

Magnanimity, Μεγαλοψυχία, and the System of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*¹

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I

The first book of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* gives the definition of εὐδαιμονία, 'happiness' as the highest good attainable for man. In books II–V virtues (ἀρεταί) are discussed, because it is in accordance with them that a life of happiness is led (*EN* I 6, 1098a16 and passim). Magnanimity (μεγαλοψυχία) is one of these virtues Aristotle deals with, both in his *Eudemian* (III 5, 1232a19 ff.) and *Nicomachean Ethics* (IV 7, 1123a34–10, 1125b25). It is important to note that for Plato μεγαλοψυχία does not play any role at all.²

In order to understand Aristotle's μεγαλόψυχος better it might therefore be useful to start by comparing briefly his teaching on virtues with that of his teacher Plato. The contrast between these two philosophers is quite obviously visible in their respective evaluations of an older opinion on virtue, that of the Sophist Gorgias.³ In Plato's dialogue *Menon*, the young Menon echoes Gorgias and, when asked for a definition of ἀρετή, he lists the different virtues of man, woman, girl, boy and slave.⁴ Socrates does not agree with this way of talking. He looks for one general

¹ H.-G. Kirsche, *Megalopsychia. Beiträge zur griechischen Ethik im 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.*, Diss. Göttingen 1952 (typescript); R.-A. Gauthier O. P., *Magnanimité. L'idéal de la grandeur dans la philosophie païenne et dans la théologie chrétienne*, Paris 1951; E. A. Schmidt, *Ehre und Tugend. Zur Megalopsychia der aristotelischen Ethik*, in: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 49, 1967, 149–168; D. A. Rees, 'Magnanimity' in the *Eudemian* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, in: *Untersuchungen zur Eudemischen Ethik. Peripatoi I*, ed. by P. Moraux and D. Harlfinger, Berlin 1970; W. F. R. Hardie, 'Magnanimity' in Aristotle's *Ethics*, in: *Phronesis* 23, 1978, 63–79.

² Cp. F. Dirlmeier, *Aristoteles' Werke in deutscher Übersetzung*, Vol. 6, 1983, 371: "Plato gebraucht ihn (scil. the μεγαλόψυχος) überhaupt nicht, schafft erst recht keine Ethik der Megalopsychia." Dirlmeier enumerates synonyms of μεγαλόψυχος, I would like to add μεγαλοσπλάγγνος, Eur. *Med.* 109; cp. D. L. Page, *Euripides' Medea*, Oxford 1938, 76.

³ Cp. Plato, *Menon*, 71c5 ff.

⁴ Cp. *ibid.*, 71e1 ff.

definition which would cover all the qualities required from the different groups enumerated by Menon.⁵ Aristotle, on the other hand, when faced with such general definitions,⁶ makes a very unplatonic comment: "Far better are those who, like Gorgias, enumerate the different virtues". Aristotle is never content with general statements or simple answers. He is interested in details and particulars⁷. Therefore, whereas Plato, following an older tradition, had concentrated his ethical thinking on four virtues, the so-called cardinal virtues of justice, moderation, courage and wisdom⁸, Aristotle enlarges the number of virtues he is studying in his *Ethics* considerably.⁹ He adds to the Platonic four inter alia εὐπραετία, a virtue which guarantees decent behaviour at social gatherings, quick-wittedness, the right mean between the vice of being a buffoon and that of being a bore.¹⁰ Plato did not deal with this virtue, nor did he concern himself with generosity (ἐλευθεριότης)¹¹, the absence of which in the guardians of Plato's *Republic* Aristotle consequently criticizes (*Politics* II 5, 1263b5 f.).

Important for Aristotle in his differentiation and detailed description is the existence of yet another special virtue going beyond generosity, namely μεγαλοπρέπεια¹², best translated as magnificence or munificence, the virtue of a man who is not content to make a small donation, but gives much more than ordinary generosity would demand. Then there is φιλοτιμία¹³, the proper love of honour and distinction as compared with excessive ambition on the one hand and the total lack of it on the other. And again, related to the attitude to the same entity, honour, but yet different from φιλοτιμία is μεγαλοψυχία¹⁴, magnanimity, the virtue of the great-souled or the great-spirited man, whom Aristotle describes at length towards the end of his discussion of virtues in *EN* IV 7. The μεγαλόψυχος is as much above the man with an average love of distinction as munificence is above simple generosity. The μεγαλόψυχος lives a life devoted to honour in its fullest meaning. He is worthy of the highest esteem, and he demands it. Thus

⁵ Cp. *ibid.*, 72a6 ff.

⁶ Cp. *Pol.* I 13, 1260a24 ff.

