## Contents

Preface	xiii
Acknowledgements	xiv
Abbreviations	xvii
Chapter I Luck and ethics A preoccupation of Greek ethical thought: the good human life is dependent on things that human beings do not control. The search for self-sufficiency through reason; its limits. Why these questions, important for us, are seldom treated in modern ethical writing. Three sub-problems: vulnerable components of the good life; contingent conflict of values; the ungoverned elements of the personality. Sketch of the argument. Why works of literature are an indispensable part of a philosophical inquiry into these questions.	1
Part I Tragedy: fragility and ambition	23
Chapter 2 Aeschylus and practical conflict  Greek tragedy's depiction of practical dilemmas as serious and not resolvable	25
without remainder: the charge that this is a sign of primitive and illogical thought.  I A sketch of the problem. Factors we usually consider important in the assessment of these cases. Reasons for not making the moral/non-moral	25
distinction central to our discussion.	27
II Some philosophical 'solutions' to the problem.  III Two cases of tragic conflict in Aeschylus: Agamemnon at Aulis, Eteocles	30
before the gates.  IV The plays' implicit view of proper response in such cases. What it means	32
to say that these experiences might give learning.  V This tragic view confronted with the theories of the philosophers of	41
Section II. The positive achievement of the Aeschylean account.	47
Chapter 3 Sophocles' Antigone: conflict, vision, and	
simplification  Could a rational person plan a life so as to avoid the situations of Chapter 2 as far as possible? One way of doing this would be to simplify and narrow the	51
scope of one's commitments.	51
I The guard: an example of ordinary practical reason, torn and conflicted.  II Creon. Tension among values precluded by recognizing only one value.  His clever redefinitions; strange consequences for love and religion. The	53
motivation for this strategy; its failure.	54
	vii

## viii Contents

III Antigone. Her conception of value narrow in a different way. Her re-interpretation of certain terms and conceptions. Why her strategy, though flawed, is superior to Creon's.  IV Hegel's suggestion that the play points to a synthesis in which justice is done to both of the competing spheres of value. The choral lyrics help us to scrutinize this claim. The parodos: eyes and seeing, simple and complex. The ode on the human being: the depth of the grounds of conflict in civic life.  The Danae ode: its pessimism about our relation to contingency. A higher-order conflict concerning conflict itself. Schopenhauer's pessimistic	63
response.	67
V Tiresias and Haemon: a flexible human rationality. Its relation to harmony;	,
to luck. The invocation of Dionysus.	79
Conclusion to Part I	
Tragedy on the vulnerability of individual values.	83
gooy on one continuently of individual values.	0,
Part II Plato: goodness without fragility?	85
Introduction	87
The continuity of Plato's thought with tragedy. Two methodological	•
problems: philosophical development over time, the dialogue form.	87
Chapter 4 The Protagoras: a science of practical reasoning	89
The antithesis between tuchē and technē (art or science) and mythic stories of	٠,
the saving power of technē: a hope for human progress.	89
I The dramatic setting: problems of tuchē.	91
II The general concept of technē in Pre-Platonic Greek science.	94
III Protagoras's story of human progress over tuchē. What technē does he	
teach, and how does it make progress with our problems?	100
IV The science of measurement: what motivates it, what progress it could	
make. The akrasia argument: the role of pleasure as standard of choice. How	
commensurability of values works to eliminate akrasia.	106
V A Socratic conclusion to Protagoras's myth.	117
Interlude 1 Plato's anti-tragic theater	I 2 2
The philosophical dialogue as a new kind of writing. The absence of any antecedent distinction between the philosophical and the literary. The poet as ethical teacher. The dialogue's positive debt to and repudiation of tragedy: Plato's stylistic break expresses a profound moral criticism.	I 2 2
a meo o ocympae bican capicosco a protouna motal cinicism.	
Chapter 5 The Republic: true value and the standpoint of	
perfection	136
The dialogue's opening: a question about what is truly worth pursuing.	136
I The alleged insufficiency of Plato's arguments to support his ranking of the contemplative over other lives. A profound, though puzzling argument concerning need and intrinsic value. Republic IX; parallels from Gorgias,	
Philebus.	138
II A defense of asceticism: how activities that are not truly valuable undercut	
those that are. Phaedo and Republic.	151
III Questions about the standpoint from which true judgments of value are	
reached. Its relevance to aesthetic judgment; to moral education.  IV How harmony among values is achieved.	152
1 v flow nathrolly among values is achieved.	158

