

ARISTOTLE ON THE PLEASURES OF TEMPERANCE

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### Lay Abstract

In Aristotle's ethical theory, the virtue of temperance is related to two types of pleasures. One type is the bodily pleasures involving appetite and pain, the other is the pleasure following upon a temperate action. My examination of his conception of health reveals that, in acting temperately, temperate people experience the second type of pleasure in their abstinence from the enjoyment of the first type of pleasures.

## Abstract

My investigation of pleasures involved in an Aristotelian temperate action starts with Aristotle's account of health presented in *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, and his other biological works. Aristotle's conception of health provides the theoretical backdrop in which two modes of temperate action concerning bodily pleasures involving appetite and pain are made possible. The temperate person is capable of acting temperately because the rational part of the human soul can influence appetite, and the contact between the pleasant and what is good for health allows two possible ways of action. When the pleasure of appetite is within the range of what is good for health or does not harm health, temperate people may pursue it; when the two do not match, a temperate action does not involve any bodily pleasures, and is simply the activity of the rational soul. This thesis emphasizes the second mode of temperate action, since this type of temperate action simply consists in the activity of the rational soul, specifically, acting out the deliberate decision of avoidance.

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## Abbreviations of Aristotle's Works

DA – *De Anima, On the Soul*

EE – *Ethica Eudemia, Eudemian Ethics*

EN – *Ethica Nicomachea, Nicomachean Ethics*

GA – *De Generatione Animalium, On the Generation of Animals*

GC – *De Generatione et Corruptione, On Generation and Corruption*

Juv– *De Juventute et Senectute, On Youth and Old Age*

Met – *Metaphysica, Metaphysics*

PA – *De Partibus Animalium, Parts of Animals*

Phys – *Physica, Physics*

## Introduction

In Aristotle's ethical theory, the virtue of temperance (σωφροσύνη) concerns pleasures (ἡδονάς), more specifically, the kind of bodily pleasures that involve appetite and pain (τὰς μετ' ἐπιθυμίας καὶ λύπης, τὰς σωματικές, *EN* VII.12, 1153a32).<sup>1</sup> He claims that the temperate take the enjoyment of such pleasures when it is appropriate, and refrain from the enjoyment when it is not. But even in the latter case, there are pleasures for the temperate person (*EN* VII.12, 1153a34-35).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bodily pleasure involving appetite and pain appears in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Book VII, apparently referring to the scope of temperance which Aristotle makes an effort to narrow down in *EN* III 10. This thesis only focuses on the type of bodily pleasures that are relevant to temperate action, and does not discuss other types, e.g., the pleasure of seeing. Hence I use the shorthand "bodily pleasures" for the whole phrase "the bodily pleasure involving appetite and pain."

<sup>2</sup> In this passage in *EN* VII.12, Aristotle states: "That is why the temperate person avoids these pleasures [but not all pleasures], since there are pleasures of the temperate person too" (διὸ ὁ σώφρων φεύγει ταύτας, ἐπεὶ εἰσὶν ἡδοναὶ καὶ σώφρονος, 1153a34-35). Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1999), 116. Greek Text from *Ethica Nicomachea*, ed. Ingram Bywater (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Irwin's insertion implies that Aristotle believes that the temperate person enjoys some bodily pleasures too, but not excessive ones. In this thesis, however, I take the pleasures mentioned in the causal clause to be referring to the pleasure supervening upon temperate action, rather than some bodily pleasures which the temperate person enjoys.

Aristotle believes that, in the temperate enjoyment of bodily pleasures, the temperate person desires moderately and in the right way those things that are pleasant and conducive to their health or good condition (πρὸς ὑγίειάν ἐστιν ἢ πρὸς εὐεξίαν, *EN* III.11, 1119a16). The temperate person also in the same way desires “anything else that is pleasant,” provided that the pleasant thing satisfies three conditions. In the first place, the pleasant thing does not impede their health and good condition. In the second place, it falls within what is defined as “the fine” (τὸ καλὸν). In the third place, it falls within their means (*EN* III.11, 1119a16-20). So a temperate action can involve two types of pleasant objects—one is conducive to health, the other not detrimental to health. Accordingly, health would determine to which type an object belongs.

The bodily pleasures that are relevant to Aristotle’s account of temperance are only of touch and taste (ἄφῃ καὶ γεῦσις, *EN* III.10, 1118a26). How then do some pleasures of touch and/or taste benefit, while others impede health? What is the pleasure the temperate person finds in avoiding bodily pleasures of touch or taste? An understanding of Aristotle’s notion of health and good condition is essential to understand the roles that the two kind of pleasures have in his theory of temperate action.

In the scholarship on Aristotle’s theory of temperance, however, the notion of health has not received much attention. I find that this neglect makes Aristotle scholars’ illustrations of temperate action focus on the temperate pursuit or the enjoyment of bodily pleasures. But Aristotle’s notion of health also requires that people pay attention to the

avoidance of certain acts and a form of temperate action that does not involve bodily pleasures at all.

In this thesis, I present the familiar topic of Aristotle's views on temperate action in a new light by focusing on temperate action that does not include bodily pleasures. My thesis is that this type of temperate action reveals Aristotle's notion of health—a formula (*λόγος*) in the soul as well as the right proportion of bodily components. Moreover, temperate action that does not include bodily pleasures brings out the harmony of appetite and correct reason, and draws attention to the pleasure that the temperate person finds in avoiding certain bodily pleasures. My view on the topic is not new, but I hope to arrange the materials in a way that brings a neglected issue into the picture.

When temperate people enjoy some pleasure, they do so not because they desire the pleasant things but because they know these things will not harm their health. When a temperate action consists in avoiding bodily pleasures of touch, such an action is simply the activity of the rational soul, namely the activity of reaching a decision to refrain from the enjoyment, and acting out the decision.

For Aristotle, bodily pleasures are types of changes occurring when a person engages in an activity of eating, drinking, or sexual relations. For instance, when we are eating food some of our bodily parts, e.g., the tongue, the throat, the stomach, are affected in some way. Aristotle describes such affection as change (*κίνησις*). In avoiding the bodily pleasures, the temperate do not undergo any changes relevant to bodily pleasures

involving appetite, though they still experience pleasure in performing the action. This is the pleasure proper to an activity (ἐνέργεια).

Aristotle states that temperate people desire moderately and in the right way the things that are “pleasant and conducive to health or fitness,” as well as the pleasant which does not constitute “an obstacle to health and fitness, does not deviate from the fine, and does not exceed his means” (*EN* III.11, 1119a18-20).<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the bodily pleasures involving appetite and pain are intimately connected with nutriment and the activity of nutritive soul.

So, my investigation of temperate action starts with the concepts of health, nutriment and the nutritive soul. In the first part of chapter 1, I give an account of Aristotle’s discussion on health. He describes two ways in which health can exist. First, he claims that health is a sort of formula one has in the soul. He seems to imply that, just as physicians have medical knowledge to cure disease, so individuals are also capable of understanding their own health, and know (or should know) why certain actions are good or harmful to the body. Second, Aristotle states that health lies in the blending and proportion of hot and cold things. Apparently, the healthy condition of the body requires each person to maintain health in daily life by procuring the right hot and cold materials

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<sup>3</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 48. *EN* III.11, 1119a18-20: ὅσα δὲ πρὸς ὑγίειάν ἐστιν ἢ πρὸς εὐεξίαν ἡδέα ὄντα, τούτων ὀρέξεται μετρίως καὶ ὡς δεῖ, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἡδέων μὴ ἐμποδίων τούτοις ὄντων ἢ παρὰ τὸ καλὸν ἢ ὑπὲρ τὴν οὐσίαν (Bywater, 2010).

for the body. In the second part of chapter 1, I make clear the relation among health, the nutritive soul, and the sense of touch that is so intricately involved in his discussion of bodily pleasures. Aristotle assigns to the nutritive soul two functions for the preservation of life: generation, and making the proper use of nutriment in nourishment, growth, and reproduction (*DA* II.4, 415a25-415b1). Health apparently results from the nutritive soul's good use of the "last nutriment", while the acquisition of nutriment, in the case of animals, requires perceptual capacities – at a minimum, the sense of touch.<sup>4</sup>

In the first part of chapter 2, I explain the difference for Aristotle between non-rational animals and a mature human being's pursuit of nutriment, and give a brief account of the two modes of temperate action concerning bodily pleasures. I first establish the link between an animal's appetite and nutriment. This link naturally initiates an agent's immediate pursuit of nutriment, a process including several stages of changes, such as lifting limbs to take hold of some nutriment, and chewing it in the mouth. These activities, such as eating when one is deficient in nutriment, or undergoing a cure when one is ill, constitute a process that restores us to our natural state. Such a process is inevitably composed of a series of changes that are ultimately initiated by our appetite for pleasant things that are non-coincidentally suitable nutriment for a particular necessary

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<sup>4</sup> See *DA* II.3, 414a29-414b1; *DA* II.4, 416b3-4; *DA* III.12, 434b17-18.

need. Some perception of nutriment would be experienced as pleasure when the animal is in a particular bodily deficiency.

In the second part of chapter 2 I explain how two modes of temperate action are possible concerning nutriment. One mode of temperate action consists in the enjoyment of pleasant things that are either beneficial to, or at least not detrimental to the healthy condition of the body, whereas the other mode consists in the deliberate avoidance of bodily pleasures involving appetite. In the second mode of action, temperate people do not engage in bodily changes pertaining to the acquisition of nutriment, their action is simply the activity of the rational soul. The temperate person is capable of acting temperately in these two ways for two reasons. First, the rational part of the human soul can influence appetite. Second, the contact between the pleasant and what is good for health (*τὸ πρακτὸν ἀγαθόν*) allows two possible ways of action. When the pleasure of appetite is within the range of what is good for health, temperate people may pursue it; when the two do not match, a temperate action does not involve any bodily pleasures, and is simply the activity of the rational soul.

In chapter 3 I first relate the views of Howard J. Curzer and Devin Henry, because their discussion of Aristotle's temperance is mainly illustrated with actions that involve the enjoyment of bodily pleasures. My intention is to point out the one-sidedness of their approach, which seems to me to have resulted from a lack of attention to Aristotle's conception of health. In the second part of chapter 3, I expand on the second mode of

temperate action and explain how a voluntary action can consist in the activity of the rational soul. In performing such an action, the temperate know that their own present bodily condition is already healthy and that extra pleasant things would upset the right proportion of their physical condition, hence that which is good for their health is to avoid bodily pleasures. In this case, the temperate action simply consists in the activity of the rational soul, specifically, acting out the deliberate decision of avoidance. I then explain the reasons why I think it important to consider this second mode of temperate action. In the first place, the second mode evinces correct reason (*ὀρθὸς λόγος*) as the principle of the action, since it consists entirely in the activity of rational soul. In the second place, the second mode makes sense of Aristotle's preoccupation with education before a student takes up ethical study. The education of the youth is mostly to habituate the part of soul with appetite and feelings to listen to and obey correct reason. Consistent performance of the second mode of temperate action demonstrates the harmony between appetite and correct reason. In the third place, the second mode of temperate action clarifies the pleasures that belong to temperate people when they choose not to enjoy bodily pleasures. It is the pleasure that Aristotle claims to perfect and supervene on an activity.

In the conclusion, I recapitulate the gist of the thesis and draw attention to the contribution this thesis makes to the understanding of Aristotle's theory of temperance. Aristotle's conception of health seldom if ever comes up in the literature on his theory of temperance. My focus on health and its importance in temperate action explains not only

what temperate action consists of, but also the reason why the temperate person enjoys, and more often than not avoids, bodily pleasures involving appetite and pain.

## Chapter 1

### Health as the End of Temperate Action

Aristotle characterizes the temperate person in the following way:

If something is pleasant and conducive to health or fitness [good condition], he will desire this moderately and in the right way; and he will desire in the same way anything else that is pleasant, if it is no obstacle to health and fitness [good condition], does not deviate from the fine, and does not exceed his means (*EN* III.11, 1119a18-20).<sup>5</sup>

For temperate people, there are two categories of pleasant thing. First, they desire pleasant things that promote their health or good condition (*πρὸς ὑγίειάν ἐστιν ἢ πρὸς εὐεξίαν*). Second, they desire pleasant things that apparently do not benefit their health, insofar as they satisfy three conditions: (i) they do not impede health, (ii) they do not deviate from the fine (*τὸ καλὸν*), and (iii) they do not exceed the person's means. Moreover, he claims that correct reason sees to this result for temperate people.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 48. *EN* III.11, 1119a18-20: ὅσα δὲ πρὸς ὑγίειάν ἐστιν ἢ πρὸς εὐεξίαν ἡδέα ὄντα, τούτων ὀρέξεται μετρίως καὶ ὡς δεῖ, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἡδέων μὴ ἐμποδίων τούτοις ὄντων ἢ παρὰ τὸ καλὸν ἢ ὑπὲρ τὴν οὐσίαν (Bywater, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

Here and elsewhere in the ethical works, Aristotle sets up health as a sort of goal against which the temperate evaluate to which category a pleasant thing belongs, so that it consequently can be desired in the right way (*EN* III.11, 1119a18-20). He is not explicit about how bodily pleasures involving appetite and pain relate to health, or about how some pleasures of touch and/or taste benefit health while others impede it. In what follows in this chapter, I first discuss Aristotle's notion of health, as it is explained in his other works, and then show how the activity that maintains health is connected to temperate action.

## Health

Aristotle's discussion on health is mainly found in the *Physics* VII and *Metaphysics* VII.<sup>7</sup> *Physics* VII.3 explains that health and good condition consists in a

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<sup>7</sup> For scholarship on Aristotle's conception of health, see Christopher Frey, "Organic Unity and the Matter of Man," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 32 (2007):167-204; and "From Blood to Flesh: Homonymy, Unity, and Ways of Being in Aristotle," *Ancient Philosophy* 35 (2015): 375-394. Anthony Preus, "Aristotle on Healthy and Sick Souls," *The Monist* 69 (1986): 416-433; Maaïke Van der Lugt, "Neither Ill nor Healthy: The Intermediate State between Health and Disease in Medieval Medicine," *Quaderni Storici Nuova Serie* 46 (2011): 13-45.

blending and proportion of hot and cold things in the body, while *Metaphysics* VII.7 accounts for health as a formula in the soul. The two discussions of health, as will be shown, are complementary, and make up the context for Aristotle’s account of temperate action. The formula of health in the temperate soul ensures that the temperate person desires the sort of pleasant things that are beneficial or, at least not detrimental to the healthy state of his or her body. Besides the two accounts of health, the *Parva Naturalia* advances an idea on the relationship between healthy and sick souls.

### **Health: A Formula in the Soul**

In *Metaphysics* VII, Aristotle discusses health in contrast with disease. He explains that physicians possess the formula of health, so they can produce health in the patient by reasoning out a procedure. He states that “disease is the absence of health, and health is the formula and knowledge in the soul. Now the healthy subject is produced as the result of this reasoning” (*Met* VII.7, 1032b4-5).<sup>8</sup> By exercising their medical art,

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<sup>8</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. W. D. Ross, in *Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, vol.2, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1630. *Met* VII.7, 1032b4-5: τῆς γὰρ στερήσεως οὐσία ἢ οὐσία ἢ ἀντικειμένη, οἷον ὑγίεια νόσου, ἐκείνης γὰρ ἀπουσία ἢ νόσος, ἢ δὲ ὑγίεια ὁ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ λόγος καὶ ἢ ἐπιστήμη. Greek text from *Aristotle Metaphysics*, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924).

physicians can bring about health in a patient. Aristotle describes how a physician deliberates and works to bring about a patient’s health:

Since *this* [τοδὶ] is health, and if the subject is to be healthy *this* must be present, i.e. a uniform state of body, and if this is to be present, it must have heat; and the physician goes on thinking thus until he brings the matter to a final step which he himself can take. Then the process from this point onwards, i.e. the process towards health, is called a ‘making’ (*Met* VII.7,1032b5-10).<sup>9</sup>

Health as a formula in the soul is apparently what Aristotle refers to by “τοδὶ” in the passage. It seems that physicians possess “τοδὶ” as a body of medical knowledge, and the knowledge enables them to diagnose patients’ illness, and to provide cure to restore their health.