⁷ Ep. *EN* II 7, 1107a28 ff.; I 8, 1098b27 ff.; IX 8, 1168b12; *EE* I 8, 1217b21; *Rhet.* II 19, 1393a16 ff.; *Pol.* II 6, 1265a28 ff.; cp. L. Bertelli, *Historia e Methodos*, Torino 1977, 12, n. 34.

⁸ Cp. *Rep.* IV 428a8 ff.; cp. 433d7 ff.; 435b8.

⁹ Cp. E. Schütrumpf, Die Bedeutung des Wortes "ethos" in der Poetik des Aristoteles, *Zetemata* 49, 1970, 39 ff.

¹⁰ Cp. *EN* IV 14, 1127b34.

¹¹ *EN* IV 1, 1119b22 ff.

¹² *EN* IV 4, 1122a18 ff.

¹³ *EN* IV 10, 1125b1 ff.

¹⁴ *EN* IV 7, 1123a34 ff.; Isokr. *Euag.* 3 does not yet make this distinction between φιλοτιμία and μεγαλοψυχία.

he only concerns himself with the highest of matters, and as a result of this every other affair is of too little importance to warrant his attention. At the same time he possesses all the other virtues Aristotle has described before. He is thus ethically the most perfect man.

Today people feel rather uneasy about Aristotle's μεγαλόψυχος. It is not his moral perfection, however, which is found repulsive, but the fact that he is aware of his own merits and asks for due recognition of them. He does not act in a certain manner because morality demands that he should do so, but rather with the acquisition of honour in the forefront of his mind, and he shows disdain for almost everything.¹⁵ Today many people, particularly students, find him objectionable: "a most repulsive, unpleasant man", "a self-righteous prig" are comments I have heard. W. Hardie in his book *Aristotle's Ethical Theory*¹⁶ tells us of the bad press Aristotle's account of the virtues, and in particular of magnanimity, has had. He quotes an Oxford lecturer as saying that Aristotle's μεγαλόψυχος is "a prig with the conceit and bad manners of a prig." The μεγαλόψυχος has certainly not been a great favourite with Aristotelian scholars nor with any others. Sir David Ross did not have a very high opinion of him, nor did Bertrand Russell, who is quoted by Hardie as saying: "One shudders to think what a vain man would be like."¹⁷ In the notes appended to his second edition Hardie¹⁸ gives an even longer list of objections to the great-souled man.

Should we therefore pass him by? The translation of selections from the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Professor Ackrill¹⁹ does not include the chapter on the μεγαλόψυχος. I think this exclusion was unwise, because the chapter sums up the earlier discussions of virtues by its characterization of the μεγαλόψυχος as being "a sort of endowment of the virtues" (οἶον κόσμος τις ... τῶν ἀρετῶν; 1124a1). It is the μεγαλόψυχος who enhances all virtues (1124a2). One should not deal merely with the minor virtues and leave out the most important one, the fulfilment of them. As Aristotle says: the μεγαλόψυχος has what is great in every

¹⁵ Cp. Hardie, *Phronesis* 23, 1978, 65.

¹⁶ W. Hardie, *Aristotle's Ethical Theory*, Oxford 21980, 119 f.

¹⁷ The quotation comes from B. Russell, *History of Western Philosophy and its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 1946. Aristotle's concept of the mean is misunderstood by Russell when he tries to illustrate its absurdity: "There was once a mayor who had adopted Aristotle's doctrine; at the end of his term of office he made a speech saying that he had endeavoured to steer the narrow line between partiality on the one hand and impartiality on the other" (196). But in Aristotle the mean is not an attitude between a positive and a negative quality.

¹⁸ Cp. Hardie, *Ar.'s Eth. Theory*, 372.

¹⁹ Cp. J. L. Ackrill, *Aristotle's Ethics*, London 1973. In his selection from *EE*, p. 185–217, Ackrill has not included the chapter on the μεγαλόψυχος *EE* III 5 either.

virtue (1123b30). And except for the general introduction in *EN* II 6 (1107a6 ff.) it is only in the context of this discussion of the μεγαλόψυχος that Aristotle guards himself against a potential misunderstanding, namely that the concept of the mean in his definition of virtue should be understood as mediocrity. Aristotle uses the opportunity of discussing the μεγαλόψυχος to assert that the mean is a balanced state between two extreme qualities, but in itself it is the highest fulfilment of behaviour in a certain field, something indeed of incomparable preeminence (1123b13). This is the only passage in the discussion of virtues where Aristotle shows that the general principle laid down in *EN* II actually applies to virtues. This is another indication of the importance of this chapter, one more reason why it should not be ignored.

