

Part II: The Virtues of Happiness

WHY HAPPINESS REQUIRES THE VIRTUES

We begin by wanting to be happy, but to be so, at least according to Aristotle, we are led to a life of virtue.¹ It seems any happiness worth having is that which a person of worth achieves. But *achieves* is almost too strong a word; it sounds as if we can become happy by following a set of prescriptions at the end of which happiness is guaranteed. The problem with such a view, however, is that the virtues are not just the means to happiness, they are the form of happiness itself.

Aristotle's account of happiness presupposes the temporal character of our lives. One swallow does not make a spring any more than one good act (or even one good day) makes us morally worthy. Aristotle, therefore, is struggling to understand what is necessary to sustain us for the long haul. Put in my language, we are on a journey, or more accurately, the self is a journey. But if that is the case, then what do we need in order to prepare for living a life that, in a sense, never stops?

Perhaps the significance of this can be made clear by asking you to consider the difference between going on a trip and undertaking a journey. When I go on a trip, I know where I am going, how long it will take, what preparations I need to make, and what I am going to do or hope to accomplish. When I undertake a journey, I often have only a hazy idea of where I am going, how long it will take, how to prepare, or what I hope to accomplish. Thus, I make *trips* to Texas, but if I were to go to India it would be a *journey*. (Of course, for some, going to Texas would be more like a journey.)

Our metaphorical use of *trip* and *journey* illustrates their differences. We say some experiences were a "trip" which means they were different, interesting, and a bit unusual. But as a "trip" they leave no lasting impression and we know when they are over. Thus anyone who suggests that "life is a trip" is making a significant claim that it's fun but nothing you ought to take too seriously. We think it more appropriate to suggest that life is a journey, for that suggests more than a movement from one place to another, but rather a development over time where I may make no physical movements but go through significant changes.

To a large extent recent moral philosophy, in an attempt to articulate the working moral presumptions of our culture, has tried to depict the moral life more as a trip than a journey.² Ethics is a matter of having a clear idea of where you want to go and working out the means to get there. Therefore the proper business of ethics is to concentrate on decisions and their justifications. Typical

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moral "issues" lie behind questions such as: What should we do when we have ten patients suffering from kidney disease and only seven dialysis machines? or, Is abortion wrong? Or, What is wrong with sex before marriage? Such questions are hard, but we feel that we can throw light on such matters by rigorous analysis. Life is a series of such decisions. Life is a trip.

Our concentration on this aspect of our lives has led us, however, to overlook the fact that our lives are not constituted by such decisions. Rather our decisions, or even more importantly, those matters we do not subject to decisions, reflect fundamental dispositions and orientations that form our lives. For example, most of us think it good to be kind, but being kind is not the result of some decision we have made. Rather kindness derives from our having certain "overall" aims that constitute what our lives are about. But how are we to understand the status of such aims and their place in our lives? At least to ask that question is to begin to appreciate why morally we cannot avoid thinking of life as a journey.

Aristotle's means of trying to get a handle on the language of overall aims was through a discussion of the virtues.³ The virtues for Aristotle are a set of excellences that help us become the kind of person who is capable of respect. The virtues are those skills that provide the means for us to have the stability of self so that happiness is a characteristic of our lives rather than the achievement of objects of satisfaction. Therefore the question of whether the good life is or can be happy can be answered only by asking, "Happy for whom?" The only happiness worth having is that which the person of worth, the person of virtue, has.

But we must remember that the virtues are not simply given. They are not like the luggage we need in order to go on a trip. Rather the virtues are what they are because we do not know where we are going. We do not know where we are going because the very virtues necessary to begin the journey are crucial to its outcome--that is, they are intrinsic to the end. So, we can only know what we have become retrospectively. Therefore, we cannot know what kind of happiness we desire until we have acquired the virtues.

It is to Aristotle's account of the virtues that we must now turn.

ON BECOMING VIRTUOUS

Unlike Plato, Aristotle does not try to establish a set of central virtues corresponding to different aspects of the soul. Indeed as we read Aristotle we are naturally drawn to Plato's account of courage, temperance, justice and wisdom as it gives us a sense of order and balance in comparison to Aristotle's more chaotic account of the virtues. Aristotle's lists of the virtues include not only the above, but also generosity, magnificence, highmindedness, a nameless virtue between ambition and lack of ambition, gentleness, truthfulness, wittiness, justice and friendship. He makes no attempt to suggest a hierarchy or priority of the virtues, though his treatment of courage and temperance in relation to his general analysis of virtue and choice seems to suggest they have a significance the others do not. Yet he never explicitly suggests what such a significance might involve. Though one assumes that a person of virtue might be deficient in a par-

ticular virtue--like gentleness--there is no way they could be virtuous without courage or temperance.