For instance, people visit physicians when they do not know how to remedy some illness. A physician’s intervention, such as prescribing some drug, prohibiting some bad habit, or performing a surgery, is a means to restore the sick body to health. The physicians are able to diagnose patients’ illness and select the right remedy because they possess medical knowledge pertaining to health. Kevin L. Flannery points out that the

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<sup>9</sup> Translated by W. D. Ross, 1630. *Met* 7.1032b5-12: ἐπειδὴ τοδὶ ὑγίεια, ἀνάγκη εἶ ὑγιὲς ἔσται τοδὶ ὑπάρξαι, οἷον ὁμαλότητα, εἰ δὲ τοῦτο, θερμότητα· καὶ οὕτως ἀεὶ νοεῖ, ἕως ἂν ἀγάγη εἰς τοῦτο ὃ αὐτὸς δύναται ἔσχατον ποιεῖν. εἶτα ἤδη ἢ ἀπὸ τούτου κίνησις ποίησις καλεῖται, ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ ὑγιαίνειν (Ross, 1924).

formal cause of health is the physician *qua* physician, while a patient is cured by a physician not *qua* living body, but *qua* sick body.<sup>10</sup> While health exists in the physician's soul as a kind of formula, it has to exist in a patient's body as something concrete, which Aristotle describes in the *Physics* as a blending and proportion of hot and cold things in the body.

Before proceeding to further discussion, I want to take a moment to note the diverse translations of the term *λόγος*, as it has a prominent place in this thesis. Since the word *λόγος* is difficult to translate, and the particular translations chosen tend to vary with the specific context, in the context of this specific passage from the *Metaphysics*, I follow Ross's translation, speaking of *λόγος* as "formula." But in Aristotle's ethical works, I will follow Terence Irwin and Anthony Kenny in translating it as "reason" when it appears in the phrase *ὀρθὸς λόγος*.

What kind of knowledge of health must a temperate person possess? Certainly a temperate person is not necessarily a physician, so the sort of knowledge he or she possesses cannot be medical knowledge that prescribes that which produces health. After all, some medical knowledge indeed can be used to cure as well as harm patients (*Met*

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<sup>10</sup> Kevin L. Flannery SJ., *Action and Character According to Aristotle: The Logic of the Moral Life* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 60.

IX.2, 1046b5-10); the temperate person surely does not need to learn how to harm his or her own body. Aristotle never actually says that temperate people must have knowledge of health, nor does he say that they will have the formula of health in their soul as the physicians do. But his discussion of knowledge pertaining to actions in the ethical works evinces my belief that Aristotle's discussion of temperance assumes that the temperate person will possess some kind of knowledge of health.

The temperate person must have knowledge of health in order to reach good decisions in relation to bodily pleasures. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle stresses the important function of practical wisdom (φρόνησις) in virtuous action. He believes that while virtue makes people aim at the correct goal, practical wisdom enables people to know the right things that promote the goal (*EN VI.12*, 1144a8-9). He states:

[E]ven if prudence [φρόνησις] were useless in action, we would need it because it is the virtue of this part of the soul, and because the decision will not be correct without prudence or without virtue—for [virtue] makes us achieve the end, whereas [prudence] makes us achieve the things that promote the end (*EN VI.13*, 1145a2-6).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 99. *EN VI.13*, 1145a2-6: κἂν εἰ μὴ πρακτικὴ ᾗν, ὅτι ἔδει ἂν αὐτῆς διὰ τὸ τοῦ μορίου ἀρετὴν εἶναι, καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἔσται ἡ προαίρεσις ὀρθὴ ἄνευ φρονήσεως οὐδ' ἄνευ ἀρετῆς· ἡ μὲν γὰρ τὸ τέλος ἡ δὲ τὰ πρὸς τὸ τέλος ποιεῖ πράττειν (Bywater, 2010).

Aristotle observes that practical wisdom is rarely found in young people, because it is concerned with particulars as well as universals. His illustration of particular and universal knowledge that practical wisdom must have is the knowledge pertaining to health. He states that “[f]or someone who knows that light meats are digestible and healthy, but not which sorts of meats are light, will not produce health; the one who knows that bird meats are light and healthy will be better at producing health”(EN VI.7, 1141b18-21).<sup>12</sup> Commenting on this passage, John M. Cooper observes that “one must continue to deliberate until one has discovered a specific type of light meat to eat.”<sup>13</sup> In this sense, the knowledge of health has to be part of practical wisdom for a temperate person to reach the right decision to act temperately.

In the discussion on virtue and knowledge in *Eudemian Ethics* Book VIII, Aristotle also claims that people who possess good states of character are also practical wise (φρόνιμοι, 1246b33).<sup>14</sup> Temperate people’s knowledge of health does not need to have the same scope of medical knowledge possessed by physicians, but they would have

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<sup>12</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 92. EN VI.7, 1141b18-21: εἰ γὰρ εἰδείη ὅτι τὰ κοῦφα εὐπεπτα κρέα καὶ ὑγιεινά, ποῖα δὲ κοῦφα ἀγνοοῖ, οὐ ποιήσει ὑγίειαν, ἀλλ’ ὁ εἰδὼς ὅτι τὰ ὀρνίθεια κοῦφα καὶ ὑγιεινὰ ποιήσει μᾶλλον (Bywater, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> John M. Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle*, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company Inc, 1986), 31.

<sup>14</sup> EE VIII.2, 1246b33: ἅμα φρόνιμοι καὶ ἀγαθαὶ ἐκεῖναι αἱ ἄλλου ἕξεις (Greek text from *Aristotelis Ethica Eudemia*, eds. Richard Walzer, and Jean Mingay (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

to possess the knowledge of health, such as the constitution of their own body, varied bodily needs under particular conditions, and what contributes to or detracts from the good condition of their own body, etc.

In the description of the scope of temperance in *EN* III.11, Aristotle states that the appetite for nourishment is natural, “since everyone who lacks nourishment, dry or liquid, has an appetite for it, and sometimes for both; [...] the young in their prime [all] have an appetite for sex” (*EN* III.11, 1118b11-).<sup>15</sup> But how does the natural appetite for nourishment and sex relate to temperate action, on Aristotle’s account?

### **Health: A Blending and Proportion of the Hot and Cold Things**

As said earlier, Aristotle claims that health has to exist in a person’s body as the right proportion of hot and cold things. He claims that health can be produced as the result of the activities set up by heat (θερμότης) in the body, stating that “[T]he heat in the movement causes heat in the body, and this is either health, or a part of health, or is followed by a part of health or by health itself. And so it is said to cause health, because it

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<sup>15</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 47. *EN* III.11, 1118b8-11: πᾶς γὰρ ἐπιθυμεῖ ὁ ἐνδεὴς ξηρᾶς ἢ ὑγρᾶς τροφῆς, ὅτε δὲ ἀμφοῖν, καὶ εὐνῆς, [...] ὁ νέος καὶ ἀκμάζων (Bywater, 2010).

produces that on which health follows” (*Met* VII.9, 1034a28-32).<sup>16</sup> He makes it clear in the passage quoted earlier from *Met* VII.7, 1032b5-10 that the physician wants to bring about the uniform state of body (ὁμαλότητα) in the patient, and such a state is achieved by means of heat (θερμότητα). So medical treatments, such as diet, purging, and drugs, are employed to influence the activity of heat in a sick body. The patient’s body, though afflicted in some respect, must still be responsive to treatment that is designed to affect the heat in the body. For instance, a patient must be able to absorb the drug which would encourage the heat to its activity.

In *EN* VII, Aristotle says the process a patient undergoes in being cured “coincides with some action of the part of us that remains healthy” (1154b18).<sup>17</sup> The context does not clarify what exactly “the part of us that remains healthy” (τοῦ ὑπομένοντος ὑγιούς) is, or what “some action” (πράττοντός τι) refers to. However, it appears likely that “the part of us that remains healthy” refers to the nutritive soul. In the first place, as discussed earlier, physicians possess the formula of health in their soul, and work to produce health in the patient. So physicians need to employ some means to work

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<sup>16</sup> Translated by W. D. Ross, in *Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, vol.2, 1633. *Met* VII.9, 1034a28-32: θερμότης γὰρ ἢ ἐν τῇ κινήσει θερμότητα ἐν τῷ σώματι ἐποίησεν· αὕτη δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ ὑγίεια ἢ μέρος, ἢ ἀκολουθεῖ αὐτῇ μέρος τι τῆς ὑγείας ἢ αὐτὴ ἢ ὑγίεια· διὸ καὶ λέγεται ποιεῖν, ὅτι ἐκεῖνο τὴν ὑγίαν ὧ ἀκολουθεῖ καὶ συμβέβηκε θερμότης (Aristotle *Metaphysics*, ed. W. D. Ross, 1924).

<sup>17</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 118. *EN* VII. 14, 1154b18: ὅτι γὰρ συμβαίνει ἰατρεύεσθαι τοῦ ὑπομένοντος ὑγιούς πράττοντός τι (Bywater, 2010).

with the heat in the patient’s body. In the second place, Aristotle plainly indicates that the activity of heat is part of nutritive activity. He claims that “everything ensouled has heat” (*DA* II.4, 416b29).<sup>18</sup> Among three types of the souls that mortal living beings possess—the nutritive, the perceptual, and the rational, the nutritive soul is the most basic. Plants, which only possess the nutritive soul, also have heat in their bodies. So the activity of heat in living beings evidently belongs to the nutritive soul (*DA* II.3, 414a29-414b1). Accordingly, patients’ recovery partly depends on their own nutritive soul’s performing some actions (πράττοντός τι), a part of which would be the activity of heat.

In *Physics* VII.3, Aristotle more explicitly accounts for the role of heat in causing health. He states that health and good condition (ὕγιειαν καὶ εὐεξίαν) lie “in a blending and proportion of hot and cold things, either of one in relation to another within the body or to what encompasses it” (*Phys* VII. 3, 246b4-6).<sup>19</sup> He believes that the composition of an animal’s body must contain all the four basic elements, that is, the four simple bodies, fire, air, water and earth.<sup>20</sup> The four simple bodies are associated with four contrary

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<sup>18</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. Christopher Shields (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2016), 32. *DA* II.4, 416b29: διὸ πᾶν ἔμψυχον ἔχει θερμότητα. Greek text from *De Anima*, ed. W. D. Ross (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

<sup>19</sup> Aristotle *Physics*, trans. C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2018), 130. *Phys* VII. 3, 246b4-6: οἷον ὑγίειαν καὶ εὐεξίαν, ἐν κράσει καὶ συμμετρίᾳ θερμῶν καὶ ψυχρῶν τίθεμεν, ἢ αὐτῶν πρὸς αὐτὰ τῶν ἐντὸς ἢ πρὸς τὸ περιέχον (Greek text from *Aristotelis physica*, ed. W. D. Ross, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *DA* III.13, 435a22.

qualities: Fire is hot and dry, air is hot and moist, water is cold and moist, and earth is cold and dry.<sup>21</sup> Aristotle combines the contrary qualities into two pairs, the hot/cold, and the moist/dry, claiming that they are the principles (ἀρχαί) according to which simple bodies are mixed.<sup>22</sup> Christopher Frey observes that an animate organism, e.g., a human body, is a mixture (μικτόν) that contains the two paired qualities:

[A] mixture of a given kind will come to be from a collection of simple bodies only if a particular ratio of the four primary, interactive, tangible capacities—hot (θερμός), cold (ψυχρός), moist (ύγρός), and dry (ξηρός)—is present in the collection.<sup>23</sup>

It seems reasonable to believe that “the blending and proportion” in the passage quoted from *Physics* VII. 3 refers to the best sort of composition for a healthy body. The healthy blending of the hot and cold would be one of the principles of which our bodies are composed.

In a detailed description of how a living organism is nourished by moist and dry substance in the *Parts of Animals*, Aristotle specifies the role of heat:

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<sup>21</sup> See *On Generation and Corruption* II.1-2, e.g., II. 3, 330b1–4.

<sup>22</sup> See Christopher Frey, “From Blood to Flesh: Homonymy, Unity, and Ways of Being in Aristotle,” *Ancient Philosophy* 35 (2015): 382-385.

<sup>23</sup> Christopher Frey, “From Blood to Flesh,” 382.

Now since everything that grows must take nourishment, and nutriment in all cases consists of moist and dry substances, and since it is by the force of heat that these are concocted and changed, it follows that all living things, animals and plants alike, must on this account, if on no other, have a natural source of heat (*PA* II.3, 650a2-6).<sup>24</sup>

Aristotle describes the activity (ἐνέργεια) of nutritive soul as sustaining life by the burning of that which is potentially hot, claiming that everything ensouled has heat (*DA* II.4, 416b29). So in order for the agent to be alive, things that are potentially hot have to be continually supplied to enable the activity of nutritive soul. It seems, then, that health results from the right activity (ἐνέργεια) of the nutritive soul.

What then does the activity (ἐνέργεια) of the nutritive soul have to do with the pleasures of touch and taste, with which Aristotle claims temperance is concerned?

### The Activity of the Nutritive Soul

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<sup>24</sup> Aristotle, *Parts of Animals*, trans. William Ogle, in *Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, vol.1, 1011-1012.

Aristotle states that the soul is “the first actuality of an organic natural body” (*DA* II.1, 412b5-6).<sup>25</sup> An organism lives insofar as its nutritive soul is active. The nutritive soul sustains life by accomplishing two functions (ἔργα): generation, and making use of nutrition (γεννῆσαι καὶ τροφῆ χρῆσθαι).<sup>26</sup> The two functions arise from the living being’s natural impulse to be alive. Aristotle believes that all mortal living beings strive to remain alive as long as they are capable. But a living organism is bound to degenerate, in which case the impulse to life is carried on by generation, one’s own life continuing in offspring.<sup>27</sup>

Aristotle claims that these two functions ultimately require making the right use of nutriment. He emphasizes the importance of nutriment to living beings, saying that the nutritive soul “preserves the thing [living being] which has it, as the sort of thing it is, while nutrition equips it to be active (ἐνεργεῖν)” (*DA* II.4, 416b18-19).<sup>28</sup>

Nutriment, as described earlier, is moist and dry substance, concocted and changed by the body’s heat. This process seems to imply two different mixtures. Aristotle

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<sup>25</sup> Translated by C. Shields, 23. *DA* II.1, 412b5-6: εἴη ἂν ἐντελέχεια ἡ πρώτη σώματος φυσικοῦ ὀργανικοῦ (Ross, 1956).

<sup>26</sup> *DA* II.4, 415a24-26: ἡ γὰρ θρεπτικὴ ψυχὴ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὑπάρχει, καὶ πρώτη καὶ κοινοτάτη δυνάμις ἐστὶ ψυχῆς, καθ’ ἣν ὑπάρχει τὸ ζῆν ἅπασιν. ἧς ἐστὶν ἔργα γεννῆσαι καὶ τροφῆ χρῆσθαι (Ross, 1956).