Hardie himself tries to make an apology for Aristotle: "His moral ideals are the product of his time and cannot be expected to be adequate in the world of today."²⁰ In 1978 Hardie published an article with the title *Magnanimity in Aristotle's Ethics*²¹ where he reviewed conflicting interpretations: that of the French scholar Gauthier and of the German Dirlmeier. Gauthier, in his doctoral thesis on the μεγαλόψυχος (1951), argued that the μεγαλόψυχος is Aristotle's portrait of the philosopher. Hardie does not agree: "This, at least, seems clearly wrong"²² — yet there is some truth in Gauthier's view. Dirlmeier²³, on the other hand, in his commentary to the *Nicomachean Ethics*, warned of an exaggeration of this ideal of magnanimity and found in the description of the μεγαλόψυχος a kind of anticlimax. Hardie remarks: "Dirlmeier is no doubt right. But he leaves us to find [...] our own answers to the question, why Aristotle, having claimed supreme merit for the magnanimous man, lets us down [...] by offering us this careful collection of mainly negative [...] attributes: The character of the μεγαλόψυχος is such, that he does *not* seek danger, has *few* needs, is *rarely* moved to action [...]"²⁴. Unfortunately Hardie loses sight of this very sound observation in his article. He says something about honour and its relation to an active life in comparison with the βίος θεωρητικός. His remarks are rather a late comment on the thesis by Gauthier, but are not helpful or satisfactory as an explanation for this extraordinary character, something Hardie himself must have felt when he (in the same passage) stated that all he had done had been to "offer suggestions for the further treatment of the problem." In this paper I will try to offer a different solution and I will start with Plato.

In the VIth book of the *Republic* Plato tries to counter objections to his demand that philosophers should be kings. He refutes possible

²⁰ Hardie, *Ar.'s Eth. Theory*, 120.

²¹ Hardie, *Phronesis* 23, 1978, 63–79.

²² Hardie, *Ar.'s Eth. Theory*, 373; cp. *Phronesis* 23, 1978, 68 f.; cp. Dirlmeier (see above n. 2), 370.

²³ Cp. Dirlmeier (see above n. 2), 379.

²⁴ Hardie, *Phronesis* 23, 1978, 66.

doubts as to their ability to rule by proving that the philosopher alone is capable of being the ruler of a country. Plato does this in two ways. One is by means of the famous theory of ideas: only the philosopher in his grasp of the ideas of justice, temperance and other virtues, possesses the true standard for putting these virtues into practice. But there is in *Republic* VI another way of demonstrating that the philosopher is actually in possession of moral qualities as well: in order to determine the nature of the philosopher, Plato starts with a distinction of the components of the actual word φιλόσοφος. He replaces φιλεῖν with ἐρᾶν²⁵ which is not only a stronger verb but also expresses a more exclusive and absolute relationship: The philosopher is bound to a serious love relationship, he is totally committed. Plato compares the attitude of a philosopher to philosophy with the attitude of a lover to his loved one, i. e. an attitude of total commitment, not ignoring even the most trivial concomitants. After this — and this is important for the interpretation I am attempting — Plato compares the philosopher with a man who loves honour.²⁶ He continues his erotic analogy saying: “He whose desires are strong in one direction will have them weaker in others”.²⁷ The observation that love may lead to the neglect of other affairs and failure to do one’s duties may not be profound philosophy, but the moral which Plato draws is interesting: passionate love for a worthy subject has the positive result of distracting one’s interest from unworthy objects and activities. The philosopher who is totally committed to the search for truth does *not*, therefore, look for bodily pleasures and is *not* fond of money; for him human life is *not* a matter of great importance and so he can *not* be a coward.²⁸ This is a negative way²⁹ of establishing a moral attitude — in contrast to the positive way of acquiring a knowledge and a perception of the forms of justice and temperance and of acting according to true philosophical knowledge. This is certainly the very centre of Plato’s moral philosophy in the *Republic*. But it is not only through a positive knowledge of moral principles, but also through a person’s total commitment to a single occupation, that philosophy becomes the basis of morality.

²⁵ *Rep.* VI 485a10.

²⁶ Cp. *Rep.* VI 485a8.

²⁷ *Rep.* 485d6 ff. I have not found a reference to a statement by Demokritus, VS 68 B 72, DK II 159: “αἱ περὶ τι σφόδρα ὀρέξεις τυφλοῦσιν εἰς τᾶλλα τὴν ψυχὴν.”

²⁸ Cp. *Rep.* 485d10–486b5.

²⁹ Such a method of describing virtues as ways of *not* doing things, avoiding certain actions was, according to Xen. *Mem.* IV 4, 11, adopted by Sokrates but denounced as unsatisfactory, by Hippias.

