The Question of Self-Reference in *Nicomachean Ethics VI*

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Introduction

The overarching theme of this paper is the relation between philosophy and politics in the classical tradition of Plato and Aristotle. Emblematic of that tradition is Socrates’ claim in the *Republic* that, “unless . . . political power and philosophy coincide . . . there is no rest from ills for the cities, my dear Glaucon, nor I think for human kind” (473d). Of special relevance, as well, is Socrates’ assertion, also in the *Republic*, about the relation between regime and human character type: “[D]o you suppose that the regimes arise ‘from an oak or rocks’ and not from the dispositions of the men in the cities, which, tipping the scale as it were, draw the rest along with them?” (544d-e)\(^1\)

In what way does Aristotle comport with this understanding of philosophy, politics, character? Let me say at the outset that there is a straightforward answer to this question, which, although partial, covers a case of great importance. Tyranny is probably the greatest malady of human kind.\(^2\) Tyrants everywhere and always seek to destroy moral virtue, especially courage, intellectual virtue, and trust among subjects. Aristotle’s *Ethics* seeks to cultivate moral virtue, intellectual virtue, and true friendship, bonded by unbreakable trust. Where these dispositions tip the scale, as Socrates puts it, that society will be resistant to tyranny. Aristotle’s *Ethics* can thus be seen as an anti-tyrannic device.

I return to this point at the conclusion of this paper.

Let us turn to our main text, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 6.
I. Happiness, Good, Soul, Virtues

Book 6 of Aristotle’s *Ethics* is about the intellectual virtues. It is prepared by Aristotle’s opening inquiry, in *NE* 1.7, into happiness and the human good or human work, famously defined as the activity, actuality, being-at-work, *energeia*, of soul in accordance with virtue (1098a7-20). But soul is divided—as commonly accepted—into reasoning part and appetitive part (1098a4, 1102a26-03a4), thus “virtue as well is divided in accordance with the same distinction [between thinking and apppetition], for we speak of virtues as pertaining either to thinking or to character” (1103a4).³ Character refers to the way we come to have our emotions and appetites, thus the way we come to be disposed toward, and act in the face of the pleasures and pains to which we are subject as animate, rational, individuals in political community. Our dispositions give rise to our characteristic patterns of choices. We make choices for the attainment of ends or goods whose appearance to us is intimately a function of our disposition (1113a31, 1114b23-25, 1115b21, 1144a33-36, 1176b27).⁴ To choose well, therefore, we must be rightly disposed toward pleasures and pains in order to be free of extremes of passion that distort perception and judgment. We must be disposed in the mean between excess and deficiency of passion such that action is correspondingly appropriate to the particular situation. The mean in action is delimited, determined, or bounded, not by instinct as in the lower animals, but through practical wisdom, prudence, in Greek, *phronēsis*:

“[T]here is some boundary (*horos*) delimiting the mean conditions that we say are between excess and deficiency, [a boundary] in accord with right reason” (1138b23-25). Thus, “[m]oral virtue is a disposition concerning choice, consisting in a mean [in passion and action] . . . as would be determined (bounded, delimited; *hōrismenon*) by the person
with *phronēsis*" (1106b36-07a1). *Phronēsis* is, thus, contained within the definition of moral virtue, which is contained in turn within the definition of the human good. Indeed, "what is determinate (bounded, delimited; *hōrismenon*) belongs to the nature of the good" (1170a22). Therefore, without *phronēsis* the human being would be indeterminate, boundless, unlimited, in its passions and actions, unlike any other being in nature. Accordingly, *phronēsis* is the central intellectual virtue of Book 6. It is right reason, attaining truth in action (1139a27, 1144b26-28).

But to define *phronēsis* adequately we must distinguish it from, and relate it to, the other truth-attaining capacities. And this requires a further division of soul, given in *NE* 6.1. There, the reasoning part of the soul is divided by Aristotle into, first, the scientific or speculative part that can know invariable principles and what follows from them (in mathematics, physics, metaphysics), and, second, the deliberative part that deals with things that are variable because they are determined by us through our choices. The excellence of the scientific part of the soul is the virtue of wisdom (*sophia*), consisting of intellectual intuition of first principles (*nous*) and step-by-step demonstration (*epistēmē*) of truths about the necessary, eternal, highest, divine, and thus suprahuman, things. The excellences of the deliberative part of the soul are productive craft (*tekhnē*) and *phronēsis*. The elaboration of the five intellectual virtues, *epistēmē, tekhnē, phronēsis, nous, sophia*—but especially *phronēsis*—is the substance of Book 6 of Aristotle's *Ethics*. Near the conclusion of Book 6, in the penultimate chapter 12, we finally have the complete scheme of Aristotle's definition of happiness and the human good in terms of the parts of the soul and the corresponding virtues. This virtuous work of Aristotle's own intellect can be easily diagrammed, based on *NE* 6.12, 1144a5-8:
Happiness is the energema of soul
(1098a7, 14, 17)

reasoning part

\begin{align*}
\text{scientific: studies things whose principles are invariable} \\
\text{deliberative: studies variable things determined by us through our choices (we are the principle)}
\end{align*}

appetitive part: unreasoning but can listen to reason

accounting to teleion virtue:
(1100a5, 1102a5, 1144a7)

sophia: nous & epistēmē of the highest things (1141a19, b1)

phronēsis (directs techne): ensures the right means to ends rightly desired through:

moral virtues: ensure the right ends (1144a6-9)

II. The Problem of Self-Reference

Certain features of this scheme are distinctive, even provocative. Reason exerts no force over against unruly passions. Because of the perfect disposition of the appetites, there are no unruly passions here. Wisdom plays no discernible role in disposing the appetites to the right ends in action. Indeed, according to Aristotle, "wisdom does not contemplate the means by which a human being will be happy, since it is in no way directed to coming into being [phronēsis is so directed]" (1143b19-21). Speculative reason, it seems, has no appetite or desire of its own simply to understand. Consistent with this, the sophos, the wise man, has the enjoyment of wisdom possessed, complete wisdom, rather than the desire for wisdom not yet possessed, which animates the philosophos, the philosopher. Desire (orexis) is here contained within the appetitive or subordinate part of the soul (1102b30-32).