<sup>27</sup> See *De Anima* II. 4, 415b3-7; 415a26; 415a27.

<sup>28</sup> Translated by C. Shields, 31. *DA* II.4, 416b18-19: ὥσθ’ ἡ μὲν τοιαύτη τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρχὴ δυνάμις ἐστὶν οἷα σώζειν τὸ ἔχον αὐτὴν ἢ τοιοῦτον, ἡ δὲ τροφὴ παρασκευάζει ἐνεργεῖν (Ross, 1956).

distinguishes two formats of nutriment, calling one “the first” (τὸ πρῶτον) and the other “the last” (ἡ τελευταῖν) nutriment (*DA* II.4, 416b3-4). Presumably, heat interacts with the compositional elements in the substance; for instance, it burns the dry and moist, and increases the hot, thus causing the substance to be remixed in a different ratio. The concocted product is apparently the one that equips the activity of nutritive soul.

At this point we might consider two divergent interpretations of Aristotle’s account of the concocted nutriment, those of Thomas Kjeller Johansen and Christopher Frey. My intention in recounting their conclusions is to draw attention to their shared view on the last nutriment. In spite of their significant differences on Aristotle’s theory of the activity of the nutritive soul, both of them believe the last nutriment—blood—is the one our nutritive soul makes use of.

Johansen argues that, in the case of animal nutrition, the procurement of nutriment involves two kinds of change (κίνησις). In the first change, the sensory organ of touch is affected by the first nutriment, so the animal takes hold of the nutriment. The procured nutriment, at this stage, is still only a potential nutriment for the animal. The second change occurs to the nutriment due to the activity of the nutritive soul. He states:

When Aristotle says [...] in *DA* II.4, 416b11-20 that the nutriment provides the activity, this is therefore fully compatible with saying that the soul is the efficient cause, since it is the soul, with the assistance of the body’s connate heat, which has turned the nutriment into the final nutriment. As far as the final cause, the

nutriment serves the end of saving the living being such as it is, but such as it is means a being having a certain form or soul, so again the reference to the saving function of the nutriment makes essential reference to the soul.<sup>29</sup>

Johansen understands nutrition as a process in which nutriment with the form of the nourished being is produced. In the process of concoction, the nutritive soul gives the form of the living being to the first nutriment, and turns it into blood. The blood is what Aristotle describes as the last nutriment.<sup>30</sup>

Frey also believes that the last nutriment refers to the blood (in the case of animals), although he differs from Johansen in believing that the blood is already in the form of a nutriment that the nutritive soul can directly use, though it is not yet a proper part of the animal, but only an advanced phase of nutriment. He observes: “Just as the food we eat stands to the mouth that chews it or to the stomach that partially digests it, so blood stands to the vessels in which it resides—as an inanimate, foreign body.”<sup>31</sup> The blood *per se* is only a part of the living body in potentiality; it is an advanced phase of nutriment, which Aristotle calls the last one.

On both Johansen and Frey’s views, the difference between raw material and blood is

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<sup>29</sup> Thomas Kjeller Johansen, *The Powers of Aristotle’s Soul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 103.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.

what Aristotle refers to in the distinction between “the first” and “the last” nutriment in *DA* II.4. The distinction is important to Aristotle’s notion of nutriment as the object of natural appetite. The account of temperance in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.11 states that every creature that is in deficiency has natural appetite for nutriment (*EN* III.11,1118b9). Johansen and Frey’s insight makes it clear that the last nutriment—blood—is that which constitutes the reason why we have natural appetite for food, drink, sex.

Here, a brief note on Aristotle’s use of the term “change” (κίνησις) is appropriate. In English translations of Aristotle’s text, the Greek word κίνησις is often translated as “movement,” “motion,” or “change.” In this thesis, I try consistently to use the English word “change,” because the types of κίνησις relevant to my topic mostly involve changes of bodily parts that might not be visible.

In the *Physics*, Aristotle advances an elaborate theory of change. He distinguishes three main types. First, there is change in respect of magnitude (κατὰ μέγεθος, *Phys* VIII.7, 260a27); for instance, the activity of the nutritive soul is realized in the changes of growth, decay, and so on. Second, there is change in respect of affection (κατὰ πάθος, 260a27), of which perception is primary, being a type of change that occurs in the sense organ. Third, there is change in respect of place (κατὰ τόπον, 260a28), which is also

called locomotion (φοράν, 260a28).<sup>32</sup> Aristotle assigns this last type of change only to animals that have reached completion (φορὰ δ' ἤδη τετελειωμένων, *Phys* VIII.7, 260b33), meaning animals that are born to be mobile and that have developed to maturity, so that they can use their capacity to move in space.

The two changes in Johansen's account of nutriment can be placed in the three types of change. The first change is change in respect of affection, referring to the perception in obtaining the first nutriment, when the sense organ of touch is changed by the form of nutriment. The second change occurs to the nutriment itself, which is changed by the form of the organism being nourished. So both changes are changes in respect of affection.

Just as in Johansen's account, Frey believes that blood is the product of digestion. Digestion is "a multi-stage process of mechanical division and heat induced concoction that involves the exercise of active capacities for movement located in numerous organs and tissues."<sup>33</sup> The multi-stage process of making blood from first nutriment no doubt also involves the changes discussed in Johansen's account. For instance, the perception of touch occurs when taking hold of the first nutriment, and the change of form occurs to first nutriment when it is made into blood.

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<sup>32</sup> See *Phys* VIII.7, 260a26-260b15.

<sup>33</sup> Christopher Frey, "From Blood to Flesh," 375.

Nutritive concoction is effected by the natural interaction of forces in the paired contraries. In *On Generation and Corruption* II.1-2, Aristotle claims that hot/cold and dry/moist are terms that imply, respectively, activity and passivity. The hot and cold imply a capacity to act, while the moist and dry imply the capacity to receive. He believes that the hot is that which associates things of the same kind and eliminates what is foreign, while the cold is that which brings both homogeneous and heterogeneous things alike together. The two paired contraries combine and transform into one another, so that the body is nourished in a seamless mixing process (*GC* II.2, 329b5-30).<sup>34</sup>

Plants have only nutritive soul, and their living simply consists in making use of a naturally supplied nutriment. Their habitat supplies a flow of nutriment of which they make direct use. In other words, the nutriment of plants is naturally supplied in the format of the last nutriment.<sup>35</sup> Aristotle observes that the roots of plants absorb food in a similar way as the mouth of animals. For instance, just as a lion chews on the flesh of an ox, the roots of a tree imbibe nutriment in the soil, which presumably contains all that is necessary to nourish the tree.<sup>36</sup> The concocting process in accordance with the principles

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<sup>34</sup> See *On Generation and Corruption*, trans. H. H. Joachim, in *Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, vol.1, 539–540.

<sup>35</sup> See *PA* II.10, 655b30-656a2, also *PA* IV.4, 677b35-678a20, in *Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, vol.1, 1021; 1057.

<sup>36</sup> See *De Anima* II.1, 412b1-3.

of hot/cold and the dry/moist is done outside of plant's body. Plants would soon perish if they were deprived of the conducive conditions of their natural habitat.

In contrast to plants' reliance on naturally supplied last nutriment, animals, in particular mobile animals, need to obtain and concoct the first nutriment with their own naturally endowed organs. Animals' perceptual capacities, according to Aristotle, are the natural given capacities for their survival, because nature does not provide ready-made last nutriment for them.<sup>37</sup> For instance, a lion must be capable of perceiving the presence of its first nutriment, e.g., the ox; if the ox is far off, the lion must have the limbs to take itself to it, and have the sort of paws that clutch the ox, and the sort of teeth that tear its hide, and so on.

In *De Anima* III 12-13, among the five perceptual capacities—sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch—Aristotle singles out the senses of touch and taste as necessary for animal survival. In particular, he states: “it is not possible for an animal to exist without touch” (*DA* III.12, 434b17-18).<sup>38</sup> He believes that animals must have the sense of touch because they need it for sustenance. His argument is apparently from a teleological consideration when he explains that:

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<sup>37</sup> See *PA* IV.4, 677b35-678a20, in *Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, vol.1, 1057.

<sup>38</sup> Translated by C. Shields, 71. *DA* III.12, 434b17-18: ἀδύνατον ἔσται σώζεσθαι τὸ ζῷον (*De Anima*, ed., W. D. Ross, Oxford University Press, 1956).

Since an animal is an ensouled body, and [as] every body is tangible, necessarily the body of the animal must be capable of touch if the animal is going to survive. For the other senses perceive through other things, for instance, smelling, seeing, and hearing; but when making contact, if it does not have perception, it will not be able to flee some things and take hold of others. But if this is so, the animal will not be able to survive (*DA* III.12, 434b11-17).<sup>39</sup>

The sense of touch is vital to animal survival because it perceives through direct contact between the sense organ and the potential nutriment. While “to flee” (φεύγειν) might require an animal to move spatially, “to take hold of” (λαβεῖν) can involve only the changes of body parts. For instance, barnacles do not move from place to place, so they cannot really flee imminent threat. But they are capable of taking hold of nutriment when plankton bump into them. That is, the barnacles allow water to pass through their appendages, which are full of tactile sensory hairs; when plankton comes into contact with their sensory hairs, some of their body parts move and take hold of the stuff for food.

Most animals, of course, need more than the sense of touch if they want to live for a while. As was said earlier, lions need other perceptions and movement to obtain their

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<sup>39</sup> Translated by C. Shields, 71. *DA* III.12, 434b11-17: ἐπεὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῷον σῶμα ἔμψυχόν ἐστι, σῶμα δὲ ἅπαν ἀπτόν, [ἀπτόν δὲ τὸ αἰσθητὸν ἀφῆ.] ἀνάγκη [καὶ] τὸ τοῦ ζῴου σῶμα ἀπτικὸν εἶναι, εἰ μέλλει σώζεσθαι τὸ ζῷον. αἱ γὰρ ἄλλαι αἰσθήσεις δι' ἐτέρων αἰσθάνονται, οἷον ὄσφρησις ὄψις ἀκοή· ἀπτόμενον δέ, εἰ μὴ ἔξει αἴσθησιν, οὐ δυνήσεται τὰ μὲν φεύγειν τὰ δὲ λαβεῖν (Ross, 1956).

prey. So touch is the minimum requirement for the animal survival. Earlier I explained the nutritive soul sustains life by generation and making use of nutrition, since animals, unlike plants, do not have nature to supply the needs of the nutritive soul. To say that the sense of touch is the minimum requirement for animal life implies that it is naturally designed to generate offspring, and to obtain nutriment.

The composition of the sensory organ of touch is, Aristotle believes, naturally designed to perceive nutriment. The body of each animal is mixed in accordance with varied blending and proportion of the simple elements. It thus requires a corresponding mixture of nutriment, but the sensory organ of touch establishes in advance, as it were, the sort of nutriment the animal can perceive. Hence the relation between nutriment and the animal is not coincidental. Aristotle goes further to imply that the animal can live for a while, though not well, if it loses other senses, but it perishes instantly without touch (*DA* III.13, 435a11-24).

The sense of taste perceives the qualities of the nutriment. In *DA* II.3, Aristotle has argued that touch is the sense for the moist and dry, which are tangible qualities, and that nutriment is the moist and dry; so he claims that touch is naturally made to be the sense for nutriment. In addition, the perceptible objects of taste, that is, the sweet and the bitter, are the indication of pleasantness and unpleasantness in the nutriment.<sup>40</sup> Flavor is a

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<sup>40</sup> See *DA* III.12, 434b18; *DA* III.13, 435b22.

needed indication of the suitability of a particular thing as a source from which the organism can obtain required elements. Aristotle claims that taste is a form of touch, for the reason that taste is concerned with nutriment, and nutriment is a tangible body (*DA* III.12, 434b18-19).

This account explains why touch and taste are sometimes mentioned together in Aristotle's discussion of bodily pleasures involving appetite.<sup>41</sup> In short, perceptual soul performs the activities that obtain the first nutriment, while the sense of touch is the minimal component of the perceptual soul.

Aristotle states that temperate actions are concerned with pleasures that arise in eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse. It is apparent that eating and drinking are the principal means by which we acquire first nutriment. The sense of touch is apparently the minimal condition for an animal to be capable of complete these activities. But what do sexual relations have to do with touch and/or taste?

C. C. W. Taylor finds it difficult indeed to fit the pleasure of sexual relations in the category of bodily pleasures of touch, and believes that it must be due to Aristotle's

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<sup>41</sup> For instance, *EN* VII.41148a4-9: "Now consider the people concerned with the bodily gratifications, those that we take temperance and intemperance to be about. Some of these people go to excess in pursuing these pleasant things and avoiding painful things—hunger, thirst, heat, cold, and all the objects of touch and taste..." (Trans. T. Irwin, 105).

taking “an unduly narrow view of sexual activity, ignoring such psychological factors as the pleasures of intimacy and tenderness, of dominating or being dominated, etc.”<sup>42</sup>

Taylor’s complaint seems to arise from an oversight in the function of the sense of touch in equipping the activity of nutritive soul.

As discussed earlier, Aristotle assigns to nutritive soul two functions (ἔργα): generation and making use of nutrition (γεννῆσαι καὶ τροφῆ χρῆσθαι, *DA* II.4, 415a23-24). Johansen and Frey, though taking different approaches to the activity of the nutritive soul, agree that the last nutriment—blood—is that which nutritive soul makes use of. Eating and drinking—activities of touch and taste—see to the procurement of the first nutriment.

Johansen states that generation is also a case of the nutritive soul’s using blood, because Aristotle believes that semen is a surplus of the male blood, and is responsible for the transmission of the progenitor’s soul.<sup>43</sup> The function of generation, in the case of human being, is apparently prepared by the processes that produce blood (in the male). The function of the sense of touch (and taste) in the case of sex can be, presumably, directly linked to the production of blood, the surplus of which is made use of in generating offspring. Frey takes a similar approach to Johansen in his interpretation of

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<sup>42</sup> C. C. W. Taylor, *Pleasure, Mind, and Soul: Selected Papers in Ancient Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 118.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Kjeller Johansen, 108. See *PA* 650b8-11; 674a19-20.

generation. He points out the parallel between artisanal and nutritive activities, and describes sexual relations as another way of using blood. Citing a passage from *On the Generation of Animals* (I.22, 730b14-24), Frey argues that just as the hands of an artisan move the tools, and the tools move the material, the male uses the seed as a tool to generate offspring. Sexual intercourse is the means by which the nutritive soul uses blood to make another life.<sup>44</sup>

In short, the three activities involved in the account of temperance—eating, drinking, and sex—have various relations to the nutritive soul. The sense of touch is the least requirement for an animal to perform the activities of eating and drinking; these perceptual activities procure blood to equip the activity of nutritive soul. Sexual intercourse is the means by which nutritive soul accomplishes its function of generation. According to Aristotle, the male's seeds, which carry the form of life that is continued in offspring, arise from a surplus of blood. Sex is ultimately connected with the sense of touch because blood is made from the first nutriment procured by touch.

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<sup>44</sup> Christopher Frey, "From Blood to Flesh," 386.

## Chapter 2

### Two Modes of Temperate Action

The scope of temperance includes only bodily pleasures involving appetite and pain, the kind of pleasure found in meeting necessary needs, in eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse. As discussed in Chapter 1, the perceptual activities of touch and taste procure nutriment to enable the nutritive soul to make use of blood, and sexual relations are the means by which the nutritive soul accomplishes its function of generation, and make use of blood as well.

