

ARISTOTLE ON MAGNANIMITY

Aristotle's modern commentators have had difficulty in coming to terms with how the virtue of magnanimity, or in Greek megalopsuchia, which literally means "greatness of soul", is to be understood in terms of the Aristotelian framework of virtue. Critics of Aristotle's megalopsuchos, or magnanimous person, claim that he is somehow lacking in a given virtue on the basis of the portrait of the megalopsuchos offered in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, (hereafter *NE*.) The *Eudemian Ethics*, (hereafter *EE*), does not contain, to a large extent, this portrait, rich in detail, and hence is largely spared the disparaging critical remarks reserved for the *NE* portrait. To be sure, criticism regarding the issue of whether magnanimity, which is defined as the combination of greatness and self-knowledge, is even a virtue, is directed toward both the ethical works.¹

The critics claim, according to commentator Howard Curzer, that the megalopsuchos is (1) conceited, (2) snobbish, (3) ungrateful and manipulative, (4) inactive and remote, (5) oblivious and immoral, (6) insufficiently concerned with honor, (7) self-absorbed, (8) unable to form perfect friendships, (9) unneighborly, and (10) obsessed with and motivated by honor². Clearly, this is a less than flattering view of an allegedly magnanimous person. It is, however, outside the scope of my paper to attempt to rehearse Curzer's persuasive point by point refutation of the above mentioned criticisms of the megalopsuchos. Nonetheless, it is evident that in the aforementioned character defects of the megalopsuchos, numbers 6 and 10 appear to be diametrically opposed. This fundamental tension in the critical interpretation of the Aristotelian megalopsuchos' relation to honor is the basis upon which a scholarly debate between Curzer and commentator Neil Cooper³ has developed.

In particular, they disagree on the issue of how Aristotle resolves the apparent tension between the megalopsuchos being on the one hand, overly concerned with honor and, on the other hand, not being

sufficiently concerned with honor. Cooper takes the view that the tension "in Aristotle's thought" between the megalopsuchos valuing honor as the "greatest of external goods", and considering honor to be a "small thing" is explicit in the *EE* and "underneath the surface" in the *NE*⁴. Curzer⁵, on the other hand, maintains that whereas the tension is evident in the *EE*, there is no such tension in the *NE*⁶. Although they both think Aristotle offers a clear solution to the problem in the *EE*, the difference is that Cooper takes the fact that Aristotle resolves the issue in the *EE* to be "further evidence" that Anthony Kenny is correct in suggesting, in his *The Aristotelian Ethics*, that the *EE* is the later work⁷. Curzer takes the same fact to be evidence that the *EE* is the earlier work, insofar as he does not see the *EE* problem in the *NE*⁸. Certainly, Curzer considers the phenomenon of problem loss from one work to another to be indicative of philosophical maturity.

For my part, I am sympathetic with Cooper's contention that Aristotle's explicit resolution of the difficulty in the *EE* seems to indicate that it is the later work. Unlike Cooper, though, I attempt to suggest why the tension is not nearly as obvious in the *NE* as in the *EE*. Furthermore, I question his criticism of Aristotle's attempt to provide a unitary account of magnanimity. If my view is correct, then we are in a position to see how Curzer seems to be in error in arguing that upon having formulated the solution to the problem in the *EE*, Aristotle retains the formulated solution, which is a distinction between honor from ordinary people and honor from good people, inasmuch as it seems to be "intrinsically important", but simply rejects the view that the megalopsuchos has "great desires for external goods."⁹ Moreover, I should like to suggest that the relative lack of detail on the "state of the magnanimous person", as Terry Irwin puts it on p.99 of his *NE* translation, in the *EE* indicates its relative lack of concern with politics and, hence, may corroborate the view that the *EE* and the *NE* are intended for different audiences.

Before examining the view of Curzer and Cooper on Aristotle's treatment of the megalopsuchos apparently being obsessed with honor on the one hand and being insufficiently sensitive to honor on the other hand, let us recall Aristotle's discussion of magnanimity in the *EE* and the *NE*. In the *NE* IV, 3, Aristotle offers a definition of the virtue of magnanimity and tries to place it in the context of his scheme of

regarding virtues as means between extremes. Curzer points out that in the NE, Aristotle offers a "portrait" of the megalopsuchos, between 1123b26 and 1125a16, "embedded in a frame (1123a34-1123b26, 1125a16-1125a35)." In the frame, Aristotle, according to Curzer, "formally defines" megalopsuchia and tries to "fit it into his virtue-is-a-mean architectonic by contrasting the *megalopsychos* with the *chaunos* [or the "vain" person in Irwin's translation], the *mikropsychos* [or the "pusillanimous" person in Irwin's translation], and the temperate man who lacks *megalopsychia*."¹⁰ Aristotle begins, as Curzer mentions, by defining the megalopsuchos, the temperate person, the vain person, and the pusillanimous person "in terms of external goods (wealth, power, beauty, honour, etc.)" and self-knowledge.