The virtues in this scheme are called by Aristotle "complete" or "perfect," teleion. As we shall see (in Part IV), following a comment by Aquinas on the meaning of this term, "perfect" or "complete," the intellectual virtues here are something like Platonic ideal forms. The ideal character of wisdom, sophia, is easiest to see: it combines the
certainty of mathematics with the dignity of the highest object of metaphysics. One could thus wonder where in this scheme Aristotle’s biological works, including *De Anima*, might be placed. In general, it would be worthwhile (but require a longer inquiry) to compare the description of wisdom in *NE* 6, with that given in *Meta.* 1.2. A salient point appears to be that, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, wisdom and prudence could have no overlapping subject matter, whereas in the *Metaphysics* they could.6

Most noteworthy, singular, provocative, however, about *NE* 6 and its culminating scheme of happiness and human good is that Aristotle is failing the test of self-reference. That is, if we refer Aristotle’s scheme to itself, we do not get consistency.7 What I mean is this: the intellectual virtues presented here are said to attain truth (1139a27-30, b12-13). But doesn’t Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, this very book, attain some truth? So where is Aristotle’s own intellectual activity of writing the *Ethics* to be found in the account of intellectual (truth-attaining) virtues in Book 6? Elsewhere in the *Ethics* (*NE* 1.2 and 10.9), Aristotle describes his *Ethics* as politikê tis (1.2, 1094b12 also 7.11, 1152b1-4) and philosophaia peri ta anthrôpina (10.9, 1181b15): “a certain politics” or “in a certain way political,” and “philosophy of the human things.” But the terms “philosophy” or “political philosophy” do not appear in *NE* 6.

Stated most concisely, the test of self-reference consists in this question: Of which of the five intellectual virtues is this scheme (of happiness and good in terms of soul and virtues) itself a product? It cannot be a product of sophia—consisting of nous and epistêmê of the highest things (1141a20)—unless man, or some part of man, is the necessary and eternal, highest being. But Aristotle explicitly rejects this, both here in the
NE (1141a22, 1141b1) and in his theoretical works, which contain famous arguments for the First Unmoved Mover, the First Intellect.\(^8\)

Is the scheme a product of a more general epistêmê or science, one that is demonstrative, like mathematics, and not merely probable, but not restricted in its application to the highest beings? It seems not, because the derivation of the scheme involves an instance of supposition or conception (hypolêpsis), specifically, the hypolêpsis that epistêmê in the precise sense is of the necessary and eternal (1139b19-25). Since hypolêpsis is subject to error (1139b17) it is not demonstrative, but merely probable.

As noted above, the five intellectual virtues are perfect (teleion) and thus, as we shall see, error-free. The fact that they are embedded in a scheme that results in part from a cognitive capacity, hypolêpsis, that is imperfect and subject to error is peculiar and calls for explanation, which is attempted in Part V. For now, let us complete our examination of the question whether the scheme of happiness and good in terms of soul and virtues is itself a product of one or more of the five intellectual virtues. So far, we have reviewed and rejected sophia (nous and epistêmê of the highest things) and a possible generalized sense of epistêmê.

Is the scheme then a product of Aristotle's technê? Not in the normal sense of technê and as Aristotle defines it in NE 6.4. In order for it to be a product of technê, we would have to say either that definitions (and specifically this definition of happiness and good) are artifacts, or that there is a moral technê—a productive craft that can reliably produce humans who make good choices and are happy, and that Aristotle's definitional scheme is the blueprint for the reliable production of virtuous human beings. Such a
moral technē is something greatly to be wished for by every parent, but is, obviously, not available. So the scheme of happiness and human good seems not to be a product of technē.

Is it, finally, a work of Aristotle’s phronēsis? This might offer the best avenue of approach to the problem of self-reference in NE 6, namely, that Aristotle’s own activity in writing the Ethics is a sort of phronēsis, although not simply as defined in Ethics 6.5 and subsequent chapters, wherein it is restricted in its application to action or doing (praxis; 1140b5-8) in the particular circumstances of life, and would thus not apply to Aristotle’s thinking in developing this definition of happiness and human good. We return to the notion of a generalized phronēsis in Part V, below.

Where do we now stand on the problem of self-reference in NE 6, and where are we going? Aristotle appears to be failing the test of self-reference, and yet that is impossible. Aristotle cannot fail the test of self-reference, for he is one of its major founders (Meta. 4.3-4). There must be a resolution. Aristotle’s characterization of his own approach in the Ethics as politikē tis (1.2, 1094b12), “politics of a sort,” or “in a certain way political,” provides a key. Another key is the complete, perfect, ideal character of the virtues in NE 6. But the relation between these two keys—Aristotle’s political intention, on the one hand, and the ideal form of the virtues, on the other—is an open and important question. Let us begin with the first of these two keys to the solution of the problem of self-reference in NE 6. What does Aristotle mean by politikē tis?
III Aristotle’s Political Intention

Consider the following texts from *NE* 1.9, 1.13, 2.1:

[T]he highest good is the end of *politikê* . . . it takes the greatest pains to produce (*poieitai*) citizens of a certain sort, namely, ones that are good and inclined to perform noble actions. (1.9, 1099b31-33)

[W]e assert that happiness is activity of soul. Now if this is so, it is clear that the statesman [or political practitioner; *politikos*] needs to know in some way (*eidemai pôs*) the things that concern the soul. . . . [He] must study it for the sake of the political and to the extent sufficient for what is sought, for to be more precise than that is perhaps more laborious than needed for the things proposed. (1.13, 1102a17-27)

[W]e acquire the virtues by first being at work in them, just as . . . people become, say, housebuilders by building houses or harpists by playing the harp. So, too, we become just by doing things that are just, moderate by doing things that are moderate, and courageous by doing things that are courageous. What happens in cities gives evidence of this, for lawmakers make the citizens good by habituating them (*tous politas ethizontes poiousin agathous*), and since this is the intention of every lawmaker, those that do not do it well are failures, and one regime differs from another in this respect as a good one from a worthless one. (2.1, 1103a31-b7)
We see that Aristotle’s account is “in a certain way political” in that it aims to support the training or habituation of citizens to the performance of noble (just, moderate, courageous) actions as directed by the laws. This sheds light on a fact that might otherwise seem odd, namely, that of the eleven or so Aristotelian moral virtues, four are without commonly accepted names, so that Aristotle has to make up names for them. Robert Licht points out that, lacking names, these virtues could not be objects of legislation or stable customs, and, thus, by giving them names Aristotle enables their cultivation by law and custom. It is striking that among these previously nameless virtues is moderation with respect to anger.