Health and good condition are what temperate people aim to preserve, but Aristotle's notion of temperance does not cover all the pleasures or pains that might be involved in activities that promote health. In the *Politics* VII.15, he mentions several means by which children may be habituated to health. He stresses the importance of bodily exercise and conditioning from early on, believing that it is beneficial to health as well as military practice to habituate (συνεθίζειν) children to cold circumstances, for the condition of children is well suited (εὐφυῆς δ' ἡ τῶν παίδων ἕξις) to such training (*Pol* VII.15, 1336a20-21).<sup>45</sup> He does not include the pleasures and pains involved in physical

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<sup>45</sup> Greek text from *Politica*, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957).

training that do not fall into the scope of temperance. Moreover, the work of the various nutritive capacities, such as growth, aging, and digestion, cannot be determined by rational soul at all. These processes occur independent of human desire or wish, and thus do not form part of ethical conduct.

Aristotle believes a natural tie connects the sense of touch with appetite in the pursuit of nutriment. The natural link among the sense of touch, appetite, and nutriment makes human voluntary action in this field possible, because the part of the soul that has appetite can interact with reason.

## Appetite

In the context of temperance, Aristotle discusses appetite (ἐπιθυμία) in two ways. One is natural appetite (φυσική), which is common to all animals insofar as they have a sense of touch; the other is appetite particular to individuals (ἴδιοι).<sup>46</sup> The object of appetite is also described as either nutriment or the pleasant. He states that “[t]he appetite for [nutriment], for instance, is natural, since everyone who lacks nutriment, dry or

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<sup>46</sup> *EN* III.11, 1118b6-7: τῶν δ’ ἐπιθυμιῶν αἱ μὲν κοιναὶ δοκοῦσιν εἶναι, αἱ δ’ ἴδιοι καὶ ἐπίθετοι (Bywater, 2010).

[moist], has the appetite for it, and sometimes for both,” and “the young in their prime have an appetite for sex” (*EN* III.11, 1118b9-19).<sup>47</sup>

While plants absorb nutriment in the ground with their roots, animals require, at the least, the sense of touch to select and obtain the first nutriment. What is obtained by animals through their perceptual activities cannot be used directly to nourish themselves or to generate children. The last nutriment (for instance, the blood in mammals) is that which the nutritive soul uses to generate offspring. So, the first nutriment needs to be concocted into fluid to be used by the nutritive capacity. What Aristotle here calls “natural appetite” evidently refers to hunger and thirst.<sup>48</sup> In *De Anima* II.3, he claims that “[h]unger and thirst are appetite—the first sort, hunger, for the dry and the hot, and the second sort, thirst, for the moist and the cold. Flavour is a sort of seasoning of these” (414b11-13).<sup>49</sup> What the appetite desires is the dry or moist substances that constitute appropriate nutriment for the animal.

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<sup>47</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 47. I altered two terms in Irwin’s translation in square bracket to maintain consistency with my preferred terminology. *EN* III.11, 1118b9-10: οἷον ἢ μὲν τῆς τροφῆς φυσική. πᾶς γὰρ ἐπιθυμεῖ ὁ ἐνδεὴς ξηρᾶς ἢ ὑγρᾶς τροφῆς, ὅτε δὲ ἀμφοῖν, καὶ εὐνῆς, φησὶν Ὅμηρος, ὁ νέος καὶ ἀκμάζων (Bywater, 2010).

<sup>48</sup> See also Charles M. Young, “Aristotle on Temperance,” *Philosophical Review* 97 (1988), 530.

<sup>49</sup> Translated by C. Shields, 27. *DA* II.3, 414b11-13: πείνα δὲ καὶ δίψα ἐπιθυμία, καὶ ἢ μὲν πείνα ξηροῦ καὶ θερμοῦ, ἢ δὲ δίψα ὑγροῦ καὶ ψυχροῦ (Ross, 1956).

Aristotle believes a natural tie connects the sense of touch with appetite in the pursuit of nutriment. However, the account in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.11 differs from that offered in *De Anima*, where the object of appetite is described as the pleasant:

All animals have at least one kind of perception, touch. And that to which perception belongs, to this belongs also both pleasure and pain, as well as both the pleasurable and the painful; and to those things to which these belong also belongs appetite, since appetite is a desire for what is pleasurable. And further they have perception of nutriment; for touch is perception of nutriment (*DA* II.3, 414b3-7).<sup>50</sup>

Apparently, the occurrence of pleasure and pain depend on the condition of the perceptual object and the sense organ. Appetite is directly tied to the perception of nutriment at birth, a naturally built-in mechanism that impels the animal to seek nutriment.

### **Bodily Pleasures Involving Appetite and Pain**

Klaus Corcilius's interpretation of Aristotle's view on bodily pleasures involving appetite is most illuminating. Here, I give a brief summary of his conclusion and bring his interpretation to bear on the topic of temperate action.

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<sup>50</sup> Translated by C. Shields, 27. *DA* II.3, 414b3-7: τὰ δὲ ζῷα πάντ' ἔχουσι μίαν γε τῶν αἰσθήσεων, τὴν ἀφήν· ἧ δ' αἴσθησις ὑπάρχει, τούτῳ ἡδονή τε καὶ λύπη καὶ τὸ ἡδύ τε καὶ λυπηρόν, οἷς δὲ ταῦτα, καὶ ἐπιθυμία· τοῦ γὰρ ἡδέος ὄρεξις αὕτη. ἔτι δὲ τῆς τροφῆς αἴσθησιν ἔχουσιν· ἢ γὰρ ἀφή τῆς τροφῆς αἴσθησις (Ross, 1956).

In his “Aristotle’s Definition of Non-Rational Pleasure and Pain and Desire,” Corcilius aims to make sense of a puzzling passage in *De Anima* III.7, where Aristotle states that bodily pleasure is “to be active with the perceptual mean” (τὸ ἐνεργεῖν τῇ αἰσθητικῇ μεσότητι, 431a10-11).<sup>51</sup> He believes that this phrase, “to be active with the perceptual mean,” is Aristotle’s semi-technical expression for the conditions required to experience a non-rational pleasure, which, Corcilius believes, must include pleasures of perception and emotions. Moreover, he believes the combination of the depleted condition of the animal and things suitable to restore that deficiency is also a type of activity “with the mean.” This is what Aristotle calls bodily pleasures involving appetite and pain (τὰς μετ’ ἐπιθυμίας καὶ λύπης, *EN* VII.12, 1153a32). Such pleasures are not determined by the sensation of certain objects alone, but “by the relation of the bodily condition of the animal towards these objects.”<sup>52</sup> The claim is supported by Corcilius’s view on the perceptual capacity itself as the nature of animals:

If the animal is in a physical condition in which its perceptual activity results in pleasure or pain, then it, by its own force and in the measure of its bodily capacities, strives towards the complete restoration of its natural state or avoids

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<sup>51</sup> Klaus Corcilius, “Aristotle’s Definition of Non-Rational Pleasure and Pain and Desire,” in *Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics: A Critical Guide*, ed. Jon Miller (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 115-143.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

further damage to it. What is important is that what is ultimately responsible for these motions is not a psychic capacity separate from the perceptual capacity (a supposed primitive faculty of desire or a “bare” desire), but the perceptual capacity itself, or, to be more exact, the animal in possession of this capacity. This is so, because the perceptual capacity is the nature of the animal and the animal’s nature is what is ultimately responsible for its specific motions [or change, *kinesis*].<sup>53</sup>

This view clarifies the reason why nutriment is non-coincidentally relative to the animal. The motivation to pursue nutriment is the natural impulse to survival, but is also prompted by the perception of pleasant things. When animals are hungry or thirsty, they are naturally attracted to things that can appease these feelings. If these things happen to be out of reach, animals employ the necessary bodily organs to close the distance.

Aristotle’s depiction of the activity (ἐνέργεια) of the nutritive soul seems to go like this: animal appetite aims to maintain its natural state; when the animal is hungry or thirsty, appetite is aroused for those things that are suitable to the specific need and prompts the animal to pursue them. Once the hunger or thirst are appeased, the natural state is restored and the animal rests or sleeps in order to digest or make use of the

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 135.

nutriment. Presumably, for an animal in its natural state, no pleasure sets animals into action, since otherwise animals would be forever seeking superfluous nutriments.

Mortal living beings, as Aristotle sees them, strive to stay alive forever, like the immortal gods (*DA* II.4, 415a25-b9). But a living organism, as a mixture of simple bodies, is by nature perishable, though a natural impulse ensures the continuance of life in offspring through reproduction, to which animals are also impelled by appetite.

The natural activity of appetite—impelling the animal to pursue the pleasant object once it is aroused—implies that further bodily changes necessarily follow upon an appetite. The aroused appetite might urge the animal to take hold of the pleasant object. The animal might lift limbs to chase or hold breath to ambush it. All such further bodily changes are ultimately initiated by the appetite.

### **Restorative Processes**

In the procurement of the nutriment, a series of changes must occur. Some of the changes are actually “active with the perceptual mean,” and can be called the bodily pleasures involving appetite and pain. These changes are perceptual activities which collaborate to acquire the required object. Procuring nutriment apparently belongs what Aristotle describes as coincidentally (*κατὰ συμβεβηκός*, 1152b34) pleasant in the *EN* VII 12, because these activities, in obtaining some foodstuff, eventually contribute to the restoration of one’s natural state. Such a process can be sketched in the following manner:

taking hold of the food, putting it into the mouth, and mincing it; the minced food is then being sent down the esophagus and transported to the stomach, where it is concocted (*Juv* 17, 476a30-33). Further distribution in the veins and organs purifies the fluid, which finally flows into the heart. Here I take the heart to be the destination of the last nutriment, because Aristotle locates the sense organ of touch in the region of the heart (*PA* II.10, 656b3-6).<sup>54</sup>

Aristotle assigns to the mouth and stomach an ancillary function in restorative processes.<sup>55</sup> Apparently, the first nutriment necessarily contains an earthy element and is therefore a composite substance. The earthy element must be broken into smaller pieces in the mouth so as to assist its transportation into the body, and must also be rejected in the concocting process in the stomach in order that nutriment can become fluid, facilitating its distribution.

At various stages in which nutriment is obtained and turned into blood, pleasures might arise. In the first place, when the nutriment is most suitable to replenish the bodily needs, according to Corcilius's reading, the experience of refilling the needs is pleasure. In the second place, some of the perceptions, such as the contact when we get hold of a

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<sup>54</sup> See Thomas Kjeller Johansen, *Aristotle on the Sense-Organs* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 208; also 208n39. See also *Juv.* 3, 469a13-14; *De Sense* 2, 438b16-439a5.

<sup>55</sup> See *Juv* 3, 469a1-7.

needed nutriment, the taste in the mouth, and the feeling of satiety when the nutriment arrives at the stomach, can be “active with the perceptual mean.” Moreover, Aristotle says that the most deviant intemperate person, such as the gourmand Philoxenus, enjoys very much the pleasant contact when the minced nutriment glides down the esophagus (*EN* III.10, 1118a28-b1; *EE* III.2, 1231a12-15). According to Corcilius’s reading of non-rational pleasures, when the meeting between the correlative object and a perceptual capacity is in accordance with the principle of being “active with the perceptual mean,” bodily pleasures are found in such changes. In this sense, pleasure can be found in all these bodily changes: the chewing of the mouth, the swallowing of the food, and so on.

### Two Modes of Temperate Action

Two non-rational capacities of the soul are involved in the discussion of temperate actions. One is the nutritive soul, also called nutritive capacity. It has nothing to do with reason, and its activity, even when excellent, does not take part in human excellence. Aristotle makes this point clear at the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I, where he says that the nutritive part (τὸ θρεπτικὸν) by nature (πέφυκεν) “has no share in

human virtue” (*EN* I.13, 1102b11-12).<sup>56</sup> Heat—the principle of nutritive soul—is active provided that it is supplied with fuel. The perceptual capacities carry out the preparation of the fuel for the nutritive soul.

The other capacity is the part with appetites and in general desires (τὸ δ’ ἐπιθυμητικὸν καὶ ὅλως ὀρεκτικὸν), which, although a non-rational capacity, does partake in reason (λόγος) “in a way, insofar as it both listens to reason and obeys it”(1102b30-31).<sup>57</sup> This appetitive capacity initiates the changes in a mobile animal in order to procure the nutriment that is necessary for nutritive activity. Replenishing one’s necessary needs so as to restore the natural state is in fact a concatenation of such changes that are initially set into motion by appetite. The restorative process itself is not part of the activity of nutritive soul, but prepares the last nutriment for its use. However, the activities of eating, drinking, and sex, in which bodily pleasures involving appetite and pain arise, enter the discussion of practical matters that Aristotle takes up in the ethical treatise because the appetitive part can interact with (μετὰ) reason (*EN* VI.13, 1144b26-27).

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<sup>56</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 17. *EN* I.13, 1102b11-12: ἐπειδὴ τῆς ἀνθρωπικῆς ἀρετῆς ἄμοιρον πέφυκεν (Bywater, 2010).

<sup>57</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 18. *EN* I.13, 1102b30-31: τὸ δ’ ἐπιθυμητικὸν καὶ ὅλως ὀρεκτικὸν μετέχει πως, ἧ κατήκοόν ἐστιν αὐτοῦ καὶ πειθαρχικόν (Bywater, 2010).

### Non-rational Animal and Bodily Pleasures

In *EN* III.10, Aristotle describes a lion that appears to be delighted upon hearing the lowing of an ox. The reason for the lion’s delight is that the ox is going to make a meal for it (1118a23). The intrinsically (καθ’ αὐτάς) pleasant for the lion is, of course, getting the meal. It is delighted by the sound because the sound is associated with its previous enjoyment of a meal, not because it enjoys the sound itself.

Animals such as lions can remember a bodily affection (σωματικόν τι τὸ πάθος) obtained by perception. So they are capable of associating current perception (for instance, smelling or hearing) with past experience.<sup>58</sup> For instance, upon hearing the lowing of an ox, a lion is capable of recalling that previous meals it had from an ox that produces such lowing sound (*EN* III.10, 1118a23). Their appetite can be aroused even in the absence of the food, provided that present perception triggers their memory, which supplies some bodily affection in place of the missing perception of the food. Aristotle describes such things that are delightful by association as pleasant coincidentally (κατὰ συμβεβηκός), referring to them as things “we enjoy through anticipation or memory, like those of food and drink” (*EE* III.2, 1231a7-9).<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> David Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection: Text, Translation, Interpretation, and Reception in Western Scholasticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 47-50.

<sup>59</sup> *Eudemian Ethics*, trans., Anthony Kenny (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 43. *EE* III.2, 1231a7-9: λέγω δὲ μὴ καθ’ αὐτάς, αἷς ἢ ἐλπίζοντες χαίρομεν ἢ μνημόνοι, οἷον ὄψων καὶ ποτῶν (Walzer Jean Mingay, 1991).

The aroused appetite is naturally inclined to cause further changes in the agent. Non-rational animals would inevitably engage in some kind of movement of their bodies initiated by appetite. However, human beings may act differently. Their active appetite can be made to refrain from pushing for further bodily changes. It is unnatural for the appetite to give up its predisposition, but human appetite is also naturally equipped for the appropriate alternative action. Herein lies the essential difference between the changes in non-rational animals and in human beings concerning the bodily pleasure involving appetite.