Aristotle's account of the mean, moreover, is not sufficient to counter the suspicion that his choice of the virtues is arbitrary. We feel that he had made up his mind what virtues he wanted to commend and what kind of person he took as his ideal before ever developing the virtues as a mean between various extremes. His own account of the mean is enough to sustain such a critique because, on analysis, the mean turns out to be extremely complex. Virtue is not some abstract mean that can be established in the abstract, but

is concerned with emotions and actions, and it is in emotions and actions that excess, deficiency, and the median are found. Thus we can experience fear, confidence, desire, anger, pity, and generally any kind of pleasure and pain either too much or too little, and in either case not properly. But to experience all this at the right time, toward the right objects, toward the right people, for the right reason, and in the right manner--that is the median and the best course, the course that is a mark of virtue (1106b15-23).

The virtues which Aristotle analyzes are not so much "a mean" as they are the kind of characteristics he thinks necessary to be the kind of person who feels the right things rightly.

If we look more closely at Aristotle's account of the individual virtues, our difficulties multiply. For example, Aristotle says that a generous man is characterized by giving to the right people rather than by taking from the right and not taking from the wrong sources. Excellence consists in doing rather than having good done to one, in performing noble actions rather than in not performing base ones (1120a10-15). Thus a person who is good is "not one to accept good turns lightly" (1120a35). This same kind of note is continued in Aristotle's account of high-mindedness; that is, one who is worthy of honor because of his excellence and good fortune is the kind of person who will do good but is "ashamed to accept a good turn, because the former marks a man as superior, the latter as inferior" (1124b8-10). Such a man is reluctant to ask for any favor but readily offers aid.

It is easy to criticize Aristotle's account of such a man and his corresponding virtues from our perspective. Indeed we are almost tempted to make fun of such an "ideal" when Aristotle tells us that such a person will have a slow gait, "a deep voice, and a deliberate way of speaking. For a man who takes few things seriously is unlikely to be in a hurry, and a person who regards nothing as great is not one to be excitable. But a shrill voice and a swift gait are due to hurry and excitement" (1125a12-16). This is clearly someone most of us would prefer not to know.

But such a judgment is premature if we try to appreciate the problem Aristotle is trying to address. What is crucial for the life of virtue is a certain kind of sufficiency that we might call integrity or constancy.⁴ Thus, in a passage more

likely to appeal to our sensibilities, Aristotle says the high-minded

is not a gossip, for he will talk neither about himself nor about others, since he is not interested in hearing himself praised or others run down. Nor again is he given to praise; and for the same reason he does not speak evil of others, not even of his enemies, except to scorn them. When he encounters misfortunes that are unavoidable or insignificant, he will not lament and ask for help. That kind of attitude belongs to someone who takes such matters seriously. He is a person who will rather possess beautiful and profitless objects than objects which are profitable and useful, for they mark him more as self-sufficient (1125a5-12).

It is a mistake to let ourselves be misled into dismissing Aristotle's account of the virtues because of our distaste for the outward manifestations he associates with the high-minded. Behind his account of the high-minded lies an essential insight about virtue--namely, the virtuous are such only because their virtue derives from, as well as is formed by, a certain kind of steadfastness of character. That such should be the case is not surprising if, as I have suggested, Aristotle's account of *eudaimonia* can be displayed by the notion of journey.⁵ Knowing we are necessarily on a way but unsure of where we are ultimately headed means we must be well prepared for the undertaking. To be prepared means we must have a center that is not easily destroyed by the good or evil fortune we are bound to meet along the way. Aristotle's account of the high-minded is but an attempt to suggest the kind of character necessary to be able to feel the right things rightly as well as act at the right time, in the right way and toward the right people.

