

ARISTOTELIAN *SOPHROSYNÉ* IN THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE: A RE-EXAMINATION

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There has been a renewed interest in the study of virtues and virtue ethics, and many modern virtue ethicists have acknowledged that traditional virtues differ from contemporary ones. This study, then, re-examines the virtue of sophrosyne, or self-control, given the context of digital technologies. This study critiques the traditional scope of the virtue by using the concept of the unity of the senses. Likewise, this study argues that the scope of sophrosyne, originally discussed by Aristotle, can be extended to other objects of pleasure and not necessarily those that appeal to the senses of taste and touch, i.e., the traditional objects of pleasure. Consequently, this study claims that there are modern objects of pleasure such as mobile gadgets and social media applications. An examination of this virtue in the digital context is vital, as one can easily become self-indulgent with respect to these modern objects.

Keywords: digital self-control, digital temperance, objects of pleasure, sophrosyne, virtue ethics

INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of the 20th century, a renewed interest in the study of virtues and virtue ethics emerged. This comes despite the existence and prevalence of modern normative ethical frameworks such as utilitarianism and deontological ethics. Since the 17th century, many scholars and ethicists have rejected virtue ethics, rendering it inactive, as they believe it only fits the traditional or classical society from which it originated. According to MacIntyre (1984, 313), with the rise of a different structure of society ruled by the market economy, there was a "rejection of the Aristotelian tradition" along with "modern moralities of rules." However, MacIntyre (1984, 315) argues that the "Aristotelian tradition can be restated in a way that restores intelligibility and rationality to our moral and social attitudes and commitments." He also claims that rejecting the Aristotelian tradition entails a "rejection of a quite distinctive kind of morality," where rules are at its core (MacIntyre 1984, 32). However, as rules are "predominant in modern conceptions of morality," it is "both

possible and important" (Schneewind 1982, 653) for such a theory of morality wherein "virtues have the central place."

This renewed interest in the study of virtues continued until the 21st century. According to Gong and Zhang (2010, 255), one of the primary questions investigated is the relevance and appropriateness of virtues and virtue ethics in the contemporary world. Like MacIntyre, Gong and Zhang (2010, 255) argued that contemporary society "has not made virtues less important." In fact, as life in the current society has "become more diversified, rule-following ethics have taken on even greater importance" (Gong and Zhang 2010, 255). According to them, the unprecedented "evils that have happened in modern society" have actually made it clearer that virtues are crucial (Gong and Zhang 2010, 255). Gong and Zhang (2010, 255) also emphasize the importance of virtues in the "continuing existence of mankind" and in the "continuing development of human civilization."

This renewed scholarly interest is also reflected in contemporary philosophical works that examine virtue ethics within emerging digital and technological frameworks. For instance, Quintana (2024) explored the applicability of virtue ethics in the digital era, demonstrating how it remains relevant in guiding online interactions and moral decision-making in virtual spaces. Likewise, Meier et al. (2025) examined the impact of digital health technologies on moral responsibility. According to them, while AI may enhance healthcare decision-making, it lacks the moral agency necessary for genuine ethical deliberation. On the other hand, Doherty (2021) investigated the survival of Aristotelian virtue theory amidst the rise of Fourth Order Technologies (FOT). Doherty argued that, while AI-driven systems increasingly attempt to replicate human decision-making, they inherently lack the fundamental components of moral agency, relationality, and lived experiences, i.e., elements that are essential to virtue ethics. Meanwhile, Alirezabeigi and Magaraggia (2025) explored the role of virtue ethics in digital education. Their article argues that, as learning environments become increasingly mediated by technology, the cultivation of intellectual virtues remains essential (Alirezabeigi and Magaraggia 2025).

In addition, Constantinescu and Crisp (2022) questioned whether AI systems can be considered truly virtuous within an Aristotelian framework. They claim that AI may be capable of acting in ways that appear virtuous but ultimately lack the essential moral emotions and rational choice required for genuine virtue (Constantinescu and Crisp 2022). Their study examined the limitations of AI in achieving moral excellence, which reinforced the argument that virtue ethics remains distinct from rule-based ethical systems. Gill (2024, 1543-1545) further extends this discourse by analyzing AI as an "agent of data" rather than an agent of moral reasoning. This again supports the earlier claim that virtue ethics is indispensable in human-AI interactions. Lastly, Lavdari (2025), in his article, critiques the centralization of digital knowledge and its impact on ethical resilience. He warns that excessive reliance on digital decision-making processes risks undermining the virtues necessary for moral autonomy (Lavdari 2025). These studies collectively demonstrate the enduring significance of virtues and virtue ethics in contemporary times.

As scholars continue to explore the role of virtue ethics in modern contexts, many also recognize that the virtues themselves have evolved alongside these transformations. Traditional Aristotelian virtues, while still valuable, may manifest

differently in today's world due to profound societal shifts. According to Gong and Zhang (2010, 255), the rise of "professional life, urban life, and technological life" in contemporary society has "considerably changed the human environment." Likewise, people in the contemporary world are more exposed to "stronger temptations from greed and selfish desires" as compared to people in ancient societies before (Gong and Zhang 2010, 255). For this reason, many Aristotelian scholars and ethicists have explored the role of virtues in the contemporary world.

