control, he is not responsible for his conduct, no rational principle is practicable under the circumstances that occasion his action. Through either such process, a weak-willed person may argue his position with the same logic as that on which Aristotle founded his classic case of akrasia: although he may grant that his actions have been voluntary, he denies, because they do not express his moral purpose, that they were the consequence of fully formed choices, i.e., of volition enacted after sufficient and appropriate deliberation.

A person may, in an isolated instance, willfully though unconsciously act against his principles on account of an instinct that he cannot control and yet preserve his proairesis; but to do so, he must adjust his knowledge of the mean relative to himself, and so exercise control over such an instinct by avoiding any situations in which it might be aroused. But as an excuse for an established or even frequent though sporadic pattern of behavior, a plea of unconscious and uncontrollable instincts is untenable: although in a particular instance reason may fail to control the lesser faculties, human behavior is considered normal precisely to the degree to which it is determined by conscious processes.⁴ A person cannot remain a rationally

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capable agent even in his own eyes if he maintains that he is often unconscious either of the rational principles that ought to guide his actions or of the motives that in practice do so. Even if only a single class of actions that constitutes a very small part of his complete moral activity is considered, if he frequently acts against his idea of eupraxia in the circumstances which evoke that class of actions, he cannot maintain that both his rational capability and his proairesis have remained intact; certainly a man could not maintain such a stance, regardless of his unimpeachable probity in all other areas, if he acted on an unfortunate but irresistible urge to murder each of his children when they turned ten. Nor can such an agent contend that the actions characteristic of his moral purpose are freely determined and, hence, praiseworthy if he, at the same time, asserts that those prompted by the operation of insatiable and uncontrollable cravings born of unconscious forces are normal in human conduct and, hence, blameless.35

The forces of reason and conscious self-determination are so strong in man that a person who is marked by persistent weakness of will and yet who does not take the psychologically normative step of convincing himself that his actions are indeed the best means to happiness and of assuming those actions—and the acts of volition that effect them—as his

35NE 1113b3-21; Kubie, p. 33.
proairesis, is neurotic. Man is free only to the extent to which conscious processes govern his life. The akrates who is truly deprived of an awareness (and, hence, the exercise) of his rational principles in his aproairesis and yet who refuses to control such behavior by avoiding the circumstances that occasion it, and who, as a consequence, is unable to relinquish either his consciously held moral principles or his unconsciously motivated conflicting conduct, such a person is bound to neurotic ambivalence:

he wants to be a man but also remain a child, to be a good husband but unfaithful at his convenience, . . . to enjoy both the peace of a good conscience and the sensations of vice.

Aristotle's ethical scheme thus appropriately does not admit of habitual akraasia because, as its identification with neurosis makes apparent, it is first and foremost a deviation from a psychological rather than an ethical norm; on the other hand, Aristotle's explication of akraasia is deficient insofar as it admits of a case in which an agent may dismiss as a lapse of reason an action that is, in reality, a failure of will and an injury to the positive development of his proairesis.

36Kubie, p. 33.
37An adult is capable of choice; a child, only of volition.
A proper understanding of ethics is as dependent on a perception of the properties that make it distinct from psychology as its proper functioning is dependent on its interrelationship with the latter. Psychology postulates a behavioral norm; ethics presupposes the psychological norm and postulates a system through which it may be transcended and perfected. Both psychology and ethics assume that man is essentially rational and consciously self-determining. Even so, an occasional akrasia is not abnormal in psychological terms because the norm psychology posits is predominant rather than absolute conscious self-determination; psychology thus does not attempt to define an ideal, but only a statistical norm. As a consequence, it concerns itself not with an occasional akrasia, which is normal although less than ideal, but with a habitual akrasia (i.e., with neurosis), because the latter, regardless of its ethical implications, is a priori abnormal. For the same reason, ethics cannot treat of neuroses; it presumes the psychological norm, and sets up for its own norm, not the average man, but the phronimos, the prudent man, within whom is the ideal integration of prudence and virtue. Consequently, as with all ethical systems, Aristotle's is based on the assumption that the perfection of sainthood is desirable and attainable; just as the phronimos is the ideal for the integration of prudence and virtue, proairesis is the ideal for the integration of volition and moral purpose.
The Freedom of the Will

Aristotle's ethical system has served as the model for all subsequent ethical systems39 both because it accounts for the observable facts of human conduct and because it is easily adapted to a hierarchy of values other than that which Aristotle espouses. The mean may be derived from the Ten Commandments, the Golden Rule, or the Sayings of Mao Tse Tung; the phronimos may be a prophet, a Christ, or a philosopher; but mutatis mutandis, the system functions in the same way.

The Aristotelian system may seem most vulnerable, consequently, in that it appears to presume free will. The reality of free will has been in doubt among Western philosophers since Descartes' disciples (in the face of the discovery of the law of conservation of momentum, according to which the total quantity of motion in the world in any given direction is constant) rejected his proposal that the soul acted on the body by altering the direction of the motion of the animal spirits that operate within the body; they postulated instead that matter and the mind are two distinct substances and that they cannot, therefore, act upon each other.40 Volition takes place at the same time

39Gauthier, p. 27.

as physical movement, Descartes' Dutch follower, Geulincx, explained, just as two clocks may keep the same time; but volition does not cause movement anymore than one clock's showing the hour causes the other to strike.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 561-562.} Spinoza held that God, or Nature, is the only substance and that everything is ruled by absolute logical necessity: there is neither free will in the mental sphere, nor change in the physical sphere.\footnote{Ibid., p. 571.} Man remains in bondage as long as he is an unwilling part of the larger whole; he is free only insofar as he adequately understands his own circumstances and grasps the reality of the whole.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 573-574.} Leibniz, in the philosophy that he produced for popular consumption, put forth a "principle of sufficient reason," which stated that nothing happens without a reason, but that, where a free agent is concerned, the reason for an action makes him inclined to carry it out without necessitating him to do so;\footnote{Ibid., p. 584.} his esoteric doctrine, however, that "the individual notion of each person involves once and for all everything that will ever happen to him" is as deterministic as Spinoza's philosophy.\footnote{Ibid., p. 593.} Spinoza had also presented the two antithetical, and often mutually exclusive conceptions of freedom that are found in most modern Western philosophical
systems: the freedom of self-realization and the freedom of indeterminism (or freedom of the will). The freedom of self-determination assumes a divinely foreordained universe in which a person can be free only if he

humbly acknowledges the individual history or nature which God gave him and . . . if he observes with wholehearted approval the temporal realization of God's eternal idea of him; the freedom of the will, which, like the freedom of self-realization, has its source in Christian doctrine, reconciled God's goodness and omnipotence with man's sinfulness by attributing man's sins to his own undetermined choices.

The freedom of self-realization, which appeared under a number of guises in modern philosophy, is, consequently, (unless joined with an attempt, such as St. Augustine's, to reconcile it to a doctrine of freedom of the will) a tacit rejection of the freedom of the will. Such is the case with Hegel, who postulated a universe whose reality was the general will embodied in the State as the visible substantial will; as a consequence, in his view, freedom consisted in the right to obey the law. Schopenhauer, in a similar manner, maintained that the phenomena of the world are the objectification of the reality of one vast

47Ibid. 48Ibid., p. 103. 49Ibid.
50Russell, pp. 737, 740.
will, that of the whole universe; the will of the universe is, however, the source of all human pain and suffering, and the aim of life is not the exercise, but the surrender of the will. Thus, until Kierkegaard introduced existentialism, modern metaphysical systems tended to view the freedom of the will as an illusion rather than the reality.

And until the turn of the twentieth century, science wholeheartedly agreed. One of the three principles of the philosophy of determinism that was partially a product of the physics of the nineteenth century was an assumption of strict causality in all aspects of the physical world, a principle that was not abrogated even for man. In 1812, Pierre Laplace said, in his Essay on Probability, that the present state of the world might be described as the effect of its antecedent state and as the cause of its subsequent state; and that, if the state of the world at creation were specified in its minutest detail, an infinitely capable mathematician could calculate from that data all of subsequent history. Sir James Jeans summed up, in the passage that follows, both a common defense of free will and

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51 Ibid., pp. 755-757.
the argument that such a rigidly deterministic philosophy as Laplace's could make against it:

Henry Sidgwick says that the question at issue in the free-will controversy, as he understands it, is whether his action at any moment is completely determined by his character and the external influences, including his bodily condition, which act on him at the moment, "or is there always a possibility of my choosing to act in the manner that I now judge to be reasonable and right, whatever my previous actions and experiences may have been?"55

But a judgment as to what is reasonable and right cannot be based on nothing at all—if it is, it is no judgment but pure caprice. And it cannot be based on anything other than a man's character, which is founded on his previous actions and experiences, and the external influences acting on him at the moment. . . . Thus Sidgwick's second alternative, which is clearly intended to represent free-will, is that our actions are determined by our judgments, and our judgments by our inner character and external influences—which brings us round to precisely his description of determinism. Thus his two alternatives are not determinism and freedom at all, but merely conscious and unconscious determinism. . . .56

No scientific justification any longer exists, however, for a theory of strict causality that accounts for the progression in events with the same mechanism as that which causes a row of dominoes to fall one against the next.57 Causality, the scheme of things in which every present event is seen both as an effect of a past and as a cause of a future event, has been replaced in modern physics by

55Sidgwick, pp. 61-62.
56Jeans, p. 209.
57Ibid., p. 103; see also Eddington, p. 294.
causation, a scheme which admits of a present event that may have an effect, but that does not itself have a cause. Causality is symmetrical and cannot distinguish absolutely between those events that are causes and those that are effects because every event is both; causation, on the other hand, allows the present to be distinguished from the past by the occurrence of an event in the present for which no cause existed in the past, an event that is unpredictable in itself "not merely because it is impracticable to obtain the data of prediction, but because no data connected causally with our experience exist."58 Most significant to the study of the free will is the fact that modern physics no longer searches for a cause for every event;59 "it concerns itself not with what must happen but with what is likely to happen."60

Modern physics does not by any means prove the existence of free will, although "the argument for determinism is in some respects less compelling than it seemed to be . . . ;"61 nonetheless,

those who maintain a deterministic theory of mental activity must do so as the outcome of their study

58 Eddington, pp. 294-297; Jeans, p. 199.
60 Eddington, p. 296.
61 Jeans, p. 217.
of the mind itself and not with the idea that they are thereby making it more comfortable with our experimental knowledge of the laws of inorganic nature. 62

Science still finds room, consequently, for modern determinists such as B. F. Skinner. Skinner maintains that freedom is a matter of the contingencies of reinforcement: 63 a person who acts in a given way because such behavior is naturally positively reinforced (i.e., is followed by a natural consequence that makes such behavior more likely to occur) is said to act freely, while he is said to be coerced if he acts in a given way because such behavior is intentionally negatively reinforced (i.e., because his customary, but opposing behavior has been followed by an adersive and humanly imposed consequence that makes such behavior less likely to occur). 64 He attributes man's struggle to freely determine himself, consequently, not to a will to be free, but to the avoidance or escape from the adersive features of his environment. 65 The indeterminacy principle of modern physics does not maintain that all, or even many things are unpredictable; on the contrary, the adoption of the indeterminacy principle—which states that the behavior of individual particles alone

62Eddington, p. 295.
64Ibid., p. 42. 65Ibid.
could not be predicted—allowed physics to perceive that the great accuracy with which it could predict the behavior of large numbers of particles through the laws of statistical probability gave science more appropriate and useful information than the predictions of the behavior of individual particles that had been sought through strict causality. Skinner has gone beyond mere statistical probability, however, in claiming that "personal exemption from a complete determinism is revoked as scientific analysis progresses, particularly in accounting for the behavior of the individual." 66

 Nonetheless, Skinner's corroboration of his assumption of determinism through an objective method and rigorous experimentation 67 is valid precisely because it is, as Eddington suggested such a stance should be, the outcome of his study of the mind itself, and not an attempt to make psychology fit the experimental knowledge of inorganic nature. On the other hand, however, in 1938, the same year in which The Behavior of Organisms, Skinner's first and single most important work, was published, 68 the University of California Associates presented, in Knowledge and Society,

66 Ibid., p. 21.


68 Ibid., p. 478.
what has been adopted as a purely theoretical reply to modern physics; Herbert Feigl summarized the response in this way:

The extent to which strictly deterministic laws are applicable is, of course, an empirical question, and the revolutionary results of quantum mechanics must therefore be taken quite seriously.

However, the widely debated consequences of the free-will problem are precisely nil, for the simple reason that the free-will problem is a pseudo-issue arising out of confusions of meaning. Not determinism, but compulsion is the opposite of freedom.

The Associates' discussion of freedom of the will attempted to counter assumptions of free will and indeterminism by redefining determinism in such a way that it is not only compatible with the freedom of voluntary action, but necessary to its identification as such.

The premise advanced is that the opposition between freedom and determination is falsely construed; freedom is in fact opposed to compulsion, and determination to indetermination. Determination means that its object can be predicted by means of a law; compulsion, on the other hand, implies an agent's acting against his desire or volition, but not against a natural law (which is

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70 Ibid., p. 21, n. 11.
72 Ibid., p. 154.
impossible); determination is not, therefore, compulsion. No one can be compelled to act against a natural law because it describes how things actually take place, and it holds without exception; a natural law, according to the Associates, may be either true or false, but because it simply necessitates, it can be neither obeyed nor disobeyed. (The Associates, however, fail at that point in their argument to distinguish between the term 'natural law' when it refers to a formulation of a human understanding of one of the causal factors at work in the universe, such as Newton's law of gravitation, and the term when it designates the causal factor itself, divorced from the limitations of a human understanding of it. Consequently, only man's conceptions of the causal factors at work in the universe are descriptive, and only his conceptions may be true or false; conversely, only the causal factors themselves, not man's understanding of them, hold without exception, and only they may be neither obeyed nor disobeyed.) Human laws, on the other hand, prescribe how things ought to take place, and, because they may be either obeyed or disobeyed, they may also compel action. Some voluntary actions are thus accidentally subject to human laws (e.g., the age at which one may drink alcohol varies from state to state),

73Ibid., pp. 159-160. 74Ibid., pp. 160-162. 75Ibid.
but all voluntary actions are necessarily subject to certain natural laws (e.g., a rational man must desire to avoid what he perceives as evil)\textsuperscript{76} and are necessarily determined by those laws.\textsuperscript{77} But the presumption that voluntary actions are determined does not imply that they are not free; on the contrary, because free acts are distinguished from compulsory ones by their causes, a presumption of determination is a prerequisite to any attempt to discern freedom.\textsuperscript{78} A human action is free when, like a falling body, it is completely determined "by the initial conditions and the forces" acting on it, i.e., by its agent's own desires, intentions, and motives; a human action is, on the other hand, constrained when, like the motion of a pendulum, it is determined "not only by the initial conditions and forces acting upon \textit{it}, but also by conditions which are not directly expressible in terms of force," i.e., by the desires, intentions, and motives of someone other than its agent.\textsuperscript{79} Determination is not destructive of freedom of the will, consequently, since it is a necessary condition of freedom; freedom of the will is, furthermore, not just a moral postulate, but a psychological fact.\textsuperscript{80}


\textsuperscript{77}University of California Associates, p. 169.