The difference between the arts and the virtues illustrates the necessity of such character for the life of virtue. In the arts, excellence lies in the results themselves; but in matters of virtue an act is not just or temperate unless the agent has certain characteristics as he performs it: "first of all, he must know what he is doing; secondly, he must choose to act the way he does, and he must choose it for its own sake; and in the third place, the act must spring from a firm and unchangeable character" (1105a26-35). Acts that appear to be just and self-controlled cannot properly be called such without reference to the person who has performed them: "The just and self-controlled man is not he who performs these acts, but he who also performs them in the way just and self-controlled men do" (1105b7-9). We cannot become courageous by slavishly imitating the actions we associate with courage, but we must *be* the kind of person who is capable of acting courageously.

Aristotle contends, therefore,

that people may perform just acts without actually being just men, as in the case of people who do what has been laid down by the laws but do so either involuntarily or through ignorance or for an ulterior motive, and not for the sake of performing just acts. (Such persons are not just

men) despite the fact that they act the way they should, and perform all the actions which a morally good man ought to perform. On the other hand, it seems that it is possible for a man to be of such a character that he performs each particular act in a way as to make him a good man (1144a12-18).

That a person of virtue is able to act so that each act contributes to his being a good man is the result that the action proceeds from a "firm and unchangeable character" so that the act is done for its own sake--that, I think, is what Aristotle is trying to get at through his depiction of the high-minded.

But what does it mean for an act to be done for its own sake and why should that be a mark of character? Aristotle does not try to answer that question as he assumes that it is obvious--namely, we become good by doing what good and just people do. Yet more needs to be said if we are to understand why this is the case. On Aristotle's account we seem caught in a circle not easily resolved--if virtuous actions require us to be persons of character, yet we can have such character only as we have acquired the virtues, then from whence does our character come that allows us to act virtuously? To suggest that our actions must be done for their own sake is not sufficient, since it is by no means clear what that would mean since the description of the action must include some account of "results."

The circular nature of Aristotle's account is only complicated by his extremely nuanced account of practical wisdom. Practical wisdom, like virtue, is not governed by the attempt to secure or accomplish some result. Nor is it like science, since it deals with matters that "admit of being other than they are" (1140b2). Practical wisdom aims at good actions as an end in itself, but that is why we cannot have such wisdom without "self-control." Self-control "preserves" practical wisdom since, in matters that depend on judgment, pleasure and pain can destroy or pervert every conviction we hold. We can only become self-controlled if we act with practical wisdom, but we cannot possess such wisdom unless we are self-controlled (1140b11-20).

Within the terms with which Aristotle is working, I think there is no satisfying account that may alleviate the circularity he seems unable to avoid. That does not mean, however, that he is without resources to counter certain kinds of objections, particularly if we attend to his suggestion that actions that contribute to our moral goodness must spring from a "firm and unchangeable character." It is that which makes possible our ability to know and choose what we are doing as well as doing it for its own sake. But asking that we "know what we are doing" is an extraordinary demand, for seldom do we really know what we are doing. Often we only "know" what we have done long after we have done it. By "know," however, I think Aristotle means we must be able to describe what we are doing honestly as what we are doing in terms of our ongoing life as a person of virtue.⁶ Thus, I cannot try to avoid the demands of my friends and still think of myself as generous. To be generous requires that I steadfastly face the demands of being generous and will that as my own, as I would not choose to be other. Moreover, that is why I can choose to act in no other way, for if I did I would not be who I

am. Thus, I can only be generous if I do not have to will or try to be such.

Put simply, Aristotle's account of the kind of behavior characteristic of a person of virtue is that of a person at ease with him or herself. In a sense, the language of self-sufficiency is misleading, for the virtuous are not persons who need nothing, but rather they are ones who are satisfied with what they have done because they know it is how they should act if they are to be virtuous. In short, they can act the way they do because they are happy. What they do is not duty for duty's sake; instead there is an ease to their behavior that reflects their desire to be nothing other than what they are. Happiness, therefore, becomes one of our essential checks against self-deception--the difficulty is that it is also one of our greatest temptations to self-deception.

