

**Sketching the Stereotype:
A Comparison Between the Characterization of Menander and Aristotle**

Passage 1: *Nicomachean Ethics* 1126b

οἱ δ' ἐξ ἐναντίας τούτοις πρὸς πάντα ἀντιτείνοντες καὶ τοῦ λυπεῖν οὐδ' ὀτιοῦν φροντίζοντες δύσκολοι καὶ δυσέριδες καλοῦνται. ὅτι μὲν οὖν αἱ εἰρημέναι ἕξεις ψεκταὶ εἰσιν, οὐκ ἄδηλον, καὶ ὅτι ἡ μέση τούτων ἐπαινετὴ, καθ' ἣν ἀποδέξεται ἃ δεῖ καὶ ὡς δεῖ, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ δυσχερανεῖ. ὄνομα δ' οὐκ ἀποδέδοται αὐτῇ τι, ἔοικε δὲ μάλιστα φιλία· τοιοῦτος γάρ ἐστιν ὁ κατὰ τὴν μέσην ἕξιν οἷον βουλόμεθα λέγειν τὸν ἐπεικῆ φίλον, τὸ στέργειν προσλαβόντα. διαφέρει δὲ τῆς φιλίας, ὅτι ἄνευ πάθους ἐστὶ καὶ τοῦ στέργειν οἷς ὀμιλεῖ· οὐ γὰρ τῷ φιλεῖν ἢ ἐχθαίρειν ἀποδέχεται ἕκαστα ὡς δεῖ, ἀλλὰ τῷ τοιοῦτος εἶναι. ὁμοίως γὰρ πρὸς ἀγνώτας καὶ γνωρίμους καὶ συνήθεις καὶ ἀσυνήθεις αὐτὸ ποιήσει, πλὴν καὶ ἐν ἑκάστοις ὡς ἀρμόζει· οὐ γὰρ ὁμοίως προσήκει συνήθων καὶ ὀθνεῖων φροντίζειν, οὐδ' αὖ λυπεῖν.

Passage 2: *Rhetoric* 1389b

Οἱ δὲ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ παρηκμακότες σχεδὸν ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων τούτοις τὰ πλεῖστα ἔχουσιν ἤθη· διὰ γὰρ τὸ πολλὰ ἔτη βεβιωκέναι καὶ πλείω ἐξηπατήσθαι καὶ ἡμαρτηκέναι, καὶ τὰ πλείω φαῦλα εἶναι τῶν πραγμάτων, οὔτε διαβεβαιοῦνται οὐδὲν, ἤττόν τε ἄγαν ἅπαντα ἢ δεῖ. καὶ οἴονται, ἴσασι δ' οὐδέν. καὶ ἀμφοισθητοῦντες προστιθέασιν αἰεὶ τὸ ἴσως καὶ τάχα, καὶ πάντα λέγουσιν οὕτω, παγίως δ' οὐδέν. καὶ κακοήθεις εἰσίν· ἔστι γὰρ κακοήθεια τὸ ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον ὑπολαμβάνειν πάντα. ἔτι δὲ καχύποπτοὶ εἰσι διὰ τὴν ἀπιστίαν, ἄπιστοι δὲ δι' ἐμπειρίαν. καὶ οὔτε φιλοῦσι σφόδρα οὔτε μισοῦσι διὰ ταῦτα, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν Βίαντος ὑποθήκην καὶ φιλοῦσιν ὡς μισήσοντες καὶ μισοῦσιν ὡς φιλήσοντες. καὶ μικρόψυχοι διὰ τὸ τεταπεινώσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ βίου· οὐδενὸς γὰρ μεγάλου οὐδὲ περιττοῦ, ἀλλὰ τῶν πρὸς τὸν βίον ἐπιθυμοῦσιν.

Translation by H. Rackman

Those on the contrary who object to everything and do not care in the least what pain they cause, are called Surly or Quarrelsome. Now it is clear that the dispositions described are blameworthy, and that the middle disposition between them is praiseworthy—that is, the tendency to acquiesce in the right things, and likewise to disapprove of the right things, in the right manner. But to this no special name has been assigned, though it very closely resembles friendship; for he who exemplifies this middle disposition is the sort of man we mean by the expression ‘a good friend,’ only that includes an element of affection. It differs from friendship in not possessing the emotional factor of affection for one’s associates; since a man of this character takes everything in the right way not from personal liking or dislike, but from natural amiability. He will behave with the same propriety towards strangers and acquaintances alike, towards people with whom he is familiar and those with whom he is not—though preserving the shades of distinction proper to each class, since it is not appropriate to show the same regard or disregard for the feelings of friends and of strangers.

Translation by J.H. Freese

Older men and those who have passed their prime have in most cases characters opposite to those of the young. For, owing to their having lived many years and having been more often deceived by others or made more mistakes themselves, and since most human things turn out badly, they are positive about nothing, and in everything they show an excessive lack of energy. They always “think,” but “know” nothing; and in their hesitation they always add “perhaps,” or “maybe”; all their statements are of this kind, never unqualified. They are malicious; for malice consists in looking upon the worse side of everything. Further, they are always suspicious owing to mistrust, and mistrustful owing to experience. And neither their love nor their hatred is strong for the same reasons; but, according to the precept of Bias they love as if they would one day hate, and hate as if they would one day love. And they are little-minded, because they have been humbled by life; for they desire nothing great or uncommon, but only the necessities of life.