In sum: Aristotle’s political intention means that, at least in part, the *NE* is aimed (1094a1) at disposing its audience, that is, at “shaping” emotion and moral perception, in favor of decent politics and, ultimately, philosophy (1180a35). This intention is consistent with a crucial assertion on ethical disposition, apparent good, and the voluntary in *NE* 3.5: “we ourselves are in a certain way jointly responsible for our dispositions (τὸν ἅξιον συναιτίοι πῶς αυτοὶ ἐσμέν”) (1114b23). Joint responsibility means responsibility shared between the individual agent and other sources, which could include family and friends, community and traditions, founders and laws, and political philosophy—invoking perhaps “the highest sort of cause” (1099b24)—including Aristotle’s own *Nicomachean Ethics*.

But how does this requirement (to dispose human beings to decent politics) determine or delimit what the statesman is to know about the soul? The doctrine to be given by Aristotle to the statesman will be less than fully precise (1102a26), perhaps like
operating rule of thumb: reliable in practice, like rules of carpentry, but not as adequate or precise as the theoretical truths of geometry (1098a26-35).

To get a sense of what Aristotle might have in mind, consider these lines from *On the Motion of Animals*:

[W]hatever we do without calculating (*mê logisamenoi*), we do quickly. For whenever [one is] actually using sense perception or imagination or thought towards the end, he does at once what he desires. For the activity of desire (*energeia tês orexeôs*) takes the place of questioning or thinking (*ant’ erôtêseôs ê noëseôs*). . . . We should consider the organization of an animal to resemble that of a city well-governed by laws. For once order is established in a city, there is no need of a separate monarch to preside over each thing to be done; each does his own task as assigned, and one thing follows another because of habit (*dia to ethos*). In animals this same thing happens because of nature . . . each part of them, since they are so ordered, is naturally disposed to do its own work (*ergon*). There is then no need of soul in each part. (*701a28-32, 703a29-36)*

Ideally, there would be no need of soul in the individual citizens, because the whole community would act like one whole animal, each part of which performs its proper function automatically. But this is utopian. A community of human beings cannot possess the organic unity of a single animal—because a human being is itself a single animal. (*12*) The next best thing is a kind of optimal habituation. In the optimally habituated citizen, there would unavoidably be a soul, but a soul as possessing only
motivational power. The reflective, questioning power of human soul would get in the way of prompt execution—by questioning or thinking over the rightness or necessity of the action that has been ordered, especially in the face of danger. Of course the motivational part of the soul must be able to listen to orders given by the laws, or by leaders (1102b30-33, 1103a3, 1119b13) who do the practical thinking that issues in commands, which are then carried out straightaway.

War. Can we find a modern example of the high demand on action that Aristotle subserves according to his premodern political intention—an example from large liberal societies with individual freedom? Yes: combat military units undergo rigorous training to enable soldiers to perform their proper functions without thinking, because in combat, facing violent death, very few people can think.

Since war was a pervasive condition of the ancient world, we can understand Aristotle’s political intention and its stringent demand for prompt and unquestioning action by free citizens. Of course we must keep in mind the question, for what should the polis go to war—for conquest and domination or for defense, and in defense of what? We consider this later. In any case, war makes it hard to reconcile the happiness of the individual with the common good—as Aristotle wishes to do (1.2, 1094b8, 9.8, 1169a19-28)—because it just isn’t pleasant to die in battle.

Socrates. There is another background factor, besides war, relevant to the meaning of Aristotle’s political intention in the Ethics, namely, Socrates and the fate of Socrates. He was a great thinker and questioner. In the Symposium, Socrates famously says he knows nothing but ta erōtika, the erotic things, matters of love (177E1). But the main thing he does, throughout the dialogues of Plato, is ask questions. Terence Marshall
points out that, if we change the first Greek letter, epsilon, of the word erōtika to eta, we have ta ērōtika, which sounds like, the questions (ta ērōtēka: the things asked). And Marshall suggests that Plato is punning, as he often does, so that Socrates’ famous, risqué remark in the Symposium is a double entendre: Socrates longs like a lover for the possession of the beloved, namely, wisdom, but has not yet possessed it. His lack or incompleteness consists in knowing nothing but the questions; that is, he lacks final or fully complete and fully certain answers to the most fundamental questions. This would certainly fit Socrates’ lifetime performance and his frequent claims to knowledge of ignorance.

A further element of historical background, also presented in the Symposium, is Socrates’ failure to moderate Alcibiades—a dangerous demagogue—by turning him to philosophy and away from his addiction to the adulation of the many (215d-216c). Alcibiades instigated the Athenians to undertake the disastrous Sicilian expedition of 415BC, which was opposed by Socrates, and which contributed to the eventual defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War, 431-404BC. Socrates’ long, yet ultimately ineffective relationship with Alcibiades likely contributed to the bad reputation that Socrates got in the eyes of many Athenians, culminating in his execution.14

Socrates’ experience with Alcibiades was perhaps paralleled by Aristotle’s brief contact with the young Alexander the Great. According to Carnes Lord, “[u]nsatisfactory as the evidence is, it seems relatively clear that . . . neither [Aristotle nor Philip] succeeded in educating or taming the strong-willed and altogether extraordinary Alexander.”15 Did Aristotle learn something from these episodes about the impediments to cooperation between political power and philosophy?16
It is plausible that, in light of experience, Aristotle turned away from the Socratic attempt to educate or “seduce” (Socrates and Alcibiades) the extraordinary but potentially tyrannic individual to philosophy, and turned instead toward the cultivation of a political class that could be spoudaios—morally serious. This would be the class of “gentlemen,” in the common English parlance. For now, the two most relevant points, are, first, the morally serious are not attracted to demagoguery, debauchery, or self-deification, and, second, in the NE, the term “spoudaios” is the hallmark of non-philosophic virtue. In view of the latter, therefore, in his rhetorical address, Aristotle will not show the “messy details” of philosophy, the uncertain, questioning or aporetic aspect of what he does, because this aspect (and it is an aspect, not the whole of philosophy) is inappropriate to his audience—future political practitioners, who as such must often make life-and-death decisions with little time for sustained, disinterested, profoundly detailed analysis. Accordingly, the morally serious statesmen need a certain limited awareness of soul; as Aristotle says, they “must study [the soul] for the sake of the political and [only] to the extent sufficient for what is sought” (1102a24-26).