\textsuperscript{78}Ibid., p. 171.  \textsuperscript{79}Ibid., p. 172.  \textsuperscript{80}Ibid.
Such a reconciliation of freedom with determination does not sufficiently answer the objections that modern physics raises to determinism, however, because it falls victim to the same fallacies, or at least questionable assumptions that physics shed in divesting itself of strict causality. The kernel of the Associates' argument is that the question, "Are voluntary actions determined or indetermined?" ought to be restated as "Are voluntary actions predictable or unpredictable?"\(^{81}\)

The predictability of voluntary actions presupposes the existence of laws that connect the properties of voluntary actions with the properties of antecedent events. . . . We must therefore answer the question: "Are there such laws?"\(^{82}\)

The answer arrived at is that such laws exist, but that they are not known; that motivated actions exhibit regularity, which justifies the presumption that such laws exist; that, more often than not, however, predictions are not verified and that no known laws connect past or present events with future actions; but, that, nevertheless, the presumption that voluntary actions are determined is based on the belief that the law of causality has no exceptions.\(^{83}\)

With that argument, philosophy took a headlong leap into the wall against which physics had bashed its head for the first quarter of the Twentieth Century. If determinism is

\(^{81}\)Ibid., p. 165.  \(^{82}\)Ibid., pp. 165-166.  
\(^{83}\)Ibid., pp. 169-171.
based on predictability and predictability, on certain laws and if those laws are not known, then predictability is impossible; and determinism is more speculative than free will ever was: at least an illusion of free will exists.

The fact that motivated actions as a class exhibit regularity does not justify the presumption that laws governing the determination of every individual act of volition exist: the decay of a radioactive element exhibits extraordinary regularity, yet no law exists by which the behavior of any given atom may be predicted.\textsuperscript{84} If predictions about individual instances of behavior prove wrong more often than not, they are wrong, no doubt, because no known laws connect past or present events with future action; such laws may, in fact, have no application to individual acts of volition, just as they have no application to the behavior of individual particles on the atomic scale.\textsuperscript{85} Finally, the discoveries of modern physics suggest that the belief that the law of causality has no exceptions is at best ill advised: where laws do not obtain, causality is meaningless; and there, man cannot now, may never, and does not seem to need to perceive causality. Choices, of course, are not atoms nor are the laws of physics always

\textsuperscript{84}Jeans, p. 150; Cline, p. 22.

\textsuperscript{85}Jeans, p. 149; Cline, pp. 22, 164.
comparable to the principles of ethics; nonetheless, physical science has provided models for moral science since the time of Aristotle. But the laws of classical mechanics (the mechanics of large aggregates of atoms acting together, such as falling bodies) account only incompletely even for the phenomena of inorganic nature; consequently, the attempt by the University of California Associates to vitiate modern physics' rejection of strict determinism by a redefinition of determination that uses the assumptions, models, and logic of classical mechanics as a paradigm of human volition makes their argument immediately vulnerable to the same doubts that quantum mechanics has raised about the validity of the application of those assumptions, those models, and that logic to their proper field of study.

The contention of the behavioral sciences that man is ultimately determined and consequently predictable, although corroborated to some extent by experimentation, is challenged on purely metaphysical grounds by existentialism not only in its reassertion of the freedom of the will, but also in its elevation of the exercise of free will to the fundamental act of the human condition. The argument of existentialism is that, in determining if man is free, recourse to the behavioral sciences is pointless because

86 See NE 1103al9-24.
87 Hall and Lindzey, pp. 480, 481, and 508.
the validity of their conclusions is based on the validity of their assumptions, one of which is that man is not free. Furthermore, the argument goes, because the behavioral sciences have not succeeded in predicting important aspects of individual behavior (for example, none of the behavioral sciences in their present states could have predicted Shakespeare's writing of *Hamlet*), the question of free will must be decided on non-scientific grounds. The essence of existentialism is the recognition of a unique experience of freedom in every human life: each man, according to Kierkegaard, must choose to be or not to be. If a person truly chooses one or the other, he is free; if he does not choose, he is still free, because to refuse or to fail to choose must also be the result of a choice. Man's freedom of choice is not accidental to his being; on the contrary, it is at the very center of his essence, and its exercise determines the shape of his existence. The acknowledgement and the defence of man's choice to be is the very aspect that sets existentialism apart from the philosophies of Spinoza and Hegel:

"Every choice is a choice of finitude," as Sartre says, since every choice involves

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88 Olson, p. 24. 89 Ibid. 90 Ibid. 91 Wild, p. 42. 92 Ibid. 93 Ibid., p. 117.
elimination. The voracious appetite for being displayed by Spinoza and Hegel cannot coexist with respect for human freedom.\textsuperscript{94}

Consequently, in reaction to the biologically or culturally deterministic points of view found in behavioral sciences, existentialism spawned an existential psychology and an existential psychiatry.\textsuperscript{95} The latter are holistic (i.e., they approach the individual as a unique entity, rather than as an aggregate of physiological, psychological, and social characteristics)\textsuperscript{96} and recognize the significance that the element of choice plays in man's well being.\textsuperscript{97} They maintain that to live fully means not simply to satisfy certain desires natural to man as a human being, but to exercise freedom.\textsuperscript{98} In \textit{Being and Nothingness}, Sartre summed up the central position that the belief in free will takes in existentialism: "I am my liberty."\textsuperscript{99}

At the heart of Skinner's and all the determinist philosophers' and scientists' argument, however, remains their ultimate contention, as Decartes phrased it, that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{94} Olson, p. 52.
\item \textsuperscript{96} Ibid., pp. 38, 44.
\item \textsuperscript{98} Ibid. \textsuperscript{99} Wild, p. 117.
\end{itemize}
"nothing cannot be the efficient cause of anything." Stated in that way, the idea is undeniable. But whether such a statement is applicable to acts of volition has not been established and may prove to be purely academic. The fact that some determinists make free will contingent upon determination is less important than that they consider free will a psychological fact; the fact that other determinists deny the reality of free will entirely and describe the illusion of free will as just the name man gives to unconscious determinism, is, likewise, less important than the fact that, nonetheless, none of them deny that an illusion of free will exists. In the artificial world of the drama, the concession that an illusion of free will exists is all that is necessary to make free will a fact when a playwright chooses it to be so.

The continued validity and usefulness of Aristotle's ethical system does not ultimately rest, however, on the triumph of the proponents of free will over those of determinism; as Stewart has indicated, Aristotle's discussion is of volition, not of the freedom of the will. Just as the rejection of the idea of the free will by

100 Jeans, p. 214.
101 Ibid.
102 Stewart, p. 225.
modern philosophers is a result of and a part of their metaphysical consideration of the universe, had Aristotle attempted a metaphysical discussion of free will, he would have done so in his *Metaphysics*.\textsuperscript{103} The subject of the examination of volition conducted in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is, rather, man's responsibility for his conduct; that man is the cause of his own actions is assumed a priori.\textsuperscript{104} Freedom, nonetheless, enters into Aristotle's discussion. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, any action that is caused immediately by the character of its agent is designated free;\textsuperscript{105} any action that is the direct result of a choice is free, consequently, because choice is the act that expresses moral purpose, and moral purpose is the content of character. Furthermore, because choice is rational, a person can be held responsible for (i.e., come in for the consequences of) only what he had intended to do.\textsuperscript{106}

According to Stewart, Aristotle resolved the difficulty between freedom and necessity in this way: although both an agent's character and the particular circumstances that cause him to act are necessary products of the universe, he is not thereby either relieved of the responsibility for (the consequences of) his action nor deprived of

\textsuperscript{103}Ibid., pp. 225-226. \textsuperscript{104}Ibid., p. 226. \\
\textsuperscript{105}Ibid. \textsuperscript{106}Ibid.
freedom, the ability to effect an action immediately through choice. The connundrum of the existence of free will in a universe whose primary mechanism is necessity is not, of course, resolved at all through such an explanation; it is instead sidestepped by defining freedom of choice in such a way that it is totally consistent with a system of strict causality.

Aristotle's postulate that what reason affirms volitio must implement, in fact, makes his ethical system highly deterministic. An act of volition that is the result of akrasia is not a choice in the Aristotelian system because it is interpreted as a product of a faulty judgment rather than as a completion of the free exercise of an agent's will the practical effect of which is his consciously choosing something contrary to his principles. The theory argues that a person cannot fail to do what is right if he possesses and actively exercises the knowledge of what is right in the particular circumstances in which he finds himself. But he may fail to do what is right in such circumstances through an intellectual error: just as a person may neglect to use in a syllogism a universal principle that he possesses knowledge of but does not realize applies to the facts at hand, he may also have knowledge of a universal principle of conduct, and yet

107Ibid., p. 227.
fail to exercise it in the particular circumstances that call for it. But for a person to have the knowledge of a universal principle of conduct, see its applicability to the circumstances in which he finds himself, and yet act against that principle is as unthinkable to Aristotle as is a person who would consciously construct a false syllogism by ignoring a universal principle of which he both had the knowledge and recognized the applicability. Aristotle's explanation of the causes of weakness of will must be rejected, however, not because it implies determinism, but rather, as has been demonstrated, because it is psychologically inaccurate; akrasia may be attributed not only to an agent's ignorance of the applicability of a certain principle to a specific set of circumstances, but also to a greater desire to pursue what is immediately pleasant than to do what is best.

The only serious objection that can be made to Aristotle's ethics is, consequently, one of mechanics. His system functions according to what B. F. Skinner has labeled a prescientific formula: deliberation and decision, followed by action. Skinner has proposed, in lieu of the prescientific formula, the conditioning mechanisms of positive and negative reinforcers, which are clinically

108Milo, p. 83.
demonstrable. Even Skinner has admitted, however, that, "neither view can be proved; but it is in the nature of scientific inquiry that the evidence should shift in favor of the second." 111

Rational Concepts in Science and in Art

Skinner's acknowledgement that neither view may be proved despite the evidence in favor of a scientific formula springs from the epistemological principle, held in common by most contemporary scientists, that man does not perceive the world directly through his senses, but merely infers it from sense data. 112 The epistemology of modern science argues that if man's knowledge of reality can be acquired only through inference, then the limitation of his senses' capacity to be stimulated by external reality limits a priori his knowledge of reality. Insofar as the knowledge that man possesses is, as a consequence, necessarily derived from evidence that is incomplete, confirming evidence necessarily falls short of absolute truth. 113

111Ibid.


113Kiley, p. 10.
But the discovery that neither Skinner's nor Aristotle's mechanism of voluntary action may be proved true is of no consequence in an aesthetic theory, (and fortunately so since surely, if a scientific equivalent of damning with faint praise exists, it is the substantiation of the tenability of a hypothesis with a broad philosophical assumption that neither it nor any opposing hypothesis can ever be proved true). Consequences of aesthetic significance follow, rather, from the discovery that from the same epistemological premise may be deduced both that neither is provable and that the concepts of which such hypotheses are constructed are not themselves reality but merely a method of grasping reality.\textsuperscript{114} Man's inference of external reality from his sense impressions depends upon his constructing concepts to serve as the mechanism by which his inference may be accomplished; he constructs the necessary concepts by mentally and arbitrarily abstracting, from a multitude of sense impressions, those occurring repeatedly and by then attributing to those abstractions a significance (that of real existence) whose justification rests solely on the fact that such concepts enable him to orient himself in a labyrinth of sense impressions.\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{114}Ibid., p. 24. \textsuperscript{115}Ibid., p. 19.
The necessary part that conceptual construction plays in man's understanding of reality means not only that sense data are by themselves incapable of yielding scientific knowledge, but also that no direct logical path leads from empirical data to scientific knowledge. A psychiatrist may logically deduce that a patient who has exhibited certain empirically observable behavior suffers from a phobia, but he is able to do so only because he possesses the concept of a phobia beforehand. Had he possessed not the concept, but the empirical data of his patient's behavior alone, he would have been unable to deduce the concept logically from the behavior; to arrive at the concept, he would have been forced to invent it as a way of grasping as an entity the 'real' relationship that he perceived among the data. Concepts are, thus, the products, not of deductive thought, but of the creative imagination. All knowledge consists simply of hypotheses that attempt to explain phenomena by reducing them to concepts that are sufficiently familiar that the operation of the processes they account for may be predicted intuitively. As a result, every theory, however accurately it may explain an observable phenomenon of the external world, possesses hidden assumptions that

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are open to challenge and that will eventually make necessary its replacement; furthermore, a person will be led to seek the reasons for a certain phenomenon, regardless of how obvious in retrospect may seem the clues that manifest the explanation for it, only among those hypotheses that are conceivable to him. An economist will tend to attribute the ills of the world to economic causes; a sociologist, to sociological causes; a moralist, to moral causes; each to causes that fall within the conceptual framework with which he grasps reality. The God of a merchant, as Emerson said, is a merchant.

Creative artists, on the other hand, especially those of the stature of Shakespeare or Sophocles, are often reverenced as men who are not bound by the ephemeral understanding of the time in which they live, whose spirits transcend the temporal and speak to men of all ages. Such artists no doubt express something that is eternally human, insofar as eternal is an appropriate description of a few centuries or a millenium or two. A playwright, like ordinary mortals, is nonetheless something less than omniscient; he, like his contemporaries, is limited in his understanding of human nature by the horizon to which

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120Bronowski, p. 240.

knowledge has been extended in his day, even if he himself has helped to broaden that horizon. Since he cannot imitate what he cannot conceive of, his dramatic personages will mirror the functioning of the human organism only in a way in which the concepts that he possesses allow him to grasp it.

