

VII

*specialized invitations to theoretical philosophy
and especially to the life in accordance with intellect, some based
on the real nature of a human being, and others based
on what is evident, which call to mind this very proposition*
[4.1-4]

One might see the same point more clearly on the basis of the following. [7] To be intelligent and cognizant is in itself valuable for humans, for it is not possible to live as a human without these; and it also provides something useful for living a life, for nothing good happens to us unless it is reasoned and acted upon intelligently. [11] Moreover, whether living successfully consists in enjoyment, or in having virtue, or in intelligence, in accordance with all these we should do philosophy, for these things come to us most of all, and in a pure way, through doing philosophy. [15] Furthermore, part of us is soul, part body; and the former rules, the latter is ruled; the former uses the latter, which subserves it as a tool [18]. Further, it is always with reference to that which is ruling and using that the use of that which is ruled, i.e. the tool, is coordinated [20]. And of the soul one part is reason (which by nature rules and judges our affairs), the other part is a follower and is naturally ruled. [41.7-22]

And everything is well disposed when it is in accordance with its proper virtue, for to obtain this is good. [24] Moreover, it's when a thing's most authoritative and most estimable parts have their virtue that it is well disposed; therefore the natural virtue of that which is better is naturally better. [27] And that which is by nature more of a ruler and more deserving of command is better, as a human is than the other animals; thus soul is better than body (for it is more authoritative), as is the part of the soul which has reason and thought, for this kind of thing is what prescribes and proscribes and says how we ought or ought not to act. [42.1] Whatever, then, is the virtue of this part is necessarily the most valuable virtue of all, both for everything in general and for us; in fact, I think one might actually take the position, that we are this part, either alone or especially. [41.22-42.4]

Furthermore, when whatever the natural function of each thing is (not by coincidence but in itself) is said to be accomplished most beautifully, then it should also be said to be good, and the most authoritative virtue should be taken to be the one by which each thing naturally achieves this very thing. [9] So something that is composite and divisible into parts has many different activities, but something that is by nature simple and whose being is not relative to anything else necessarily has a single virtue in itself in the strict sense. [42.5-13]

So if a human is a simple animal whose being is ordered according to reason and intellect, there is no other function for him than only the most precise truth, i.e. having the truth about existing things; but if he is naturally composed of several capacities, it is clear that, of the several things he can

naturally achieve, the best of them is always his function, e.g. of the doctor health, and of the pilot safety. [20] And we can name no function of thought, or of the thinking part of our soul, which is better than truth. [22] Truth therefore is the most authoritative function of this part of the soul. [42.13-23]

And it performs this simply with knowledge, and it performs this more with more knowledge; and the most authoritative end for this is observation. [25] For when of two things one is valuable because of the other, the one on account of which the other is valuable is better and more valuable; for example, pleasure is better than pleasant things, and health than healthy things, for the latter are said to be productive of the former. [29] Thus nothing is more valuable than intelligence, which we say is a capacity of the most authoritative thing in us, to judge one disposition in comparison with another, for the cognitive part, both apart and in combination, is better than all the rest of the soul, and knowledge is its virtue. [42.23-43.5]

Therefore its function is none of what are called 'parts of virtue', for it is better than all of them and the end produced is always better than the knowledge that produces it. [8] Nor is every virtue of the soul in that way a function, nor is success; for if it is to be productive, different ones will produce different things, as the skill of building (which is not part of any house) produces a house; however, intelligence is a part of virtue and of success, for we say that success either comes from it or is it. [14] Thus according to this argument too, it is impossible for this to be productive knowledge; for the end must be better than its coming to be, and nothing is better than intelligence, unless it is one of the things that have been mentioned and none of those is a function distinct from it. [18] Therefore one should say that this kind of knowledge is an observational one, since it is surely impossible for production to be its end. [20] Hence being intelligent and observant is a function of the virtue, and this of all things is the most valuable for humans, comparable, I think, to seeing for the eyes, which one would choose to have even if there wasn't anything different that was going to result from it beyond the vision itself. [43.5-25]

Again, if we appreciate sight for its own sake, this gives sufficient witness that everybody appreciates being intelligent and cognizant to the highest degree. [27] Again, if someone appreciates a particular thing because something else coincides with it, it is clear that he will wish more for that which has more of it: for example, if someone happens to choose walking because it's healthy, and it occurred to him that running is more healthy and is possible for him, then he will choose this even more, as soon as he recognizes it. [44.4] Further, if true opinion is similar to intelligence, given that having true opinions is valuable in that and insofar as it is similar to intelligence on account of its truth, and if true opinion exists more in intelligence, then being intelligent will be more valuable than having true opinions. [43.25-44.9]

But yet, living is distinguished from not living by sense perception, and living is defined by its presence and power, and if this is removed life is not worth living, as though life itself were removed along with sense perception. [13] But among the senses the capacity of sight is distinguished by being the most distinct, and for this reason as well we value it most; but every sense perception is a capacity for becoming familiar with things through a body, just as hearing perceives the sound through the ears. [44.9-17]

Therefore, if living is valuable because of sense perception, and sense perception is a kind of cognition, and we choose it because the soul is able to have familiarity by means of it; and we've been saying for a long time, just as of two things the more valuable one is always the one which has more of that same thing, and of the senses vision is necessarily the most valuable and estimable, and intelligence is more valuable than it and all the others, and more valuable than living, intelligence is more authoritative than truth; hence the main pursuit of all humans is to be intelligent. [26] For because people like living they like being intelligent and recognizing, for they value it for no other reason than for the sake of perception, and above all for the sake of vision; for people seem to love this capacity exceedingly, for it is, compared with the other senses, virtually a kind of knowledge. [44.17-45.3]