Aristotle notes at NE 1123a34-1123b2 that magnanimity is "concerned with great things", and the magnanimous person seems to be "one who really thinks himself worthy of great things and is really worthy of them." In contrast, the temperate person is one who is "worthy of little and thinks so" (1123b5-6), the vain person is one who "thinks he is worthy of great things when he is not" (1123b8-9), and the pusillanimous person is one who "thinks he is worthy of less than he is worthy of," whether "he is worthy of great or moderate things; and even if he is worthy of little, he thinks he is worthy of still less than that" (1123b10-12). Curzer contends that these contrasts "emphasize the two components of" megalopsuchia, and they show that the megalopsuchos and the temperate person "share a sort of self-knowledge" which the vain person and the pusillanimous person lack. But Curzer further maintains that since the megalopsuchos "also has greatness while the temperate man lacking" megalopsuchia "does not," Aristotle locates, "in the chapter's frame," megalopsuchia "in a mean with respect to only one of its components." Aristotle claims at 1123b13-17 that the

magnanimous person, then, is at the extreme in so far as he makes great claims. But in so far as he makes them rightly, he is intermediate; for what he thinks he is worthy of reflects his real worth, while the others are excessive or deficient. The pusillanimous person is deficient both in relation to himself [i.e., his worth] and in relation to the magnanimous person's estimate of his own worth, while the vain person makes claims that are excessive for himself, but not for the magnanimous person.

Aristotle returns to the vices of excess and deficiency, or vanity and pusillanimity respectively, at 1125a17-35, and fleshes out what he claims in the above mentioned passage.

Between the above passage and the concluding examination of vanity and pusillanimity, though, Aristotle offers his portrait of the megalopsuchia, in which he, according to Curzer, elaborates upon the definition of megalopsuchia. For instance, Aristotle claims, at 1123b21-23, that magnanimous people "are concerned with honour", which is "the greatest of the external goods". As Curzer notes, honour is the "sphere (*peri ho*)" of megalopsuchia, and the megalopsuchos "deserves great honour by being more virtuous than others." Indeed, Aristotle mentions at 1123b26-1123b29 that since the magnanimous person is

worthy of the greatest things, he is the best person. For in every case the better person is worthy of something greater, and the best person is worthy of the greatest things; and hence the truly magnanimous person must be good.

The megalopsuchos, as Curzer points out, is "more virtuous than others not only because he has the full compliment of virtues, but also because each of his virtues is greater". For example, he is "more courageous, more just, more temperate, etc". Aristotle relates, at 1123b30-1124a, that greatness

in each virtue also seems proper to the magnanimous person, Magnanimity, then, looks like a sort of adornment of the virtues; for it makes them greater, and it does not arise without them. Hence it is hard to be truly magnanimous, since it is not possible without being fine and good.

Furthermore, Aristotle claims at 1124a-5-11 that the megalopsuchos, being "concerned especially with honours and dishonours", discriminates between great and small honours conferred respectively by "excellent" and ordinary people. In particular, the megalopsuchos is "moderately pleased" when he "receives great honours from excellent people", insofar as he thinks he is "getting what is proper to him, or even less." The megalopsuchos adopts this attitude because

there can be no honour worthy of complete virtue; but still he will accept [excellent people's] honours, since they have nothing greater to award him.

But if he is honoured by just anyone, or for something small, he will entirely disdain it; for that is not what he is worthy of. And similarly he will disdain honour, for it will not be justly attached to him.