In Plato’s argument in *Republic* VI the first step is that total dedication on the part of a man to the pursuit of one single activity would suppress in him the desire for anything else in life. The second step is to equate this *negative* attitude, *not* to deprive others of their property, *not* to succumb to temptations and so on, with the *positive* virtues of justice, temperance and courage. This, I think, is the first answer to the question Hardie asks and is my explanation for Aristotle’s way of *negative* reasoning in the chapter on the μεγαλόψυχος. Hardie saw this way of reasoning quite clearly, but could not explain it. There is an identical pattern or structure of thought in Plato’s philosopher³⁰ and Aristotle’s μεγαλόψυχος: for neither of them is anything, except the object of their dedication, of real value or importance or such as to be taken seriously.³¹ From this one central quality in a person’s character all other virtues automatically follow. The one cannot exist without the rest. This is the idea which the Stoics were to call the ἀντακολουθία of virtues, that is to say, the reciprocal coexistence of virtues.³² In the chapter on the μεγαλόψυχος in the *Eudemian Ethics* III 5, 1232a32, Aristotle uses the same word ἀκολουθεῖν to express this necessary linking of virtues with one another. Plato’s early dialogue *Protagoras*³³ leads us to believe that the idea may have been ‘Socratic.’

³⁰ Besides the *Rep.* one has to compare *Theait.* 173c8 ff.: “The philosophers do *not* know the way to the marketplace, they are *not* informed about political rules, they do *not* participate in political clubs [...] The mind of the philosopher regards these things as little important or worthless” (ἡγησαμένη σμικρὰ καὶ οὐδέν; e4). His attitude *not* to revile others (174c–d, cp. *Rep.* VI 500b: αἰεὶ περὶ ἀνθρώπων τοὺς λόγους ποιουμένους, ἤκιστα φιλοσοφία πρέπον) could be the model for Aristotle. *EN* 1125a5: οὐδ’ ἀνθρωπολόγος. Cp. a8: οὐδὲ κακολόγος. The μικρόψυχος is not only the negative counterpart to Aristotle’s μεγαλόψυχος (*EN* 1125a17 ff.), but already to Plato’s philosopher; *Theait.* 173a3: σμικροὶ ... τὰς ψυχὰς. Cp. 175d1; *Rep.* VI 486a5.

³¹ Cp. the passage quoted in n. 28, esp. VI 486a9: οἷόν τε οἶε τούτῳ μέγα τι δοκεῖν εἶναι τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον; with Aristotle *EN* IV 7, 1123b32: τίνας γὰρ ἕνεκα πράξει αἰσχροὶ ᾧ γε οὐδὲν μέγα; 1124a16 ff.: οὐδὲ γὰρ περὶ τιμὴν οὕτως ἔχει ὡς μέγιστον ὄν [...] ᾧ δὲ καὶ τιμὴ μικρὸν ἔστι, τούτῳ καὶ τᾶλλα; 1125a2 f.: οὐδὲ θαυμαστικός: οὐ γὰρ μέγα αὐτῷ ἔστιν; a14 f.: οὐ γὰρ σπουδαίως ὁ περὶ ὀλίγα σπουδάζων, οὐδὲ σύντομος ὁ μηδὲν μέγα οἰόμενος.

There might be another point of contact between Plato’s philosopher and Aristotle’s μεγαλόψυχος: for Plato the philosopher has to do with the μέγιστον μάθημα, *Rep.* VI 503e4; 504d2, in comparison to which everything is small and unimportant. Aristotle’s μεγαλόψυχος, as well, is devoted to the highest of things, *EN* IV 7, 1123b13–21, b26–30.

³² Cp. *SVF* II 349; cp. III 275.

³³ Cp. 331a ff., esp. 349b ff.; cp. *Menex.* 247e5 ff.

II

For Plato in the *Republic* — and the same can be seen already in the *Phaidon*³⁴ — the basic attitude of the philosopher from which his moral qualities are derived is the search for truth. In Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* IV 7, the chapter on the μεγαλόψυχος, the basis for perfect morality is not the pursuit of philosophy but the love of honour, a high sense of personal achievement and a natural self-confidence. Because of these qualities the μεγαλόψυχος considers himself worthy of the highest honour. We find that Aristotle replaces philosophy, which is the Platonic basis for attainment of virtues, with honour embodied in the μεγαλόψυχος. But why does Aristotle substitute honour for philosophy?