What is sought (for the most part) in the Nicomachean Ethics is ethical character-formation in citizens and rulers, and resulting capacity for public-spirited, virtuous action. What is not sought, and will not be taught concerning the soul, is a philosophical, thus arresting awareness that, as Aristotle says in his theoretical work, On Soul (De Anima), “altogether in every way the soul is one of the most difficult things to get any assurance about” (402a11). Indeed, could we remove from the Ethics Aristotle’s simplified, practical-rule-of-thumb account of the two-part soul, and replace it with the more theoretical, complex and difficult account of soul given in De Anima? Could we still
derive the neat division of the virtues into intellectual and moral, which follows immediately from the two-part soul, and culminates in the distinctive scheme of happiness and human good, as shown above?21 We must leave this as a another question, along with the question of war, and now the question of Aristotle’s distinctive, post-Socratic approach to the classical problem of philosophy in relation to politics (Rep. 473b).

Unfortunately, we have gotten ahead of ourselves. We have not yet addressed the important question whether Aristotle’s political intention and resulting limited presentation of subject matter extends all the way through Book 6 to the culminating scheme of happiness, good, and virtues in NE 6.12. Aristotle’s restriction to the political clearly enough applies to the accounts of the moral virtues in NE 2 through 5. But perhaps the intellectual virtues of NE 6 fall outside of this restriction, so that NE 6 is a genuinely theoretical account for the sake of, and sufficient for, the truth simply. Of course, the problem of self-reference would then be acute. To decide this question, look at what Aristotle says in NE 2.2:

[O]ur present business is not for the sake of theory . . . for we are investigating not in order that we might know what virtue is, but in order that we might become good, since otherwise there would be no benefit from it. . . . Now the phrase ‘acting in accordance with right reason’ is commonly accepted, and let it be set down—there will be a discussion of it later [in NE 6] both what right reason is [phronēsis is right reason; 1144b28] and how it is related to the other virtues. (2.2, 1103b26-36)
This text makes clear that Aristotle’s restriction to the requirements of political
practice does extend through NE 6, at least through NE 6.12. The final, 13th chapter of
Book 6, with its discussion of cunning (deinotês) and intellect (nous), may contain a
wider account, and, as is often noted, Aristotle announces a new beginning in NE 7. At
this point, however, we do have a firm conclusion: NE 6 is not simply a theoretical
account for the sake of, and sufficient for, the whole truth about our truth-attaining
capacities. And so the test of self-reference cannot be applied to Aristotle’s own
writing of NE 6, because Book 6 does not claim to be comprehensive, i.e., it does not fall
under the range of its own claim. This result is sufficient to exonerate Aristotle of the
grade charge of failing the test of self-reference. Now, however, we have the question of
what exactly to make of NE 6. It’s presentation of the intellectual virtues is tailored to
the requirements of excellent performance in and by the polis. This has to do with the
way statesmen (legislators, rulers, commanders) are to understand their own high and
indispensable activity, their politikê, the highest form of phronësis. And it has to do with
how these statesmen are to see that unusual, and (historically speaking) often suspect
minority involved in philosophical life. For, clearly, the relation of phronësis to sophia
is a central theme of NE 6. Let us turn to the presentation of the intellectual virtues,
specifically, to what I called the second key to the problem of self-reference, namely, the
perfect, complete, ideal form of the virtues. After that, we shall review those outstanding
questions, and answer them to the extent presently possible.
IV. Perfect Virtues

Four times in *NE* 1, Aristotle links happiness or the human good, not simply to virtue, but to perfect or complete, *teleion*, virtue:

>[T]he human good comes to be disclosed (*ginetai*) as the activity of soul according to virtue, and if the virtues are many, according to the best and most perfect (*aristēn kai teleiotatēn*; 1.7, 1098a17).

[Happiness], as we said, requires both complete virtue (*dei . . . aretēs tēleias*) and a complete lifetime (1.9, 1100a5).

[W]hat then prevents our calling happy the person who is at work in accordance with complete virtue (*kat’ aretēn tēleian energounta*), and is adequately furnished with external goods? (1.10, 1101a15)

[H]appiness is a certain activity of soul according to perfect (or complete) virtue (*hē eudaimonias psychēs energeia tis kat’ aretēn tēleian*; 1.13, 1102a5).

How are we to understand this term, *teleion*, complete or perfect? Specifically, how does it bear on the intellectual virtues? Here I follow Aquinas. In his commentary on *NE* 6, Aquinas remarks that “falsehood . . . is the evil of the intellect just as truth is the good of the intellect. But it is contrary to the nature of virtue to be the principle of an evil act.” (n. 1143) According to Aquinas, then, intellectual capacities or habits that
sometimes yield truth but other times happen to express falsehood cannot be included among the intellectual virtues, properly and strictly so called. I take this to be the sense of the term *teleion* as it applies to the five intellectual virtues presented in *NE 6*. This interpretation accords well with Aristotle’s own language. He introduces the five—*technē, epistêmē, phronēsis, sophia, nous*—in *NE 6.3* by bounding them off from supposition or conception (*hypolēpsis*) and opinion (*doxa*), in which he says it is possible to err, to go wrong, to falsify something (1139b17). This implies that the five intellectual virtues are error-free, they never go wrong. Aristotle says this explicitly in *NE 6.6* on *nous*: “if those capacities by which we disclose truth and are never in error . . . are *epistêmē, phronēsis, sophia,* and *nous*” (1141a4) then, he concludes, *nous* is of the first principles. So *epistêmē, phronēsis, sophia,* and *nous* are never in error; they are perfect or ideal forms. Note that *technē* is absent from this list of error-free virtues. This is because experimentation, or trial and error, is necessarily part of *technē*, such that, in the words of Heidegger, “[i]t is precisely on the basis of [the possibility of failure] that *technē* is *teleiōtera* [completed or perfected].”\(^{24}\)

Finally, among the meanings of the word *teleion* listed by Aristotle in *Metaphysics 5.16*, we find the following:

Complete, perfect (*teleion*) . . . means that which has nothing of its kind exceeding it in excellence (virtue; *aretē*) . . . as someone is called the complete (perfect) doctor or the complete (perfect) flutist when they lack nothing of the excellence (virtue) proper to their kinds (1021b13-18).\(^{25}\)
Thus, the perfect doctor never fails to diagnose correctly and cure the disease. This is the sense of perfect or complete picked out by Aquinas.