Moreover, Aristotle argues at 1124a12-26 that although the magnanimous person is "concerned especially with honours", he will "also have a moderate attitude to riches and power and every sort of good fortune, however it turns out." Indeed, he will be "neither excessively pleased by good fortune nor excessively distressed by ill fortune, since he does not even regard honour as the greatest good." Aristotle concedes that this apparent discounting of honour and other goods makes the megalopsuchos seem "arrogant". To be sure, Aristotle's point seems to be that the magnanimous person's attitude toward honor and other external goods is a mean between the extremes of excessively desiring them and insufficiently desiring them. The "results of good fortune, however, seem to contribute to magnanimity." Thus, even though "only the good person" is honourable, "anyone who has both virtue and these goods is more readily thought worthy of honour." Certainly, as Aristotle notes at 1123a27-1124b6, it is this combination of virtue and the result of good fortune that distinguishes the megalopsuchos from those who lack virtue, but have good fortune and try to "imitate" the magnanimous person. The megalopsuchos, then, as Curzer indicates, "not only deserves, but also claims great honour because he is aware of being more virtuous than most other people." But this self-knowledge does not lead to exploitation of others or even haughtiness." For instance, when the magnanimous person, as Aristotle notes at 1124b19-23,

meets people with good fortune or a reputation for worth, he displays his greatness, since superiority over them is difficult and impressive, and there is nothing ignoble in trying to be impressive with them. But when he meets ordinary people he is moderate, since superiority over them is easy, and an attempt to be impressive among inferiors is as vulgar as a display of strength against the weak.

What is more, self-knowledge, on Curzer's view, "leads" the megalopsuchos to "aim at higher standards of passion and action than others." Aristotle concludes his portrait by offering examples of this. For instance, at 1124b10-12, Aristotle contends that the magnanimous person is one "who does good but is ashamed when he receives it; for doing good is proper to the superior person, and receiving it to the inferior." In addition, at 1124b24-26, we learn that the magnanimous person.

stays away from what is commonly honoured, and from areas where others lead; he is inactive and lethargic except for some great honour or achievement. Hence his actions are few, but great and renowned.

Furthermore, from 1124b27 to 1125a16, we are informed by Aristotle that the magnanimous person is "open in his hatreds and his friendship, since concealment is proper to a frightened person." He is "not prone to marvel, since he finds nothing great" Also, he is "no gossip", since he is "not concerned to have himself praised or other people blamed." The magnanimous person "especially avoids laments or entreaties about necessities or small matters." Moreover, the magnanimous person is one "whose possessions are fine and unproductive rather than productive and advantageous, since that is more proper to a self-sufficient person." Aristotle concludes his portrait by pointing out that the magnanimous person.

seems to have slow movements, a deep voice and calm speech. For since he takes few things seriously, he is in no hurry, and since he counts nothing great, he is not strident; and these [attitudes he avoids] are the causes of a shrill voice and hasty movements.

This, then, is the character of the magnanimous person.

As Curzer summarizes, the magnanimous person "has great virtue, knows it, does not flaunt it, and strives to maintain it."

Admittedly, the portrait of the megalopsuchos that Aristotle offers in the *NE* is the focus of the critics of Aristotle's discussion of megalopsuchia. The above mentioned criticisms of the megalopsuchos make pointed references to the remarks Aristotle makes in his portrait.

Curzer does well in showing how, when the principle of charity is applied. Aristotle's discussion may be saved from the disparaging comments of critics. But it is important to note that the rich portrait of the megalopsuchos that is in the *NE* is largely absent in the *EE*. For instance, in the *EE*, Aristotle does not point out the magnanimous person's "attitude to danger" nor his "attitude to giving and receiving benefits", as Irwin puts it on p.101 of his *NE* translation, which he discusses in the *NE* at 1124b7-18. In addition, Aristotle does not mention in the *EE* that the megalopsuchos is "inactive and lethargic except for some great honour or achievement." (*NE* 1124b25) Furthermore, he does not discuss the megalopsuchos being "open in his hatreds and his friendships," not being a "gossip," and having "slow movements, a deep voice and calm speech." (*NE* 1124b27-1125a14) In short, Aristotle does not include several of the details about the character of the magnanimous person in his *EE* discussion of megalopsuchia.

Instead, what he does do in the *EE* is remind his audience of his endoxic method at the outset. At *EE* 1232a19-22, Aristotle states that

As to magnanimity we must define its specific nature from the qualities that we ascribe to the magnanimous. For just as with other things, in virtue of their nearness and likeness up to a certain point, their divergence beyond that point escapes notice, so it is with magnanimity.