Plato's opinion — at least in the *Phaidon* and the *Republic* — that philosophy is the only prerequisite for morality is not acceptable to Aristotle. For him the βίος θεωρητικός and βίος πρακτικός — the latter consisting in the realisation of ethical virtues — are two separate phenomena.³⁵ This means that in order to fulfil the requirements of morality one does not have to be a philosopher. In his criticism of Plato's theory of ideas in the first book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*³⁶ Aristotle rejects the link made by Plato between theoretical philosophy and ethics. Aristotle is adamant on this point. Even if ideal forms of virtues were to exist they would be without any practical value when it came to ethical behaviour. Although he accepts Plato's insistence that all virtues can be derived from one single attitude, he cannot, as a result of his assumption of the separation of theoretical philosophy and ethics, concede that because of his commitment to the search for

³⁴ 64d2: "Do you think that it is fitting for a philosopher to get excited about the so-called pleasures like those of eating and drinking?" — "Certainly not," answered Simmias. "And what about the pleasures of love?" "By no means" is the answer. And later: "It would be very absurd if he were afraid of death": the conclusion: "Courage is a quality which is especially characteristic of the philosopher" (68b5). Cp. as well Plat. *Rep.* VI 486a9f. with Ar. *EE* III 5, 1232b1 ff., b10f.; *EN* IV 8, 1124b8 ff.; see bel. n. 43 (Isokr.). σπουδάζειν *Phaid.* 64d2 as *Rep.* VI 485e4f.; cp. Arist. *EE* III 5, 1232b4, b10f.; *EN* 1125a14, cp. a10.

³⁵ Cp. esp. *EN* X 7, 1177a12 ff.

³⁶ Cp. *EN* I 4, 1096a11 ff., cp. H. Flashar, Die Kritik der platonischen Ideenlehre in der Ethik des Aristoteles, in: *Synusia. Festgabe für W. Schadewaldt*, Pfullingen 1965, 223 ff., 236 f., now in: *Articles on Aristotle. 2. Ethics and Politics*, ed. by J. Barnes, M. Schofield, R. Sorabji, London 1977, 1 ff., 14 f.

truth the philosopher would automatically become the perfect ethical man.³⁷

Gauthier's attempt at equating Aristotle's μεγαλόψυχος with the philosopher reveals a basic misunderstanding of Aristotle's Ethics in relation to theoretical philosophy. It is an 'interpretatio Platonica' which ignores Aristotle's division of the fields of philosophical investigation.³⁸ Thus, for Aristotle it is not the philosopher who possesses all ethical virtues.³⁹

If Aristotle shared Plato's view that a single attitude embraces all the ethical qualities, but could not deduce these from the search for truth, he had to find a different quality. Yet even here he follows in Plato's footsteps, for he chooses the man who comes closest to Plato's philosopher, namely the man devoted to honour.

In *Republic* VI, as we have seen, Plato had compared the philosopher to the man given to love in general or to love of honour in particular.⁴⁰ He referred there to an earlier explanation where he first compared the philosopher to someone who regarded every beautiful person as worthy of his love and care (474d3 ff.). But such love, of course, is very much associated with those pleasures of the flesh which the philosopher naturally shuns. And so it is the lover of honour, the φιλότιμος, who immediately precedes the philosopher (475a9/b8) as being closest in definition to him. The same order of values appears in the account of the development of constitutions in the VIIIth book of the *Republic* where next to the ideal state ruled by philosophers comes timocracy, the constitution in which those rule who love honour, like the Spartans who strive after glory in war.⁴¹ Honour, τιμή, is valued only second to philosophy. Whereas philosophy is the achievement of the highest

³⁷ Cp. F. Dirlmeier, *Aristoteles' Werke in deutscher Übersetzung*, Vol. 7, 1979, 501 n. 105, 30 on 1249b14.

³⁸ When I said above that there is some truth in Gauthier's position I mean that Aristotle followed a tradition in which a philosopher embodied these qualities, Plato's philosopher, not Aristotle's.

³⁹ If the Protrepitkos is a reliable source for Aristotle's views then Aristotle expressed at that time opinions which come closer to those of Plato: according to B 105 Dü. it is philosophy, not honour, which makes one ask: τί δ' ἐστὶ μακρόν ... τῶν ἀνθρώπων; a question familiar from the passages quoted above; cp. I. Düring, *Aristotle's Protrepticus. An Attempt at Reconstruction*, Göteborg 1961, 261 to B 104–110: "Inspired by the discussion in the *Phaedo*" — I should like to add *Rep.* VI and *Theait.* and refer to the μεγαλόψυχος. From here a line leads to the topoi of consolation literature, cp. Servius in Cic. *Ad fam* IV 5, 4f., or to the *Somnium Scipionis*, Cic. *De rep.* VI 20, on this world: "Quae si tibi parva ut est ita videtur, haec caelestia semper spectato, illa humana contemnito."

⁴⁰ Cp. *Rep.* 485b7.

⁴¹ Cp. *Rep.* VIII 545a2 ff., esp. c9; cp. emphasis on words formed from the stem τιμ-: 547d4; 548a1, a6, b4, c2, c7; 549a4, b9; 550b7, c11.

part of the soul, φιλοτιμία, love of honour, is that of the second part (τὸ θυμοειδές)⁴². Aristotle is in complete agreement with this view when he places the βίος πρακτικός, the goal of which is τιμή, second in value to the βίος θεωρητικός (*EN* I 3, 1095b22).