We conclude that the five intellectual virtues are something like Platonic ideal forms. They are not exactly the same thing, since in Plato there is, for example, no ideal form of technê, nor of epistêmê. In their perfection, however, Aristotle’s intellectual virtues are paradigms or governing models, each in its own domain of truth, to which we can look, although they are never fully instantiated in human life. It follows that, since philosophy, or imperfect, incomplete wisdom, sometimes falls short, sometimes goes wrong (as Aristotle notoriously did concerning inanimate local motion) or has to settle for knowledge of ignorance (unsolved problems), philosophy will not appear among these perfect intellectual virtues. And this is the clearest reason why Aristotle does not fail the test of self-reference in NE 6.

V. Outstanding Questions

Let us now attempt to answer the questions that we have accumulated along the way. These questions are:

First, what is the relation between the two keys to the resolution of the self-reference problem in NE 6, namely, (1) Aristotle’s political intention, and (2) the ideal forms of the intellectual virtues? Specifically, why should optimal training for good performance by statesman and citizens—say, for actions that are courageous yet moderate with respect to anger—require idealized forms of the intellectual virtues, like nous, epistêmê, technê?
Second, given that military capability is a requirement of political life, for what should the polis go to war—for domination or for defense, and in defense of what?

Third, how might Aristotle’s distinctive, post-Socratic approach to fostering cooperation between philosophy and politics (i.e., the spoudaios as mediating link between the two) work, especially in regard to the problem of extraordinary but dangerous men like Alcibiades and Alexander?

Fourth, could we remove from the Ethics the simple psychology of the two-part soul and replace it with the more complex account given in De Anima? This last and more theoretical question goes beyond the range of my present inquiry and, in any case, would require a separate study of De Anima in relation to the Ethics. Let us then focus on the first three questions.

Why should Aristotle’s political intention to affect “the dispositions of the men in the cities” (Rep. 544e) for the sake of decent political practice require idealized forms of the intellectual virtues? Note that there are only two intellectual virtues that really matter: sophia and phronēsis. The other three are included within, or subsumed under these two. Nous and epistêmē are constitutive parts of sophia, providing it with logico-deductive perfection, thus the certainty of mathematics. But, unlike mathematics, the objects of sophia are the highest, eternal, and most honorable; thus, as noted, the perfection or ideal character of sophia is easy to see. Technē is the perfection of production, but as such it is always morally neutral to the use of the product. Technē must, therefore, always be subject to phronēsis. Thus we are left with sophia and phronēsis as the central, ideal virtues of NE 6. I have not taken up the ideal character or perfection of phronēsis, because it is a longer story; a few brief remarks must suffice.
Phronēsis is complex. It has four parts: (1) deliberative excellence, (2) understanding, (3) a type of nondiscursive moral perception also called nous by Aristotle, and (4) a sense of the truly just in particular cases in contrast to the universality of the legal (6.8-11, 1142a24-43b6). Furthermore, as is evident from the diagram of happiness and human good, phronēsis is inseparable from the moral virtues. And so the perfection of phronēsis takes up the bulk of Book 6. But we may not need to get into the perfection of phronēsis in order to answer our question (on the relation between political intention and ideal forms). It may suffice just to look at the relation between phronēsis and sophia, as succinctly presented by Aristotle at the conclusion of NE 6. There, at the end of Chap. 13, he provides what amounts to a six-term proportion:

Phronēsis is to sophia as medical art is to health, as politikē is to the gods.

Clearly medical art issues orders for the sake of health, and, in the ancient city, rulers order religious practices in view of the gods to engender habits of piety. Similarly, according to this analogy, rulers will also order the city with a view to wisdom—to engender or protect those who possess or seek it. Statesmen are thus to understand their own practical activity by reference to the perfection of phronēsis and the intrinsic nobility of moral virtue, but also for the sake of a theoretical activity that is not their own—the rare life of sophia—which they will admire and care about from without, because Aristotle’s idealized presentation makes it appear admirable to them.26

But men of action—think of high-spirited military commanders or political men and women of great ambition for whom honor is a supreme value27—are not likely to
understand philosophy “from within,” that is, as its few practitioners (e.g., Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, their followers) understand it. To begin with, they do not take pleasure in it, and thus do not adequately discern its contents. As Aristotle says, “those who are at work with pleasure discern each sort of thing better and are more precise about it . . . [while] pleasures from different sources are impediments to activities” (1175a32, b32). Furthermore, leading men of action do not have the leisure (1177b7-13) for sustained, detailed inquiry, especially concerning problems of physics, metaphysics, and their possible moral-political implications.

On this account, Aristotle's political intention idealizes philosophy and phronēsis (or politikê) for the mutual benefit of both philosophy and the polis. The polis is to be made safe for philosophy, but thereby it is also to be moderated, made less warlike, made safe from the ambition of extraordinary but dangerous men like Alcibiades and Alexander. I consider momentarily how this might be supposed to work.

In the Posterior Analytics, discussing two species within the genus of magnanimity, Aristotle says that Alcibiades, Achilles, and Ajax were magnanimous in the sense that they would not submit to being dishonored, and so, when insulted, Alcibiades chose war (97b18-20). And this brings us to our second and third questions, on war, the fate of Socrates, and Aristotle's post-Socratic approach.

For what should the polis go to war? For what is most admirable, of most serious worth. But what is that? It is not what leading men and many poleis in Aristotle's time believed, namely, domination. To see this, look at Politics 7.2. There, Aristotle lists nine well known city-states or tribes whose laws “look to one thing . . . domination” (1324b3-22). In fundamental contrast, Aristotle teaches that what is most admirable, of most
serious worth, is sophia and, by implication, the human life devoted to it. Again, look at Politics 7.2: the life of mastery and domination, even tyranny, which is praised by many, is contraposed to theoretical life. Although Aristotle does not say so explicitly, the implication is that, without a protected place for philosophy in the polis, the political community will turn to mastery, domination, even tyranny (1324a32, b4). In NE 10.7, Aristotle says that “the activity (energeia) of the intellect appears to excel in seriousness” (spoudê; 1177b19), and is more choiceworthy even than the active life, which attains to nobility and greatness in politics and war.” Accompanying this affirmation is the following stark warning: “no one chooses to make war for the sake of making war . . . anyone would seem to be completely bloodthirsty if he were to make friends into enemies so that battles and killings might come about” (1177b9-11). It is striking that both NE 10.7 and Politics 7.2 contain roughly the same juxtaposition of these alternative ways of life, contemplation and domination.

