

## **An Argument in *Nicomachean Ethics***

Hence it is also clear that none of the virtues of character arises in us naturally. For if something is by nature in one condition, habituation cannot bring it into another condition. A stone, for instance, by nature moves downwards, and habituation could not make it move upwards, not even if you threw it up ten thousand times to habituate it; nor could habituation make fire move downwards, or bring anything that is by nature in one condition into another condition. And so the virtues arise in us neither by nature nor against nature. Rather, we are by nature able to acquire them, and we are completed through habit. (II.1.2-3; 1103a19-26)

Hence ~~it is also clear that~~ *none of the virtues of character arises in us naturally.* {conclusion 2} For *if something is by nature in one condition, habituation cannot bring it into another condition.* {premise for conclusion 2; conclusion 1} *A stone, for instance, by nature moves downwards, and habituation could not make it move upwards, not even if you threw it up ten thousand times to habituate it; nor could habituation make fire move downwards, or bring anything that is by nature in one condition into another condition.*

And so *the virtues arise in us neither by nature nor against nature.* {restatement of conclusion 2} Rather, we are by nature able to acquire them, and we are completed through habit.

1. A stone by nature moves downwards, and it cannot be habituated to move upwards.
2. Fire by nature moves upwards, and it cannot be habituated to move downwards.
3. Therefore, if something by nature is in one condition, it cannot be habituated to bring it into another condition.
4. [ ]
5. Therefore, we do not possess the virtues of character by nature.

1. A stone by nature moves downwards, and it cannot be habituated to move upwards.
2. Fire by nature moves upwards, and it cannot be habituated to move downwards.
3. Therefore, if something by nature is in one condition, it cannot be habituated to bring it into another condition.
4. [We can be habituated so as to bring us from the condition of lacking to the condition of having the virtues of character.]
5. Therefore, we do not possess the virtues of character by nature.

# **An Argument in the *Tao te Ching***

## **Chapter 7**

Heaven and earth are long lasting.  
The reason why heaven and earth are long lasting:  
Because they do not live for self.  
Therefore they last long.

Thus the sage puts his body behind,  
Yet his body is in front.  
He regards his body as external,  
Yet his body remains in existence.  
Is it not because he is selfless  
That he can fulfill himself.

Heaven and earth are long lasting. { *conclusion 1* }  
~~The reason why heaven and earth are long lasting:~~  
Because they do not live for self. { *premise* }  
~~Therefore they last long.~~

Thus the sage puts his body behind,  
Yet his body is in front.  
He regards his body as external,  
Yet his body remains in existence.  
Is it not because he is selfless { *conclusion 2* }  
That he can fulfill himself. { *conclusion 3* }

*Interpretation:*

*The first two sentences of stanza 2 present in more concrete imagery the general idea that is stated in the third sentence.*

1. Heaven and earth do not live for self.
2. [ ]
3. Therefore, heaven and earth are long lasting.
4. [ ]
5. Therefore, the sage does not live for self.
6. [ ]
7. Therefore, the sage can fulfill himself.

1. Heaven and earth do not live for self.
2. [Whatever does not live for self is long lasting.]
3. Therefore, heaven and earth are long lasting.
4. [The sage models his life on heaven and earth.]
5. Therefore, the sage does not live for self.
6. [Anyone who does not live for self can fulfill himself.]
7. Therefore, the sage can fulfill himself.

Aristotle: VI.4.1-3; VI.4.4; VI.1.5.

Tao te Ching: 2; 11; 13.