A poet's use of the particular concepts that make reality comprehensible to him is in many ways comparable to his use of the language that makes his thought concrete. Although a poet may use language in unconventional ways, although he may bend the rules of grammar and coin new words, he is nonetheless bound by the arbitrary conventions of language, over which he has no control, in many more ways than he is free from them. He is bound by the fact that he must be understood by his fellow men and by the fact that he himself thinks in language. The function of language is to enable a person to communicate his thoughts externally, to express them physically, and to do so ideally with an unlimited flexibility; but, because language is a physically finite entity, it can never attain such an ideal. As a consequence, just as a poet must choose certain consciously imposed physical dimensions, such as those of a sonnet or a drama, within which to express reality, he must perforce express reality within the confines that are necessarily imposed by the physical limitations of language. Moreover, the inherent physical limitations of a language--
its vocabulary, grammatical structure, idioms, and pronunciation—are arbitrarily and unconsciously imposed by man himself as a result of the natural relationship between his mind and his body, which permits the former to receive information only through the agency of the latter; the nature of language is, consequently, a function of the nature of man. The nature of his concepts is similarly a function of his nature; their limitations are only a reflection of the boundaries that the necessary mediating capacity of the sense organs and the interpretative apparatus of the brain set on the perceptual powers of the conscious mind. Thus, he is similarly bound by such concepts more than he is free from them, not only because he is capable of understanding only in terms of the concepts that he possessed, but also because whatever he creates, he must create in terms of them.

Yet, the fact that man's concepts are intrinsically limited in their picture of reality does not mean that they are inherently deprived of their proper value; it means only that they fall short of a wrongly construed ideal of absolute correspondence between concept and reality, a correspondence that is put beyond their scope by their very function as instruments of the limited perceptual apparatus of man. The boundaries that are set on a concept when it is measured against such an ideal are called limitations, consequently, because they mark what
stands outside them rather than what they encompass; but the very same boundaries, when set upon a concept to delineate what it properly possesses, define the actual and unique functioning of the concept and characterize the attributes that make it recognizable. So, at the same time every language has limitations peculiar to it, each also has a set of proper attributes that allow it to function with unique effectiveness; for example, the positive being of English, i.e., the realization of the potential inherent in its proper attributes (its vocabulary, grammar, and so on), more so than its inherent limitations, makes it distinct from French or German.

Despite the myriad such differences among those languages, however, the same thought can be expressed in each of them; perhaps it cannot be expressed so elegantly or so precisely in one as in another, but the thought can be expressed nonetheless. In much the same way, the same external reality can be expressed through different concepts, although it may be expressed more elegantly or more precisely through one concept than another. Some concepts are not only more elegant or more precise, however, they are truer as well. Although the Ptolemaic, earth-centered model of the solar system accounted for the observable phenomena of the heavens quite accurately for centuries, the Copernican, sun-centered model not only did it more precisely, but also, by being able to account
for more phenomena and to account for them more fully, apparently got much closer to the truth as well. So all concepts are not, like most modern languages, roughly equal and fairly interchangeable as tools of communication and understanding. But the fact that some concepts are truer than others is of paramount importance, not in art, but only in science, where the real and empirically observable universe is implicitly taken as the subject of investigation. In contrast, a fundamental principle in the world of drama, derived from the fact that every play posits its own universe, is that all concepts, with absolute disregard for their empirical accuracy, are roughly equal. Some plays, of course, posit a universe as close to the real one as the author can contrive it; but such a universe is contrived nonetheless, and even writers of documentary dramas are allowed a freedom of invention that would appall a historian in a colleague's work. The universe of every play is necessarily artificial and appeals for probability only to the data observable within it; anything is possible as a consequence—Aristophanes's chorus of singing and dancing frogs, the personifications of personal attributes in Everyman, the Antrobus's domesticated dinosaurs in The Skin of Our Teeth—as long as such a contrivance is consistent with the scheme of probability that operates within the play itself. The degree of truth that a concept possesses in its representation of reality, consequently,
is of no intrinsic aesthetic value: modern psychology may be truer than the psychology of the Greeks or that of the Elizabethans, but its truth alone cannot cause the works of Eugene O'Neill or Tennessee Williams, which presume it, to be more dramatically pleasing than those of Sophocles or Shakespeare. Good science does not always make good drama, and bad science sometimes does. To the extent that the representation of reality has any bearing on the quality of drama, the more real the action of a drama seems to be, regardless of the limitations of the concepts with which it has been constructed, the better the drama is. The sole criterion by which a concept used in a drama may be judged is whether it allows the construction of an effective illusion of reality.

The use of concepts is governed, consequently, by the interaction of two disjunctive forces. On the one hand, just as a person is constrained to make use of the conventional meaning of the elements of language by the need to communicate effectively, he is similarly constrained to employ the innumerable conventional concepts that he shares with his contemporaries because they are commonly understood and immediately accepted without proof as true and because he consequently finds them not only adequate and helpful, but necessary; in the construction of drama, that tendency causes the use of whatever concepts of reality are current (and often of popular understandings of
current concepts, if the latter are highly specialized) simply because the use of such concepts is the most efficient method of constructing an illusion. On the other hand, just as a person is sometimes compelled to suspend a conventional usage of language, he is compelled to forge a new concept with which to sharpen the precision of his expression when a conventional concept is too dull to hew from its matrix the idea he seeks to fashion. The meaning of a new concept must be explained by its context within a work of art if such a work is to achieve an organic wholeness and if the concept is to function effectively; in drama, such an explanation is accomplished in the context of the play's scheme of probability. Scientists and artists are influenced in much the same way by the first tendency: they both employ innumerable conventional aspects simply because without such conventional concepts they could not function. Human perception, understanding, and communication depend so utterly on so many conventional concepts that the function of the latter as entities that organize complexes of individual elements (a function analogous to that of words in language) often escapes notice; even such a seemingly fundamental perception as that of a square as an entity—not that such and such a thing is called a square, but that four lines of the same length set at certain angles to each other are in and of themselves a whole—even such a perception is a concept
that is learned, not an innate and automatic response to an inherently real entity. To function without such conventional concepts would be akin to a writer's having to define every word he intended to use before he could write a book.

The second force, the need on occasion to forge a new concept, likewise influences scientists and artists in the same way, but because of the different purposes inherent in their work, the effect of the influence can be radically different. When a scientist disuses a conventional concept, he is forced to do so in order to create a new concept that explains new data for which no concept exists, or one that encompasses more data than a conventional concept, or one that explains the same data as a conventional concept, but in a better way; because a scientist's purpose is to investigate reality, the only reason for him to replace a conventional concept with a new one is to get closer to the truth. An artist disuses a conventional concept, however, only so that his work may more effectively serve the function for which it is designed. A painter who uses a pointillist or a cubist technique in a particular work presents a view of the way things look that is quite different from the way in which they are customarily seen.

and a view that is, from a scientific point of view, decidedly inaccurate; he presents things in such a way, however, not because he actually sees them that way or because he is trying to make his painting more scientifically accurate, but clearly because he is trying to make his work more visually expressive. For the most part, a playwright uses the concepts that are current in his day as the devices with which he constructs a dramatically effective illusion. Only when such conventional concepts are inadequately effective dramatically is he compelled to create new concepts or modify old ones; but, at times, to be adequate material for an effective dramatic illusion, such a new or modified concept must be less true than the old. Such is the case with Robert Bolt's *Vivat! Vivat Regina*; within the limits of the action that the play presents (and the action of a play is the single standard against which every dramatic element within it must be measured), the meeting of Elizabeth and Mary, Queen of Scots, although contrary to irrefutable historical fact, makes the action more plausible than historical accuracy alone could have rendered it.

The frequency with which a playwright may need to create new concepts may seem impossible to specify with any degree of accuracy, but a comparison with a poet's use of language offers some indication. Concepts may be arranged on a continuum that extends from the simple and fundamental
at one end to the complex and derivative at the other. The concept of a square is, for example, far to the simple and fundamental end of the spectrum, while far to the opposite end is the concept embodied in the blueprint for a large public building; the latter is, of course, complex and derivative because it contains simple and fundamental concepts such as the square. Words and idioms on an analogous continuum would be toward the simple and fundamental extreme, and sentences, paragraphs, and essays progressively farther toward the other. So, just as the invention of a new word is relatively rare, the invention of a fundamental concept may be assumed to be equally infrequent; conversely, the construction of a derivative concept may be as common as the construction of a sentence. And, just as any book contains a great number of sentences and paragraphs that are unique to it alone, a play may contain concepts of human behavior that are similarly unique; a play as a whole may, in fact, be the embodiment of a single such complex and derivative concept. Furthermore, just as one unique sentence is drawn from the very same set of available words as any other, the unique and highly complex concept of human behavior that characterizes one drama draws upon the very same elemental concepts of human action that constitute the characteristic concepts of another.
An important qualification of the foregoing assertion (that unique, complex concepts are always constructed from the same, commonly held fundamental concepts) is that it is tenable only if those who create such unique concepts share the same fundamental concepts as a frame of reference. Thus, two unique sentences draw on the same lexicon only if written in the same language, and two unique concepts of human behavior are explained in the same terminology only if they share the determinate standpoint of a given popular or scientific theory; thus, English words mean nothing to speakers of French, and the humors of Galen are clinically meaningless to Freudians.

As necessary as the qualification above is, it can be misleading, nonetheless. In the present context, a comparison of the fundamental concepts of two characteristically different works of art with the works of two different contemporaneous languages is somewhat inappropriate because the language that is commonly spoken among a group of people changes from one country to another while the common behavior of men does not. Because, on the other hand, both the understanding of a single language and that of human behavior changes more with the passage of time than from place to place or play to play, a comparison of the durability of a given concept with that of any given
word in a living language is more justified. So, just as during the development of a language, some works or idioms remain the same while others change, some concepts of human behavior change while others remain the same; the latter, consequently, persist as elements common to the divergent theories that mark the development of man's understanding of his own behavior.

As a result, the simplest explanation of those aspects of the masterworks of art that appear to be eternally human is that they embody interpretations of human nature that have not yet changed. Skinner has testified that human behavior is one of the most durable such interpretations:

Twenty-five hundred years ago it might have been said that man understood himself as well as any other part of his world. . . . Physics and biology have come a long way, but there has been no comparable development of anything like a science of human behavior. Greek physics and biology are now of historical interest only . . . , but the dialogues of Plato are still assigned and cited as if they throw light on human behavior.123

Because of its apparently incorrect description of the mechanisms that control human actions, the Greek ethical system, which Aristotle brought to its fullest formulation, may be useless in solving the behavioral problems of real human beings; but, as the embodiment of the prescientific view of human conduct, it is invaluable in examining the functioning of dramatic character. The twenty-five centuries

123Skinner, pp. 5-6.
through which man's understanding of human behavior has resisted change reaches far enough into the past to encompass the entire scope of extant dramatic literature, from its earliest masterpieces to its present manifestations on stage, screen, and television. Man's prescientific understanding of human behavior, in which he sees himself as free to deliberate, decide, and act, must, as a consequence, be the image of himself in which he has created dramatic personages, not only because man has so conceived himself up to the present, but because, as Skinner laments,

almost everyone who is concerned with human affairs— as political scientist, philosopher, man of letters, economist, psychologist, linguist, sociologist, theologian, anthropologist, educator, or psychotherapist— continues to talk about human behavior in this prescientific way.  

Skinner's behavioral principles may one day be a necessary addition to theoretical treatments of the nature of dramatic character, but only when men begin, as a matter of course, to perceive as actual events the phenomena of positive and negative reinforcement and to conceive of themselves as conditioned beings. Never, however, will those or any other set of principles, regardless of their truth, change Seventeenth Century man's perceptions of himself, nor the representation of those perceptions in the drama that has survived him; on that conclusion rests the primary defence

\[^{124}\text{Ibid., p. 9.}\]
for the lengthy examination of Aristotle's ethical theory presented in this study.
CHAPTER SEVEN

The Nature of Dramatic Character

For the most part the discussion of ethos presented in this study has ignored the fundamental distinctions that exist between the actions of human beings in real life and those of dramatic personages in a play, distinctions that derive from the fundamental differences in the natures of life and drama. In life, the functioning of the will, at least as it is conceived of, occurs on a plane different from that on which operate the circumstances that prompt it and the action that follows from it: both of the latter are external and visible, while the exercise of the will is internal and invisible. Drama is, however, a physical product of human creativity, and, as such, it is also part of the external visible world; as a consequence, its very nature renders it devoid of the capacity to admit of anything that is internal and invisible. Regardless of how clever the contrivance, an internal quality can no more be made to inhere in a drama than actual depth can exist in a
mirror. So, although drama reflects the inner powers and faculties of man, it, like a mirror, can reflect things only as they are manifested at the surface; its beauty, however, resides in the manipulation of that very limitation: it can, just as a highly reflective mirror, present a virtually flawless illusion of seemingly infinite depth where, in fact, none exists.

Because the nature of an illusion is of an entirely different order from that of the reality it represents, the nature of the object that produces an illusion must also be of an order different from that of the facts that create the reality. The reflection in a mirror depends, of course, on the presence of a subject before the mirror; yet, the same subject before ten mirrors may be reflected in ten different ways. If each mirror serves the function for which it is designed, the fact that the reflection in each is different does not indicate that any of the mirrors is necessarily defective; the perfection of a particular reflection is measured in terms, not of accuracy, but of the nature dictated by the function that the mirror producing it serves. Thus, two mirrors, one on a woman's dressing table and another in a fun house, each have a proper reflection different from that of the other because
each has a distinctive function. The function that a mirror is to serve also dictates the shape that makes the mirror effective; although the quality of the silver and that of the glass that constitute a mirror bear directly on the function of the whole, even the finest materials are of little value if they are not fashioned into the form that makes a mirror most effective. Furthermore, apart from their individual qualities, the glass and the silver each share individually in the perfection of the whole by accomplishing a unique function that is determined according to the form and the function of the mirror in its entirety. The silver on a two-way mirror, for example, serves a different function from the silver on a dressing table mirror; if the silver on each is not distributed over the glass in a certain, but different way according to a certain, but different proportion, neither of the mirrors is able to serve its function. Similarly, the glass in a dressing table mirror is intended to function differently than that in a fun-house mirror; if each of the mirrors is to function as intended, the glass in each must take a different shape. So, the form that is proper to any part of a mirror is determined by the function of that part; the function of a part is, in its turn, determined by the
function of the mirror as a whole; that part's execution of its function is contingent upon its occupying its proper place in the arrangement of all the mirror's parts, an arrangement determined by the form of the mirror in its entirety. The proper functioning of the mirror, consequently, demands that it take a certain shape in the structure of which each part performs an essential task. The nature of a mirror depends on the nature of the subject before it, nonetheless, to the extent that its function, reflection, is defined by and limited to the subject's visible nature, rather than by its audible, tactile, or other such natures. If the nature of a mirror, or any other object capable of producing an illusion, is assumed to be adequate to the function of reflecting its subject, then the form and function of any of its parts depend, not on the facts of the reality that it mirrors, but on the nature of the reflector itself.