### **Deliberative Desire and the Good**

In *Eudemian Ethics* II.8, in connection with his discussion of the voluntary and involuntary, Aristotle gives an account of compulsion which applies to inanimate objects as well as to living things (1224a21-1224a29). On this account, the internal origin of compulsion in inanimate objects and non-rational animals is single; for instance, stones naturally move downward, and non-rational animals move toward their food when natural appetite leads them on. Human beings, however, possess two such origins of change: appetite and reason.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> I confine the topic to the pursuit of food, accordingly, spirit (*thumos*), another origin of change, is left unmentioned.

Aristotle distinguishes between rational and non-rational powers in terms of the origin of the change they cause. A non-rational power is always a power to do one thing. Fire, for instance, has the power to heat, but it is not a power to do anything else. A rational power such as the art of medicine, however, is a power to produce contraries, as the physician's knowledge enables him to harm as well as to heal (*Met IX.2*, 1046b5-10). The knowledge of health at the same time reveals the contrary of health, which is also in the physician's power to achieve.

The part of the soul that has appetite is the source of action in beasts and children.<sup>61</sup> In human beings, the appetitive part is naturally capable of being brought into a condition where it listens to and obeys the command of reason, first by the voice of parents or tutors, then by one's own thought (*διανοία*).<sup>62</sup> In his analogy between the appetitive part of the soul and a child's behavior, Aristotle implies that appetite is able to follow reason. He states that “just as the child's life must follow the instruction of his guide, so too the appetitive part must follow reason” (*EN III.12*, 1119b13-15).<sup>63</sup> The goal of the pedagogical process is apparently to train—to temper or check (*κεκολάσθαι*)—

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<sup>61</sup> See *EN I.3*, 1095a5-7 on young people following feelings, and *EN III.12*, 1119b5-7 on children living by appetite; *EN III.13*, 1116b24-26 on beasts attacking at the impulse of spirit.

<sup>62</sup> See *EN I.13*, 1102b30-31; also *EE II.1*, 1220a10-11; *Pol VII.14*, 1333a16-18.

<sup>63</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 49. *EN III.12*, 1119b13-15: ὥσπερ δὲ τὸν παῖδα δεῖ κατὰ τὸ πρόσταγμα τοῦ παιδαγωγοῦ ζῆν, οὕτω καὶ τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν κατὰ τὸν λόγον (Bywater, 2010).

children to obey their guide (*EN* III.12, 1119b3). In a similar way, people can train their appetite to lean toward reason, rather than running in its natural course—growing larger and more intense.

The interaction between appetite and reason in a human soul allows two possibilities for appetite. In grown-up human beings, “once they reached the age at which we begin to assess their conduct, both desire (ὄρεξις) and reason are present” (*EE* II.8, 1224a27-28).<sup>64</sup> That makes the perception of nutriment complicated, as reason and desire are “not always in harmony” (*EE* II.8, 1224a24-25).<sup>65</sup> The possibility of harmony or conflict between reason and desire is expressed in the conflict between the particular and absolute good as the object of pursuit. Aristotle seems to have in mind this distinction in *De Anima* II.4, 416b11, where, as discussed in chapter 1, the last nutriment is that which is non-coincidentally related to the thing it nourishes, because, for an animal, being alive is its nutritive soul’s active use of the last nutriment. But the first nutriment’s relation to the thing it nourishes, according to Corcilius’s reading of bodily pleasures involving appetite, would have to depend on the coincidence of the depleted condition of the animal and things suitable to restore that condition. Once the bodily need is refilled, the

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<sup>64</sup> Translated by A. Kenny, 27. *EE* II.8, 1224a27-28: ἐν δ’ ἀνθρώπῳ ἔνεστιν ἄμφω, καὶ ἔν τινι ἡλικίᾳ, ἣ καὶ τὸ πράττειν ἀποδίδομεν (Walzer and Mingay, 1991).

<sup>65</sup> Translated by A. Kenny, 27. *EE* II.8, 1224a24-25: οὐ γὰρ ἀεὶ ἡ ὄρεξις καὶ ὁ λόγος συμφωνεῖ (Walzer and Mingay, 1991).

conditions required for the activity “with the mean” are no longer present, then the same object would not be pleasant. In this sense, the first nutriment is pleasant coincidentally.

Aristotle’s discussion on the qualified and unqualified good in *EN VII. 12* can be extended to his distinction between the first and last nutriment. The explication focuses on the factors involved in order for something to be evaluated as one of the two types of good. The first nutriment apparently belongs to the qualified good, because he stresses the coincidental relation between the nutriment and our bodily needs:

[W]e even enjoy sharp or bitter things, though none of these is pleasant by nature or pleasant without qualification. Hence [these pleasures] are not pleasures [without qualification] either; as pleasant things differ from one another, so the pleasures arising from them differ too (*EN VII.12, 1153a5-7*).<sup>66</sup>

Aristotle indeed stresses that numerous things can attract our appetite, and we can thus be misled by our likes (*EN III.11, 1104b9–13*).

There is a contrast between doing something merely because one likes it and doing it because one supposes it to be good. Apparently, temperate people enjoy what they like because their practical wisdom enables them to judge how a particular circumstance relates to health. In acting temperately, the temperate person enjoys pleasant

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<sup>66</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 116. *EN VII.12, 1153a5-7*: καὶ γὰρ ὀξέσι καὶ πικροῖς χαίρουσιν, ὧν οὐδὲν οὔτε φύσει ἡδὺ οὔθ’ ἀπλῶς ἡδύ. ὥστ’ οὐδ’ ἡδοναί· ὡς γὰρ τὰ ἡδέα πρὸς ἄλληλα διέστηκεν, οὕτω καὶ αἱ ἡδοναὶ αἱ ἀπὸ τούτων (Bywater, 2010).

things only insofar as they are conducive or unharmful to health or fitness (*EN* III.11, 1119a18-20). It seems to me that in this sense, a healthy bodily condition is closely related, if not identical to, an unqualified good (τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἀπλῶς) that is aimed at by the virtuous.

Aristotle describes virtue in general in the following terms:

Virtue of character is a state that decides; and decision is a deliberative desire. If, then, the decision is excellent, the reason must be true and the desire correct, so that what reason asserts is what desire pursues. This, then, is thought and truth concerned with action [...] the function of what thinks about action is truth agreeing with correct desire (*EN* VI.2, 1139a22-31).<sup>67</sup>

Decision in this context is described both as “deliberative desire” (ὄρεξις βουλευτική, *EN* VI.2 1139a23) and as “intellectual desire” (ὄρεξις διανοητική, 1139b5). Fernando Inciarte Armiñán observes that in the *De Anima* Aristotle uses “wish” (βούλησις) to cover all forms of rational desire without employing the distinction made in the ethical works between wish and decision. He believes that “wish is desire for an end, while choice [or decision] (προαίρεσις) is desire for something within one’s power that contributes to an

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<sup>67</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 87. *EN* VI.2, 1139a22-31: ὥστ’ ἐπειδὴ ἡ ἠθικὴ ἀρετὴ ἔξις προαιρετικὴ, ἡ δὲ προαίρεσις ὄρεξις βουλευτικὴ, δεῖ διὰ ταῦτα μὲν τὸν τε λόγον ἀληθῆ εἶναι καὶ τὴν ὄρεξιν ὀρθήν, εἴπερ ἡ προαίρεσις σπουδαία, καὶ τὰ αὐτὰ τὸν μὲν φάναι τὴν δὲ διώκειν [...] τοῦ δὲ πρακτικοῦ καὶ διανοητικοῦ ἀλήθεια ὁμολόγως ἔχουσα τῆ ὀρέξει τῆ ὀρθῆ (Bywater, 2010).

end. Choice (προαίρεσις) pertains to what the person evaluated as good, rather than pleasant.”<sup>68</sup>

In this light, health enters as the first consideration in deliberation for a temperate action. Temperate people have correct reason which directs deliberative desire to the unqualified good as its object. In the face of bodily pleasures involving appetite, deliberative desire allows alternative possibilities other than proceeding more or less immediately to a further change, i.e., a bodily movement, beyond the internal bodily change that occurs when appetite is aroused.

The difference between non-rational animals and a rational human’s pursuit of bodily pleasures is that the latter’s appetite can move in the other direction. The rational part of the soul in the temperate enables them to pursue that which is good for their health. It can be said that the virtue of temperance allows its possessors to live well and finely (εὖ καὶ καλῶς, *EN* I.7, 1098a13-15), because, in temperate people, the rational part of the soul is in charge of their action. In addressing the necessary needs, they are not merely performing a function that is common to all mortal beings for the sake of living,

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<sup>68</sup> Fernando Armiñán Inciarte, *First Principles, Substance and Action: Studies in Aristotle and Aristotelianism*, ed. Lourdes Flamarique (New York: Olms, 2005), 125.

but complete the human function (ἔργον ἀνθρώπου), which, Aristotle states, “is activity of soul in accord with reason or requiring reason” (*EN* I.7, 1098a7-8).<sup>69</sup>

### **The Second Mode of Temperate Action**

Aristotle states that “we fulfill our function [ἔργον] insofar as we have practical wisdom and virtue of character; for virtue makes the goal correct, and practical wisdom makes the things promoting the goal [correct]” (*EN* VI.12, 1144a7-9).<sup>70</sup> In the case of temperance, temperate people have their appetite in harmony with correct reason, so that they do not pursue the sort of pleasures that are harmful to their health. Moreover, their practical wisdom enables them to appropriately enjoy pleasant things.

Practical wisdom can influence people to the extent that their aroused appetite refrains from pushing them to pursue the pleasant, because they know exactly the things that are good for health. A temperate action can consist in the rational soul’s endorsing the appetite’s pursuit of bodily pleasures, or it can simply consist in restraining the active appetite, and make it resume the state of rest. In the latter case, apart from the affection incurred when the appetite is aroused, a person does not experience further bodily

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<sup>69</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 9. *EN* I.7, 1098a7-8: ἐστὶν ἔργον ἀνθρώπου ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια κατὰ λόγον ἢ μὴ ἄνευ λόγου (Bywater, 2010).

<sup>70</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 97. *EN* VI.12, 1144a7-9: ἔτι τὸ ἔργον ἀποτελεῖται κατὰ τὴν φρόνησιν καὶ τὴν ἠθικὴν ἀρετὴν: ἢ μὲν γὰρ ἀρετὴ τὸν σκοπὸν ποιεῖ ὀρθόν, ἢ δὲ φρόνησις τὰ πρὸς τοῦτον (Bywater, 2010).

changes. In his account of the principles (ἀρχαῖ) of changes in *De Anima* III.10, Aristotle advances two types of principle. In the chain of changes, while one principle remains unchanged, the other principle itself changes as well. In short, while the changed principle is the faculty of desire, the unchanged principle is the practical good, which constitutes the object of deliberative desire in the rational part of the soul. Aristotle connects the good (τὸ ἀγαθόν) with the unchanged principle:

that which initiates motion [change] is twofold, in the one instance being unmoved and in the other initiating motion while being moved, there is: something unmoved, the good concerned with what can be done [the practical good, τὸ πρακτὸν ἀγαθόν]; something initiating motion while being moved, the faculty of desire (for what is moved is moved insofar as it is desiring, and desire, when in actuality, is a kind of motion); and what is moved, the animal (*DA* III.10, 433b14-18).<sup>71</sup>

In the case of temperance, the unchanged principle (i.e. the practical goal) for the temperate person acting temperately seems to be health, understood as the good state of the body. The temperate person, being virtuous, acts appropriately, striking the mean,

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<sup>71</sup> Translated by C. Shields, 69. *DA* III.10, 433b14-18: τὸ δὲ κινουῦν διττόν, τὸ μὲν ἀκίνητον, τὸ δὲ κινουῦν καὶ κινούμενον, ἔστι δὴ τὸ μὲν ἀκίνητον τὸ πρακτὸν ἀγαθόν, τὸ δὲ κινουῦν καὶ κινούμενον τὸ ὀρεκτικόν (κινεῖται γὰρ τὸ κινούμενον ἢ ὀρέγεται, καὶ ἡ ὀρεξις κίνησις τίς ἐστίν, ἢ ἐνεργεία), τὸ δὲ κινούμενον τὸ ζῷον (Ross, 1956).

which is as correct reason would recommend. In order to reliably act appropriately, the virtuous person must therefore have some knowledge of health, and of what contributes to it or detracts from it. Such knowledge of health (and of the means to achieve it) therefore seems to be a part of the temperate person's practical wisdom. For, without such knowledge, the temperate person could not be expected to reliably strike the virtuous mean in decisions and actions concerned with the bodily pleasures.

The appetite of a temperate person is entirely in alignment with the order of correct reason. In one possibility, the enjoyment of pleasures of appetite is within the practical good; the deliberative desire accordingly takes it as its object of action. In another possibility, correct reason judges that what is good is to avoid the pleasant object, in which case the appetite of a temperate person, following the deliberative desire for the good, resumes its state of rest (τὸ ἡρεμεῖν), without pushing the agent to initiate further changes.

One clarification is due here. By saying “without pushing the agent to initiate further changes,” I of course do not imply that the person, meanwhile, undergoes no changes at all. In *Eudemian Ethics* Book I Aristotle states that “a healthy life is not the same thing as the necessary conditions for healthy living” (*EE* I.2, 1214b14-24).<sup>72</sup> The

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<sup>72</sup> Translated by A. Kenny, 4. *EE* I.2, 1214b14-24: οὐ γὰρ ταῦτόν, ὃν τ' ἄνευ οὐχ οἷόν τε ὑγιαίνειν, καὶ τὸ ὑγιαίνειν [...] οὐ γὰρ ὁμοίως οἰκεῖον πρὸς εὐεξίαν τοῖς εἰρημένοις κρεωφαγία καὶ τῶν περιπάτων οἱ μετὰ δεῖπνον (Walzer and Mingay, 1991).

necessary conditions, like breathing, being awake, or being able to walk, practically underlie all human activities. While other conditions, such as eating meat and taking exercise after meals, are conducive to health and good condition, they are specific to individuals. So when the temperate do not engage physical activities because of bodily pleasures involving appetite, what counts as their voluntary action concerning such pleasures is the activity of rational soul.

### Chapter 3

#### Temperate Action Without Bodily Pleasures

For the temperate person acting temperately, the object of deliberative desire is the good (τὸ ἀγαθόν). The contact between the pleasant and the good allows two possible ways of action. When the pleasure of appetite is within the range of the good, temperate people pursue the pleasant object; when the two are far from a match, the temperate simply avoid the pleasant.

No doubt, temperate people might also decide not to enjoy pleasant things which are not only harmless but also beneficial to health. For instance, a temperate soldier, e.g., Socrates, would not run from the battlefield to take a lunch break, when he is in desperate need of nourishment to stay in good physical condition. But such cases involve the choice of two unqualified goods, a scope that is broader than this thesis intends to address, as this thesis focuses only on examining health as the goal of temperate action.

In their discussions of Aristotle's views on temperance, Howard J. Curzer and Devin Henry focus on the first mode of temperate action, the one involving activities of eating, drinking, or sex.<sup>73</sup> The exemplary actions in their discussion always involve the

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<sup>73</sup> See Howard J. Curzer, "Aristotle's Account of the Virtue of Temperance in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.10-11," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 35 (1997): 5-25;

enjoyment of some bodily pleasure. This procedure has the merit of emphasizing the allowance Aristotle made for temperate people, namely, that they have an appetite for the pleasant in spite of the fact that the pleasant does not contribute to their overall health. However, their discussions appear to be one-sided, as they neglect the role of Aristotle's notion of health, by reference to which the temperate prudently evaluate that which is good for their healthy condition. These scholars consequently fail to explain the importance of the second mode of temperate action, which consists simply in the activity of rational soul that instructs the agent to avoid some bodily pleasures.

