M. Baumer--10-1-97

A. Book Three

1. Chapter 1--The voluntary is that not done under compulsion or in ignorance. Compulsion is the origin of motion outside the agent when the agent contributes nothing. An act which would not be done willingly apart from now and for these reasons is voluntary now and for these reasons. Ignorance of the kind that makes an action involuntary is ignorance of the particular circumstances of the action.

a. He who would investigate excellence must define the voluntary and the involuntary.
   (1) He who is concerned with excellence of passions and actions must be concerned with the voluntary, for:
      (a) Praise and blame are for all and only the excellent and the vicious passions and actions.
      (b) Praise and blame are for all and only the voluntary actions and passions.
      (c) Therefore, the excellent or vicious passions and actions coincide with the voluntary ones.

b. This investigation is also useful for the legislator.
   (1) The legislator is concerned with the voluntary, for:
      (a) The legislator determines rewards and punishments.
      (b) Rewards and punishments pertain to the voluntary.

c. DEFINITION: Actions are involuntary when done
   (1) under compulsion or
   (2) through ignorance

d. DEFINITION: An action or passion is compulsory when its origin is outside of the agent or patient and the agent or patient contributes nothing to it.
   (1) Example: one being carried by the wind or by people having one within their power

e. Problem: what about base or disadvantageous actions done to avoid great harm or achieve a
noble end?
(1) Example: children or parents are held hostage by a tyrant and threatened with death.
(2) Example: throwing cargo overboard in a storm.

g. Solution:
(1) acts like this are mixed (partly voluntary and partly involuntary?) but are closer to voluntary.
(2) When these acts are done they are chosen (and thus voluntary), for:
(a) "Voluntary" and "involuntary" are predicated of an action relative to the time when it is done, for:
i) Ends vary according to time,
ii) [and thus so do means, which are dependent on ends,
iii) and thus choices, [which pertain to means.]]
(b) The actual deed here is voluntary, for the origin of the movement of the body parts is in the agent, and in the one in whom is the origin of the action is the doing or not doing.
(3) But absolutely (haplos, "simply," they are involuntary, since no one would choose such an action in itself. NOTE: There will be an amplification of this a little further on.
(4) Depending on the relative weights of the act and its consequences, these situations may be judged differently.
(5) It is difficult to judge what should be chosen, and difficult to follow one's judgement, since pain is involved (which disturbs judgement).

h. Refined definition of compulsion.
(1) Absolutely, an act is compulsory if its origin lies outside the agent, and when the agent contributes nothing.
(2) But when something absolutely involuntary is chosen now and for the
sake of these things, it is voluntary now and for the sake of these things (a conditional form of voluntariness). This is closer to voluntary than to involuntary, since deeds are among singulars, and these are voluntary.(?) [Maybe--if you examine the deed itself, which is a sensible particular, rather than the motive, which is imperceptible to the senses, its origin is in the agent.]

(3) Reply to an opposing view: that all actions done for pleasure or the noble are compulsory.
(a) Under that view all actions are compulsory, for these are the motives of all actions.
(b) Actions done involuntarily are painful, whereas those done for pleasure or nobility are pleasant.
(c) It is absurd to blame something else instead of ourselves when we fall prey to their attractions, or to blame pleasures when we act disgracefully, but to take the credit for acting nobly.

h. Acts done in ignorance of the particular circumstances of the act in some respect are involuntary, but not those done in ignorance of the moral nature of the act.

i. Thus, a voluntary action is one of which the origin lies in the agent and the circumstances of which the agent understands.

(1)... 

2. NOTE: FROM HERE ON THE NOTES ARE MORE BRIEF.
Chapter 2--Choice is the voluntary which is predeliberated.
a. Choice is a voluntary act, but the voluntary is wider than choice, for children and animals do voluntary things, but do not choose, and the sudden can be voluntary but unchosen.
b. Choice is not desire, passion, wish, or opinion (or any particular kind of opinion). Various arguments.
c. Perhaps choice is the voluntary which is predeliberated.
d. What is deliberation?

3. Chapter 3--Choice is deliberate desire, and deliberation is calculation of possible means for the one calculating (an analysis of ever more subordinate ends leading back to the agent).
a. What are the objects of deliberation (for a sensible person)?
b. The four causes are Necessity, Nature, Chance, and Intelligence and what is through human causes. [How are these related to the four causes of the PHYSICS?] 
c. We do not deliberate about the things that are or come about through Necessity, Nature, or Chance.
d. Of human actions, we do not deliberate either about things that don't pertain to us in particular or things that have scientific solutions (such as spelling).
e. We deliberate about things done by us for which there are general principles, but which do not always come out as they are supposed to. Examples: medicine, navigation.
f. We deliberate about means, not ends, and the last step in the deliberative analysis is the first step of action, that is, if it is possible. So all deliberation is investigation (finding a chain of causes, in this case final causes).
g. We do not deliberate about direct perceptions--is this a loaf? or is this loaf properly baked? [for these are starting-points.]
h. The objects of choice and deliberation are the same, except that when something is chosen it has already been deliberated on. For deliberation stops when one has carried the origin of action back to oneself. The ancient constitutions....
i. The object of choice is something done by us that is desired after being deliberated, and

choice is deliberate desire (desire upon deliberation) for such a thing. For desire comes about upon having judged in accordance
with deliberation.

4. Chapter 4--The absolutely wishable is the good, but the wishable for each person is the apparent good for him. NOTE: The words in Greek for the deliberable (bouleuton) and the wishable (bouleton) are very similar, a circumstance which may explain why Aristotle is so concerned to explicate the distinction between them. Also, the wishable probably has at least the connotation of that which ought to be wished for.
   a. Wish is for ends.
   b. Is what is wished for (the wishable, Gk: bouleton) the true good or the apparent good? Either answer is inadequate:
      (1) If you say the true good, then those who are mistaken about the good do not really wish.
      (2) If you say the apparent good, then everything is equally wishable based on someone's misapprehension of the good. (Why is this unacceptable? Because it seems that some things are more wishable than others--those that are truly good.)
   c. Solution:
      (1) The wishable absolutely is the good, but the wishable for each person (the relative wishable) is the apparent good.
      (2) The good man wishes for the true good, and the bad man for anything, and therefore the wishes of the good man are a standard of the good.

5. Chapter 5--
   a. [The actualizations of excellences and vices are by deliberation and choice, for
      (1) [Whereas wishes are of ends,] deliberations and choices are of means (literally, things relative to ends).
      (2) The actualizations of virtues also pertain to things relative to ends.
      (3) [Therefore things done by deliberation and choice are the same as actualizations of virtue and vice.]
   b. Virtue and vice are in our power (eph' hemin).
      (1) In those things in which to act is in
our power, not to act is also, and where not to act is in our power, to act is also.

(2) Therefore, in those things in which to act nobly is in our power, it is also in our power basely not to act, and in those things in which nobly not to act is in our power, it is also in our power basely to act.

(3) It is therefore in our power to be excellent or vicious, because these respectively are doing noble and base things.

(4) Thus the saying that base acts are involuntary is false.