So it is with drama. Its nature is determined by reality only insofar as its function as an imitation of an action is defined by and limited to the external attributes of human action. But to the extent that drama adequately reflects the external reality of human action as man perceives it, the form and function of any of its parts depend,
not on the facts of reality themselves, but on the nature of drama. The nature of drama, its form and functioning, can alone define the function of dramatic ethos, its shape within a play, and its proper relationship to the structure of the whole.

Even though a dramatic personage may appear to be a real human being and may have been constructed to give such an illusion, it is not and cannot be treated as a real human being because it simply does not possess the potential to be so treated: it is no more possible to treat it as a human being than it is to reach into the apparent depth of a mirror. Thus, the Latin term for a dramatic personage, *dramatis persona*, although it originally referred to a physical mask used in a drama, is no less accurate now, when such masks are the exception rather than the rule, in describing the nature of a dramatic personage: a dramatic personage is a facade, and like a mask or a painted flat it is effective not on account of a certain internal structure, but rather on account of a certain external shape. A dramatic personage is effective, as a consequence, to the extent to which it is constructed of the sort of detail necessary to make it appear like a human being under the circumstances in which it appears, just as a piece of
scenery is effective to the extent that it is constructed of the sort of detail that makes it appear to be, for example, the wall of a castle from the perspective from which an audience views it. What prevents dramatic ethos from being treated in the same way as human character is that the nature of its function is essentially different from that of human character. Dramatic character exists only so that it may be perceived, whereas human character functions whether or not it is perceived. The function of dramatic character is, thus, as different from that of human character as the function of a set piece that represents a beam is different from the function of a real beam. The latter functions as a support even if it is hidden, while a set piece supports nothing and functions only to be seen. The resemblance that exists between a real beam and a scenic beam, between human character and dramatic character has, as a consequence, nothing to do with a similarity in function; it exists, rather, as a result of what Gustav Freytag called a habit of thinking that people find necessary in every day life.\textsuperscript{1} Perception has been demonstrated to be intentional.\textsuperscript{2} It is not merely the activity

\textsuperscript{1}Freytag, p. 248.
of receiving information from the senses, but of organizing such information as well;\textsuperscript{3} thus, people tend to perceive not raw, objective facts, but what they expect to perceive, what they have learned to perceive. A stage illusion effects its act of representation not by functioning as the thing it represents, but by functioning in such a way that it imposes on the mind of the perceiver, through his senses, the shape of the effectiveness of the thing represented.

Dramatic character, thus, consists only of the manifestation of the shape of those attributes that are necessary, under the circumstances in which a dramatic personage appears, for the communication of the appearance of the functioning of human character. The manner in which the functioning of human character is manifested is merely an accident of the juxtaposition of its operation and the circumstances in which its operation occurs. Because of its accidental nature, the manifestation of human character does not necessarily reflect the true nature of the character it makes apparent; it is easy to misjudge a person's purpose when his actions alone are known. On the other hand, because the manifestation of a semblance of

\textsuperscript{3}Weyl, p. 29.
human character is what makes dramatic character what it is, its manifestation is necessarily rather than accidentally determined by the nature of the circumstances in which it appears. The manifestation of a dramatic character in a play, taken as a whole, is consequently invariably accurate. Moreover, unlike human character which has a single mode of operation, dramatic character can be represented either by being enacted or by being reported, much as a beam may be painted on a drop or represented by a plastic set piece and yet be no less functional, although it might be considerably more shallow; its manner of representation is determined not by the capacity of dramatic ethos to be one or the other, but by the appropriateness of the manner to the dramatic action of which it is a part. Every human character, furthermore, possesses the inherent potential to function in circumstances of varying degrees of seriousness (whether or not such potential is developed notwithstanding), while dramatic character possesses the potential to develop only to the extent defined by the circumstances in which it appears. So, whereas circumstances provide a human being with merely the opportunity to develop the potential inherent in his character, the circumstances that constitute a dramatic action also constitute the potential, and ultimately,
the actuality of the potential that dramatic character possesses. Dramatic character is most unlike human character, then, in that human character possesses potential for development so long as human consciousness continues, but dramatic character possesses potential only until the dramatic action in which it appears is complete.

Dramatic character is distinct not only from human character; it is distinct from a dramatic personage as well. The soul of drama is not an agent, but, as Aristotle pointed out, an action; the action of a drama exists not for the sake of the agents, then, but the agents, for the sake of the action.\(^4\) A dramatic personage is, consequently, merely the representation of a given human agency that is the cause of one or more of the things that happen in the course of the action of a play. Dramatic character, on the other hand, is one of the kinds of things that happen in the action of a play that is represented as being caused by such human agency.

Dramatic character is specifically the point of change in the action of a drama at which the relative probabilities of an action's happening or not happening cease, and at

\(^4\)Poet. 1450a20-22.
which the certainty of one of those events comes into being. The change that dramatic character embodies represents the most fundamental aspect of human agency. It represents, first, a change in the soul, i.e., an actualization of a potential for the exercise of one of the soul’s powers; the specific form of the change that dramatic character represents is that in which rational human agency acts primarily and directly as the cause of action. It is distinguished from other forms of human agency in that it is in essence a function of the soul as a whole; it is in essence a result of those processes proper to man and, hence, fundamentally independent of external processes. Character in a play is thus the dramatic version of an act of the will: it represents a change from a state in which a human being manifests a consciousness of a privation of formal goodness to a state in which he adopts a sensitive attitude that, in the absence of immediate actualization, an unrealized potential for being will become a privation of being that he no longer possesses the ability to make whole. Such a point of change in human character has two possible issues: either the potential for being will be realized, or it will be lost; it one event does not happen, the other must. The change that dramatic character represents is, thus, the
point at which an action ceases to be possible and probable and becomes, by means of such a change, necessary.

A fundamental difference exists between the potential actualized in the change embodied in human character and the potential actualized in the change embodied in dramatic character. The change embodied in dramatic character is, of course, a mere representation of the change from potential to potential realized, or from potential to potential lost that occurs in human action; as a consequence of that, in a play only the potential for either one or the other of those changes exists in any representation of choice: although an incident in a play appears to present the potential for both, it in fact presents the potential either for a change from a representation of potential to a representation of such potential realized, or for a change from a representation of potential to a representation of such potential lost. Which of those changes a potential exists for is determined by the action of the play as a whole. In a human being, the change that constitutes an act of the will is the exercise of a power of the human soul; in a drama the representation of such a change is, analogously, the exercise of a power of the soul of a play: the one, complete action that constitutes the essence of its being. The change that, in
its representation of the means by which a certain activity is made necessary, is the essence of dramatic character, itself is made necessary by the overall shape of the action of which it is a part. The action of a play as a whole, an action whose components are structured in a certain causal relationship in order to have a certain effect, can alone determine when potential is to be actualized, when what is possible and probable becomes necessary.

An understanding of drama as a whole is clearly indispensible to a complete understanding of dramatic character. Drama is, according to Aristotle, an imitation of an action in the manner of enactment. An understanding of drama consequently requires an understanding of the three classes of action that contribute to its constitution: the action of real life that serves as the model of dramatic representation; the action of a play that represents the model; and the action of enactment, the manner in which a dramatic representation is accomplished.

Aristotle's term for action is praxis. Like its English equivalent, praxis in its simplest and most general sense means 'the doing of something.' In a specified

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\(^5\) Poet. 1449b23-28, 1448a23-25.
context, however, praxis can take on a restricted meaning that is proper to that context alone. Such is the case in the Nicomachean Ethics, where praxis means conduct, i.e., the sort of action that constitutes a person's behavior. Praxis is, moreover, the word that Aristotle used in his definition of drama as an imitation of an action. Action, according to Aristotle, is a specific type of change; as such he termed it an activity (energeia or entelecheia) and distinguished it from mere movement (kinesis*). Movement is a change that takes place between two distinct termini. It is, by nature, incomplete while it is a process; its actual functioning must stop short of completion because, once it is completed, movement no longer exists: once the terminus toward which it is moving is reached, the potentiality that was operative has vanished. The bleaching of a piece of cloth is an example of movement: the two termini between which the piece of cloth is in the process of changing are non-whiteness and whiteness; once the cloth has become white it no longer is changing, nor does it possess any potential to become white. Movement is, consequently, a process of change that has an end outside

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6 Meta. 1048b20–22. 7 Phys. 201b31.
of itself; it is, as such, only a means to an end because, as a process, it ceases when its end has been achieved. Activity, on the other hand, is change in which the potential for change does not vanish in the actuality of change: no discrete termini exist between which such a change occurs. Once a person has seen, for example, he does not lose the potential for seeing. An activity is, moreover, complete at every moment: a person is seeing and has seen at the same time. An activity, as a consequence, is a change that has itself as its end; it is complete as a process. Thus, a process of change that brings about actuality in a thing being acted upon is a movement, whereas a process of change that brings about actuality in its agent is an activity.

The type of action that drama imitates is, in its essence, activity: human beings retain the potential to think, to feel, to speak, to choose, or to act at the same time they actualize the potential to do so. Activity is, moreover, the nature of the type of change that constitutes the representation that is the essence of drama. Thus, since drama is defined as an imitation of an action, both

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the action that is being imitated (the imitable praxis*) and
the action that constitutes the imitation (the imitative
praxis*) are activities.

An imitative praxis is, however, an activity in a
precisely defined sense that sets it apart from the activ­
ities that make up the imitable praxis: regardless of the
number of imitable activities a drama represents, the
imitative praxis that represents them is properly a single
activity. Activities that may be discrete entities in real
life are transformed by dramatic imitation and are repre­
sented in drama as the causally related parts of a single
activity. Such a transformation is not so unnatural as it
might seem; certain activities in real life are made up of
a series of changes and yet are still considered single
activities. The activity of seeing, for example, begins with
a change in the eye that leads to a change in the optic
nerve that leads to a change in the brain that is accompanied
by a change in consciousness. Taken as a whole, those
changes constitute the actualization of the potential for
seeing; that is, taken as a whole, they constitute a
complete activity of seeing. Drama is analogous to such
an act; it is made up of many individual changes that
constitute a single activity.
The changes that constitute the activity of seeing or those that constitute the activity of drama compose a whole not because of an artificial organization imposed on them from without, but because of an internal and intrinsic relationship. The state of consciousness known as seeing would not occur, under ordinary circumstances, were it not for a certain activity of the brain; nor would such an activity occur were it not for stimulation it receives through the optic nerve; nor would the optic nerve be capable of causing such stimulation were it not for stimulation that it itself receives as a result of a change in the eye. Such events are not grouped together arbitrarily; each occurs, on the contrary, because of the last one and as a cause of the next. The causality that joins the parts of a whole activity is more than seriality, however. Not only is each part proper to the whole, each has its proper place in the arrangement of the whole: if an activity of the brain that is proper to the activity of seeing takes place without being caused by stimulation from a change in the eye, the result is not a proper act of seeing but a hallucination; the proper functioning of the whole as a whole is, as a consequence, a result of both the functioning of each of its parts and the functioning of each in its
appropriate place in the arrangement of the whole. Such causality, as Aristotle pointed out, is necessary in a drama if its action is to function as a single activity:

in poetry the story, as an imitation of an action, must represent one action, a complete whole, with its several incidents so closely connected that the transposa or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoin and dislocate the whole. For that which makes no perceptible difference by its presence or absence is no real part of the whole.¹³

As a consequence of causality, the various things that happen in a drama constitute a single activity; as a consequence of causality, moreover, a play gives pleasure: "even matters of chance seem most marvelous," Aristotle noted, "if there is an appearance of design as it were in them."¹⁴

Any given thing that happens in a drama depends for its existence, then, on everything else that happens taken as a whole; that circumstance produces a significant difference between the source of the wholeness of human character and that of the wholeness of dramatic character. Human character derives from the consciousness of a human being, and, as a consequence, the consistency of human

¹³Poet. 1451a31-35. ¹⁴Poet. 1452a6-7.
character (or its consistent inconsistency) is the result of the essential wholeness of the human soul. A play, on the other hand, is an inanimate object and as such it has neither potential for nor actual possession of consciousness; the consciousness that it appears to manifest is simply a representation of human consciousness, a representation that is effected, moreover, through an activity that is accessible to the senses. Dramatic character, as a consequence, derives not from the functioning of consciousness, but from the functioning of the activity of representation. Dramatic character thus derives its consistency (or its consistent inconsistency) not from the human agency that embodies it, but rather from the causality that gives shape to the things that happen in the play: causality employs such consistency (or consistent inconsistency) as a means by which one event may be connected to another in a way that is possible, probable, and ultimately necessary. The wholeness of dramatic character is not, consequently, the real organic wholeness of a living entity, but a manifestation of artistic unity; its wholeness is the result not of growth, but of parts that have been fashioned to fit together so precisely that the seams that join them are invisible.
Despite the differences between human action and the action of drama, they are both in essence activities; yet despite that similarity, they remain in essence different: they are both essentially activities, but they are activities whose intrinsic properties make them essentially different. From their similarity derives a natural inclination to treat them in the same manner, while their difference makes such treatment fundamentally inappropriate. Consequently, although the form of dramatic action is inseparable from the form of human action that it imitates, it possesses at the same time a form that is both proper to itself and wholly different from that of human action. The relationship between human action and dramatic action is not, therefore, a simple imposition of the form of the former on that of the latter; it is rather a superposition of the one on the other: the two constitute the complementary elements of the imitable praxis and the imitative praxis only insofar as the elements of human action can be made to coincide with those of dramatic action. The result is that an activity that is a proper part of a human action may not be a part of the imitable praxis that corresponds with such an action because dramatic action lacks an element with which such a part may coincide. The form of
a human activity may not exist in the same sense in a
dramatic imitation as it does in life, just as warmth and
coldness do not, in a tactile sense, exist in the imitable
object that the world provides for a painting because a
painting possesses no elements with which such tactile
elements may coincide. The elements of a painting are
incapable of the manifestation of anything that does not
appear to the eye; thus the imitable object of a painting
is the appearance of warmth and coldness, and in any
painting in which warmth and coldness cannot be expressed
by appearance, they simply do not exist. Thus, while a
knowledge of the form of a human activity is indispensable
to an analysis of its dramatic representation, such knowl­
dedge is by itself not sufficient.