Upon indicating his endoxic method, Aristotle asserts, at 1223a29-31, that the "magnanimous man, as is indicated by the name we apply to him, is characterized by a certain greatness of soul and faculty." Furthermore, Aristotle notes, at 1232b1-14, that "it seems characteristic of the magnanimous man to be disdainful" because "he cares about few things only, and those great, and not because someone else thinks them so." But the megalopsuchos also "seems to delight most of all when he obtains honour." Thus, Aristotle claims, at 1232b15, that the megalopsuchos "would seem to contradict himself, for to be concerned above all with honour, and yet to disdain the multitude and reputation, are inconsistent." Then Aristotle resolves this problem, and I discuss his resolution below. Thereafter, Aristotle spends the rest of the

chapter, or from 1232b31-1233a30, discussing "for different kinds of men." In particular, there is the person of vanity "who is worthy of the small but thinks himself worthy of the great. Secondly, there is the person of "mean-spiritedness" who "being worthy of great goods, because he possesses the gifts that make a man worthy, does not think himself worthy to share in them." The "opposite of these two" is the "man who is worthy of great goods and thinks himself worthy of them, such being his disposition; he is the mean between the other two and is praiseworthy." Thus, Aristotle maintains that "it is clear that magnanimity is a mean." The fourth sort of person Aristotle wishes to distinguish is "neither wholly blameable nor yet magnanimous, not having to do with anything that possesses greatness, for he neither is worthy nor thinks himself worthy of great goods." It is evident that this person is similar to the temperate person Aristotle discusses in the *NE*. Also, it is certain that Aristotle's treatment of the four sorts of persons is offered in an effort to clearly indicate that magnanimity is a

virtue because it is a mean between the extremes of vanity and "mean-spiritedness" as he calls it in the *EE*.

The crucial difference between the two discussions of megalopsuchia, I think, is that the *EE* lacks the richly detailed portrait of the magnanimous person that is in the *NE*. I take this to be an indication that the two treatises may have been intended for different audiences. Indeed, I want to suggest that the portrait of the magnanimous person that is offered in the *NE* may perhaps be read as being a blueprint for what an ideal politician is to be like. If this suggestion is correct, then it may lend credence to the view that whereas there is a close tie between the *NE* and the *Politics*, the *EE* is relatively uninterested in politics. Moreover, I should like to point out that the lack of a detailed portrait in the *EE* may indicate that it is the later work. My point is that since modern commentators have taken Aristotle's megalopsuchos of the *NE* to task as mentioned above, it is not implausible that some of Aristotle's contemporaries criticized his portrait of the megalopsuchos in the same fashion. It might be the case that Aristotle, not wishing to court the misguided wrath of contemporary critics who failed to employ the principle of charity in their understanding of his *NE* discussion of megalopsuchia, simply omitted controversial aspects of his detailed portrait in the *EE*.

At this point, let us recall Aristotle's methodological comments and his historical milieu. First, Curzer does well in pointing out that Aristotle's discussion of megalopsuchia "constitutes a particularly interesting juncture in the history of ideas; the point at which the vestigial, Homeric values of greatness and grandeur seem to clash with the newer value of moderation and the mean."¹¹ Cooper, however, claims that Aristotle's account emerges, out of the rubble of a failed attempt to offer an "impossible" unitary account, as an "attempt in a broad sense to do justice to both Achillean and Socratic elements in Greek evaluations" of megalopsuchia.¹² Still, Cooper seems to suggest that Aristotle's attempt to deal with the Homeric and Socratic strains in Greek thought on magnanimity is informed by his methodological commitments. Indeed, Cooper notes that Aristotle begins his account of megalopsuchos with characteristics "universally or generally ascribed to that character." Of course, that is precisely what Aristotle does at *EE* 1232a19-22. His general methodology, according to Cooper, is either to "save the phenomena" or to preserve" as many endoxa, or opinions of the wise and the many, as possible within a "coherent scheme."

Cooper takes this methodology to be "particularly appropriate" in giving descriptions of the virtues, for Aristotle's "purpose" is not to introduce new virtues or vices, but to "articulate the ones recognized by common sense morality, making full use of the vocabulary available in ordinary Greek."¹³ Aristotle indicates his methodology in the *Posterior Analytics* at 97b7-25. In this work, Aristotle writes, as Cooper notes, that :

We should look at what are similar and undifferentiated, and seek, first, what they all have that is the same; next [we should do this] again for other things which are of the same kind as the first set and of the same sort as one another but of a different [sort] from those. And when we have got what all these have that is the same, and similarly for the others, then we must again inquire if what we have now got [have anything that is] the same-until we come to a single account; for this will be the definition of the object. And if we come not to one but to two or more [accounts], it is clear that what we are seeking is not a single thing but several.