ἐν δ' ἴσω[ς] ἡμαρτον, ὅστις τῶν ἀπάντων ᾠόμην
 αὐτὸς αὐ[τ]άρκης τις εἶναι καὶ δεήσεσθ' οὐδενός.
 (715) νῦν δ' [i]δὼν ὀξεῖαν οὔσαν ἄσκοπόν τε τοῦ βίου
 τὴν τε[λ]ευτήν, εὔρον οὐκ εὖ τοῦτο γινώσκων τότε.
 δεῖ γὰρ [εἶ]ναι καὶ παρεῖναι τὸν ἐπικουρήσοντ' αἰεὶ.
 ἀλλὰ μὰ τὸν Ἥφαιστον—οὔτω σφόδρα διεφθάρμην ἐγὼ
 τοὺς βίους ὁρῶν ἐκάστους τοὺς λογισμούς θ' ὄν τρόπον
 (720) πρὸς τὸ κερδαίνειν ἔχουσιν—οὐδέν' εὖνουν ᾠόμην
 ἕτερον ἐτέρῳ τῶν ἀπάντων ἂν γενέσθαι· τοῦτο δὴ
 ἐμποδὼν ἦν μοι. μόλις δὲ πείραν εἷς δέδωκε νῦν
 Γοργίας, ἔργον ποιήσας ἀνδρὸς εὐγενεστάτου.
 τὸν γὰρ οὐκ ἔδωθ' ἑαυτὸν προσίεναι πρὸς τὴν θύραν,
 (725) οὐ βοηθήσανθ' ἑαυτῷ πάποτ' εἰς οὐδέν' μέρος,
 οὐ προσειπόντ', οὐ λαλήσανθ' ἠδέως, σέσωχ' ὄμως.
 εἶπ' ἂν ἄλλος, καὶ δικαίως, “οὐκ ἔἴς με προσίεναι·
 οὐ προσέρχομ'. οὐδέν' ἡμῖν γέγονας αὐτὸς χρήσιμος·
 οὐδ' ἐγὼ σοι νῦν.” τί δ' ἐστί, μειράκιον; ἐάν τ' ἐγὼ
 (730) ἀποθάνω νῦν—οἴομαι δέ, καὶ κακῶς ἴσως ἔχω—
 ἂν τε περισωθῶ, ποσοῦμαι σ' ὑόν, ἅ τ' ἔχων τυγχάνω
 πάντα σαυτοῦ νόμισον εἶναι. τήνδε σοι παρεγγυῶ·
 ἄνδρα δ' αὐτῇ πόρισον. εἰ γὰρ καὶ σφόδρ' ὑγιαίνοιμ' ἐγώ,
 αὐτὸς οὐ δυνήσομ' εὐρεῖν· οὐ γὰρ ἀρέσει μοί ποτε
 (735) οὐδὲ εἷς. ἀλλ' ἐμὲ μὲν, ἂν ζῶ, ζῆν ἔἴθ' ὡς βούλομαι
 ...
 ὑπὲρ ἐ]μοῦ γὰρ βούλομ' εἰπεῖν ὀλίγα σοι καὶ τοῦ τρόπου.
 εἰ τοιοῦτ]οι πάντες ἦσαν, οὔτε τὰ δικαστήρια
 ἦν ἂν, ο]ὔθ' αὐτοὺς ἀπῆγον εἰς τὰ δεσμοτήρια,
 (745) οὔτε π]όλεμος ἦν, ἔχων δ' ἂν μέτρι' ἕκαστος ἡγάπα.
 ἀ[λ]λ' ἴσως ταῦτ' ἔστ' ἀρεστὰ μᾶλλον· οὔτω πράττετε.
 ἐκποδὼν ὑμῖν ὁ χαλεπὸς δύσκολός τ' ἔσται γέρων.

But perhaps I made one mistake, I supposed myself the one of all
 who was self-sufficient and needed no one.
 But now having seen that the end of life is sudden and
 unexpected, I've found I did not understand this well then.
 For there is always need for a helper to be at hand.
 But by Hephaestus, so exceedingly distorted I've become
 watching each man's life and their calculations how they are
 disposed to profit, I thought that no one at all had good intentions
 toward each other. This was my obstacle. But just now one man
 has put this to the test Gorgias, doing the deed of a truly noble
 man. For the very man who did not allow him to approach my
 door, not help him in any amount, did not greet him, did not
 chatter pleasantly, he saved nonetheless. Another man might
 have said, and rightly, “You don't let me approach, I'm not
 coming. You have been no use to us, and I won't be one to you
 now.” What is it boy? Whether I die now, and I think I might,
 perhaps I am doing poorly, or if I survive, I adopt you as my son,
 everything which I happen to have consider yours. I entrust her
 to you. Find her a husband. For even if I become much better, I
 would not be able to find one; for no one will ever please me.
 But as for me, if I live, let me live as I please;

...
 I wish to tell you a little about myself and my character.
 If everyone were such, there wouldn't be lawcourts, they
 wouldn't send each other to prisons, there would be no war, and
 each man would be content having enough. But perhaps these
 things are more pleasing; act thus. This difficult and grouchy old
 man will be out of your way.

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