The matrix from which the imitable praxis of drama
develops is, then, the range of activities of which man is
capable; those activities, even though properly human, are
appropriately examined in a study of dramaturgy because
they constitute such a matrix. The activity of human
character itself is made up of a number of such activities,
and those activities, of course, constitute the matrix
from which dramatic character is brought forth; the forms
by which they may be perceived have been articulated in the
preceeding chapters. The first of the components of character is inclination, a potential for ethical activity; it has three forms: capacity (dynamis, an undeveloped potential for feeling pleasure and pain in a certain way and to a certain degree), disposition (diathesis, an incomplete actualization of such a potential), and a fixed habit (hexis kuria, a complete actualization of such a potential). A second component is passive desire, a sense of the privation of formal goodness; it also has three forms: epithymia (which causes the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain), thymos (which causes the pursuit of expedient things and the avoidance of harmful ones), and boulesis (which causes the pursuit of noble things and the avoidance of base ones). The activity of desire has the potential to prompt two other activities: judgment, which is the discernment of which activity, of those that are possible, constitutes formal goodness; and deliberation, which is the discernment of which means, of those available, is both efficient and itself formally good. Both of those activities entail the exercise of phronesis (practical wisdom); phronesis, in its turn, is subject to the influence of inclination, to the activity of conscience (which is that part of the moral and intellectual environment that is active in an agent), and
to the exercise of cleverness. The activity of character culminates in active desire, which is the exercise of the will. The activity of the will takes three forms: simple volition (which derives from epithymia and is the adoption of an attitude with the sensitive faculty that an immediately attainable pleasure is necessary), complex volition (which derives from thymos and is an attitude that a difficult means to a desirable end is necessary), and proairesis (which derives from boulesis and is an attitude that the means and the end that reason has designated as good are necessary). Simple volition, complex volition, and the failure to exercise the will can each constitute a case of aproairesis, the failure to actualize a proairesis, when the latter is proper to a certain set of circumstances. The final component of human character is ethos, a person's practice of acting in a certain way. Ethos, a practice, is not to be confused with ethos, character. Ethos is a practice, a mere fact that the same sort of thing has been done over and over again. Ethos, on the other hand, is a pattern, the essence that makes the actions done over and over again action of the same sort. A practice of playing the piano every day is, thus, an activity quite different from the activity of playing the piano.
In real life, each of those elements, functioning at the proper point, makes up the arrangement of activities that constitutes an exercise of the activity of **proairesis**. An act of **proairesis** (an act of rational choice) is thus the activity that constitutes the essence of human character because it is the single form that encompasses the exercise of all of the activities that possess the potential to take part in human character. Human character is, consequently, not limited to mere acts of volition. The simple change of attitude that makes necessary some good that is both practical and rational—i.e., the act of rational volition—in which the activity of **proairesis** culminates is no more nor less essential to **proairesis** than the activities that have preceded it, in the same way that the change that takes place in the consciousness is no more nor less essential to the activity of seeing than the chemical and electrical activities of the eye, the optic nerve, and the brain are. An act of volition can occur without the activities that properly precede it just as a change in the consciousness can occur without its proper precedents; but just as such consciousness is a hallucination rather than a proper act of seeing, such an act of volition is an **approairesis** rather than a **proairesis**. The act of volition in which **proairesis**
culminates is of special interest because it marks the point of transition from *energeia* to *entelecheia*, from an ability in operation, to a state of completion in which an ability, its exercise, and its result appear together.\(^{15}\) The culminating act of volition is not, however, a mere act of summary; it is, rather, the ultimate imposition of form on the activities that have gone before it. Before an act of volition can make a particular thing necessary, the activities that precede such an act of volition must limit the things that may happen, to that one particular thing: thus, while the activities that precede volition cannot determine, they can limit, and, while an act of volition cannot limit, it can determine. Thus, the act of volition in which *proairesis* culminates is not the result of the activities that precede it, but a distinct change that, as the point beyond which no further potential exists to be actualized, constitutes the completion of the cause that makes them whole. It derives its primacy from that fact, because, as such, it constitutes the imposition of the ultimate shape on all of the potential possessed by it and by all the activities that have gone before it.

\(^{15}\)See Chapter Three, p. 122-125.
The activity of proairesis is complemented by a hexis kuria, an established condition that takes the form of either a virtue or a vice. Such a condition is the establishment of an inclination to choose as one has chosen before, an inclination that persists even when the activity of proairesis is not itself being exercised. Virtue was described in Chapter Five as being analogous to inertia: it is a resistance, once things have gotten moving in a certain direction, to a change in either the force of the movement or its direction. Virtue is thus the perfecting counterpart of choice: whereas the essence of choice is a change characterized by certain proper attributes, the essence of virtue is a resistance to any change in the attributes proper to the change that characterizes choice. The nature of virtue is, moreover, a further indication of the primacy of the act of volition in the activity of proairesis: without the change that is the essence of a choice, a resistance to any modification of such a change, which is the essence of virtue, is pointless. Choice is, thus, that for the sake of which virtue exists; virtue is the complement of choice, therefore, because the purpose of its existence is the perfecting of the latter.

\[16\text{See Chapter Five, p. 248.}\]
Just as the existence of virtue is pointless without the act of choice in which proairesis culminates, an isolated act of volition cannot embody proairesis unless the fixed condition that constitutes virtue has exercised its function in the activity that volition completes. A choice embodies moral purpose not only because it is the exercise of rational desire at the appropriate moment under appropriate circumstances, but also and necessarily because it is part of a pattern of doing so. Virtue's act of being, as a fixed condition, is its resistance; the function of virtue consists, then, not in a change of order nor in establishing a new order, but in maintaining the order that a given choice has established. The activity of virtue is, consequently, its actualization of a certain potential that the faculty of desire possesses to retain in a latent manner the form of the act of rational volition when such a form lacks appropriate matter on which to operate. The actuality of virtue (i.e., the exercise of the power to retain the form of rational volition) is, however, different from the latent form itself: while the form of rational volition is fully actualized the first time it is exercised, it is not fully retained (i.e., virtue is not fully actualized) until its exercise has been repeated a number of times. From that
interrelationship derives the complementarity of the two: while choice, an act of volition that embodies proairesis, is the final cause of the actuality of the fixed condition that constitutes virtue, the content of such actuality is, conversely, the final cause of choice. A choice cannot be part of a pattern of acts of rational volition without a concomitant functioning of virtue, then, not merely because virtue makes such a choice more likely to come about, but because virtue is the act of being in which the continuity of a pattern of choices is established.

The fixity of the condition that virtue embodies is not, or at least does not appear to be, absolute; virtue is a resistance to change, not a rendering it impossible. Each individual act of choice is important because each is not merely another instance of unalterable continuity, but rather an instance in which such continuity may be reconfirmed and established more strongly. The limitation on the extent to which the fixed condition that constitutes virtue appears to be able to determine an act of choice defines the sphere of operation of the free will. The apparent freedom of the will has a significant effect on the manner in which character manifests itself externally. While from the outside an act of choice is recognizable as
a change determining the necessity of some action, virtue, on the other hand, manifests itself only as a certain probability that such a determining change will take place. In many circumstances in which a person is confronted with the possibility of action, his habit of acting in a certain way may be so strongly established that the probability of his doing or not doing a given action is so great that it is a virtual certainty; even in such cases, however, habit constitutes only probability because there always seems to be a chance that even the most wildly improbable choice will be made. An act of choice, on the other hand, increases in significance to the extent to which it is a persistence in or an establishment of a pattern of behavior in circumstances in which the ability of habit to resist change to the pattern seems improbable. To an external observer, then, the probability and finally the necessity of the occurrence of an action that is consistent with a pattern, although perhaps influenced by a moral force fixed beforehand, is nonetheless determined by a force established for the first time by a present activity of proairesis.

Human ethos is thus a property that a person possesses in virtue of his ability to determine action. Ethos is not the determining of action; if it were it would be
indistinguishable from virtue and choice. Ethos is, rather, that without which human action that is determined by essentially human means could not be as it is. Ethos is the sum of the essential attributes of the efficient and final causes of such action; it is the quality of the reason and desire that account for a person's action. Ethos is thus embodied in the pattern of the behavior that is the result of the mutual interaction of choice and habit; it is that which may be said to characterize the activity of the human soul that makes necessary human action.

Dramatic ethos is, analogously, "what makes us ascribe certain moral qualities to agents;" it is that which makes evident whether a dramatic action is ethical in nature, and, if so, whether it is good or bad. The difference between dramatic ethos and human ethos is that whereas the efficient and the final causality that characterize human ethos actually determines its nature; the efficient and the final causality of dramatic ethos do not. As a consequence, the ethos that is proper to a human being in virtue of his actions is a property intrinsic to the activity of his being and exists whether or not anyone perceives it, and whether or not anyone assesses it correctly; human ethos is the essence of the activity of a person's moral purpose.

17Poet. 1450a5.
Dramatic ethos, on the other hand, is merely the power of representing the properly human activities by which a given action has been determined. Thus, neither the final nor the efficient cause that dramatic ethos reveals is in fact the final or the efficient cause of the dramatic action effected; the final cause of a dramatic personage's determining of an action (that for the sake of which an action is determined to be necessary) is represented as the personage's happiness, but is actually the shape of the action as a whole; similarly, the efficient cause of a dramatic personage's determining of an action (that by means of which an action is determined to be necessary) is represented as an exercise of the personage's will, but is, rather, a change made necessary by the shape of the dramatic action as a whole. Dramatic ethos is, consequently, not the essence of an activity exercised by a dramatic agent in virtue of a power of its soul, but a power inherent in the arrangement of the events of a drama by means of which the final and the efficient causes that actually effect the dramatic action of its personages manifest themselves through such events as representations of the final and efficient causes that constitute moral purpose.
The activity of human proairesis embodies the efficient and the final causes of human ethos and is, hence, the essential activity of the latter. The activity of proairesis is not, however, a complete end in itself; it exists in order that a person might attain happiness by effecting those activities that are the components of happiness, and it embodies its own final cause because it itself is one such component. Because happiness is the formal goodness unique to the human animal, it constitutes not only the perfection of each of the faculties a person possesses, but their integration as well; any activity that a person engages in through which he attains or attempts to attain happiness is, as a consequence, impossible except as a result of his ethos, except as a result of his exercise of proairesis. In spite of the fact that any such activity by which a person hopes to attain happiness is therefore necessarily an expression of ethos, the action that manifests such an activity physically may not reflect explicitly enough, for an external observer to apprehend it, the ethos being expressed; human ethos is the essence of the attributes proper to a person's pattern of choices and only accidentally their external manifestation. Dramatic ethos is on the other hand, essentially the external expression of a
representation of such attributes; it exists, in fact, only to the extent to which its expression can be apprehended. While both Hamlet and Macbeth, for example, commit murder, the quality of their actions is different; if the thing done is the same, then that which differentiates the proper attributes of two such actions must be something other than the actions themselves. Dramatic ethos is, thus, not properly expressed in the action that is the result of the efficient causality of a representation of *proairesis*, although it may be expressed in such an action by implication; it is properly expressed, rather, in an imitation of the activity of *proairesis*, the activity in which the qualities that constitute ethos have been forged. Such an activity of dramatic *proairesis* is not limited to the representation of only a culminating act of volition; its representation properly embraces the *energeia* of *proairesis* as well as the act of volition that constitutes its *entelecheia*.

The fact that the efficient and final causes that human ethos embodies are different from the efficient and final causes embodied by dramatic ethos is an indication of the corresponding difference that exists in the relationship of the components of human *proairesis* and those of
dramatic proairesis. In human proairesis, the components of its energeia (habit, desire, judgment, and deliberation) limit a culminating act of will to a single object, and such an act of will absolutely determines the necessity of the actuality of the action that follows upon it; an action is, thus, determined by a choice, and the scope of the activity of a choice is limited by the activities of proairesis that precede it. In dramatic proairesis, however, the actuality of every pragma (of every thing that is done in a play) is made necessary not by an activity that precedes it, but by the causality that constitutes the essence of the single activity that makes a play a whole: a given action must occur at a given point in a play not because a dramatic personage has chosen it, but because it is made necessary by the causal relationship among the parts that makes them a whole. The efficient cause that effects the representation of such an action is not the act of will that is imitated, but the dramatic change that represents such an act of will; such a dramatic change is a means by which the causality that unifies the whole effects the appropriate relationship among the parts. Dramatic ethos, like the action of the play in general, is also a causally related whole; it likewise represents a single activity, that of proairesis. In a
play, moreover, that which determines the constitution of the activities of *proairesis* that precede a choice is the nature of the choice itself: if a given action must occur at a given point for the relationship of the parts to proceed in a causal manner, then a given change that represents the choosing of such an action must occur at such a point to effect the latter. The necessity of such a change, in turn, makes necessary certain properties in its parts: the representation of an act of will that is the *entelecheia* of dramatic *proairesis* consequently determines the nature of the activities (habit, desire, judgment, and deliberation) that constitute the representation of its *energeia*. Since the causal structure of dramatic ethos must fit into the greater causal structure of the whole play, its shape is made necessary, not by the parts that constitute it, but by the function it as a unit must serve in relation to every other functional unit.

The nature of drama is such that the things done in a drama taken as a whole impose form on dramatic ethos whether or not the audience, the actors, or even the playwright is aware of it. Drama is composed of six elements, the first and most important of which is the plot, or *mythos*. The plot of a play is simply "the combination of the incidents,
or things done \( \text{pragmata} \) in it;\(^{18}\) plot is not a mere outline of events, but the very essence of a drama, that without which the latter would not be as it is. It is the causal relationship that exists among every thing that is a proper part of a play; it is the relationship in virtue of which everything that is in a play constitutes a single activity and thereby possesses artistic unity; it is the structure in virtue of which a play has its appropriate effect. The plot is thus "the life and soul"\(^{19}\) of a drama and "the end and purpose"\(^{20}\) of the parts that constitute the latter.

Next in importance after plot is character, or ethos. Character, as already stated, is "that which reveals the moral purpose of the agents, i.e., the sort of thing they seek or avoid;"\(^{21}\) it is, consequently, "what makes us ascribe certain moral qualities to the agents."\(^{22}\) Character is secondary to plot because the latter constitutes the scheme of causality that makes an expression of character appropriate, necessary, and therefore, pleasing.