I mean, e.g. if we were to seek what pride is we should inquire, in the case of some proud men we know, what one thing they all have as such. e.g. if Alcibiades is proud, and Achilles and Ajax, what one thing do they all [have]? Intolerance of insults; for one made war; one waxed wroth, and the other killed himself. Again in the case of others, e.g., Lysander and Socrates. Well, if here it is being indifferent to good and bad fortune, I take these two things and inquire what both indifference to fortune and not brooking dishonour have that is the same. And if there is nothing, then there will be two sorts of pride.

In the above passage from Jonathan Barnes' translation of the *Posterior Analytics*, the terms "megalopsuchos" and "megalopsuchia" are translated, as Cooper mentions, as "proud" and "pride" respectively. Cooper claims that since Aristotle does not give any indication of deviating from the *Posterior Analytics* methodology in any of his three treatises on ethics, and that he "writes in all three texts as if there were only one sort of" magnanimous person, then it is "reasonable to think that he was attempting to present a unitary account."¹⁴

I agree with Cooper that Aristotle is trying to provide a single of unitary account of what magnanimity actually is, but I think he fundamentally misconstrues what Aristotle's project is in his discussion of magnanimity. Whereas Cooper recognizes Aristotle's endoxic method, he insists that Aristotle's own account, his single or unitary account, of megalopsuchia must be something other than a synthesis of Homeric and Socratic views on megalopuschia. Indeed, Aristotle wants to place the virtue of magnanimity between the extremes of excess and deficiency. What he finds in his inquiry on the matter is that the Socratic and Homeric conceptions of magnanimity tend to be at the extremes of deficiency and excess respectively. As a result, the only sort of magnanimous person on Aristotle's view is one who is a mean between the Homeric and Socratic extremes. Thus, Cooper is in error in suggesting that Aristotle "logically cannot" produce a unitary account of a "single concept" of megalopsuchia, because there is "not merely a lack of unity between" the Homeric and Socratic types of megalopsuchia but "actually an incompatibility", which is, "of course, to be distinguished from the 'tension' overcome" in *EE* 1232b8ff, and previously mentioned.¹⁵ It is difficult to see how Cooper can maintain that there is a tension between valuing honor as the

greatest of external goods on the one hand and being indifferent to honor on the other, but not recognize that these are diametrically opposed, or incompatible, views. I should like to maintain that Aristotle is not merely resolving a tension in the *EE*, but he is showing how the only plausible view of magnanimity as a virtue is as a mean between the aforementioned extremes. If Aristotle's project is to offer a single, or unitary, account of magnanimity that is in accord with his framework of conceiving of virtue as a mean, then Cooper's criticism that he fails to offer a "proper" unitary account and must settle for offering a "middle way"¹⁶ between the Socratic and Homeric elements in Greek thought on magnanimity is erroneous.

Unlike Cooper, Curzer takes Aristotle's project in discussing the virtue of magnanimity to be one of trying to "incorporate what is right about the beliefs of the many and the wise (*endoxa*), and reject what is not."¹⁷ This seems to be precisely what Aristotle relates as being his method in the aforementioned passage in the *Posterior Analytics*. To be sure, Aristotle seems to indicate that he has established the univocity of magnanimity by placing the concept squarely within his framework of regarding virtue as a mean. Nonetheless, Curzer regards Aristotle as being confronted by two "clusters" of *endoxa*. On the one hand, the Homeric tradition considers the *megalopsuchos* as being (1) "relatively selfsufficient", (2) doing "great deeds", and (3) having "great desires for external goods." The Homeric *megalopsuchos*, according to Curzer "especially desires honor, since honor is the greatest of the external goods." The Socratic tradition, on the other hand, pictures the *megalopsuchos* as (4) knowing his "place and desert", (5) "acting moderately", and (6) having "only moderate desires for all external goods including honor." Curzer accurately notes that these two pictures seem to be in "conflict."