To be a person of character, therefore, cannot be attained by simply trying to attain all the virtues Aristotle lists, though they are obviously significant for a person of character. Just as we can no more become virtuous by doing one virtuous act after another, neither can we become persons of character by some mixture of the various virtues. To be sure, the individual virtues have a particular *telos* that direct us, but that is just the problem. The various virtues pull in different directions and may in fact conflict (the gentle person may well be tempted not to press strongly claims of justice, and so on). Of course, Aristotle in principle denies such conflicts since everything is finally a matter of judgment. Thus, gentleness is not the absence of anger or conflict, but describes one who is angry only under the right circumstances and for as long as reason demands (1125b31-35). But this only reminds us that if the various virtues are to constitute a single life we must be, in Aristotle's terms, persons of character.⁷

But whence does such character come? In what sense can we be said to be responsible for the development of such character if our very ability to be agents in the first place depends on our having character? The individual virtues may be acquired by engaging in certain kinds of activities since a "given kind of activity produces a corresponding character" (1114a8). But there is no one activity that corresponds to character, so character is not on all fours with the other virtues. Our character is determined by the end, and, finally, that is

not determined by the choice of the individual himself, but by a natural gift of vision, as it were, which enables him to make correct judgments and to choose what is truly good: to be well endowed by nature means to have this natural gift. For to be well and properly provided by nature with the greatest and noblest of gifts, a gift which can be got or learned from no one else, but which is one's possession in the form in which nature has given it: that is the meaning of being well endowed by nature in the full and true sense of the word (1114b5-11).

But then how can we be said to be responsible for our character?

Though I think that Aristotle provides no satisfactory answer to this question, we can be helped toward a solution if we remember the temporal character of the moral life. Aristotle does not assume we acquire all the virtues all at once.

Rather we learn to be courageous in relation to a set of activities and then find that the skills learned there have implications for other aspects of our lives. Moreover, the interrelation of the virtues seem to have a pull that extends our lives beyond what we had anticipated. We learn that it is not enough that we be courageous, but we must be courageous as a person of self-control is courageous. But neither is self-control sufficient in itself, as the self-controlled person must be capable of the anger that derives from our being just. Thus the development of one virtue leads to, or at least makes us open to, being formed by other virtues.

This perhaps helps explain how the development of the virtues are crucial to our becoming people of character, but it is obviously not sufficient. As we have already noted, character is not simply all the virtues added up; nor is it the particular mixture of the virtues characteristic of one person. Character is not simply the collection or combination of many virtues, but rather all the various virtues must be formed by character if they are to be genuine--that is, not easily lost so that we would not will to be other than who we are.

Confronted with this kind of problem one might well be tempted to conclude that Aristotle's account of the virtues, indeed his very characterization of morality, is incoherent. Not only is his depiction of the individual virtues arbitrary, he is not able to provide us with a satisfying account of how we become persons of character. It is enough to make you want to return to an ethic of "What should I do in X or Y situation?"

However, we must remember that as yet we do not have the full story. It may be that friendship is the crucial element that is missing from this account. The virtues, as I have treated them here, appear as individual achievements. Morally, it seems we are isolated beings who must forge out of the complexities of our experience a decent and virtuous life. But Aristotle does not assume we are so isolated.⁸ On the contrary, we can only be virtuous to the extent we are capable of being a friend; or perhaps even more strongly, it may be that without friendship we are incapable of having the character necessary for the acquiring of virtue. Determining why that is the case must wait until we next look at friendship. At the very least, however, we can now appreciate why friendship is such a significant issue for Aristotle.

THE LIFE OF CHRISTIANS AS THE LIFE OF VIRTUE

But what are we to make theologically of this account of the virtues? Christians, no less than non-Christians, need the virtues to live well. Christians can be no less courageous, no less just, no less temperate, no less wise or prudent than anyone else. Therefore an ethic of virtue insofar as it helps us learn what is required to live well, to live happily, is no less important to us.

There is certainly truth to this, but it suffers from being too simple. It assumes that the "virtues" that help us live well are straightforward and clear; but on the basis of Aristotle's account, that can hardly be assumed. What justice meant to Aristotle may not be what it means for Christians.⁹ Thus arises the constant emphasis by Christian theologians that the virtues of the pagans are nothing less

than sin unless transformed by grace. Indeed, Augustine even suggested that unless justice, courage, temperance, and prudence were transformed by love they could be no use to the Christian.

It is not, moreover, just the content of the virtues that seems to present a problem for Christians, but also their nature. This has been particularly true of Protestants who have been concerned to deny all attempts to establish a moral standing before God.¹⁰ The virtues inextricably appear as something that is our achievement, that assures our righteousness, and thus only lead us further from the kind of life appropriate to those who have learned that we can only be good insofar as another has made us so. Virtue is a category that may be of use by Catholics, but we all know they are works of righteous people in the first place.