To sum up: Aristotle agrees with Plato that a single quality in man leads to contempt for commonly acknowledged goods such as wealth, bodily pleasures, life, etc. For reasons founded upon his separation of the fields of theoretical philosophy and ethics, Aristotle could not, as Plato did, deduce all ethical qualities from the search for truth. Therefore he chooses a different quality, namely the quality which, even in Plato, comes closest to philosophy,⁴³ love of honour in its highest possible form, μεγαλοψυχία. This for him is the central quality which embraces all other virtues.

Since Aristotle does not accept philosophical training as the basis for morality, he devises a different method of acquiring moral virtues, namely habituation⁴⁴ of the irrational faculty. Virtue, according to Aristotle, can only be acquired by habituation, and this view – not Plato's approach – led to our terminology of moral philosophy when we call it 'Ethics'. Yet again, even here, there is a link with Plato, for the latter regarded habituation, ἔθος, as the basis for at least one kind of virtue, namely that acquired by the unphilosophic masses. According to Plato these do not have the virtues founded upon philosophical insight, but only an inferior quality acquired by habituation, ἔθος⁴⁵. It is precisely this method of acquiring moral virtues denigrated by Plato which Aristotle promulgates. Thus for the principles of his ethical theory and particularly in his chapter on the μεγαλόψυχος, Aristotle in spite of all his reservations and criticisms is following in Plato's footsteps. He consistently upholds Plato's inferior alternative in his own argument. In other words, Aristotle's theory of acquiring a moral quality and his account of the μεγαλόψυχος are a δεύτερος πλοῦς already envisaged by Plato.

⁴² Cp. 547e3; cp. 551b6f.

⁴³ Plato had already pointed out in *Rep.* IX 581d5 that the man who loves honour despises the pleasures derived from money, very similar to Aristotle *EN* 1124a13–20; cp. 1125a11, a27. Aristotle's μεγαλόψυχος could be understood as a generalization of the passage quoted from Plato's *Rep.*, not limiting the disdain of a honour loving man to money, but extending it to all external goods. Already Isokr. *Euag.* 3 had mentioned the φιλότιμος next to the μεγαλόψυχος (see above n. 14) and stated that for them honour weighs more than life.

⁴⁴ ἐθίζειν, see *EN* II 1, 1103a17 ff.

⁴⁵ Cp. *Phaid.* 82b: moderation and justice ἐξ ἔθους τε καὶ μελέτης γεγυνοῦσαν ἀνευ φιλοσοφίας, cp. *Rep.* X 619c7f. That Aristotle knew the passage of the *Phaid.* is clear from *Pol.* I 2, 1253a7, obviously quoting *Phaid.* 82b6.

Aristotle substitutes for Plato's philosopher in his ethical dimensions his μεγαλόψυχος. But the μεγαλόψυχος, very much like Plato's philosopher, is also an ideal⁴⁶, not easily to be found in reality. He is not, as Hardie⁴⁷ suggests, an actual figure of Aristotle's time but rather an artificial fabrication modelled on Plato's philosopher. He is furthermore not just an additional character in Aristotle's treatment of the ethical virtues. The importance of the μεγαλόψυχος lies in the theoretical development of Aristotle's system of ethics as a whole and not on his creation of an individual⁴⁸ subject to moral scrutiny.

III

There is one further unexpected qualification in *EN* 1124a16: not even honour is the highest good for the μεγαλόψυχος. This claim is supported by the fact that honour is often attained by political influence or wealth. In book I of the *EN* we find the objection that, since honour is in the people who bestow it and not in the person who merits or obtains it, its pursuit⁴⁹ is not justifiable. Therefore, the μεγαλόψυχος, who does not live by dependence on others as Aristotle puts it (1124b31), should not depend on others for a show of honour. As far as the Platonic philosopher is concerned, this kind of judgement about ambition is, of course, in character: he despises all the accepted goods

⁴⁶ Cp. 1124a3.

⁴⁷ See above n. 20.

⁴⁸ Aristotle's remarks on the slow movement and deep voice of the μεγαλόψυχος *EN* 1125a12 ff. seem to contradict this statement and seem to depict in a vivid way a real character, visualizing his appearance; cp. the unfavourable description of Nikobulos in Demosth. 37, 52, 55. But even here Aristotle follows almost verbally Plato's description of a moderate (σώφρων) character, *Charm.* 159b2 ff., esp. *Polit.* 307a7 ff. The same holds true for the μεγαλόψυχος' behaviour to people according to their position, 1124b18 f.: he shows greatness towards men of power and fortune but is courteous towards those of moderate status; this is obviously the direct contrast to the timocratic man (whose attitude the μεγαλόψυχος presents in principle) in Plat. *Rep.* VIII 549a, a man who treats his inferiors, the slaves, harshly, is civil to free men but subservient to those in power. This seems to have been already a traditional topos, cp. Thuk. V 111,4.