Moreover, Curzer points out that Aristotle "considers the possibility of synthesizing these pictures" in the above mentioned passage from the *Posterior Analytics*. I take Curzer to be suggesting here that perhaps the resultant picture, or definition, that emerges from Aristotle's efforts in "synthesizing" the Homeric and Socratic views of the *megalopsuchos* is the single, or unitary, account of *megalopsuchia*, for which Cooper claims Aristotle is striving. Curzer, however, accurately notes that in *EE* III, 5 (1232b14-20) Aristotle poses the conflict between the above numbered (3) and (6) and

tries to resolve it by differentiating between honor from good men and honor from the masses. In the *EE* 1232b5-7, Aristotle mentions that the magnanimous man "cares about few things only, and those great, and not because someone else thinks them so. The magnanimous man would consider rather what one good man thinks than many ordinary men." But, according to Aristotle at 1232b10-13, "as regards honour, life, and wealth-about which mankind seems to care—he [the magnanimous man] values none of them except honour. He would be pained if denied honour, and if ruled by one undeserving. He delights most of all when he obtains honor." Aristotle notes at 1232b14-19 that

In this way he [the magnanimous man] would seem to contradict himself; for to be concerned above all with honour, and yet to disdain the multitude and reputation, are inconsistent. So we must first distinguish. For honour, great or small, is of two kinds; for it may be given by a crowd of ordinary men or by those worthy of consideration; and, again, there is a difference according to the ground on which honour is given.

Curzer concludes that Aristotle has shown that whereas the Homeric megalopsuchos "greatly desires great honors from good men", the Socratic megalopsuchos "disdains small honors from the masses." Although this seems to be a correct analysis, Curzer fails to offer the additional crucial point that Aristotle's megalopsuchos is a person who, by virtue of being a megalopsuchos, has all of the virtues, accepts honors from great, or excellent people, with a response that is the mean between disdain and utter exultation. In addition, the megalopsuchos must disdain a small honor offered by an ordinary person, because this is not of what he is worthy. Cooper, of course, takes the above passage from the *EE* to be an explicit resolution of the tension he sees "in Aristotle's thought" of the megalopsuchos valuing honor as "the greatest of external goods" on the one hand and considering, on the other hand, "even" honor, "although the greatest of external goods", to be a "small thing."¹⁸

Whereas Cooper and Curzer are in agreement that the *EE* succeeds in solving a problem regarding the valuation of honor by the megalopsuchos, they disagree about what this resolution

indicates about Kenny's thesis. Cooper claims that in "the light of" Kenny's thesis, "one wonders whether the fact that the *Eudemian Ethics* offers a solution of the tension is further evidence that *EE* is the later work." Cooper seems to assent to Kenny's thesis because he thinks the problem is explicitly addressed in the *EE* and is "underneath the surface" in the *NE*. He does, however, point out that Aristotle solves the difficulty "by distinguishing, as he also does in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, between honour from ordinary people" and "honour from good people."¹⁹ To be sure, in *NE* 1124a6-11, Aristotle offers the distinction between small and great honors conferred by ordinary and excellent people. Clearly, this distinction is offered in both treatises by Aristotle in an effort to resolve the conflict in Greek thought over the Homeric tradition's megalopsuchos placing great emphasis on honor and the Socratic tradition's megalopsuchos being insufficiently concerned with honor.

Unfortunately, Cooper does not precisely state why he thinks the tension that is evident in the *EE* is not on the surface in the *NE*, even though the same distinction seems to be used to solve the same problem in both treatises. In an effort to perhaps flesh out the furtive character of the tension in the *NE*, I suggest that in the *NE* discussion, Aristotle does not employ the phrase "he would seem to contradict himself," which he uses at *EE*, 1232b14, to indicate the difficulty of there being a megalopsuchos who might take the Homeric line on the one hand and greatly value honor, but then take the Socratic line on the other hand and value honor very little. In addition, Aristotle does not use the phrase "we must first distinguish" which he uses at *EE* 1232b16, in the *NE* to specifically point out to his audience the introduction of the distinction, between great and small honors conferred by excellent and ordinary people, that suggest that his own conception of a megalopsuchos is a person who is a mean between the Homeric and Socratic extremes. My point is that there seems to be a certain commitment to argumentative rigor, in terms of offering key phrases that clearly indicate the course of the argument, that is present in the *EE* and not present in the *NE*. This lack of argumentative rigor in the *NE* discussion of megalopsuchia, to which Cooper seems to be referring, may well support the Kenny hypothesis that the *EE* is the later work. If, however, we are averse to playing the so-called "dating game" with respect to the two work, then I should like to suggest that the relative lack of argumentative rigor in the *NE* may perhaps be in keeping with

my aforementioned thoughts that the *NE* seeks to offer a portrait, rich in detail, of what the true megalopsuchos is like, and in this regard, might be intended for a different audience than the *EE*. Indeed, it seems plausible that someone committed to offering a portrait of a megalopsuchos might not be as interested, as someone not giving a detailed portrait, in putting forth a taught argument as to why megalopsuchia fits into an ethical framework that views as virtue to be a mean between two extremes.

