

THE BASIC DISTINCTIONS (THE BASIC PHENOMENA) DEALING WITH HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY:

THE VOLUNTARY	–behavior done willingly or “wantingly”; includes conduct of animals & children;
CHOICE	–a decision dealing with means, made after deliberation has sorted out the means;
DELIBERATION	–the thoughtful “shaking out” of ways of acting in view of a purpose;
WISH	–three levels: a. wanting something that cannot be done; b. wanting something that can be done, but not by me; c. wanting something as a purpose; (it is wanted “at a distance,” through “means” that lead to it, not immediately). A wish that kicks into action is an intention.

[CHOICE is a species of the voluntary; WISH is rational wanting]

PRAISE AND BLAME (bestowed on the voluntary), PITY AND PARDON (bestowed on the involuntary)

DETAILED ANALYSIS:

- a. THE VOLUNTARY: The *voluntary* is defined against the *involuntary* (Ch 1); the involuntary can be caused by two things:
 - compulsion (the origin of the conduct is outside the agent)
 - ignorance (the origin is inside the agent, but the agent is ignorant of something essential)
 - in treating COMPULSION, Aristotle mainly asks whether *fear* makes an action involuntary, and he concludes that it does not; rather it intensifies our choice; still, we choose our conduct not in itself, but only to escape the fearful alternative; we are, therefore, not the kind of person that would do such things in themselves;
 - also: the pleasant and the noble do not force or compel us from without
 - in treating IGNORANCE, he asks what kind of things we can be ignorant of;
 - and he shows how *involuntary* conduct is different from *nonvoluntary* conduct: for something to be involuntary, it must be something we regret; if we don't care about it, then it is just nonvoluntary.
- b. CHOICE (Ch 2): choice is not appetite, wish, or opinion; Aristotle's description is mostly negative
 - here Aristotle makes his important distinction between three kinds of “wishables,” as noted above
 - choice gets clarified through the analysis of deliberation in Ch 3;
 - the chosen is “the having been deliberated about”: *το προβεβουλευμενον* (1112a15)
- c. DELIBERATION (Ch 3): what do we deliberate about? (Let's distinguish this from “policy studies”);
 - not what a fool or madman deliberates about [some things *are* excluded by this criterion]; also NOT:
 1. eternal things [about the cosmos, about mathematical truths]
 2. things that change but always in the same way [movement of the heavens, rotation of the seasons]
 3. things that change in a random way, now in one way and now in another [snow storms]
 4. chance things [lottery]
 5. human affairs done by others
 6. YES about what is in our power & can be done
 7. NOT about exact sciences such as writing the letters of the alphabet
 8. YES about what can be done by us, but not always in the same way
 9. and the more elaborated the art or science, the less deliberation it involves
- d. WISH (Ch 4) and what seems good to each man; in Greek this word is *boulēsis*, which must be distinguished from *bouleusis*, the word for deliberation.
- e. Action & the shaping of character (Ch 5): we are responsible for moral appearances

The rest of Book III deals with the central virtues of courage (which is treated first) and temperance. Book IV deals with other virtues. The details of these analyses are very illuminating. Recall that Books I–VI deal with virtue and vice, and that Book VII makes the “new beginning” with self-control and weakness.