The third question is, how might Aristotle’s post-Socratic approach to the relation between philosophy and politics (the spoudaios as mediating link between the two) work, especially in regard to the problem of men of unlimited, thus potentially tyrannic ambition? Here I offer a conjecture that is in accordance with Aristotle’s turn to the class of gentlemen (above, p. 13): Aristotle’s idealized presentation of philosophy as perfect or complete wisdom, in contrast to its depiction as erotic or incomplete at Parts of Animals, 644b22-45a26, is a rhetorical strategy intended for the morally serious gentlemen, in contrast to students of the theoretical works. As the dialogues of Plato show, Socrates directly confronted dangerous men (Alcibiades, Callicles, Meno), in hopes of attracting them to something even better than power, namely, ta èròтика, the
erotic pursuit and enjoyment of the greatest questions, questions about the human good 
and the ultimate principles of the universe. But these men did not, and could not get it. 
Their was not the *eros* of metaphysics, but *libido dominandi*. Accordingly, Aristotle 
abandoned the attempt to educate men of this type. And so it is no accident that *eros* as 
metaphor for philosophy, or as animating the incomplete pursuit of wisdom is 
conspicuously absent from Aristotle’s *Ethics*. (It does occur in Aristotle, but rarely, e.g., 
*Parts of Animals*, 644b22 ff., just noted.) Furthermore, in the idealized presentation of 
*NE* 6, wisdom and *phronēsis* appear as separate and independent. Indeed the model for 
their relation is that of Anaxagoras and Pericles, about which much could be said.\(^{30}\) But, 
simply stated, this model represents non-philosophical *phronēsis* in caring admiration of 
non-political wisdom. Thus we have the following contrast: In Plato’s Socratic 
dialogues, philosophy is erotic, incomplete (like a lover), and intrusively concerned with 
the moral-political sphere. In the *NE*, within the idealized account determined by 
Aristotle’s political intention, philosophy appears as non-erotic, complete, and separated 
from *phronēsis*. As noted, the two-fold purpose of this approach would be to help make 
the city safe for philosophy and, reciprocally, to benefit the city by moderating the most 
dangerous tendencies of political life.\(^{31}\)

But how is this supposed to work; how might philosophy reciprocate and help the 
political community by controlling men like Alcibiades, which Socrates failed to do? 
Here is a suggestion (again, conjectural) based on an implication of a remark by Leo 
Strauss, namely, that Socrates’ inability to get angry, and thus to punish or frighten 
Alcibiades, was a kind of defect.\(^{32}\) For its own protection against “hyperactivism”\(^{33}\) in 
pursuit of domination, the political community needs a group of leading persons who can
get angry in defense of moderation and thus constrain, by force if necessary, the
demagogic ambitions and tyrannic tendencies of men like Alcibiades. Who could do
this? Perhaps those high-spirited military types, if they are given the right formation, or
disposition. If they can be disposed such that intellect seeking the highest understanding
appears to them, not as useless or unserious (thus irritating) but as excellent and noble
(which it truly is), then they will defend it, and even listen to the moderating advice of
“correct philosophy” over against the instigation of demagogues. As Strauss puts it,
“[t]he gentleman is by nature able to be affected by philosophy; Aristotle’s political
science is an attempt to actualize this potentiality.”\textsuperscript{34} I take this to be the heart of
Aristotle’s political intention in the \textit{NE}. Accordingly, his own intellectual activity in
preparing this program of study for political practitioners would then be a higher-order
form of \textit{phronēsis} or political philosophy. It would be the source of that definition of
happiness and human good that we diagrammed, but it would not appear in the diagram.\textsuperscript{35}
The remarkable beginning of \textit{NE} 7.11 may support this interpretation. There, Aristotle
says, “[i]t belongs to one who philosophizes about politics to examine what concerns
pleasure and pain, for he is the master craftsman of the end (\textit{architektōn tou telous}) to
which we look when we speak of each thing as good or bad simply” (1152b1-4). On this
account, the aim of Aristotle’s \textit{phronēsis} would be to bring into being (1143b21) or to
cultivate that morally serious character type—the \textit{spoudaios}—to whom the truly good
appears.\textsuperscript{36} For, as Aristotle says, “in accordance with each disposition, specific things are
noble and pleasant, and the \textit{spoudaios} is distinguished most of all, perhaps, by seeing
what is truly so in each class of things, being like a standard and measure of the noble
and pleasant” (1113a31-34). This completes my attempt to answer three questions that arose in connection with the self-reference problem in NE 6.

Conclusion

In Aristotle’s time, the notion that the city safe for philosophy is safe from tyranny was probably still contentious and not obvious. For us, after the special tyrannies of the twentieth century—fascism and communism—it is obvious. It is obvious, namely, that rare individuals with great intellectual strength actively searching for the disinterested truth in public would be destroyed as soon as the secret police could catch them. Therefore, their protected existence in a society is a sign that the regime is not tyrannic.

What is problematic and disturbing for us today, of which Aristotle could not know, is that the rise of those very tyrannies—communism and fascism—had something to do with philosophy, with the thought of Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, in relation to extremist ideologies that proclaimed the absolute and murderous primacy of human will and the radical transformation of the world though violent action. Thus, in light of the history of philosophy and politics, we must say today that the regime that is safe from tyranny is the one that is safe for the Socratic type and resulting tradition of philosophy. This has something to do with the classical conception that man is not the highest being, and thus that there are limits on the actions, passions, and will of a dangerously unlimited being. The large literature on twentieth-century totalitarianism explicates this theme.

But this story is not over. For now we see, all too clearly, another extremist ideology, and this one, unlike fascism and communism, preaches a theistic doctrine on
the absolute and murderous primacy of God’s will—and the radical transformation of the world through violence. This new malady of human kind is probably most accurately called Islamofascism, a term that captures both of its two components: Western totalitarianism of archaic-utopian type and certain interpretations of the Koran. It is a matter of important current debate which of these two components is the more operative. For now we draw the following and final conclusion: We are not protected from tyranny simply by respecting the conception that man is not the highest being. Consider again Aristotle’s proportion at the conclusion of NE 6: As medical art is to health, so phronēsis is to wisdom and politikē is to the gods. Whatever this means in its details, it requires that the political community be so ordered, and its leaders, clerics, and citizens be disposed to see, that both the divine and wisdom dwell together, and thus that religious faith and the pursuit of wisdom, or philosophy, can coexist in peace.