\(^{18}\)\textit{Poet.} 1450a4-5. \(^{19}\)\textit{Poet.} 1450a38. \(^{20}\)\textit{Poet.} 1450a23. \(^{21}\)\textit{Poet.} 1450b8-10. \(^{22}\)\textit{Poet.} 1450a5.
compare the parallel in painting, where the most beautiful colours laid on without order will not give the same pleasure as a simple black-and-white sketch of a portrait. 23

In the natural order of things character is but one of two causes of action; the other is thought. Dramatic thought, or dianoia, is "the power of saying whatever can be said, or what is appropriate to the occasion." 24 Dianoia is, consequently, the expression not only of ideas but also of emotions:

the Thought of the personages is shown in everything to be effected by their language—in every effort to prove or disprove, to arouse emotion . . . . or to maximize or minimize things. 25

Like ethos, dianoia is determined by the plot: whether the expression of a given idea or emotion is appropriate and the point at which such an expression is appropriate is decided by the structure of action as a whole. Because the expression of ideas and emotions is necessary to the expression of character, dianoia is subject to ethos in the same way that it is subject to the plot: ethos constitutes, for some of the elements of dianoia in a play, the scheme of causality that makes an expression of thought or emotion appropriate and necessary. The plot thus imposes form on

23 poets. 1450b1-3. 24 poets. 1450b5.

25 poets. 1456a36-1456b1.
the *pragmata* (the things done) of a play and on *ethos* and *dianoia*, and the *pragmata*, *ethos*, and *dianoia* constitute the material of the plot; similarly, *ethos* imposes form on *dianoia*, and *dianoia* constitutes the material of *ethos*.

The practical result of the formal control that the plot exercises over *ethos* in a play is that the plot, not the personage, 'chooses.' Two types of change are concerned in determining the voluntary actions of the personages in a drama. One is a representation of the activity of *proaieresis* and of those activities of the human soul that are constituents of it. Such a representation, as a representation, does not possess the power of the thing it represents anymore than a statue of a man possesses human faculties; moreover, such a representation is wholly accidental to the real change that effects dramatic structure: character is not an indispensible part of a play.\(^{26}\) A dramatic representation of *proaieresis* is different from its human counterpart because, like the latter, it derives its efficacy from the nature of the entity of which it is a part: just as the function of the activity of human *proaieresis* is to act as a means by which those activities

\(^{26}\) *Poet.* 1450a24-25.
that are necessary to the realization of the formal goodness of a person is effected, so the function of the change that represents the activity of proairesis is to act as a means by which the formal goodness of a drama is effected. Thus, just as in a virtuous man, his true formal goodness shapes his choices in such a way that actual formal goodness is effected, so in the theoretically best play, the formal completeness of the activity that constitutes the plot shapes the changes that occur in its structure in such a way that the actual formal completeness of the action of the play is effected. The second and essential type of change that makes the voluntary action of a personage represented in a drama necessary is, consequently, the plot. The primary determinant of such a representation is the single change that constitutes the activity of the plot because it acts both as its final and formal cause; the plot also determines such voluntary action efficiently, however, by means of the particular component change or changes that represent the activity of proairesis.

Not every change in a play that represents an act of volition may be assumed to be an element of ethos. Aristotle pointed out, as noted earlier, that both thought and character—the sort of activities that can be represented
by an element of dianoia as well as those than can be represented by an element of ethos—can be the cause of human action.\(^{27}\) An element of ethos is, in fact, an element of dianoia that has been transformed by its function in the plot, as a timber is transformed into a lintel by the function it serves in a building. An element of ethos is specifically any element of dianoia that is caused by the nature of the plot to represent a property that determines, either formally (in virtue of reason) or efficiently (in virtue of desire), the moral nature of an action. Action that is moral or ethical is distinct from all other human action in that it is directed toward an end that can be perceived, not merely articulated, through reason alone. Both dianoia and ethos are capable of expressing both reason and desire; ethos differs from dianoia, however, in that it represents not merely rational expression and emotional expression, nor the rational expression of an emotion, but the unique fusion of reason and desire in the activity of proairesis. Since reason and desire are naturally opposed insofar as one is concerned with the ultimate and the other with the immediate, any expression

\(^{27}\)Poet. 1450al-3.
of the fusion of the two is of an intrinsically higher order than an expression that at best constitutes a balance of the two. Any element of dianoia that embodies such an expression of the fusion of reason and desire takes on a new power in virtue of the function that the structure of the action as a whole requires of it: such an element still retains its power, as an element of dianoia, to express what is appropriate to the occasion, but in addition to that, it has the power, by so doing, to reveal moral purpose, a cause of action that cannot be expressed by dianoia alone.

Dianoia can alone, as a consequence, embody a change that represents an act of will. It does so when it represents the sort of change that occurs in a person by which becomes necessary an activity that does not require the exercise of reason in order to be pursued as an end, when it represents, in other words, an act of simple or complex volition rather than the activity of proairesis. An example of the difference between the representation of an act of volition as an element of dianoia and as an element of ethos may be found in Hedda Gabler. At a point in the second act, Hedda offers her husband, Tesman, and her guests, Judge Brack and Eilert Lövborg an alcoholic beverage; Tesman and Brack accept, and Lövborg, for the moment.
refuses. Løvborg's refusal is, on the other hand, an element of ethos: Løvborg has suffered a period of dissipation in the past, and an exercise of reason on his part is necessary in order for him to pursue what is ultimately good rather than what is immediately pleasant. The distinction between a representation of an act of volition that is an element of dianoia and one that is an element of ethos is not, however, the same as the difference between expedient choices and ethical choices. The representation of an expedient choice is properly an element of ethos because its ultimate end is an object that is rationally desirable; it differs from an ethical choice only in that an expedient choice is directed toward the means to an intrinsically rational end while ethical choice is directed to the intrinsically rational end itself.

29 Smiley, pp. 86-88.
Whether or not a given *pragma* in a play is an element of *dianoia* or of *ethos* is determined not by some property that such a *pragma* possesses in and of itself, but rather by the function it serves in the structure of action as a whole. Conversely, the dramatic representation of a single activity of *proairesis*, just as the activity of human *proairesis* it imitates, is incomplete until each of the changes that constitute its components have taken place. The difference between the completion of an activity of human *proairesis* and the completion of its dramatic representation is that the activities that constitute the former occur in an order determined by the nature of the human soul, while the changes that constitute a dramatic representation occur in an order determined not by the nature of the human soul, but by that of the plot; in a play, for example, a process of deliberation may not be expressed until after the act of choice in which it has culminated has taken place. The difference between the proper order of dramatic ethos and that of human ethos is merely a further manifestation of the fact that human ethos exists and is implicit in every activity of *proairesis* whereas dramatic ethos exists only to the extent to which it is manifested externally. Consequently, although when the
activities that constitute the components of an activity of

**dramatic proairesis** are represented after the act of volition

in which they culminate, a plot appropriately creates the

illusion that the qualities embodied in those activities

were present but hidden at the time the act of volition

occurred, such is, in fact, only an illusion: the qualities

come into existence as a functional part of the plot only

at the point they find expression.

Not only is the order in which occur the elements that

constitute a representation of **proairesis** determined by the

plot, so too is the number of elements that is sufficient

for such a representation. As detailed in Chapter Four,

the nature of an efficient cause derives from the nature

of the formal completeness that it effects. The activities

that constitute human **proairesis** and the order of the

arrangement by which they constitute it are thus made

necessary by the formal goodness of man because the latter

is what **proairesis** effects; all of the activities of human

**proairesis** are always present in a certain order, because,

if man's completeness is to be as it is, then those

activities and that order must be as they are. Hence, the

nature of the end determines the nature and the arrangement

of the parts. Because the formal goodness of a human being
is different from the formal goodness of a drama, the end of human proairesis is likewise different from the end of a dramatic proairesis; what is necessary in human ethical action is not, as a consequence, necessary in a dramatic representation of it. What is proper to the ethos of a certain dramatic personage is only that which is necessary to complete the causal structure of the plot of which it is a part.

Dramatic personages can be distinguished from each other, as a consequence, not only in terms of the quality of action that their respective characters embody (as Hamlet is distinguished from Macbeth), but also in terms of the magnitude of their characters, i.e., the extent to which their characters are developed in the structure of action. The ethical aspect of the play Hamlet is, of course, one of the most fully developed in all of dramatic literature; those elements of ethos that manifest the moral quality of the personage Hamlet are similarly recognized as the most extensive of any of the agents of the drama. Even a superficial survey reveals the scope of the activity of Hamlet's proairesis. Hamlet expresses at the very outset his
His inclination is to do what is right even when it is in opposition to what he prefers: he would commit suicide if it were not contrary to what he believes is moral law, but since it is, he will not. Hamlet also deliberates about the end proper to man:

To be, or not to be—that is the question.
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep—
No more, and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. . . .

(III.1.56-64)

He deliberates about the means appropriate to an end:

Now might I do it pat, now he is praying,
And now I'll do't. And so he goes to Heaven,
And so am I revenged. That would be scanned:
A villain kills my father, and for that
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To Heaven.
Oh, this is hire and salary, not revenge.

(III.iii.73-79)

30The quotations from Hamlet that are used in the remainder of this chapter are from Shakespeare: The Complete Works, ed. G. B. Harrison (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1968).
He manifests the change in attitude through which a need for a certain object becomes a necessity:

Now whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event—
A thought which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward—I do not know
Why yet I live to say "This thing's to do,"
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me.
. . . How stand I then,
That have a father killed, a mother stained,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men
That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? . . .

(IV.v.39-46, 56-65)

He finally expresses the act of will in which his proairesis culminates: "Oh, from this time forth/ My thoughts be bloody or nothing worth!" (IV.v.65-66).

The ethical aspect of Hedda Gabler plays a role in the structure of the drama that is comparable to that played by the ethical aspect in Hamlet; it is, however, far less fully developed. Like Hamlet, Hedda articulates her inclination:

HEDDA. I'm--much too afraid of scandal.
LØVBORG. Yes, Hedda, you're a coward at heart.
HEDDA. A terrible coward.31

31Ibsen, p. 739.
On the other hand, however, the closest Hedda comes to a deliberation about the end proper to man is in a conversation with Judge Brack:

BRACK. But couldn't you find some goal in life to work toward? Others do, Mrs. Hedda.
HEDDA. A goal— that would really absorb me?
BRACK. Yes, preferably.
HEDDA. God only knows what that would be. I often wonder if—. But that's impossible too.
BRACK. Who knows? Tell me.
HEDDA. I was thinking—if I could get Tesman to go into politics.
BRACK. Tesman? No, I can promise you--politics is absolutely out of his line.
HEDDA. No, I can believe you. But even so, I wonder if I could get him into it?
BRACK. Well, what satisfaction would you have in that, if he can't succeed? Why push him in that direction?
HEDDA. Because, I've told you, I'm bored.32

Hedda's expression of boredom is typical of the majority of the expressions that characterize her behavior; they are elements of dianoia rather than ethos. She explains that she pretended she mistook her husband's aunt's hat for the maid's because "... these things come over me, just like that, suddenly."33 The first moment she is alone onstage in the first act, the first moment she has the opportunity to express herself freely, she "moves about the room, raising her arms and clenching her fists as if in a frenzy."34

32 Ibid., p. 729-730. 33 Ibid., p. 728. 34 Ibid., p. 705.
Those principles that induce her to act, she does not arrive at after deliberation, but merely asserts. She reveals to Mrs. Elvsted that "For once in my life, I want to have power over a human being."\(^{35}\) Courage is also clearly intended to be regarded as a principle of action that she rationally desires:

LØVBORG. And the courage she has, Mrs. Tesman, when it’s put to the test.
MRS. ELVSTED. Good heavens, me! Courage!
LØVBORG. Enormous courage—where I'm concerned.
HEDDA. Yes, courage—yes! If one only had that.
LØVBORG. Then what?
HEDDA. Then life might still be bearable.\(^{36}\)

The third of her standards is beauty. After Løvborg tells her that he intends to "put an end to it all,"\(^{37}\) Hedda responds: "Eilert Løvborg—listen to me. Couldn’t you arrange that—that it’s done beautifully?";\(^{38}\) and after supplying him with a pistol she repeats, "And beautifully, Eilert Løvborg. Promise me that!"\(^{39}\) Hedda, moreover, never needs to deliberate about means because the expedients are always at hand: punch is on the table when she wants to pry Løvborg from Mrs. Elvsted’s power; fire is in the stove when she wants to destroy the symbolic child of the latter

\(^{35}\)Ibid., p. 745.  \(^{36}\)Ibid., p. 741.  \(^{37}\)Ibid., p. 761.  
\(^{38}\)Ibid.  \(^{39}\)Ibid., p. 762.
two; and General Gabler's pistols are omnipresent. Despite the spareness of its parts, however, Hedda's ethos manifests growth over the course of the play, just as Hamlet's does: despite her early admission of cowardice, she ultimately performs an act that implies courage in her choice of it and that is done in a manner that conforms to her definition of beauty.

The opposition that sometimes appears to exist between character and plot (or between character and action) is not truly an opposition between two fundamentally incompatible entities, but rather the result of the limitations a whole imposes on its parts; such apparent opposition is simply the result of the fact that the proper development of dramatic ethos is determined differently in different dramas because a different structure of action is proper to each. The action of every play must be assumed to have some principle that limits its development as a whole; such a principle cannot, however, reside merely in the sum of the things done in a drama: such \textit{pragmata} do not have any finite bounds of change because, by definition as activities, they do not lose their potential in actualizing it. Thus, television soap operas have a seemingly infinite potential for things to happen. But as an imitation, the \textit{praxis} of a drama, even
that of a soap opera, has a limit: it must, as Aristotle pointed out, be "of a length to be taken in by memory." Soap operas disguise that limitation and give the impression of infinite potential by an episodic structure: not everything that happens in a given soap opera is causally related to everything else that happens in it; a given event, rather than following necessarily from all that has gone before it, follows necessarily from only a few of the preceding events and is accidental to all the others. What dictates that some events are kept in memory while others are either temporarily (or even permanently) forgotten is simply that they belong together: they are causally related. Causality constitutes not only the unity of a series of events; it also constitutes the limitation of their development.