Contents	ix
V The problem of motivation. Plato's use of negative and positive	
arguments.	160
Chapter 6 The speech of Alcibiades: a reading of the	,
Symposium	165
The charge that Plato neglects the love of one unique individual for another:	.6.
this must be assessed against the whole of the dialogue.  I The construction of the dialogue. Dramatic dates.	165 167
II Aristophanes' speech: love of unique individuals for one another; its	207
prospect and its problems.	171
III Diotima and the ascent of love. Its practical motivations. The enabling	
role of judgments of qualitative homogeneity. How the lover achieves	(
self-sufficiency.  IV The entrance of Alcibiades. His claim that he will tell the truth through	176
images. The story of a particular love; the lover's desire for knowledge.	184
V The indictment of Alcibiades. Erōs and slavery. A confrontation between	
two conceptions of value.	195
Chapter 7 'This story isn't true': madness, reason, and	
recantation in the Phaedrus	200
The apparent distance between the <i>Phaedrus</i> and the middle dialogues on the place of love and madness in the good life.	***
I Madness: what it is, how it is criticized in other dialogues. The first two	200
speeches develop certain elements of the position for which Plato has seriously	
argued in middle dialogues.	203
II Socrates' praise of (certain sorts of) madness. The non-intellectual elements	
as important sources of motivational energy. Their guiding and even cognitive function in our aspiration towards the good. The interweaving of love and	
understanding. Personal passion as an intrinsically valuable part of the best	
life. Implications for Plato's view of the soul and personal identity. The action	
of the dialogue in relation to its ethical views.	213
III Moral psychology in the condemnation of the poets. To what extent	
poetic speech is now restored to a place of honor. Philosophy and its style.  IV Motivations for this recantation. The status of its truths.	223 228
1 v Wordvarious for this recantation. The status of its truths.	220
Dow III Asiatatla, the fracility of the good human life	
Part III Aristotle: the fragility of the good human life	235
Introduction	237
The role of the general discussions of method and action.	237
Chapter 8 Saving Aristotle's appearances	240
Aristotle's announced intention to philosophize within the confines of the	
phainomena (appearances). Why there is difficulty in reconstructing and appreciating this view.	240
I What phainomena are. Their connection with language and ordinary belief.	243
II How the method works. How appearances are gathered and which are	
relevant. Puzzles. The return to appearances: the role of the competent judge.	245
III The most basic appearances of all. The principle of non-contradiction	
defended as necessary for thought and discourse. How refutation of a principle can take place within the appearances.	251
IV The method defended against a charge of laziness and conservatism. The	-,•