I believe those thinkers that have attempted to use the language of virtue for displaying the Christian life have not been wrong. However, I think that often the formulas they used for the appropriation of the language of virtue were not sufficient to suggest the complexity of the matter. For example, Aquinas, following Augustine, says that charity is the form of the virtues. Even more strongly, he says the natural virtues must be transformed by the infused theological virtues before they can be of service for those who would be followers of Jesus.¹¹ Yet what does such language mean? Does charity add new content to the virtues? Or how does faith or hope transform courage? The formulas sound right, but they do little to help us understand how the virtues can be utilized for displaying the Christian life without that life being essentially transformed.

The moral life for Christians derives not from some general conception of the good, nor even from an analysis of those skills or excellences that allegedly allow human nature to flourish. Rather, the moral life of Christians is determined by their allegiance to a historical person they believe is the decisive form of God's kingdom. How then could the language of virtue serve to help us understand what it could mean to be a follower of Christ, a disciple of Jesus? After all, Jesus did not say if you are to be a follower of me you must develop those virtues that will make you a morally impressive person. Rather he said, "Come and follow me." Moreover, it seems that such a following may require nothing less than that we be willing to die for his sake. The person of virtue may die rather than compromise his integrity, but here we are asked to die not for some moral ideal but for the sake of another person.

While I think there is no easy solution to his seeming incompatibility, I want to offer a framework that suggests how Aristotle's account of the virtues can be appropriated. The kind of appropriation I suggest requires modification of some aspects of Aristotle's account, but in an interesting way I think the kind of modifications I have in mind are consistent with some of Aristotle's best intuitions.

The reason I think Aristotle's account of the virtues is important for a display of the Christian life is because his analysis of the virtues entails dealing with the temporal character of our life. For as we have seen, the virtues in fact are the means through which we are initiated into a journey. Indeed in a sense they are the form of the journey. Yet the outlines of that journey, its plot, its main characters, its dramatic tensions remain unclear. It is as if Aristotle worked out an

account of the moral life necessary for a strenuous task but no such task appeared that was worth the effort.

And it is exactly that emptiness at the heart of Aristotle's vision that makes him so appropriate as we reflect on the Christian life. As MacIntyre has suggested, it was no accident that Aristotle was seen by medieval thinkers to be such a fruitful source for attempts to provide a systematic presentation of the Christian life.¹² They could supply what Aristotle's account of virtue lacked--namely, a narrative in which the development of virtues made sense. For the medieval vision, schooled as it was on the Bible, was "historical in a way that Aristotle's could not be. It situates our aiming at the good not just in specific contexts--Aristotle situates that aiming within the polis--but in contexts which themselves have a history. To move towards the good is to move in time and that movement may itself involve new understandings of what it is to move towards the good."¹³

Situating Aristotle's account of the virtues in such a context meant that, just as Augustine and Aquinas suggested, the virtues were in fact transformed. Now they were put at the service of a community who had the task to live out the kind of life they believed had been made possible by Jesus of Nazareth. Charity becomes the form of the virtues, not through some mysterious transformation, but because the virtues are no longer self-referential. Rather they are skills for a people who are trying to be faithful to a journey they believe to be crucial for God's dealing with the world. Happiness just is my ability to rejoice in the presence of another, for it is the other that makes it possible for me to be one thing rather than another.

Therefore, more important than the specific virtues Aristotle recommends is how his account of the virtues begs for a narrative display. Indeed, at least part of what it means for the virtues to be transformed is the necessity of Christians to add new virtues to Aristotle's list. Hope is as important as courage, patience is as significant as justice, and faithfulness is as crucial as practical wisdom. These virtues do not appear in Aristotle's account because they obviously are intelligible in terms of the narrative that Christians believe they are living out. For hope, patience, and faithfulness are decisively eschatological virtues--that is, virtues required by a people who believe that our existence, as individuals and as societies, is fundamentally historic. There is no way out of history, there is no freedom from history, but rather our freedom is developing the virtues that make it possible to live in history in a way that is faithful to a God whom we believe has given us the means to live truthfully. And to live truthfully is finally the only way possible to live happily.

The acknowledgement of our historic character, moreover, may be exactly what is required to give an account of character that seemed so necessary to Aristotle's analysis of the virtues. For it seems the kind of constancy that makes our actions virtuous--that is, that makes what we do and do not do form a pattern of consistency--is possible only as we learn to be such from others. But how are such people known? I think only as they reflect a more determinative story that is embodied and lived out by a whole community.