Causality in a play takes the form of a unifying element in the praxis through which is imposed on the activities of the drama a limit organic to the whole. The unifying element is the activity to which everything else has relation because it is the activity by reason of which everything else exists; the enactment of the change embodied in the unifying element is thus the essence of the

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40 Poet. 1451a6.
praxis being imitated. Everything in a plot exists for the sake of the element that unifies it, and the unifying element, thereby, constitutes the form of the plot. Any of the elements of dramatic structure can account for the unity of a piece, but the activity of a drama is most fully developed when it is unified on the level of plot. In such a drama, all of the elements that express the causes of action (i.e., elements of ethos and dianoia) exist for the sake of the pragmata they cause, and those pragmata in turn exist for the sake of the single activity that constitutes the whole. A drama may also, however, be unified on the level of ethos or dianoia. In such a drama, that for the sake of which everything exists (that which accounts for the causal relationship of the whole) is an expression of ethos or of dianoia. In such a drama, as a consequence, the causes of action do not exist for the sake of the action they bring about; rather an action exists for the sake of the expression of its cause. In A Streetcar Named Desire, for example, Blanche's flirtation with the newspaper boy has, as a pragma, no causal connection with the structure.

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of the action as a whole: that action is not the cause of any other event. It has a necessary relationship with the whole, on the contrary, only insofar as it is necessary as an expression of an element of dianoia, namely, Blanche's sexual appetite. No elementary opposition can exist between character and plot, then, because the causal relationship that unifies a number of pragmata as an expression of a single activity of ethos may also be the causal relationship that accounts for the unity of the plot. Character, simply put, may be plot.

Plot, when it is assumed to be fundamentally opposed to character, is usually understood as the outline of the physical actions of a play; the plot of a play is thus limited by such an understanding to shootings, sword fights, deeds of derring-do, and the like. Such an understanding of plot means that the opposition between plot and character is really an opposition between character and physical action, between the internal activities of the soul and the external activities of the body. But even such an assumption of an elementary opposition between internal activities and external activities in a drama is difficult to maintain since the soul of drama lacks the power to exercise an internal activity of any sort. An internal activity of the
soul, is, rather, an activity of a human being that drama imitates; drama, however, as noted at the beginning of the chapter, has not the actuality of the thing it represents, but rather the actuality of a facade that is capable of representation. Dramatic activity derives its shape from human activity through the superposition rather than the imposition of the form of the latter on the capacity of the former. Thus an internal activity of the human soul is an imitable praxis only to the extent to which the form of an imitative praxis can correspond to it. As a consequence, one of the most important distinctions that can be made between the human action that serves as the model for dramatic action and the dramatic action that represents it is that, in the former, a choice or thought is distinct from the language that may express it, while in drama that is never so. A dramatic personage is no more capable of thought than Rodin's statue is; it is only capable of a more articulate expression of thought. Furthermore, just as the statue's act of thought is no more than its physical posture, a dramatic personage's activity of thought is no more than the words (or signs) in which it is expressed. Everything that is in a play, from the representation of the most violent of physical actions to the expression of the most
subtle and intimate movements of the soul, is a *pragma*, a thing done; thus, no opposition exists between action and character. All such *pragmata* are, moreover, united as an intrinsic and inseparable whole in the causally related structure of the plot; thus, no opposition exists between plot and character. What appears to be the exclusion of external action for the sake of internal activity or vice versa is rather the causal structure of the plot determining the relationship of the development of the causes of action to the execution of such action that is appropriate to the dramatic effectiveness of the whole.

Any consideration of dramatic ethos is incomplete without a consideration of enactment because dramatic ethos is defined in full neither by the nature of the human activity that it imitates, nor by the nature of the activity that constitutes its representation of human ethos, but also by the nature of enactment, the manner in which it represents human ethos; enactment thus constitutes the third type of action that is intrinsic to drama. What constitutes the essence of the soul of drama, what makes it what it is and sets it apart from all other entities is not the fact that it is an imitative *praxis*; so is a novel. The effect unique to drama is accomplished not through imitation, but through
such an imitation effected through enactment. In addition to the three elements of dramatic structure already defined (plot, ethos, and dianoia) there are three others that account for enactment: diction, music, and spectacle. To diction, or lexis, belongs anything in a play that is an element of language: thus, words and grammar, the tenses of verbs, the cases of nouns, and so on are all parts of the plot of a play and cannot be changed without changing the structure of the action. Music, or melopoiia, includes not only the formalized sounds of vocal and instrumental music, but any sound produced in the course of a play that exists on account of the activity of the plot. Music thus includes the sounds that constitute spoken language; it also constitutes the attributes of such sounds (i.e., pitch, volume, duration, timbre, and rhythm), which contribute as much to the expressiveness of language as do the literal meanings of words. Music includes non-verbal and non-human sounds as well; the off-stage gun-shot at the end of Hedda Gabler, which represents Hedda's act of suicide, is indispensible to the structure of the action of the plot. Spectacle, or opeis, similarly refers to anything seen in the course of the action of a play that exists on account of the activity of the plot. Just as a pragma, such as Hedda's
suicide, may be represented through an element of music, sometimes a *pragma* in a play is indicated principally through an element of spectacle, as is Stanley's raping Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The plot of a play is, consequently, not merely the causal relationship of the elements that represent human activities, but the definition of the materials proper to the representation of such activities and the cause of the necessary relationship that obtains between the two.

To understand the extent to which enactment is a formal property of drama, music and spectacle may be dismissed temporarily from consideration; enactment, in other words, is as much a characteristic of the text of a play as it is of a performance. Every artistic expression, in virtue of the fact that it is an expression, constitutes a physical manifestation of the thing that is expressed. The diction of a play is such a physical manifestation; it is not, as a consequence, a formal part of the imitative *praxis* of a drama, but a part of the latter's imitative *poieton*.\(^{42}\) If an

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\(^{42}\)A *praxis* is contrasted in terms of agency with a *poiesis*: the former is 'a doing,' the latter 'a making'; the end of a *praxis* is in itself, while a *poiesis* results in a product, a *poieton*, which is distinct from the activity by which it is made.
artistic expression is to be whole and complete, the thing that is expressed must be the principle whereby it cannot be other than it is; the thing that is expressed must be not only the cause of the necessary relationship among its formal elements, but the cause of the necessary relationship of those elements to their physical manifestation as well. The plot of a play thus imposes form on its poieton, as well as on its praxis. Moreover, insofar as an artistic expression is impossible apart from the thing that is expressed, and insofar as the thing that is expressed makes necessary a definite physical manifestation, then to the extent to which an artistic expression is in actual existence as a separate entity (as opposed to its existence as an unrealized idea for an artistic expression), to the same extent the form of the poieton must also be in actual existence. As a result, although performance is the proper issue of the form of enactment that plot imposes on the poieton of drama, because the plot of a drama is manifested in the text alone, the form of enactment is also manifested in the text alone.

The manifestation of enactment in a script is a matter of the formulation of diction. The diction of a drama is constructed in such a way that it represents the action "as
though [the agents] were actually doing the things described. Without such a formulation of diction, the imitative praxis of a drama would be indistinguishable from the story of a novel or from the content of any other literary form whose subject is a praxis. Such a formulation of diction is, then, part of that without which a drama could not be as it is; such a shaping of diction is part of the nature of drama, a necessary property of the form of drama; an imitative praxis is, conversely, dramatic in nature only to the extent to which it is manifested in such diction. An imitative praxis and an imitative poieton together constitute the essence of drama, not because their functions are simultaneous, but because they are parts intrinsic to one thing, the plot of a drama. The plot thus causes the arrangement of all of the elements, not just those that constitute the imitative praxis; it governs equally well the relationship of the slightest movement or that of the most extensive incident in a drama to everything else that happens. Consequently, neither the imitative praxis nor the imitative poieton can govern the formulation of any part of the drama alone. An absolute and reciprocal

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Poet. 1448a22-23.
relationship exists between the two forms: any element of the drama must be shaped simultaneously by both the praxis and the poieton to exist in the mythos. All the mythos is all the praxis at the same time it is all the poieton, just as all the house is all the bricks and lumber at the same time it is all the rooms. Thus, the elements of the imitative praxis of a drama cannot be otherwise than embodied in diction that possesses the form of enactment.

Although every element that is properly part of the plot of a drama is necessarily enacted, and although every element of a plot is properly an incident necessary to the causal structure of the play's imitative praxis, not every incident that is properly part of the imitative praxis is necessarily enacted. Consequently, incidents that are not enacted, even if they are necessary to the imitative praxis, are not proper elements of the plot; they are, rather, parts of the story, as is Oedipus's blinding himself in *Oedipus the King*. On the other hand, not everything that is a part of a story is necessary to the causal structure of a plot; the content of the riddle that the Sphinx poses to Oedipus is, for example, immaterial to the action of Sophocles's play. Those parts of a story that are necessary to the structure of an imitative praxis are, however, necessarily
expressed in an element proper to the plot. Thus, although Oedipus's blinding himself is not enacted, it serves its function as a causal link in the chain of events because a report that it has transpired is enacted; that act of reporting is an incident and a proper element of the plot. Any such incident that is necessary to the structure of the imitative praxis but not enacted is, as a consequence, an accident of the plot; such a pragma is accidental not in the sense that it is unnecessary or that it comes about by chance, but rather in the sense that it has no proper existence in a plot without the existence of the proper element on which it depends.

An element of the imitative praxis that represents an internal human activity requires a special consideration of whether it is a proper or an accidental element of the plot in which it functions. To imagine that a personage, when it expresses ethos or dianoia, is merely reporting the results of an internal activity is easy because of the habit of doing so in real life; the illusion that drama attempts to effect in fact depends for its success on such an exercise of the imagination by its audience. An analysis of the structure of drama must, however, distinguish between that which drama effects and the means that make it effective. If an
expression of \textit{ethos} or \textit{dianoia} is treated as a mere reporting of an inner activity, then such a reporting must be treated as the enacted element of the plot, while the activity that is being reported becomes analogous to an off-stage event. In some instances, such an analysis might be accurate; nothing in the nature of drama precludes a personage's reporting a decision that has just been made if such a \textit{pragma} is appropriate to the structure of the plot. But in such a case, the diction of the plot will reveal that a reporting of an activity rather than the activity itself is being enacted; a distinct difference exists between a personage that says, "I'll do it," and one that says, "I've decided to do it." In the first case, the diction represents the action as though its agent were actually doing the thing described, while the diction in the second does not; in the second case, moreover, something is properly included in the action, if only a pause, to represent the actual point of decision. The assumption cannot, however, be borne out that every articulation of what in human terms would be an interior activity is, simply in virtue of the fact that it is an articulation, a mere reporting of such an activity. On the contrary, no matter how strongly such an interior activity is implied, it exists only in the explicit activity that implies it. The reason is, of course, that the
nature of the action of drama is different from human action; the form of the two are superposed. The result is that although an imitative praxis is what is seen, a human action is what is imagined. Conversely, a certain external activity is expected to be accompanied by an interior activity taking place 'elsewhere,' just as brain activity is known to be accompanied by human consciousness. However real the latter may be, the former is only illusion: an imitative praxis' expression of an interior activity is complete in its externalization of the latter. Thus, any element of ethos or dianoia that is expressed in diction that represents its action as though an agent were actually doing the thing described is a proper, not an accidental element of the plot.

The dramaturgical goodness of an element of ethos is determined not by the extent of its development nor by whether it is a proper or an accidental element of a plot, but rather by its appropriateness to the structure of the action of which it is a part. The action of a play, as Aristotle said, is not what has happened according to historical fact, but the kind of thing that might happen; moreover, not the kind of thing that is merely possible, but the kind of thing that is probable and necessary given
the causes manifested by the structure of the action as a whole. An element of *ethos* is a representation of one such cause by means of which a relationship of necessity is woven among the activities of the plot; an element of *ethos*, as a representation of such a cause, is appropriate not only to the extent to which it is a probable and necessary consequence of the events that precede it, but also to the extent to which it accounts for the probability and necessity of the events that follow it. The determinant of the probability and necessity of an element of *ethos* as both an effect and an effectuator of action is, of course, the causality embodied in the plot. The activities that constitute dramatic ethos, unlike those that constitute human character, do not in any way cause the particular action through which they appear to characterize a personage as a certain sort of agent; on the contrary, as has been demonstrated, such an action is made necessary by the overall shape of a play's *praxis*, and the same shape makes necessary the manifestation of certain activities of *proairesis* in order that such an action may appear to be probable and necessary because the personage who effects it is an agent.

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44. *Poet.* 1451a36-37.
of a certain sort. In human character, in contrast, the possibility always exists that an improbable choice will be made. However surprising such an improbable choice may be, its possibility cannot be doubted because it has actually happened; nor is the fact that it has a cause doubted, although the nature of that cause may be unknown. Voluntary human action differs from its dramatic counterpart, then, in that it is by its very existence manifestly possible and, unless manifestly coerced, assumed to have its cause in the character of the person who performs it. Probability and causality are always assumed in voluntary human action because they are recognized as the essential properties of human action; and because they are recognized as essential to voluntary human action, they are the very properties that dramatic ethos must manifest. An element of ethos must, then, in order to be effective, make causality and, therefore, probability apparent. Probability is so necessary to a drama's effective accomplishment of its end, that, as Aristotle pointed out, if a seemingly improbable event is necessary for the proper formulation of a plot, then the structure of the plot must manifest the fact that "there is a probability of things happening also against probability."\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{45} Poet. 1461b15.
There are, as a consequence, two extremes of probability between which dramatic ethos is effective. On one hand, the choosing or the failure to choose to do or to avoid a particular action (or the choosing to do or not to do a particular action) may be so equally probable that the immediate cause of the necessity of the occurrence of one or the other is nothing other than its necessity to the structure of action as a whole. The structure is satisfied at such a juncture only by an instance of immediate formal determination: the event that occurs, occurs not because the imitative praxis lacks the potential for either event, but because the shape of the plot as a whole possesses the power to actualize only one of the events. An instance of immediate formal determination is, thus, the clearest manifestation of the fact that, in a play, the plot, not the personage, 'chooses.' Hamlet provides an example of an instance of immediate formal determination; it occurs in Hamlet's soliloquy in Act IV, Scene v:

How all occasions do inform against me
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure, He that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unused. Now whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event—
A thought which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward— I do not know
Why yet I live to say "This thing's to do,"
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me.
Witness this army, of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender Prince
Whose spirit with divine ambition puffed
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honor's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father killed, a mother stained,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men
That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? Oh, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!
(IV.v.32-66)

The logic of the speech is such that Hamlet's choosing to
act is probable; but until the change that represents that
choice actually occurs in the final two lines, given the
sort of agent Hamlet has been shown to be and given the
fact that even in the present speech he has admitted,

I do not know
Why yet I live to say "This thing's to do,"
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do't. . . .