EN 1124a13 ff.: the description of the μεγαλόψυχος' moderate reactions to power and material success or otherwise comes closer to the expressions used by Plat. *Rep.* X 603e8 than to the same idea referring to the μεγαλόψυχος in Aristotle himself *Anal. post.* II 13, 97b21 (in contrast to *EE* III 5, 1232b13).

⁴⁹ Cp. 3, 1095a24, cp. VIII 9, 1159a12 ff.

including honour.⁵⁰ But for the μεγαλόψυχος, whose life is concerned with the achievement of the highest honour, the statement that not even honour is of value to him destroys the basis of Aristotle's argument. On what principle then is this repudiation of the value of honour by the μεγαλόψυχος based? It is here that Aristotle's description of the μεγαλόψυχος leaves a few questions open. I think the inconsistency can be explained from the Platonic background. Aristotle's μεγαλόψυχος resembles Plato's philosopher so closely that he, like the Platonic philosopher, cannot value anything very much and this includes honour. I would suggest that, although the μεγαλόψυχος was a creation of Aristotle's mind, the inspiration which produced him owed so much to the Platonic philosopher that the last vestige of worldly attachment had to be removed, even though the removal shook the very foundation on which the idea was built. Contradictory though this might be, it takes away from the μεγαλόψυχος the offensiveness which many people have found in him, as being a man whose actions derive their impetus merely from love of the honour they will merit.

Appendix

E. A. Schmidt (see above n. 1) compares the chapters on the μεγαλόψυχος in *EE* and *EN* and emphasizes the differences between the two accounts, in particular:

a) In *EE*, besides honour, virtues and external goods are considered worthwhile having, in *EN* only virtue (162), therefore in *EN* there is a dichotomy of virtue and fortune, τύχη (163).

b) Consequently in *EN* the μεγαλόψυχος shows indifference ("Gleichgültigkeit", 161) towards honour and goods of fortune or towards misfortune.

c) In *EE* the individual and world are united, whereas in *EN* a deep cleft ("ein tiefer Schnitt", 163) occurs.

I would concede, that Aristotle accentuates in his two ethical treatises different aspects of μεγαλοψυχία in different ways (cp. Hardie, *Phronesis* 23, 1978, 67 ff., 77 n. 7, 78 n. 14), but I cannot agree with Schmidt's interpretation:

Ad a) *EE* III 5, 1132b10–12 treats honour as being very different from the other goods, these are not the goal of the *megalopsychos*'s efforts. Schmidt's remark: "Ehre umfaßt die Tugend und die äußeren

Güter" (163, cp. 162, II 1a) is inaccurate and misleading. Schmidt's opinion that in *EN* – contrary to *EE* – the goods of fortune are no longer considered worthwhile honouring ("haben nicht an der Ehre teil") is not correct, the ἐντιμα *EN* 1124b23 are obviously positions of power, public offices. Thus *EN* still keeps the position of *EE* 1232b20 which is actually quoted in *EN*. And the dichotomy of ἀρετή – τύχη is not a new development in *EN*, it is the topic in *EE* from the very beginning: I 1, 1214a25 f. (cp. Dirlmeier on a23); cp. VII 2, 1124b37, esp. 3, 1248b27 ff.

Ad b) The μεγαλόψυχος of *EN* is not indifferent to honour in general (Schmidt, 160 ff.), but to honour *from the wrong persons*, 1124a10: παρὰ τῶν τυχόντων (contrast a6: ὑπὸ τῶν σπουδαίων), the passage quoted by Schmidt, but without this qualification. In his conclusion ("Damit ist der Großgesinnte von Ehrerweisungen unabhängig") he leaves the qualifying element ("by those unworthy") out. The remark quoted from *EN* corresponds exactly to *EE* 1232b6 ff., b12: καὶ λυποῖτ' ἐν ἀτιμαζόμενος ... ὑπὸ ἀναξίου; cp. Aristotle's encomium on Plato fr. 673 R., l. 3: οὐδ' αἰνεῖν τοῖσι κακοῖσι θέμις.

When Schmidt states that in *EN* "Annehmen der Ehre, nicht erstreben" is the attitude of the μεγαλόψυχος (160, cp. 161), he is not right as can be seen from Aristotle's description of the opposite vice, the attitude of the "unduly humble", 1125a19 ff.: he does not claim the goods he deserves, "otherwise he would aspire them because he deserves them" (ἄρεγετο γὰρ ἂν ὧν ἄξιος ἦν), obviously the μεγαλόψυχος representing the correct attitude to honour does aspire them!