Temperate people, knowing their physical condition at a particular time and the healthy state they wish to be in, consistently choose to act rightly in the face of bodily pleasures involving appetite. A consistent performance of such an action, which is accompanied by pleasure only available to the temperate (*EN* VII.12, 1153a34-35), demonstrates that a person's appetite is thoroughly harmonized with correct reason. A discussion of the second mode of temperate action accentuates the pleasure of temperate people that lies in the action itself, as no bodily pleasure is involved in the action. Indeed, Aristotle emphasizes the laborious training required to habituate the part of the soul with appetite.

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Devin Henry, "Aristotle on Pleasure and the Worst Form of Akrasia," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 5 (2002): 255-257.

## Scholarship: A Focus on the First Mode of Temperate Action

I begin with a brief account of two scholarly interpretations of Aristotle's account of temperance or temperate action. I want to show how a good part of the scholarship on this question is inappropriately limited in the discussion of temperate action that consists in the enjoyment of bodily pleasures.

In his discussion of Aristotle's account of the virtue of temperance, Curzer distinguishes two types of temperate action. One of these he describes as "acts of temperate indulgence where the agent indulges in an appropriate amount of an appropriate type of tactile pleasure"; the other he describes as "acts of omission of intemperate objects where the agent refrains from indulging in an inappropriate amount or an inappropriate type of tactile pleasure."<sup>74</sup> The two types of temperate action correspond to the two modes I discussed in Chapter 2, the former consisting in enjoying bodily pleasures, while the latter consists in avoiding them. But his interpretation does not offer an explication of health which the temperate must understand in order to know how to

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<sup>74</sup> Howard J. Curzer, "Aristotle's Account of the Virtue of Temperance in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.10-11," 23.

avoid excessive enjoyment. Moreover, he chooses to illustrate his interpretation only with examples of the first mode of action.

Curzer claims that a healthy diet cannot consist in eating nothing but broccoli, however healthful or nutritious such food may be in general.<sup>75</sup> Presumably, he believes that broccoli, albeit a healthy food according to today's dietary trend, cannot constitute a healthy diet on its own. Such a diet may result in one's body being deficient in protein and minerals, etc., which the body needs to be in good condition. However, without a consideration of Aristotle's account of health, without some knowledge of health and of what contributes to it or harms it, how is one to judge whether a broccoli diet is conducive or harmful to health? My claim is that Aristotle recognized that a temperate person must have some knowledge of health, but that Curzer (like many others) neglects this aspect of Aristotle's view entirely.

Citing the passage from *EN* III.12, 1119b17-19, Henry states that "[t]emperance is a state of character that disposes a person to desire *the right amount* of bodily pleasures and to the right degree and at the right times."<sup>76</sup> He observes that in matters of bodily pleasure, having knowledge of what is moderate and what is excessive in a particular

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<sup>75</sup> Howard J. Curzer, *Aristotle and the Virtues* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 77.

<sup>76</sup> Devin Henry, "Aristotle on Pleasure and the Worst Form of Akrasia," 257. Italic is mine.

situation will only be useful to those who desire and act in accordance with reason, believing that temperate people have and make use of knowledge about the right amount of bodily pleasures.

My discussion on knowledge of health in Chapter I has shown that, although Aristotle does not explicitly state that knowledge of health is part of practical wisdom, textual evidence indicates that temperate action cannot be guaranteed without such knowledge. However, pleasures, or to be precise, bodily pleasures concerning temperate action, are certainly not knowledge. How could practical wisdom come by the knowledge of pleasure? Could one learn the right amount of bodily pleasures from others as a sort of universal principle, or acquire it through experience? The answers to these questions are certainly negative. Take Aristotle's example of bird meat in *EN VI.7* 1141b18-21, discussed in Chapter 1. One can learn from others the universal knowledge that light meats are digestible and healthy, and one can also gather from experience that fowls, such as chicken, belong to the category of light meat. Such universal and particular knowledge, as I argued in Chapter 1, is part of practical knowledge possessed by the temperate person. However, whether eating chicken is pleasant or not is affected by many particular factors that are not in one's control. For instance, this temperate person usually allows himself to enjoy some extra servings of poultry at his favorite diner, however the chicken marsala tonight is singularly coarse, so he did not even enjoy one bite of it.

Moreover, Curzer and Henry both focus on temperate action involving “taking hold of” something by the sense of touch, e.g., eating the first ice-cream, or drinking the first beer, which is why the exemplary actions in their discussion always involve the enjoyment of some bodily pleasure. This procedure has the merit of emphasizing the allowance Aristotle made for temperate people, namely, that they have an appetite for the pleasant in spite of the fact that the pleasant does not contribute to their overall health. However, Curzer and Henry, like many scholars overly stress temperate enjoyment, and hence ignore cases in which the virtuous person takes pleasure in refraining from acting in such a way as to procure bodily pleasure at all. When one connects Aristotle’s account of temperance with the goal of health, their choice of examples appears to provide a one-sided picture of Aristotle’s complete account of temperance and its pleasures.

### Components of Temperate Action

In his account of voluntary action in the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle claims that the voluntary is not to be defined by desire or choice. Rather, it is to be defined “in accordance with thought” (κατὰ τὴν διάνοιαν), and requires that the person have and

actually use the knowledge of “the person, the instrument, and the effect” (*EE* II.9, 1225a35-b3).<sup>77</sup>

What Aristotle refers to as “knowing” (τὸ εἰδότε) can be understood as knowing three things: the direct object of one’s action (ὄν), the instrument or that by/with which one acts (ᾧ), and the effect or that for the sake of which (οὗ ἕνεκα). For instance, the daughters of Pelias know the direct object of their action—their father Pelias, and their instrument—chopping their father to pieces, but they are ignorant of or deceived by Medea about the effect. They were made to believe that their action would be salutary rather than lethal to Pelias (*EE* II.9, 1225b5-6).

*EN* III.1 presents a similar account of knowledge pertaining to voluntary action. Here the list of what one must know contains six particulars:

They are: who is doing it; what he is doing; about what or to what he is doing it; sometimes also what he is doing with—with what instrument, for example; for what result, for example, safety; in what way, for example, gently or hard (1111a2-6).<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Translated by A. Kenny, 30. *EE* II.9, 1225a35-b3: καὶ οὐτε τῆ ὀρέξει οὐτε τῆ προαιρέσει τὸ ἐκούσιον ὄρισταί, λοιπὸν δὴ ὀρίσασθαι τὸ κατὰ τὴν διάνοιαν. δοκεῖ δὴ ἐναντίον εἶναι τὸ ἐκούσιον τῷ ἀκουσίῳ, καὶ τὸ εἰδότε ἢ ὄν ἢ ᾧ ἢ οὗ ἕνεκα (Walzer and Mingay, 1991).

<sup>78</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 32. *EN* III.1, 1111a2-6: τίς τε δὴ καὶ τί καὶ περὶ τί ἢ ἐν τίνι πράττει, ἐνίοτε δὲ καὶ τίνι, οἷον ὀργάνῳ, καὶ ἕνεκα τίνος, οἷον σωτηρίας, καὶ πῶς, οἷον ἡρέμα ἢ σφόδρα (Bywater, 2010).

Among the six constituents, Aristotle regards the knowledge of the object and that for the sake of which (ἐν οἷς ἡ πράξις καὶ οὗ ἕνεκα, *EN* III.1, 1111a18-19) as the most important kinds of knowledge in a voluntary action.

The two accounts of voluntary action emphasize the same knowledge, which the voluntary agent must possess and actively make use of.<sup>79</sup> The account of the kinds of knowledge required for voluntary action doubtlessly applies not only to the first mode of temperate action, which has been a much-analyzed voluntary action. In what follows, I want to show that the second mode of temperate action meets the requirements of voluntary action as well. Temperate people know that, in order to act temperately, they can enjoy that which is good for their health. Besides, they can also allow themselves to enjoy that which is pleasant so long as it is unharmed to the good condition of their body. But they refrain from the pleasures of appetite that are incompatible with their health or with the practical good. Temperate people know the effect of nutriment to their body, hence they are capable of deciding if it is right to procure it. In the case of temperate action that involves nutriment, temperate people engage in the activities of eating, drinking, or sexual relations.

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<sup>79</sup> For an expanded interpretation on Aristotle's account of the constituents of voluntary action, see Kevin L. Flannery S. J., *Action and Character According to Aristotle: The Logic of the Moral Life* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 110-138.

To appreciate the limitation of concentrating on the first mode in the interpretation of Aristotle's thought on temperate action, it is necessary to spend a moment on his general understanding of health. As noted above, he follows a broadly Hippocratic understanding, in terms of which health "lies in a blending and proportion of hot and cold things, either of one in relation to another within the body or to what encompasses it" (*Phys* VII. 3, 246b3-6). This thought, that health is a relation within and without the body, especially bears on the use of knowledge in ethical conduct concerning bodily pleasures. Accordingly, it can be said that "knowing" in Aristotle's formula refers to all the aspects of knowledge that a virtuous person's practical wisdom possesses to guarantee a virtuous action. In acting temperately, temperate people, in the first place, know what constitutes human health in general. In the second place, they know their particular constitution, which might be hotter than usually and require particular regimen. In the third place, they know the current state of their body, which, e.g., falling ill in the flu season, requires different means to recovery than the means employed to stay healthy. All these compose practical wisdom in the correct reason of a temperate soul. Hence, a person will need to know all these things in order to decide and act temperately. This knowledge, as it seems to me, is part of practical knowledge: some of which one learns as universal principles, while others one gathers through life experience.

Compared with other virtues, e.g., bravery or justice, temperance ought to be the easiest to acquire. We may go through life without ever facing the sort danger that is the

occasion for an expression of bravery, but each person tends to one's own constitution and appetite on a daily basis. Aristotle tirelessly insists on the arduous and life-long effort involved in hitting the virtuous mean (e.g., *EN* I.7, 1098a20), and the mean of temperate action, needless to say, is not an exception. People have different constitutions, which are mixtures of the four elements in different ratios (*DA* III.13, 435a22), and that not only naturally predisposes people toward particular kinds of food and drink, but also requires a specific regimen so as to maintain health.

Not only have we the challenge of determining the kind of constitution we are naturally endowed with, so as to procure the appropriate sort of nutriment. We also have to take constantly changing conditions into consideration, as Aristotle conceives health as a bodily condition resulting from an interaction between the contrary elements of the hot and cold, the moist and dry. What our organism needs, and in what quantity, varies from time to time, requiring a temperate person constantly to evaluate according to the formula in the soul.

In short, in order to act temperately, the temperate person must have knowledge of what health consists in, and of how the activities that address our necessary needs contribute to it or harm it. Such knowledge is an integral part of temperance, because it enables the person to decide on the right things that promote the goal of health (*EN* VI.13, 1145a2-6). Accordingly, an interpretation of Aristotle's conception of temperance must first consider his account of health.

## The Second Mode: Activity of the Rational Soul

I would like to put aside bodily pleasures for a while and discuss the role of correct reason in the virtue of temperance. In his ethical discussion, Aristotle is presumably focused on bodily pleasures that are in excess, rather than on what is necessary for vital needs. In *EN VII.14*, he says that some states and changes exceed what is appropriate, and the bodily pleasures involving appetite and pain are evidently in this category. He claims that base people are so called because they pursue excess, while temperate people obviously do not. They enjoy the necessary pleasures “in the right way” (*EN VII.14*, 1154a15).

A temperate person may occasionally eat or drink something solely for the sake of the pleasure it brings, and Aristotle, by allowing this, suggests that temperate people do more than merely accept the pleasures of eating and drinking for the purpose of satisfying necessary needs.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, he implies that health is not something inflexible, and that the living organism can and usually does take in and process more than it strictly needs.

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<sup>80</sup> Charles M. Young, “Aristotle on Temperance,” 524.

This is evident in the common tendency shared among many species of animals for their natural appetite to tend toward excess.<sup>81</sup>

Charles M. Young observes that although temperate people may consume certain foods solely for the sake of pleasure, the value of these enjoyments is limited. As activities that we engage in because we are animals, eating and drinking are not distinctively human, and the pleasure these activities bring is not distinctively human either. In Aristotle's mind, the distinctively human pleasures are found in activities associated with rationality, and it is these activities that should fill our lives as far as possible (*EN* X.7, 1177b26- 1178a8).<sup>82</sup>

Accordingly, a voluntary action does not necessarily require the agent to engage in any physical activity at all. The action can be purely in the activity (*ἐνέργεια*) of the rational part of the soul. Let me explain in two steps how a temperate action can be simply the activity of the rational soul. First, Aristotle believes that activity does not necessarily involve bodily changes:

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<sup>81</sup> See *EN* III.11, 1118b15-16.

<sup>82</sup> Charles M. Young, "Aristotle on Temperance," 535.

For activity belongs not only to change but also to unchangingness (ἀκινήσιας), and indeed there is pleasure at rest (ἐν ἡρεμίᾳ) more than in change (*EN* VII.14, 1154b26-28).<sup>83</sup>

When an activity does not consist in changes, the agent remains still. None of the three types of change discussed in Chapter 1 occurs. For Aristotle, change (κίνησις) on the one hand, always involves a change of state. For instance, when an animal, after a full meal, goes to sleep, it changes from activity to the state of rest. An activity (ἐνέργεια), on the other hand, such as perceiving or contemplating, does not involve any change of state while it is going on. Then how can an activity without bodily changes be accounted a voluntary action?

I have earlier discussed Aristotle's requirements on voluntary action, that it must include the actual use of knowledge, i.e., knowing the object, the instrument, and the effect of one's action. The activities of eating, drinking, and sex—all of which involve various bodily changes—are the means by which the temperate obtain what is good for health. For instance, by eating some meat, a person may recover their good condition after a strenuous exercise. In the same way, remaining still is also good for, or at least compatible with, health. A temperate person, knowing his or her physical condition at a

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<sup>83</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 119. *EN* VII.14, 1154b26-28: οὐ γὰρ μόνον κινήσεώς ἐστὶν ἐνέργεια ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀκινήσιας, καὶ ἡδονὴ μᾶλλον ἐν ἡρεμίᾳ ἐστὶν ἢ ἐν κινήσει (Bywater, 2010).

particular time, does not need to employ any of the means to achieve health. Their action indeed always aims at the good condition of the body.

Among Aristotle's virtues of character, the "actions" proceeding from temperance and bravery more often than not consist in the state of rest which proceeds from a deliberative desire. For instance, fear naturally urges a person to flee, but brave people stand still in the face of imminent danger because they determine they should guard the safety of the country rather than their own life. In such situations, the brave act in accordance with reason, which determines that the practical good in the given circumstance is to refrain from moving. In suppressing the urge to flee, brave people do not effect any bodily change. In such a case, standing still is itself a voluntary action and an expression of bravery.