Perhaps Aristotle is right finally that character is the result of a "natural gift

of vision," but he was wrong to think that such a gift was simply intrinsic to some people's being. Rather our character, our ability to be faithful to ourselves and others, is a gift because it is not finally something I do. My desire to be happy insures the fact that I can only make my way in the company of others. It is from my companions, that I learn the way of virtue. Therefore, any account of virtue that allows me to claim my life as an achievement rather than a gift is fundamentally false, and thus unable to sustain the truthfulness necessary for me to be faithful to myself or others. Again we are led to consider friendship not only as part of the life of virtue, but as crucial for our becoming people capable of being happy.

Notes

1. One of the most striking differences between Aristotle's account of morality and modernity is Aristotle's lack of concern with any account of morality. He simply saw no reason to draw a hard and fast distinction between "morality" and "religion" or "morality" and "manners." It is with Kant that we get the peculiar modern notion that "morality" must be a distinguishable realm in the hope that morality might be grounded in the non-contingent. As Nussbaum rightly notes in *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), Aristotle begins and ends with the "appearances." As she suggests, "Aristotle asks us to look at our practices, seeing, in the different areas, what sorts of judges we do, in fact, trust. This judgment about whom to trust and when seems to come, like the appearances, from us. We turn to doctors because we do, in fact, rely on doctors. This reliance, Aristotle insists, does not need to be justified by producing a further judge to certify the judge; it is sufficiently 'justified' by the facts of what we do. The expert, and our reasons for choosing him, are not behind our practices; they are inside them. And yet such experts do, in fact, help us to unravel puzzles" (p. 248).
2. See, for example, Edmund Pincoffs' attack on quandary ethics in his *Quandaries and Virtues: Against Reductivism in Ethics* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1986).
3. We are in debt to Alasdair MacIntyre for the renewed interest in Aristotle's account of the virtues as well as the significance of the virtues for the moral life. See his *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984) and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988). It would be a mistake to assume, however, that there is a new consensus about the importance of the virtues or how they are best understood. It is still the case that most philosophers and theologians that write about ethics do so in a manner that avoids questions of the virtues and/or treat the virtues as dependent on more "principled" approaches to ethics. For example, most of the essays on the virtues in the 1988 edition of *The Midwest Studies in Philosophy* deal with the virtues as secondary to more standard accounts of "ethics." See *Ethical Theory: Character and Virtue*, ed. Peter French, Theodore Uehling, and Howard Wettstein (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988). In particular, the essays by Kurt Baier, Richard Regan and Michael Slote illustrate this tendency. For a particularly useful presentation of the objections to virtue theory as well as a response to those objections,

see David Solomon's essay "Internal Objections to Virtue Ethics," in this volume, pp. 428-441. Part of the problem with the very characterization "an ethics of virtue" is that it makes it appear that such an ethic is a mirror alternative to those understandings of ethics that have been shaped by modernity. As MacIntyre's work makes clear, however, any attempt to recover the significance of the virtues will challenge the very paradigms of rationality and correlative political presumptions that have shaped modern accounts of the moral life.

4. MacIntyre emphasizes the importance of constancy by noting that it presupposes the notion of the unity of a human life and correlatively that the very concept of a "whole human life" makes sense. The ethical life, he notes, presupposes that "the commitments and responsibilities to the future spring from past episodes in which obligations were conceived and debts assumed unite the present to past and future in such a way as to make of a human life a unity." He argues that by the time of Jane Austen, who MacIntyre thinks to be the last great Christian Aristotelian, such unity can no longer be treated as the mere presupposition of the moral life. "It has itself to be continually reaffirmed and its reaffirmation in deed rather than in word is the virtue which Jane Austen calls a constancy. Constancy is crucial in at least two novels, *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*, in each of which it is a central virtue of the heroine. And without constancy all the other virtues to some degree lose their point. Constancy is reinforced by and reinforces the Christian virtue of patience, just as patience which is reinforced by and reinforces the Aristotelian virtue of courage, is not the same as courage. For just as patience necessarily involves recognition of the character of the world, of a kind which courage does not necessarily require, so constancy requires a recognition of a particular kind of threat to the integrity of the personality in the peculiarly modern social world, a recognition which patience does not necessarily require" (*After Virtue*, p. 242).