negative and the positive tasks of Aristotelian philosophy: a contrast with Wittgenstein.	251
Chapter 9 Rational animals and the explanation of action	264
Connections between our ethical questions and a theory of action. The	
apparent oddness of Aristotle's way of proceeding: a 'common explanation'	
for all animal movements.	264
I Ordinary (Greek) beliefs about the causal explanation of animal movement.	
The intentionality of belief and desire.	260
II A physiological model of causal explanation in early science; its reductionistic tendencies and their implications. Plato's criticisms; his defense of a model of psychological explanation that isolates intellect from the other	
faculties of the animal.	269
III Aristotle's interest in a generic conception of desiring. The word orexis;	
its function in rescuing ordinary notions of intentionality. A connection	
between goal-directed motion and the absence of self-sufficiency.	27
IV Explanation by cognition and desire. The combination of a logical and a	
causal connection between explanantia and explanandum seen as an advantage,	
not a defect, of Aristotle's account. Why a physiological description is not a causal explanation.	276
V This explanation seen as an account of 'voluntary' motion. Its connections	2/0
with issues of ethical and legal assessment.	282
Chapter 10 Non-scientific deliberation	290
Practical wisdom is not scientific understanding; the criterion of correct choice	
is the person of practical wisdom. The apparent connection of these claims	
with Aristotle's attack on Platonic self-sufficiency.	290
I The anthropocentrism of the search for the good life.	291
II The attack on the commensurability of values.	294
III The Platonic demand for generality. Aristotle's defense of the priority of	
the concrete particular.	298
IV The role of the non-intellectual elements in deliberation. Aristotle and the <i>Phaedrus</i> compared.	
V The person of practical wisdom and an apparent problem of circularity.	307
VI An example of Aristotelian deliberation. How this view leaves the agent	309
vulnerable to contingency.	312
Chapter 11 The vulnerability of the good human life:	
activity and disaster	318
Eudaimonia 'stands in need of good things from outside': which things?	•
when? to what extent?	318
I Two extreme positions on luck: Aristotle's dialectical method.	319
II The first extreme position: luck is the single decisive factor in having a	
good life. How this view is rejected; fact and value in an Aristotelian inquiry.	320
III The opposing view: a good human life is completely invulnerable to luck.	
Two versions of this position. Aristotle's attack on the 'good-condition'	
view: cases of complete or severe impediment to activity.	322
IV Partial disruption of good activity: the case of Priam. Related tragic cases.  V Damage to good states of character themselves.	327
VI The role of risk and material limitation in constituting the value of certain	330
important virtues.	340
A	74

Contents	xi
Chapter 12. The vulnerability of the good human life:	
relational goods	343
Relational constituents of the good life: their special vulnerability.  I Political activity and affiliation. Its instability. Its instrumental value in the development and maintenance of good character. Consequences for political	343
theory. Its intrinsic value. The political management of conflict.  II Philoi as 'the greatest of the external goods'. The nature of philia. The types and sources of its vulnerability. Its instrumental value in the development and maintenance of good character; in continuity of activity; in	345
self-knowledge. Its intrinsic value.	354
Appendix to Part III Human and divine	373
Conflicting evidence in Aristotle for a more god-centered Platonist position. Evidence of an overall ranking of lives in terms of their goodness. The special case of <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> x.6-8; their incompatibility with the rest of	
Aristotle's ethical thought.	373
Interlude 2 Luck and the tragic emotions	378
A controversial passage in the <i>Poetics</i> : the primacy of tragic action linked to thoughts about character and action in <i>eudaimonia</i> . The connection of this with Aristotle's attack on the good-condition theorist and the Platonist. Tragedy explores the gap between being good and living well. Why pity and fear are irrational and useless for the opponents of luck, but valuable sources of	
recognition for the Aristotelian. Luck and tragic katharsis. Aristotle's own writing.	378
Epilogue Tragedy	395
Chapter 13 The betrayal of convention: a reading of	
Euripides' Hecuba  The ghost of a murdered child. Rejection of this play by those who believe	397
good character cannot decline.  I Hecuba's speech about the firmness of good character in adversity. Her position in the nature–convention debate. Connections with Thucydides on	397
Corcyra. Polyxena an example of noble simplicity.  II The play's unity. Polymestor's crime. The dislocation of Hecuba's	399
character.	406
III Revenge as Hecuba's new 'convention'. Its structure and point.	409
IV The play's connection with Aristotelian views.	418
V Nothing human is trustworthy. The significance of this thought, both negative and positive. Hecuba's rock as a guiding mark for sailors.	419
Notes	422
Bibliography	512
General index	527
Index of passages	536