In the same way, in a temperate action, the actual experience of bodily pleasures need not be decisive. In his characterization of temperate people, Aristotle makes the clear distinction between two changes involving appetite. In one, the appetitive part is moved by the pleasant; in the other, the aroused appetite in turn initiates changes in the agent's body. Temperate people have an appetite for the pleasant, but they do not necessarily allow appetite to be linked with the enjoyment of bodily pleasures. Aristotle describes the temperate as having an intermediate state in relation to bodily pleasures (*μέσως μὲν περὶ ταῦτ' ἔχει*, *EN* III.11, 1119a11-12). The sort of pleasure temperate people might allow themselves he describes as follows:

He finds no intense pleasure in any [bodily pleasures], suffers no pain at their absence, and has no appetite for them, or only a moderate appetite, not to the wrong degree or at the wrong time or anything else at all of that sort. If something is pleasant and conducive to health or good condition, he will desire this and in the right way moderately; and he will desire in the same way anything else that is pleasant, if it is no obstacle to health and good condition, does not deviate from the fine, and does not exceed his means (*EN* III.11, 1119a13-18).<sup>84</sup>

For a temperate person, it is not the pleasure of appetite, but the consideration of the practical good, that determines whether to enjoy a delicacy or not. In a way, temperance is about what one ought to do with the pleasant things that attract appetite. Therefore, a temperate action does not necessarily involve the actual experience of bodily pleasures, because the pleasure of appetite can be at odds with what is good as evaluated by the correct reason of the temperate agent. When a temperate action consists in the appetite's not causing the agent to pursue the pleasant, bodily pleasures involving appetite would not be part of the action.

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<sup>84</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 48. *EN* III.11, 1119a13-18: οὔτε γὰρ ἡδεῖται οἷς μάλιστα ὁ ἀκόλαστος, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον δυσχεραίνει, οὐδ' ὄλως οἷς μὴ δεῖ οὐδὲ σφόδρα τοιούτῳ οὐδενί, οὔτ' ἀπόντων λυπεῖται οὐδ' ἐπιθυμεῖ, ἢ μετρίως, οὐδὲ μᾶλλον ἢ δεῖ, οὐδ' ὅτε μὴ δεῖ, οὐδ' ὄλως τῶν τοιούτων οὐδέν· ὅσα δὲ πρὸς ὑγίειάν ἐστιν ἢ πρὸς εὐεξίαν ἡδέα ὄντα, τούτων ὀρέξεται μετρίως καὶ ὡς δεῖ, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἡδέων μὴ ἐμποδίων τούτοις ὄντων ἢ παρὰ τὸ καλὸν ἢ ὑπὲρ τὴν οὐσίαν (Bywater, 2010).

All animals seem to have the ability to pause before acting on an appetite. For instance, the lion is unlikely to pursue the ox if it senses a cowherd nearby. But it is the same appetite that both moves the lion to pounce or restrains it from motion, arising in both cases from its natural impulse for survival. By contrast, in exercising restraint, the temperate agent assumes the state of rest for the sake of health, rather than mere survival.

### Benefits of Considering the Second Mode

For the temperate person, acting well (*εὐπραξία*) can simply consist in remaining in the state of rest (*ἐν ἡρεμίᾳ*) in which the agent does not enjoy any bodily pleasures involving appetite. The second mode of temperate action is simply the activity of the rational soul.

In what follows, I explain the reasons why I find it important to draw attention to the second mode of temperate action. In the first place, the second mode evinces correct reason as the principle of the action, since it is an activity of the rational soul. The activities of the rational part of the soul can include reaching the right decision, for instance, drawing on one's knowledge of health, and utilizing one's knowledge about the effects of a particular regimen on one's body, etc. In the second place, the second mode

makes sense of Aristotle's preoccupation with education as a crucial preliminary to proper ethical study. The education of children and teenagers consists mostly of habituating the part of soul with appetite and emotions to listen to and obey correct reason. Consistent performance of the second mode of temperate action thus demonstrates the harmony between appetite and correct reason. Finally, the second mode clarifies the pleasures that belong to temperate people when they avoid bodily pleasures involving appetite. This is the pleasure that Aristotle claims perfects and supervenes on an activity.

### **Correct Reason as the Principle of Temperate Action**

In the first chapter I explained that Aristotle discusses health in two ways. First, temperate people know the reason why they act in a temperate way. This is because knowledge of health, which composes part of their practical wisdom, allows them to know why certain activities with respect to the necessary balance are good for their health in changing conditions. As Curzer points out, knowing the reason why an action is done is the intellectual component of a virtuous action; it belongs to practical wisdom.<sup>85</sup> Such knowledge is more complicated than merely monitoring corporeal signs of deficiency and satiation; for Aristotle's notion of health involves the understanding of one's own constitution, the proper nutriment, and how to procure that nutriment.

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<sup>85</sup> Howard J. Curzer, *Aristotle and the Virtues*, 303.

For instance, one might have an overly hot constitution, in which case nutriment that contains components of the hot element should be taken warily. Right reason provides the insight that measures the pleasure of appetite and evaluates whether or not it matches the fine. Without measuring against overall health, how does one know one's liver is able to process another beer, or one's blood can tolerate even the first helping of ice-cream?

At the outset of *EN*, Aristotle stipulates two prerequisites from his audience: in the first place, they must have some experience of life and its goings-on; in the second place, they must want to (and be able to) control their desires and harmonize them with correct reason, and not live simply by the feelings of the moment (τοῖς πάθεσιν ἀκολουθητικῶς, *EN* I.3, 1095a4). The second requirement, harmonizing appetitive desire with correct reason, is central to virtuous action. Aristotle expresses this “correct reason” (ὀρθὸς λόγος) principle in *EN* III.7, stating that virtuous actions need to be done “in the way that correct reason prescribes” (*EN* III.5, 1114b29-30).<sup>86</sup> In *EN* VI.13, he repeats the point that “it is not merely the state in accord with [κατὰ] the correct reason, but the state involving [μετὰ] the correct reason that is virtue” (1144b26-27).<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 39. *EN* III.7, 1114b29-30: οὕτως ὡς ἂν ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος προστάξῃ (Bywater, 2010).

<sup>87</sup> *EN* VI.13, 1144b26-27: ἔστι γὰρ οὐ μόνον ἢ κατὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον, ἀλλ' ἢ μετὰ τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου ἕξις ἀρετῆ ἐστίν (Bywater, 2010).

This requirement places correct reason at both the beginning and the end of an action. The pleasant (τὸ ἡδύ), although it is that which arouses the activity of appetite, cannot by itself initiate temperate action. At the beginning of their action, the temperate consider what is good (ἀγαθόν) for their action, rather than what would please their appetite. In the scope of temperate action, this is a transition from doing something because of liking or disliking it to acting because of a decision that aims at what is good for one's overall health. It is a transition from a naturally ordered life to a rationally ordered life.

The discussion of the second mode of temperate action highlights the rational transition. According to Corcilius's reading, a temperate person is not guided by the promptings of natural appetite for the first nutriment that is perceived as pleasant when the meeting of nutriment and the bodily needs is a sort of being "active with the mean." Instead, a temperate action is constructed around the individual's own understanding of what is good for their health.

### **Habituating Appetite**

The second of mode of temperate action—action involving no change—evinces the harmony between appetite and correct reason. But correct reason alone cannot lead to virtuous action. For those who desire and act in accordance with a rational principle, practical wisdom will be an essential component of an excellent action. However, correct

reason is not always sufficient to move the agent, since there may be an opposing appetite, and one may act on that appetite instead (as the incontinent person does). In the *DA* III.9 Aristotle warns that “even when intellect [τοῦ νοῦ] does command, and thought [τῆς διανοίας] does say to flee or pursue something, one is not moved [changed, κινεῖται], but acts [πράττει] in accordance with appetite, as, for example, the incontinent man does” (433a1-3).<sup>88</sup> Moreover, appetite is apt to disregard orders from above, “since it is capable of moving [κινεῖν] each of the [bodily] parts” (*EN* VII.3,1147a35).<sup>89</sup> Aristotle states that the temperate’s appetite is in agreement with correct reason. In other words, in a less than virtuous person, appetite can overwhelm, even undermine, the authority of rational soul, even when a person is determined to pursue what is good for health. For instance, incontinent people decide to act temperately, yet their appetite nonetheless leads them to the enjoyment of bodily pleasures (*EN* VII.8, 1151a1-5). Moreover, continent people seem to act temperately, because they abstain from the enjoyment of bodily pleasures. But they are not the same with temperate people, because continent people still have

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<sup>88</sup> Translated by C. Shields, *DA* III. 9, 433a1-3: ἔτι καὶ ἐπιτάττοντος τοῦ νοῦ καὶ λεγούσης τῆς διανοίας φεύγειν τι ἢ διώκειν οὐ κινεῖται, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν πράττει, οἷον ὁ ἀκρατής (Ross, 1956).

<sup>89</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 104. *EN* VII.3,1147a35: κινεῖν γὰρ ἕκαστον δύναται τῶν μορίων (Bywater, 2010).

unsatisfied base appetites for bodily pleasures (*EN* VII.9, 1152a1-3). The unsatisfied appetite, as Curzer describes, causes a sort of pain in the continent people.<sup>90</sup>

In this sense, the second mode of temperate action shows that appetite is habituated to agree with correct reason. Temperate people do not possess unsatisfied desire in terms of the pleasant of appetite. Rather, their appetite consistently complies with the object of deliberative desire—that which is good for health. But appetite, as discussed in chapter 2, is naturally inclined to impel an agent to pursue bodily pleasures. However, appetite is a type of passion (πάθη), which occurs without reason, while states of character, such as temperance, are “responsible for whether these emotions occur in accord with reason, or in opposition to it” (*EE* II.2, 1220b18-20).<sup>91</sup>

Hence, Aristotle’s conception of education is focused on first developing states of character. The *Politics* unfolds a lengthy program of education that aims to condition the physical body and the non-rational part of the soul, as well to promote the acquisition of knowledge.<sup>92</sup> The appetite and spirit of the non-rational part of the soul are the focus of education until maturity, presumably because the emergence of the rational part of the soul is delayed in children. In *EN* II.1–4, Aristotle expounds on the importance of

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<sup>90</sup> Howard J. Curzer, *Aristotle and the Virtues*, 71.

<sup>91</sup> Translated by A. Kenny, 18. *EE* II.2, 1220b18-20: ἕξεις δέ εισιν ὅσαι αἰτιαί εισι τοῦ ταῦτα ἢ κατὰ λόγον ὑπάρχειν ἢ ἐναντίως (Walzer and Mingay, 1991).

<sup>92</sup> For Aristotle’s account of education, see *Politics* VIII.

habituation in acquiring character. In the case of temperance, habituation involves appetite's learning to follow rational command.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Aristotle discusses two types of appetite in *EN* III.11, one being the natural appetite that is common to all animals, and the other being the particular appetite found in each individual human being (*EN* III.11, 1118b6-7). As Charles Young observes, it seems that Aristotle's distinction between natural and particular appetite is not one between two different kinds of appetite, but one between different grounds on which the appetite arises. The two sorts of appetite are different in respect of the physical bases of our appetites for food and drink and the pleasures we may take in their satisfaction. If the two sorts of appetite arise from different physical bases, their errors would also call for distinctive ways of correction. Young believes that proper upbringing can fix natural appetite's excessive inclination, but that the errors of particular appetite calls for the intervention of practical wisdom.<sup>93</sup>

I agree with Young's view, but with one slight modification. It seems to me that practical wisdom guides both natural and particular appetite from erring, since proper upbringing derives from a sort of externalized practical wisdom possessed by parents, pedagogues, or the society as a whole. Children have yet to activate their own rational soul in the way required to check their own appetites, because, according to Aristotle's

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<sup>93</sup> Charles M. Young, "Aristotle on Temperance," 535.

view, the rational part of the soul takes years to develop to its proper capacity in an unimpeded cultivation. He believes that reason is one of the natural sources of action (the other is appetite), “which will be present if development proceeds without being stunted” (*EE* II.6, 1224b29-30).<sup>94</sup> He says that one has to reach a certain age to be qualified as an agent of action (*EE* II.6, 1224a27-31). Hence, practical wisdom is in charge of the tempering of both natural and particular appetite.

Corcilius points to an animal’s naturally built-in mechanism of memory to explain the association between the pleasure of appetite and animals’ anticipatory pleasure in getting a meal, saying that “this anticipation can be explained by means of associations with genuine sensations of pleasure or pain, namely by drawing on past perceptions of things which did actually restore the animal’s nature.”<sup>95</sup> Hendrik Lorenz also believes that such a natural correspondence exists between appetite and the pursuit of nutriment in non-rational animals. He observes that “appetitive impulse, by contrast, involves the application of a general evaluative outlook that is inflexibly and unmodifiably built into the constitution, not just of our organism, but of every animal’s organism.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Translated by A. Kenny, 28-29. *EE* II.6, 1224b29-30: ὅτι ἐωμένης τῆς γενέσεως καὶ μὴ πηρωθείσης ἐνέσται (Walzer and Mingay, 1991). In order to focus on my thesis topic, I set aside spirit (*thumos*), another source of action, in the present context.

<sup>95</sup> Klaus Corcilius, “Aristotle’s Definition of Non-Rational Pleasure and Pain and Desire,” 140.

<sup>96</sup> Hendrik Lorenz, *The Brute Within: Appetitive Desire in Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 194.

Without the discipline of correct reason, such a natural correspondence would allow appetite to run its natural course uncontrolled. Aristotle is explicit about the danger of taking a laissez-faire attitude towards children's inborn appetite. Intense appetite struggles with reason and can even lead a person to depart from a well-considered decision (*EN VII.3*, 1147b2-3). An intense appetite could conceivably alter the condition of a person's body to such an extent that the rational power is temporarily disabled. This is the sort of condition Aristotle describes in people who are affected by such strong feelings that they are unable to make use of the knowledge in their soul. He says that "spirited reactions, sexual appetites, and some conditions of this sort clearly [both disturb knowledge and] disturb the body as well, and even produce fits of madness in some people" (*EN VII.3*, 1147a15-17).<sup>97</sup>

Concerning this claim, Lorenz observes:

[Aristotle] must think people who are in the grip of such states continue to be sensitive and responsive to their circumstances, as they grasp them by way of their senses. In other words, it must be part of his theory that the non-rational part or

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<sup>97</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 104. *EN VII.3*, 1147a15-17: θυμοὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐπιθυμίαι ἀφροδισίων καὶ ἔνια τῶν τοιούτων ἐπιδήλωσ καὶ τὸ σῶμα μεθιστᾶσιν, ἐνίοις δὲ καὶ μανίας ποιοῦσιν (Bywater, 2010).

aspect of a person's action-producing apparatus can continue to operate while the rational part or aspect is, for one reason or another, not in functioning order.<sup>98</sup>

In short, appetite can be misled and caused to deviate by an immoderate preference for the pleasant. Since appetite does not need the participation, or even the approval, of reason to push a person to enjoyment, a person would be functioning, as it were, on the level of non-rational animal, if his or her action is entirely originated from appetite for pleasure.