Curzer, on the other hand, rejects the Cooper view that the explicit resolution of the tension in the *EE* might be evidence in support of the Kenny hypothesis that the *EE* is the later work. To be sure, he contends, unlike Cooper, that there is no tension in the *NE* between the Homeric and Socratic views on the valuation of honor by the megalopsuchos. Curzer claims that Aristotle "abandons the attempt to preserve both" views in the *NE*, by simply rejecting only the Homeric view that the megalopsuchos has tremendous desires for honor.²⁰ The textual evidence Curzer adduces in favour of this interpretation is from *NE* 1124a17, where Aristotle states that the megalopsuchos "does not even regard honor as the greatest good." Curzer's position is that since there is no tension in the *NE*, the fact that in the *EE* Aristotle offers a solution of the tension is "evidence that *EE* is the *earlier* work." He suggests that perhaps Aristotle "formulated the distinction between the sorts of honors in order to solve a problem in the *EE*." But then in the *NE*, Aristotle "decided to drop" the Homeric view that the megalopsuchos has great desire for honor, and "thereby eliminating the problem." Aristotle "retained the distinction, however, because it seemed intrinsically important."²¹

Although Curzer does not clarify what he means by "intrinsically important", I suggest that the intrinsic importance of the distinction, for Aristotle, in both works is to indicate how the virtue of megalopsuchia is a mean between extremes. Curzer, to be sure, fails to place the above mentioned *NE* passage in its proper context. In particular, the above passage comes at the end of an important discussion which seems to refute Curzer's position on the *NE* and *EE* dating debate. For his part, Aristotle points out in *NE* 1124a13-17 that

the magnanimous person is concerned especially with honours, Still, he will also have a moderate attitude to riches and power

and every sort of good and bad fortune, however it turns out. He will be neither excessively pleased by good fortune nor excessively distressed by ill fortune, since he does not even regard honour as the greatest good.

Certainly, in the above passage, Aristotle appears to be arguing that the magnanimous person, on his view, strives for the mean between valuing honor excessively and insufficiently. If the Aristotelian megalopsuchos is to be a mean between the Homeric one and the Socratic one, then Aristotle not only rejects the Homeric view of the valuation of honor by the megalopsuchos, but he also rejects the Socratic view of the valuation of honor by the megalopsuchos. Consequently, in closing, it is fair to say that there is no tension in the *NE* between the Homeric and Socratic views on the valuation of honor by the megalopsuchos seems to be erroneous²²

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NOTES

1. Hereafter, all textual references to the *EE* and the *NE* are from the following: *Eudemian Ethics*. Trans. J. Solomon. 1925. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. Terence Irwin. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985.
2. Howard j. Curzer, "Aristotle's Much Maligned *Megalopsychos*", *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 69, No. 2, (June 1991). pp. 131-151.
3. Neil Cooper. "Aristotle's Crowning Virtue." *Apeiron* Vol. 22, No. 3, (September 1989), pp. 191-205.
4. Cooper, p. 196.
5. Howard J. Curzer. "A Great Philosopher's Not So Great Account of Great Virtue: Aristotle's Treatment of 'Greatness of Soul.'" *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 20, No. 4, (December 1990), pp. 517-538.
6. Curzer, p. 533.

7. Cooper, p. 196.
8. Curzer, p. 533.
9. Curzer, pp. 532-533.
10. Curzer, pp. 131-132. All further references to Curzer from this juncture to p. 189 of this paper are to his June 1991 article, and the page references are to pp. 132-133.
11. Curzer, p. 518.
12. Cooper, pp. 188-199.
13. Cooper, p. 193.
14. Cooper, p. 194.
15. Cooper, p. 198.
16. Cooper, p. 192.
17. Curzer, p. 532. All further reference to Curzer, from this juncture to the next Cooper reference, are to his December 1990 article, and page references are to p. 532.
18. Cooper, p. 196.
19. Cooper, p. 196.
20. Curzer, p. 532.
21. Curzer, p. 533.
22. I would like to thank Larry Jost for his many helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.