5. I certainly do not mean to suggest that Aristotle would welcome the notion of journey as integral to his construal of the virtues, but rather that the teleological character of the moral life he presupposes can be so displayed.

6. Nancy Sherman provides the best account available of Aristotle's understanding of moral education in *The Fabric of Character: Aristotle's Theory of Virtue* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 157-199. She rightly emphasizes how crucial friendship is for the development of practical wisdom and character. As she notes, "we can say that the rational pursuit of ends includes, for Aristotle, a common or social conception of the good. This entails a jointly articulated end, as well as collaborative efforts in the promotion of it. In an important way rational agency and its objects are extended. What is within our power and perceptual gaze extends beyond the first person. Simply to make he informed choice and to see what is relevant often requires the resources of others" (p. 109).

7. Sherman rightly notes that "Aristotle's claim that the virtues are in principle consistent needs to be distinguished from the claim that the virtuous life is conflict free. The fact that the virtues 'may be' in principle consistent does not preclude the possibility of contingent conflicts" (*ibid.*, p. 105).

8. I have not tried to deal in this essay with the complex issues surrounding the individualization of the virtues. Aristotle's resort to the mean, as we noted, is clearly unsatisfac-

tory. The virtues can only be individualized against a community's practices and the narratives that give those practices intelligibility. Aristotle simply assumed that we exist in such narratives not having had the disadvantage of being formed by the modern presupposition that we are individual selves prior to being part of a tradition.

9. I suspect an Aristotelian account may well be closer to the way Christians ought to think about justice than accounts such as John Rawls's (see his *A Theory of Justice* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971]). For Aristotle no account of justice is possible that does not require that we have the virtue of justice. Rawls, on the other hand, writes to make justice possible for a social system of the presupposition that people need only be self-interested. For example, MacIntyre notes that Hobbes translates Aristotle's *pleonexia* as "a desire of more than their share." Yet Aristotle understood *pleonexia* to be no more or less than acquisitiveness. Nor can this be translated as greed as Irwin does. MacIntyre argues that "what such translations of '*pleonexia*' conceal from us is the extent of the difference between Aristotle's standpoint on the virtues and vices, and more especially his standpoint on justice and the dominant standpoint of peculiarly modern societies. For the adherents of that standpoint recognize that acquisitiveness is a character trait indispensable to continuous and limitless economic growth, and one of their central beliefs is that continuous and limitless economic growth is a fundamental good. That a systematically lower standard of living ought to be preferred to a systematically higher standard of living is a thought incompatible with either the economics or the politics of peculiarly modern societies. So prices and wages have come to be understood as unrelated—and indeed in a modern economy could not be related—to desert in terms of labor, and the notion of a just price or a just wage in modern terms makes no sense. But a community which was guided by Aristotelian norms would not only have to view acquisitiveness as a vice but would have to set strict limits to growth insofar as that is necessary to preserve or enhance a distribution of goods according to desert" (*Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* p. 112).

10. Gilbert Meilaender, a Lutheran, has developed a constructive account of the virtues. In particular see his *The Theory and Practice of Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984). Meilaender notes "before Christian ethicists latch too quickly onto an ethic of virtue, it is important to remember that an emphasis on character may sit uneasily with some strands of Christian beliefs. No theologian has urged this point more forcefully than Luther. The virtues are, many have wanted to say, 'good for us.' A sketch of the virtues is a picture of a fulfilled life, of the successful realization of a self. Such an approach cannot without difficulty be incorporated into a vision of the world which has at its center a crucified God—which takes, that is, not self-realization but self-sacrifice as its central theme. Furthermore, the very notion of character seems to suggest—has suggested at least since Aristotle—habitual behavior, abilities within our power, an acquired possession. And this in turn may be difficult to reconcile with the Christian emphasis on grace, the sense of the sinner's constant need of forgiveness, and the belief that we can have no claims upon the freedom of God" (p. x). As a committed Methodist, I cannot agree with Meilaender's way of putting the issue, since I do not think the "need for forgiveness" is a sufficient account of the salvation found in the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus did not come just to forgive us our sins but to offer us new life in an ongoing kingdom.

11. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1, 2, Q. 65, article 2; Q. 63, article 3. For a further discussion of these issues, see my "On Developing Hopeful Virtues," *Christian Scholars Review*, 18 (December, 1988): 107-117.
12. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 175-177.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