The two ethical treatises differ in so far as in *EE* honour gives the μεγαλόψυχος the greatest pleasure (χαίρει μάλιστα, 1232b13), according to *EN* only moderate pleasure (μετρίως ἡσθήσεται, 1124a6). It is a difference in degrees which has to be explained from a more critical attitude to the value of honour in *EN* as an appropriate reward for virtue (1124a7 ff.). But in *EN* the μεγαλόψυχος has not given up the claims that he deserves honour (cp. 1123b23), he accepts it as something deserved (1124a7), he is presupposed as aspiring it (1125a22) even if it is not commensurate to his quality.

Ad c) That in *EN* "das Verhältnis (scil. of the μεγαλόψυχος) zur Welt völlig verändert ist" (Schmidt, 164) is not true. "Die Tugend des sittlichen Selbstbewußtseins als eines 'autarken, individuellen Wertbewußtseins'" (Schmidt, 166, in n. 87 quoting Kirsche, see above n. 1, 13) is a concept Aristotle did not only develop in *EN*, he emphasizes this in *EE* VIII 3, 1248b34 ff. Schmidt fails to take the different length of the two chapters in account (in *EE* 90 lines of Bekker's text against

⁵⁰ Cp. *Phaid.* 68c2.

134 in *EN*). Instead of looking at this whole treatise *EE* for ideas missing in this one chapter on the *μεγαλόψυχος* and of complementing this chapter from there, Schmidt took the chapters out of the context of the works which they form part of and represents differences in the chapters (which according to my opinion he exaggerates) as differences in the ethical philosophy of these two works *EE* and *EN*.

Ein Versuch, Hegels letzte Arbeit zu verstehen

von Endre Kiss (Budapest)

Die letzte zu Lebzeiten abgeschlossene Arbeit Hegels ist einer Analyse wert. Abgesehen von seiner Stellung in Hegels Lebenswerk ist der umfangreiche Aufsatz „Über die englische Reform-Bill“¹ für die Geschichtswissenschaft von dreifacher Bedeutung. Erstens enthält er eine aktuelle Antwort auf die Juli-Revolution von 1830, die eine tiefgreifende Wende mit sich bringt.² Zweitens bezieht dieser Aufsatz die

¹ „Über die englische Reform-Bill“, ursprünglich: *Allgemeine Preußische Staatszeitung*, 1831, Nr. 115–118. Wir zitieren im folgenden aus *Vermischte Schriften aus der Berliner Zeit*. Bd. 30 der Jubiläumsausgabe, hrsg. von H. Glockner, Stuttgart 1930.

² Sowohl die direkten, als auch die indirekten Errungenschaften der Juli-Revolution erwiesen sich für ganz Europa (und somit auch für Deutschland) in jeder Hinsicht als entscheidend. Es genügt, wenn wir nur auf einige ihrer Auswirkungen hinweisen:

Der Saint-Simonismus büßt in Frankreich seine grundlegende Relevanz ein, weil sich nach 1830 seine die soziale Situation des „Produzenten“ betreffenden Voraussetzungen nicht länger aufrecht erhalten lassen.

Dieses Jahr markiert auch in der Geschichte der deutschen nationalen Bewegung eine Grenze („Auch jetzt erfüllt der Gedanke der Wiedergeburt des Vaterlandes [...] die Herzen [...]“; Ziegler, *Die geistigen und sozialen Strömungen im XIX. Jahrhundert*. Berlin 1911, S. 163).

Geradezu paradigmatisch äußert sich diese Wende im Schicksal Auguste Comtes, bzw. seiner positivistischen Philosophie: 1827 stürzt er sich in die Seine, 1830 erscheint der erste Band seines *Cours de philosophie positive*.

Fr. A. Lange schlägt folgende Epochenmarkierung vor: „Will man einen bestimmten Zeitpunkt angeben, der sich als das Ende der idealistischen Periode in Deutschland bezeichnen läßt, so bietet sich kein so entscheidendes Ereignis dar, als die französische Julirevolution des Jahres 1830.“ (*Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart*. 2. verb. und verm. Aufl., Iserlohn 1875.) Wir können kaum eine historische Persönlichkeit finden, deren Schicksal sich in den Jahren 1830/31 nicht entscheidend geändert hätte.

Als weiteres Beispiel führen wir zwei wichtige deutsche Intellektuelle an: „In der Pariser Julirevolution von 1830 sehen oppositionelle Intellektuelle wie Börne und Heine die Erneuerung des Versprechens von 1789. Paris wird, im ersten Enthusiasmus, zum ‚neuen Jerusalem‘ der Freiheit proklamiert.“ (Albrecht Betz, *Exil und Engagement. Deutsche Schriftsteller im Frankreich der dreißiger Jahre*. München 1986, S. 73).