In his discussion of appetite, Aristotle draws attention to the possible errors of such an appetite. While the common and natural appetite desires bodily goods even to excess (τὸ πλεῖον) (*EN* III. 11, 1118b9-11,15-16), particular appetite is so called because each person might have an appetite for specific sorts of food, drink, or sex (*EN* III.11, 1118b13). Particular appetite errs both in the array of its objects and its intensity, which can make people become lovers of the certain sort of pleasure:

With the pleasures that are distinctive of different people, many make errors and in many ways; for people are called lovers of something if they enjoy the wrong things, or if they enjoy something in the wrong way. And in all these ways intemperate people go to excess; for some of the things they enjoy are hateful, and

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<sup>98</sup> Hendrik Lorenz, *The Brute Within*, 197-198.

hence wrong; distinctive pleasures that it is right to enjoy they enjoy more than is right, and more than most people enjoy them (*EN* III.11, 1118b21-27).<sup>99</sup>

Aristotle believes appetite can and should accept rational guidance. Without it, children's natural born appetites would eventually wipe out any rational capacity from their soul. He mentions several methods by which appetitive capacity is made to share in reason:

[T]he [part] with appetites and in general desires shares in reason in a way, insofar as it both listens to reason and obeys it. This is the way in which we are said to 'listen to reason' from father or friends, as opposed to the way in which [we 'give the reason'] in mathematics. The non-rational part also [obeys and] is persuaded in some way by reason, as is shown by correction, and by every sort of reproof and exhortation (*EN* I.13, 1102b30-1103a1).<sup>100</sup>

The rational soul is able to break the natural concatenation of pleasant objects, appetite, and pursuit, and train the appetite to do what it does not naturally do, but is naturally

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<sup>99</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 47. *EN* III.11, 1118b21-28: περὶ δὲ τὰς ἰδίας τῶν ἡδονῶν πολλοὶ καὶ πολλαχῶς ἀμαρτάνουσιν. τῶν γὰρ φιλοτιούτων λεγομένων ἢ τῷ χαίρειν οἷς μὴ δεῖ, ἢ τῷ μᾶλλον ἢ ὡς οἱ πολλοί, ἢ μὴ ὡς δεῖ, κατὰ πάντα δ' οἱ ἀκόλαστοι ὑπερβάλλουσιν· καὶ γὰρ χαίρουσιν ἐνίοις οἷς οὐ δεῖ (μισητὰ γάρ), καὶ εἴ τισι δεῖ χαίρειν τῶν τοιούτων, μᾶλλον ἢ δεῖ καὶ ἢ ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ χαίρουσιν (Bywater, 2010).

<sup>100</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 18. *EN* I.13, 1102b30-1103a1: τὸ δ' ἐπιθυμητικὸν καὶ ὄλως ὀρεκτικὸν μετέχει πως, ἢ κατήκοόν ἐστιν αὐτοῦ καὶ πειθαρχικόν· οὕτω δὲ καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τῶν φίλων φαμέν ἔχειν λόγον, καὶ οὐχ ὥσπερ τῶν μαθηματικῶν. ὅτι δὲ πείθεται πως ὑπὸ λόγου τὸ ἄλογον, μὴνυεὶ καὶ ἡ νουθέτησις καὶ πᾶσα ἐπιτίμησις τε καὶ παράκλησις (Bywater, 2010).

capable of acquiring. The process of acquiring temperance is in a way like acquiring a craft, such as skill with a musical instrument. In the process, the appetitive part of the soul learns to run, as it were, to the excess which it is naturally inclined to pursue.

Mariska Leunissen advances an illuminating exposition of Aristotle's account of acquiring virtue. The formation of a virtuous disposition, such as temperance, would be just like acquiring the capacity to play the lyre:

by frequently realizing what is presumably a cluster of natural capacities in a certain craft-like way that is not predetermined by nature (e.g., moving one's fingers along the lyre in certain patterns, learning to discern and remember certain melodies and rhythms), a new craft or skill or disposition comes to be.<sup>101</sup>

Appetite is also a natural capacity that can be “crafted” by parents or tutors. It can learn to await rational instruction rather than immediately propelling the agent to pursue some object. Just as we are (in normal cases) born with the capacity to move our fingers, but in order to play lyre we have to acquire the habit of moving fingers in certain ways, perhaps even to overcome some instinctive movements of the hand which may impede the mastery of fingering, so too, in a similar way, it is not against nature for appetite to learn to obey reason. Book II 1-3 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* discusses the acquisition of

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<sup>101</sup> Mariska Leunissen, *From Natural Character to Moral Virtue in Aristotle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 126.

virtues of character in just these terms. The claim made there is that virtues of character are not ensured by nature, but are also not against nature. Aristotle explicates the contrast between “by nature” and “not against nature” in the following passage:

A stone, for instance, by nature moves downwards, and habituation could not make it move upwards, not even if you threw it up ten thousand times to habituate it; nor could habituation make fire move downwards, or bring anything that is by nature in one condition into another condition. And so the virtues arise in us neither by nature nor against nature. Rather, we are by nature able to acquire them, and we are completed through habit (*EN* II.1, 1103a20-26).<sup>102</sup>

It can be said that training appetite to obey correct reason breaks down the natural impulses that children are born with. The path to what I have described as the second mode of temperate action, namely, the mode in which the appetite is restrained from urging the agent to pursue the pleasant things it wanted, can be seen as the initial stage of moral training, consisting in a transition from natural behavior to habituated action. At birth, we are endowed with natural appetite. By nature, appetite directly causes the pursuit of nutriment, but it can be shaped to agree with correct reason.

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<sup>102</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 18. *EN* II.1, 1103a20-26: οἷον ὁ λίθος φύσει κάτω φερόμενος οὐκ ἂν ἐθισθεῖη ἄνω φέρεσθαι, οὐδ’ ἂν μυριάκις αὐτὸν ἐθίξῃ τις ἄνω ῥιπτῶν, οὐδὲ τὸ πῦρ κάτω, οὐδ’ ἄλλο οὐδὲν τῶν ἄλλως πεφυκότων ἄλλως ἂν ἐθισθεῖη. οὐτ’ ἄρα φύσει οὔτε παρὰ φύσιν ἐγγίνονται αἱ ἀρεταί, ἀλλὰ πεφυκόσι μὲν ἡμῖν δέξασθαι αὐτάς, τελειούμενοις δὲ διὰ τοῦ ἔθους (Bywater, 2010).

Training is an essential part of Aristotle’s account of temperance in relation to the bodily pleasures of appetite. The training of appetite obviously leads to a qualitative change in the capacity of desire to incite action. The appetite of temperate people is entirely in harmony with correct reason, so that a temperate action is, from beginning to end, in accordance with reason. The qualitatively changed appetite ultimately prepares the right beginning for a virtuous character of the soul. This line of thinking reinforces Aristotle’s requirement, set down at the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, to the effect that in order to be an apt student of noble and just things a person has to be brought up in noble habits. He claims that “we need to have been brought up in fine habits if we are to be adequate students of fine and just things, and of political questions generally” (*EN* I.4, 1095b4-6).<sup>103</sup> Children live by appetite and feelings,<sup>104</sup> whereas a fine upbringing certainly includes (though is not limited to) the training of appetite.

Habituating appetite obviously carries a lot of weight in Aristotle’s ethics. Temperate people do not act well merely because they have certain pieces of true information concerning what must be done in order to procure health, nor is such information sufficient to enable them to act temperately. Rather, temperate action issues

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<sup>103</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 4. *EN* I.4, 1095b4-6: διὸ δεῖ τοῖς ἔθεσιν ἤχθαι καλῶς τὸν περὶ καλῶν καὶ δικαίων καὶ ὅλως τῶν πολιτικῶν ἀκουσόμενον ἱκανῶς (Bywater, 2010).

<sup>104</sup> See *EN* III.12, 1119b5-6; also *EN* I.3, 1095a4.

from the unified desire for the unqualified good, and one's knowledge of health constantly adjusts one's desire in accord with changing circumstances.<sup>105</sup>

### **The Pleasure Supervenes upon Temperate Action**

Aristotle believes that the pleasure or pain involved in action indicates the person's state of character. For instance, continent people avoid bodily pleasures, and hence their actions outwardly appear to be the same as those of the temperate person who abstains (i.e. the second mode of temperate action). However, unlike temperate people, continent people actually experience the pain of unsatisfied desire in their avoidance of bodily pleasures.<sup>106</sup>

By focusing on temperate actions that do not involve bodily pleasures, one can also identify the pleasure characteristic of temperate people. Aristotle claims that temperate people avoid bodily pleasures, but nonetheless enjoy pleasures even when they are not enjoying delicacies (*EN* VII. 6 1153a34-5). He claims that:

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<sup>105</sup> Fernando Inciarte Armiñán, *First Principles, Substance and Action*, 363.

<sup>106</sup> See also Howard J. Curzer, *Aristotle and the Virtues* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 82n10.

We must take someone’s pleasure or pain following on his actions to be a sign of his state. For if someone who abstains from bodily pleasures enjoys the abstinence itself, he is temperate (*EN* II.3, 1104b3-6).<sup>107</sup>

In connection with temperate people, two sort of pleasures come under consideration. One is the bodily pleasures they abstain from, and the other is the pleasure they take in their excellent action. The second type of pleasure seems to refer to the pleasure that, according to Aristotle, “perfects” or supervenes on an activity. This pleasure, as Gavin Lawrence observes, might mean that the agent appreciates an activity “for what it is, and revealing it, *qua* enjoyed, as something pursued for itself by the agent, as an end (for example to enjoy watching the movie is to watch it for its own sake, to enjoy a temperate act is to do it for its own sake, as an end.)”<sup>108</sup>

Earlier I cited a passage in which Aristotle claims that acting well (*εὐπραξία*) is itself an end. Moreover, I have argued that the *eupraxia* of temperance more often than not involves no bodily pleasures. Such a temperate *eupraxia* consist simply in the activity of the rational soul. In such cases, temperate people also experience pleasure, even when

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<sup>107</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 20. *EN* II.3, 1104b3-6: σημείον δὲ δεῖ ποιῆσθαι τῶν ἔξεων τὴν ἐπιγινομένην ἡδονὴν ἢ λύπην τοῖς ἔργοις: ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἀπεχόμενος τῶν σωματικῶν ἡδονῶν καὶ αὐτῷ τούτῳ χαίρων σώφρων (Bywater, 2010).

<sup>108</sup> Gavin Lawrence, “Acquiring Character: Becoming Grown-Up 1,” 234 -284, in *Moral Psychology and Human Action in Aristotle*, ed., M. Pakaluk and Giles Pearson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 261.

they do not take enjoyment in pleasant things. It can well be that, in this case, a temperate person experiences the pleasure proper (ἡ οἰκεία ἡδονή, *EN* X.5 1175a30-31) to temperate action. In *Nicomachean Ethics* X.5, Aristotle observes that proper pleasure is that which “arise[s] from the activity in itself” (*EN* X.5 1175b21-22).<sup>109</sup> He believes that, in their avoidance of unnecessary of bodily pleasures, temperate people do have their own experience of pleasure (*EN* VII.12, 1153a34-35).

Action always takes place under changing circumstances, and the actions of virtuous people cannot always be specified with precision. For instance, in the first mode of temperate action—the enjoyment of bodily pleasures—the temperate allow themselves to enjoy bodily pleasures for their own sake. Their action is temperate because their enjoyment does not put their health at risk. Health is, of course, not a performance on a tightrope; it has a range and allows for variation and differences of circumstance, and admits of more or less (*EN* X.3, 1173a25-30). Accordingly, since our appetite naturally develops in the direction of excess (*EN* III.11, 1118b15-16), the safer and easier way to hit the intermediate state would be inclining toward the deficiency (*EN* II.9, 1109a15-19, 1109b25-26), namely, deliberately refraining from enjoyment.

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<sup>109</sup> Translated by T. Irwin, 160. *EN* X.5 1175b21-22: οἰκείαι δ’ εἰσὶν αἱ ἐπὶ τῆ ἐνεργείᾳ καθ’ αὐτὴν γινόμεναι (Bywater, 2010).

Temperate people can enjoy more than their bare necessary needs, and do not have to suffer the pain of wanting something when it is not available. Accordingly, temperate action is typically within the approximate range of a virtuous person's goal. Nonetheless, the pleasant taste of a delicacy, for example, might distract even a person of settled character from temperate action *per se*, just as the musician can be distracted from a rational discourse upon hearing a melody (*EN X.5*, 1175b1-14). Proper pleasure is undoubtedly also supervenient upon the first mode of temperate action, yet a person can be easily distracted from proper pleasure by the intense bodily pleasures. Moreover, since the first mode of temperate action consists in the enjoyment of bodily pleasures, how can we tell if the enjoyment is actually beyond the temperate mean? The convergence of the two types of pleasure might make it hard to evaluate whether the first mode is a temperate action or not.

As Young points out, although temperate people may consume certain foods solely for the sake of pleasure, the value of these enjoyments is limited. As activities that we engage in because we are animals, eating and drinking are not distinctively human, and the pleasures these activities bring are not distinctively human pleasures. In Aristotle's mind, the distinctively human pleasures are found in activities associated with rationality, and it is these activities that should fill our lives so far as possible (*EN X.7*,

1177b26- 1178a8).<sup>110</sup> The pleasures of temperance are therefore double. One is the pleasure the temperate take in their enjoyment of pleasant things, the other is the pleasure they take in their own virtuous actions. The latter pleasure is not found in a bodily change, a point that is only brought to the fore in the second mode of temperate action.

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<sup>110</sup> Charles M. Young, “Aristotle on Temperance,” 535.

## Conclusion

In this thesis I have attempted to enlarge on the importance of Aristotle's notion of health in his account of the virtue temperance, in particular, in the second mode of temperate action that excludes the enjoyment of bodily pleasures involving appetite.

Aristotle's conception of health seldom if ever comes up in the literature on his theory of temperance. This is a surprising and regrettable omission, and one that I have tried to correct. Aristotle claims that health can exist as a formula in the soul, which implies that a person can come to a rational understanding of what one's own health requires. As a result, the temperate would not only know how to act temperately, but also, having the formula of health in their soul, know the reason why an action is temperate. Moreover, Aristotle states that a healthy condition of the body consists in a blending and proportion of hot and cold things. The hot and cold things are substances that are needed to supply various bodily deficiencies. Animals require perceptual capacities, the sense of touch at the least, to get hold of raw foodstuff and process it into last nutriment (e.g., blood in the human body) that can be used in nutritive activity to maintain life. Aristotle implies there is a teleological connection between animal appetite and the sense of touch's taking hold of the nutriment. In order to maintain the right formula or ratio of the hot and cold things that compose a healthy body, a person needs to be alert in the

provisions of nutriment, lest an over-supply or an ill-fitted nutriment upsets their body's due proportion.

Aristotle states that temperance is about bodily pleasures involving appetite and pain. These pleasures involve pain because the activities in which such pleasures are found are connected with replenishing bodily needs. Unlike non-rational animals, human appetite does not have to respond directly to the pleasant and painful signals from the body. The temperate aim only at those pleasant activities of the body that reason would also endorse (or at least would not oppose), namely, the pleasures of eating, drinking, or sex—the first two activities procuring nutriment for the nutritive soul and the third being a way of using nutriment. Instead, temperate people consider first what is good for their health, and then choose either to pursue some bodily pleasure or to avoid it. This pursuit and avoidance are what I have described as the two modes of temperate action.

Temperate action may seem to be one thing, but there are two different modes of action that its full and developed expression requires. Sometimes, the temperate express their temperance in what they do and enjoy, whereas at other times they express it in what they avoid doing, an avoidance that can be no less enjoyable than gross bodily pleasure to a mature ethical person.

I believe that Aristotle's notion of health calls for some more attention to be paid to the second mode of temperate action, namely, action that does not involve bodily pleasures. This sort of action highlights correct reason as the principle of all temperate

action, as it is simply the activity of the rational soul (correct reason). In performing such an action, the temperate person does not initiate bodily changes in response to the urging of appetite. What I have called the second mode of temperate action also draws due attention to the urgency with which Aristotle emphasized the need for due habituation of children's appetite, since only when appetite is habitually in agreement with correct reason can a person consistently perform temperate actions. Finally, a temperate action that does not involve bodily pleasures helps us to comprehend the place of proper pleasure, which Aristotle claims to perfect and supervene on an activity. In performing the second mode of temperate action, the temperate do not undergo bodily changes. Accordingly, such an action accentuates the pleasure that supervenes on the virtuous activity, a kind of pleasure which does not require any changes in the body.

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