(43-46)
the probability that his resolution will once again be "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought" (III.1.85) is equally great. What decides the issue is that Hamlet must undergo such a change at that juncture in the structure of the action in order for the plot as a whole to take its shape. Whether such an element of action is a true choice or merely an intention depends on its efficacy, and the latter cannot be expressed in the activity of choice alone (although under other circumstances it may be sufficiently implicit in the enactment of a choice to be assumed to be a certainty); whether such an element is a true choice or merely an intention is consequently revealed only by the action of the play as a whole. The efficacy of Hamlet's choice in the above passage is manifested most explicitly in his answer to Horatio's offer to forestall the fencing match with Laertes:

If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all.

(V.ii.231-234)

Hamlet's readiness at that point in the plot is a clear change from the false starts that characterized his earlier action; the only pragma that can account for such a change is the choice embodied in the speech above. The proof of
the efficacy of the latter is, thus, its undeniable effect; the cause of its efficacy is, however, the necessity of that effect for the proper shape of the action.

On the other hand, an agent's choosing or failing to choose may be so probable that it is a certainty: any other choice would be so improbable, so without apparent cause given the structure of the action, that the drama would be rendered incapable of accomplishing its end. An improbable event is not necessarily ineffective; it only becomes so when it is improbable in the structure of action as a whole: a choice that were to seem improbable at a given point in the action and that was subsequently revealed to be probable and necessary could be quite effective dramaturgically. If such a seemingly improbable choice is to be integrated into the causal relationship of the action, at the point in the structure at which such a choice occurs the praxis must possess potential for the development of ethos that has yet to be actualized; the praxis must, in other words, possess potential to manifest moral qualities that do not contradict those already established or to manifest a change from an established quality to another. A choice that is so probable that it is a certainty, on the contrary, occurs at a point in the structure of the action at which
no potential for such development exists: the properties that are necessary for the ethos of a given personage to take the shape appropriate to the shape of the action as a whole have been established; the actualization of ethos is complete. Under such circumstances, any choice but the probable one could not be integrated in the structure of action. The form of a play, the actuality of a structure of action and its shape as a whole, thus not only limits matter, the potential such action possesses for development, by imposing a definite shape on it, but also by precluding it from taking any other definite shape: whenever a certain event that is probable becomes actual, then all the other things that were more or less probable at the same time become impossible; when the latter things become impossible, the consequences that they had the potential to effect also become impossible. The causality that imposes shape on a structure of action limits it and makes it whole, not only by making certain things necessary, but also by making other things impossible. Thus, a choice that is probable to the point of being a certainty is the result, not of immediate formal determination, but of mediate formal, or material, determination: a given change is made necessary, not by a cause that was only at that point being given shape by the
plot, but rather by a cause that had already been given shape and that was only at that point having its effect.

Dramatic character is, most simply, the dramatic representation of those activities by means of which a human being rationally and voluntarily seeks the completeness that is proper to him in virtue of the cause of his being. Dramatic character is, at the same time, embodied in a change by means of which the completeness proper to a dramatic action in virtue of its cause of being is brought about. But, while the activities of proairesis, which constitute the essence of human character, are the sole efficient cause of the formal goodness of man, the activities of dramatic proairesis, far from being the sole efficient cause of the formal goodness of a play, are not even a necessary efficient cause; dramatic proairesis is, on the contrary, necessary to formal goodness only in a play in which it is so determined by the shape of the action as a whole. Dramatic character is most like human character in that it is a power of the soul of the entity of which it is a part. From that similarity, however, derives the greatest difference between the two: unlike human character, dramatic character is of its nature not a property of a personal agent, real or fictional, but an element of a structure of
action. Without an understanding of that fact, the nature of dramatic character is impossible to comprehend.

**Further Studies**

In spite of all that has been written about both the traits that characterize specific dramatic personages and the properties of dramatic personages in general, much remains to be discovered about the function of dramatic character as an element of a structure of action. One of the most important of the areas yet to be explored concerns the relationship between formal goodness and proper magnitude. Formal goodness, a thing's completeness according to its form, means that if a thing possesses a function it performs that function well. Proper magnitude means that a thing's size is appropriate to its function; the proper magnitude of a part is, moreover, appropriate to the function of the whole. Two screwdrivers, for example, may differ greatly in size, yet the size of each is proper to the circumstances in which it was designed to function. Dramatic ethos may similarly be assumed to have a development that is proper to each of the forms of dramatic action (tragedy, comedy, and melodrama). The properties that mark such development are worthy of study since by them proper magnitude may be known.
The magnitude of ethos is of further interest when the differences in the natures of the tragic, melodramatic, and comic plots are juxtaposed to the nature of the entity that dramatic ethos represents. On one hand, human character is inherently serious: its concern is nothing less than the perfection and happiness of man. On the other hand, however, only tragic action admits of a comparable seriousness: melodramatic action is merely seemingly or temporarily serious, and comedy innately non-serious. The question such a consideration raises is whether the magnitude that is proper to ethos in comedy and melodrama prevents ethos a priori from achieving formal goodness in such plots; that is, whether ethos can be properly formulated only in tragedy, and, if so, whether comedy and melodrama are innately inferior as structures of action. Conversely, if the full formulation of ethos is possible in comedy and melodrama, the questions that then pose themselves are what shape ethos takes in each, and how that shape differs from that of ethos in tragedy.

At the very heart of those questions lies another: why the particular type of error in judgment known as "hamartia" has been traditionally associated with tragedy alone. If fully formulated comic or melodramatic ethos exists, comic
and melodramatic hamartia might be expected also. On the other hand, there are two other forms of acts that result in injury that Aristotle discussed in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that have not become associated with drama: atuchema and adikema. An atuchema is a misadventure that results from ignorance, ignorance whose cause is outside the agent who commits it because the injury that occurs in such a misadventure happens contrary to reasonable expectation. An adikema is voluntary and wrong; however, it can be either the result of weakness of will (in which case the deed is wicked, but the agent is not), or it can be the result of deliberate wickedness (in which case both the deed and the agent are evil). Consequently, just as tragedy seems to be impossible without some sort of hamartia, comedy may be impossible without some sort of atuchema, and melodrama without some sort of adikema. But, since it is possible to imagine both a comedy that derives its effect from the deliberate wickedness of one of its agents and a melodrama whose effect depends upon an injury caused by the reasonable ignorance of one of its agents, the appropriateness of such types of injury to the several forms of drama may be determined not by the nature of each, but by the extent to which and the circumstances under which each is developed.
in a particular structure of action. The question is perhaps, more properly, whether hamartia makes a tragedy, atuchema a comedy, and adikema a melodrama, or whether each of the forms of action admits of each of the forms of injury, which a particular plot then shapes into an appropriate element of action by controlling its causes and consequences. Given the importance that hamartia has assumed in discussions of drama, it is a question worthy of study.
GLOSSARY

aisthaneštai, to: the perceiving (of a thing).

aisthesis: perception.

aitia: causes (of being). See formal cause, material cause, final cause, and efficient cause.

akolastos: a licentious person

akrasia: weakness of will.

akrastes: a weak-willed person.

anamnesis: recollection, the capacity to consciously and deliberately reproduce an image of a past sensation. Cf. mneme.

aproairesis (pl. aproairesesis): the inverse of proairesis (q.v.); an act of will in which a person with full and active knowledge of what he ought to do, nonetheless chooses to do what is wrong; or a case in which a person simply fails, when in circumstances that call for it, to exercise his will to act well.

arete (pl. aretaí): excellence.

boulesis: rational desire or wish; the form of desire that seeks what is noble and avoids what is base.

bouleutike orexis: deliberative desire.

character: 1. that which reveals the moral purpose of an agent in a drama; the English equivalent of ethos.
2. the pattern of a person's choices that makes
character (cont.)
apparent the manner in which he seeks after happiness and in so doing reveals his moral purpose.

complex volition: the willing of an expedient action, i.e., of a means that, although not desirable in itself, is necessary to attain a desirable end; it properly admits of the exercise of reason, but not of the consideration of ethical standards. Cf. simple volition, proairesis.

culpa: fault; an evil human action.

deilia: cowardice.
deitones: cleverness.
dianoetikos: intellectual.

dianoia: 1. dramatic thought: the power of saying whatever can be said, or what is appropriate to an occasion; the expression of ideas and emotions in a play; the Greek equivalent of thought. 2. an investigative process of thought, a joining and separating of thoughts in the sense of collecting one's thoughts on a matter, applying those that are pertinent and rejecting those that are not.

diathesis: a quality that a person may possess that undergoes change more quickly than a fixed condition. Cf. hexis, dynamis.

diction: anything in a play that is an element of language; the English equivalent of lexis.

dioxis: pursuit (of an object perceived as good).

doxa: opinion.

dramatis persona (pl. dramatis personae): a personage (q.v.) in a drama.

dynamis: capacity, ability, or potential. Cf. energeia, entelecheia; diathesis, hexis.
efficient cause: that by means of which a thing is brought about

eidos: form.

energeia: actuality, a dynamis (q.v.) in operation. Cf. entelecheia.

energeia psyches: the actuality of the soul: the dynamis of the soul in operation.

energeia somatos: the actuality of the body: the dynamis of the body in operation.

entelecheia: a state of completion in which an ability, its exercise, and its result appear together. Cf. dynamis, energeia.

epistemonikon: theoretical; characterized by a pursuit of pure knowledge and things that are necessary (that must be according to natural law).

epithymia: appetite; the form of desire that is closed to reason, that seeks pleasure and avoids pain.

ethikos: ethical.

ethos: 1. dramatic character: that which reveals the moral purpose of an agent in a drama; the Greek equivalent of character. 2. human character: the pattern of a person's choices that makes apparent the manner in which he seeks after happiness and in so doing reveals his moral purpose.

éthos: a practice or habit (of acting in a certain way).

eudaimonia: happiness.

eupraxia: acting well; right conduct.
final cause: that for the sake of which a thing exists; a thing's end or purpose.

formal cause: the essence or essential formula of a thing: that without which a thing would not be as it is; hence, its principle of knowability.

hexis kuria: a fixed condition.

hekousion, to: the voluntary.

imitable praxis: the action that a drama imitates.

imitative praxis: the action of a drama that constitutes an imitation.

kinesis: movement: a change that takes place between two distinct termini; it is incomplete as a process because it has an end outside of itself; it is only a means to an end because it ceases when its end has been achieved.

koïna aîstheta: common "sensibles": those sensible qualities (motion, number, shape, magnitude) that cannot be called proper to any one of the particular senses.

koînon aîstheterion: central sense: the faculty that is a necessary concomitant of the particular senses individually and that performs a unifying function for them collectively; the basis of the entire perceptive faculty.

lexis: anything in a play that is an element of language; the Greek equivalent of diction.

logistikôn: deliberative; characterized by a concern with contingent things.
**logos**: the power of ordering in a logical form thoughts that have been collected on a given subject.

**logos enhylos**: a form mixed with matter.

**logos orthos**: right reason.

**magnitude**: size; the extent to which a thing is developed.

**material cause**: the matter or substratum in which the formal cause (q.v.) resides and to which the latter gives shape.

**melopoiia**: any sound produced in the course of a play that exists on account of the activity of the plot; the Greek equivalent of music.

**meson, to**: the mean.

**metrion**: moderate.

**mnene**: memory, the ability to recognize an image as a copy of a past sensation. Cf. anamnesis.

**music**: any sound produced in the course of a play that exists on account of the activity of the plot; the English equivalent of melopoiia.

**mythos**: the combination of incidents in a play; the causal relationship that exists among everything that is a proper part of a play; the essence of a drama, that without which the latter would not be as it is and in virtue of which a play has its appropriate effect; the Greek equivalent of plot.

**nomos**: intellectual environment.

**nous**: intelligence, the rational intuition by which an undemonstrable first principle is apprehended through induction.
**opsis:** anything seen in the course of the action of a play that exists on account of the plot; the Greek equivalent of spectacle.

**orexis:** desire.

**orexis orthe:** right desire.

**orge:** anger.

**ousia:** entity; being essentially or of necessity, without the contingency of matter or change.

**pathos:** affection, a type of quality possessed by an entity in virtue of which an alteration in the entity is possible, or such an alteration already realized.

**peccatum:** sin.

**personage:** that which represents a human being, or more precisely a human agency, in a play.

**phantasia:** imagination

**phantasia aisthetike:** the receptive form of the imagination, which propagates images after sensation.

**phantasia logistike:** the productive form of the imagination, which acts as a free and intuitive power that results in the logical construction of the general notions that serve as the images of conceptual thought.

**phantasma:** image (of the imagination).

**phronesis:** practical wisdom, the ability to reason well about what is in one's own best interest.

**phronimos:** a practically wise person.

**phyge:** avoidance (of an object perceived as bad).

**physikos:** physical.
plot: the combination of incidents in a play; the causal relationship that exists among everything that is a proper part of a play; the essence of a drama; that without which the latter would not be as it is and in virtue of which a play has its appropriate effect; the English equivalent of mythos.

poiesis: a 'making': an activity that results in a product.

poieton: the production of a poiesis.

practical syllogism: the mechanism that causes a proairesis (q.v.).

pragma (pl. pragnata): a thing done (in a drama).

praxis: action.

proairesis (pl. proaireseis): the choice of an action that is noble, i.e., that has been determined as the best means to an end by deliberation directed toward attaining an object of rational desire (boulesis). Cf. simple volition, complex volition.

proaireisthai: to choose.

proaireton, to: the thing chosen.

probebouleumenon: that which has been decided on by previous deliberation.

psyche: soul.

psyches energeia: see energeia psyches.

simple volition: the willing of an action that is immediately pleasant; it does not admit either of the exercise of reason or the consideration of ethical standards. Cf. complex volition, proairesis.

somatos energeia: see energeia somatos.

sophia: speculative wisdom.
spectacle: anything seen in the course of the action of a play that exist on account of the plot; the English equivalent of opsis.

syneidesis: consequent conscience: that which causes remorse in a person when he has acted badly.

synesis: antecedent conscience: that which commands a person before he acts to act well.

telos: end.

thought: the power of saying whatever can be said, or what is appropriate to an occasion; the expression of ideas and emotions in a play; the English equivalent of dianoia.

thymos: passion; the form of desire that heeds reason only partially, that seeks what is expedient and avoids what is harmful.
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