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2 "Just as it is a most excellent thing for someone to use power well in ruling others, so also it is evil in the highest degree to use it badly." Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I-II, q. 2, a. 4, ad 2, trans. John A. Oesterle, *Saint Thomas Aquinas Treatise on Happiness* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 20.


4 My appreciation of this owes much to Robert Sokolowski. Aristotle's teaching on ethical disposition (or character type) and moral perception is especially useful in a modern egalitarian democracy. Relevant texts from the *NE* are: 2.3, 1104b16, 1105a8, 2.5, 1105b27, 2.6, 1106b17-25, 1107a5, 2.8, 1108b19, 2.9, 1109a24 (the virtuous mean is in both actions *and* passions); 2.5, 1105b19 (three in the soul—passions [*pathe*], predispositions [*dunamei*], dispositions [*hexeis*]); 2.5, 1106a1 (being angry *simply* vs being angry *in a certain way*); 2.5, 1106a1-2 (we are not praised or blamed for our passions and predispositions, but for our virtues and vices); 2.6, 1107a11 (malice, shamelessness, envy are base in themselves, thus blameworthy [1109a20-30] always, thus always voluntary); 3.1, 1110a17 (in voluntary conduct, the source of motion is internal to the agent); 3.1, 1111a23-25, 1111b2-3 (thus acting from anger or desire is voluntary); 3.2, 1111b14 (the morally weak person acts voluntarily but not by choice); 2.8, 1108b19-24 (ethical disposition and moral perception, the apparent good and bad: the coward sees the courageous as rash); 3.4, 1113a20-b2 (to a specific disposition specific things seem beautiful, or noble, and pleasant); 3.7, 1115b21 (end [*telos*], activity [*energeia*], disposition [*hexis*] line up: to the courageous, courage is a noble thing); 3.5, 1114b23 (we are partly responsible for our own characters and apparent goods); 3.5, 1114b30-15a5 (our actions and characters are voluntary, but in different ways). From the *Rhetoric*: 1.2, 1356a15; 2.1, 1377b31-78a2, 1378a20.

5 This passage should be read in conjunction with 1144a4-7: "wisdom produces happiness not in the way that medical art produces health but in the way that health produces health, since by being part of complete virtue, it makes one happy by being possessed and being at work (*tō energein*)." This is the single instance of the Greek term *energeia* (here in verb form) in *NE* 6.
A quick and thus inadequate comparison yields the following points of contrast: In *Meta* 1.2, wisdom is called the science we are seeking (982a5), it “is the one that knows that for the sake of which each thing must be done; and this is the good of each thing, and in general the best in the whole of nature” (982b5-8).

Thus, according to *Meta*. 1.2, the wisdom we seek but do not yet possess would be architectonic and, as such, it would include the human practical good. But it knows all things in terms of universals (kinds, species, reasons), not in terms of particulars or individually (982a10), which presumably would be the domain of *phronēsis*. Thus *Meta*. 1.2 seems to leave open the possibility of a conjunction between the search for wisdom, or philosophy, and *phronēsis*. In particular, *Meta*. 1.2, does not seem to exclude the domain of coming into being from the consideration of either wisdom or philosophy (compare 1143b20).

*Meta*. 6.1 defines the subject matter of metaphysics as being qua being or common being, rather than exclusively the first or highest being. In *NE* 6 (also 10.7, 1177b32-78a2), complete wisdom is restricted to the highest (and non-human) things and is not architectonic. It thus excludes even universal aspects of the human practical good (“that for the sake of which each thing must be done”), and leaves *phronēsis* alone and autonomous in its own practical sphere. See also John Goyette, “The Nature of the Theoretical Life according to Aristotle: Wisdom, Politics and Philosophy” (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1998), 1-17, 46-50. That wisdom precisely as described in *NE* 6.7 is difficult to find in any of Aristotle’s theoretical works is noted by J. O. Urmson, *Aristotle’s Ethics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 80, 124.


See also Joachim, *Aristotle*, 16; Ronna Burger, “Aristotle’s ‘Exclusive’ Account of Happiness: Contemplative Wisdom as a Guise of the Political Philosopher,” in May Sim, ed., *The Crossroads of Norm*

8 “For it is absurd for anyone to believe that politikē or phronēsis is the most serious kind of knowledge if man is not the highest thing in the cosmos. . . . [F]or there are also other things that are much more divine in their nature than man, such as, most visibly, the things of which the cosmos is composed” (NE 6.7, 1141a21-22, 1142b1-2). See also Phys. 2.4, 196a34, Meta. 6.1, 1026a18-24, 12.8, 1074a31, on the divinity of the celestial bodies, and Phys. 8 and Meta. 12 on Unmoved Mover and First Intellect. But can the existence of God be proven with the apodictic (mathematical) certainty of nous and epistēmē as presented in NE 6? See Parts of Animals 1.5, 644b22-45a26, in which Aristotle says that knowledge of the astronomical lacks the certainty of biological knowledge, also De Caelo 1.2, 269b13-17, which seems to say that the divinity of the celestial bodies is a matter of trust (pistis) not epistēmē.


10 Concerning “shaped” emotion, see the opening remarks, together with note 4, on ethical disposition and apparent goods. The relation of Aristotle’s political intention to philosophy is discussed in Part V.


12 Meta. 7.13, 1039a4-7.


17 The term spoudaios appears over 50 times in Aristotle’s NE and refers to persons and to activites. It is variously translated as “excellent” (Irwin, Lord), “good” (Ross, Rackham, Ostwald), “serious,” “of serious
worth” (Sachs). As applied to persons it might be taken to mean simply “virtuous.” But Aristotle does not coin the term aretikos, perhaps due to the ambiguity in the meaning of virtue, namely, (1) excellence in a specialized function, e.g., naval warfare versus land warfare, and (2) moral goodness that could be common to the many different specialists. Politics 3.4 famously considers the virtue of the good man (anēr agathos) and the good citizen (politis spoudaios). Although ruler and ruled can each be spoudaios, their virtue differs according to their differing functions in the polis, phronēsis, for example, belonging only to the ruler (1277a5-16). Perhaps the most important text in the NE on the spoudaios is 3.4, 1113a30-34: “For the spoudaios judges each [class of things] rightly, and in each, the true [instance] appears to him. For in accordance with each [type of] disposition, specific things are noble and pleasant, and the spoudaios is distinguished most of all, perhaps, by seeing what is truly so in each class of things, being like a standard and measure of the noble and pleasant.” It is safe to say that Alcibiades and Dionysius II were not spoudaioi.


19 See NE 9.8, 1169a19-25; compare 1.7, 1098a20 and 10.7, 1177b25-27.

20 A canonical example: “And in fact the thing that has been sought both in ancient times and now, and always, and is always perplexing (kai aei aporounemen), ‘what is being?’, is just this: what is substance?” Meta. 7.1, 1028b2-4. Topics 1.11 describes dialectical problems, i.e., problems non-decidable by demonstrative reason, including the eternity of the universe, “for into questions of that kind too it is possible to inquire” (104b17). Note that the non-decidability of the eternity of the universe would not, of and by itself, render arguments for the existence of God equally dialectical because each case (eternal universe, temporal universe) can be separately taken as the basis of argument; see Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles I.13.30, trans. Anton C. Pegis (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 94.

21 Some texts relevant to this question are: De Anima, 1.5, 411a27-b12, on the difficulty of understanding the soul—itself a principle of unity—as divided into parts; 3.9, 432a22-b8, on different ways of dividing the soul, on the status of sense perception and, especially, of imagination in relation to those divisions, and on the omnipresence of desire (orexis) throughout the soul. At NE 1102a29-32, Aristotle asks whether the soul has parts outside of parts, like a body, or whether the parts of the soul might be as inseparable as the
convex and concave sides of a curve (is the relation of desire and thinking at 1139b5-6 like this?). He says it is not important for present purposes to answer this question. See Aquinas, Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, trans. C. I. Litzinger (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books, 1993), nn. 229-30, and Joe Sachs, Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2002), 101-02, nn. 140-141. Note that, whereas imagination is extensively discussed in De Anima, it rarely appears in the NE. Sachs wonders (private communication) where a beautiful act that has not yet occurred can take place but in the imagination. Imagination crucially affects our judgment of what is within our power, and thus of what we choose to do or to attempt (1111b20-24), which in turn impacts, over time, our disposition and the accompanying appearance to it of the noble and just (1113a31). This effect is especially evident today in connection with genetic science and biotechnology. For example, see Leon R. Kass, “Ageless Bodies, Happy Souls: Biotechnology and the Pursuit of Perfection,” The New Atlantis, Spring 2003, also Evelyn Fox Keller, The Century of the Gene (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

22 This result is foreshadowed by Aristotle’s use of the specifying adjective ‘praktikê’ at 1098a4. What about theorêtikê life? Again, NE 1.7, 1098a26-33, seems relevant.

23 Socrates was accused of, and executed for, impiety and corrupting the youth. In NE 6.7, the examples used by Aristotle to introduce wisdom (sophia) are Anaxagoras and Thales (1141b4 ff). According to Aquinas, “men see these philosophers [as] ignorant of things useful to themselves, but admit that they know . . . truths that are wonderful [but useless]. . . . Thales and Anaxagoras are especially censured on this point. . . . And Anaxagoras . . . taking no interest in civic affairs . . . was consequently blamed for his negligence” (In NE, nn. 1191-92). Aristotle’s use of Anaxagoras and Thales as examples accords with the separation of wisdom and prudence (note 6, above); the example of Socrates would not.


26 NE 10.7, 1177b19: contemplation is most serious (spoudê); 1113a32-35: to the spoudaios appears what is truly noble and pleasant. This does not mean that moral virtue loses its own nobility, but moral virtue is ordered to the polis, which, according to Aristotle, as we shall see, either respects theôria or drifts into domination; NE 10.7, 1177b7-78a2, Politics 7.2, 1324b3-22. The nobility of moral virtue is thus
conditional on the end of the *polis*. For example, would the courage of soldiers fighting in the service of mere aggression and domination still be simply noble (1115b21-24)? Would it not be stained, or its nobility obscured, by the injustice of the cause (1177b10)? See also Ronna Burger, “Aristotle’s ‘Exclusive’ Account of Happiness: Contemplative Wisdom as a Guise of the Political Philosopher,” in *The Crossroads of Norm and Nature*, ed. May Sim (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995), 79-98.

27 “[N]othing seems to be more desirable to men than honor, for men suffer the loss of all other things rather than suffer any loss of honor.” Aquinas, *ST* I-II, q. 2, a. 3, *Treatise on Happiness*, 17. “And, for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.” The Declaration of Independence. “[I]n the years between 1798 and the Civil War, two-thirds as many American naval officers were to die in duels as in all of the country’s sea fights.” James Tertius De Kay, *A Rage for Glory: The Life of Commodore Stephen Decatur, USN* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 31.

28 What about me? Since I have made the test of self-reference central to my argument, it behooves me to submit to it myself. Am I a man of action, or a philosopher, and what are my corresponding pleasures, pains, discernments and limitations? I am obviously not a man of action. But I admire the skill and courage of those who are. Nor am I a philosopher (there just aren’t that many in human history). I’m a lover of philosophy—a philospher. I study with pleasure the philosophers’ accounts of many things, e.g., Aristotle on disposition, pleasure and perception. But my pleasure is not unlimited; the practical side of me (such as it is) gets impatient and a little irritated with endless perplexity. So do I understand philosophy from within? In view of my own reaction, I must say only partially, not fully. But this is useful because it helps me understand that it would make sense for Aristotle to employ different modes of discourse for the different dispositions of his readers.


31 The two most dangerous tendencies are tyranny and faction. Aristotle’s concern about the latter is evident in *Politics* 4.11 on the importance of a middle class between the extremes of wealth and poverty.

33 Steven Salkever’s term, p. _____, above.

34 Strauss, *City and Man*, 28. See also Burger, “Aristotle’s ‘Exclusive’ Account of Happiness,” 92. The phrase “correct philosophy” is from Plato’s *Seventh Letter*, 326a. According to Aquinas, there is something in it for the leaders, namely, the honor bestowed on them by the wise; *ST I-II*, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3, Oesterle, 17.

35 That Aristotle’s writing of the *Ethics* is a type of prudence (an intellectual virtue concerned with practice), although not the same as the one described in *NE 6*, is noted by Godfrey of Fontaines, Quodlibet XIV, in *Les Philosophes Belges*, Vol. 5, pt. 2, ed. Jean Hoffmans (Louvain: L’Institute Superieur de Philosophie, 1935), 332-33.

36 The truly good as opposed to the false goods that appear to the despotic, the corrupt, the warlike.