For instance, the study of Tzavaras and Stelios (2022) explored the application of digital Aristotelian virtues, i.e., virtues in the context of online communication in corporate organizations and leadership. Their study argues that Aristotelian virtues, particularly *sophrosyne*, are fundamental in designing ethical AI, emphasizing the necessity of self-restraint and moral responsibility in technology. Likewise, the study of Berberich and Diepold (2018) analyzed the application of virtue ethics in machine learning and the development of artificial intelligence technologies. Kuzior and Zozul'ak (2019) also explored the adaptation of the Aristotelian virtue of *phronesis*, given the context of innovation and sustainable development. All of these studies show that there are scholarly attempts to contextualize virtue ethics and Aristotelian virtues, and to investigate the role that they can play in the contemporary world. Consequently, these attempts demonstrate that there are many scholars who think that there is still merit in studying and practicing virtue ethics in this day and age.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that among all of the virtues originally discussed by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, one that captured the interests of many contemporary scholars is *sophrosyne*, translated in English as "self-control" or "temperance." On the one hand, there are studies wherein scholars critically examined *sophrosyne* vis-à-vis Aristotle's discussion of the virtue and vis-à-vis other virtues he outlined in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. For instance, in his article "Temperance," Roberts (2014) examined *sophrosyne* as temperance, i.e., what it is, how a person can acquire it, and what its corresponding vices are. Likewise, in his work, "Aristotle's Account of the Virtue of Temperance in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.10-11," Curzer (1997) examined *sophrosyne* as temperance along with its parameters and targets. Similarly, in his work "Courage and Temperance," Pearson (2014) discussed the virtue of *sophrosyne* along with the virtue of *andreia*. In addition, he also critically analyzed the vice of self-indulgence and the role that *sophrosyne* plays in preserving one's practical wisdom.

On the other hand, there is also an abundance of literature wherein scholars apply the virtue of *sophrosyne* in various aspects and spheres of society. For instance, Beck (2012) discussed the value of *sophrosyne* in the characteristics of a leader, while Pisk (2011) examined its role in the field of sports. Likewise, Karches (2019) explored the role of the Aristotelian *sophrosyne* and moral friendship in smoking cessation. Meanwhile, Synowiec (2020, 90) argued that the virtue of *sophrosyne* in the contemporary world is closely linked with the practice of effective altruism. According to him (2020), in the contemporary world, the virtue has an "economic dimension and essentially means thriftiness," which is practiced by effective altruists "in order to help others fulfill their more basic needs."

In addition, Crawley (2019) explored the challenges of applying Aristotle's *sophrosyne* in modern society. Crawley questions whether the virtue's classical formulation can fully address contemporary moral dilemmas. He claims that the virtue

is best understood as conscientiousness, which is a trait extensively studied in modern psychology, particularly in its relation to self-control. He also asserts that a revaluation of educational systems to cultivate conscientiousness—while also considering its moral and philosophical dimensions—could be key to fostering both personal integrity and societal progress. On a similar note, Moore (2023) examined the virtue in the context of self-constitution and moral agency which allows individuals to navigate conflicting desires and goals in pursuit of a coherent sense of self. He further contends that *sophrosyne* is essential for community-building. It is not simply an inward-looking trait but one that fosters mutual respect and collaboration within society. Through his discussion, Moore illustrates *sophrosyne's* continued relevance in ethical decision-making today.

Lastly, the study of Brown and Lamb (2023, 49) examined the concept of digital temperance and how Aristotelian *sophrosyne* remains relevant to digital technologies. In their study, they found that many "consider the virtue of temperance as one of the most relevant to their lives" (Brown and Lamb 2023, 49). They also explained that, while the virtue of *sophrosyne* historically has "moralist connotations of chastity and teetotalism," their students view the virtue as "past carnal concerns" as they feel that digital technologies "sometimes detract from their we-being" (Brown and Lamb 2023, 49).

It is both interesting and noteworthy that these studies have examined and applied the virtue of *sophrosyne*—an ancient virtue—in various fields and disciplines of the contemporary world. Despite the differences in the structure of ancient and contemporary societies, these attempts to resurrect the said virtue demonstrate that *sophrosyne*, and Aristotle's virtue ethics, in general, indeed remain highly relevant. This makes re-examining *sophrosyne*, given the dynamics of contemporary society, timely and meritorious.

This present study then conducts a re-examination of the Aristotelian virtue of *sophrosyne* and does so within the context of the digital environment. This re-examination revises the Aristotelian account of *sophrosyne* by extending the traditional objects of virtue and vice. This study also introduces modern objects of pleasure, which include mobile gadgets and social media applications.

***SOPHROSYPNE* AND ITS TRADITIONAL OBJECTS: A CRITIQUE**

Sophrosyne is the virtue that Aristotle (1962, 3.10.1118a25) ascribes to the actions concerned with pleasures. However, in his discussion of this virtue, he qualified that it is not concerned with all kinds of pleasure. Likewise, he states that it is concerned with a particular kind of pleasure, namely, bodily pleasures. However, he does not regard all bodily pleasures as necessarily concerned with self-control. He asserts that it is concerned only with the pleasures of touch and taste. Hence, those pleasures related to other senses, despite being bodily, are not necessarily concerned with Aristotle's concept of *sophrosyne*.¹

In his *De Anima*, Aristotle argues that one's appetites are connected, by necessity, to perception. He argues that "to which perception belongs, to this also belongs both pleasure and pain, as well as both the pleasurable and the painful" (Aristotle 2016, §414b5). Likewise, he asserts that "for wherever there is perception,

there is also both pain and pleasure; and wherever these are, of necessity, there is appetite as well" (Aristotle 2016, §413b20). This entails that, indeed, pleasure or *hedone* is the "object of appetite" and that as one has the capacity for sense perceptions, one necessarily has an "ability to experience pleasure, and so, in turn, has a capacity of desire" (Aristotle 2016, 392).

For this reason, for the virtue of self-control, Aristotle disqualifies pleasures of the soul as objects with which self-control is concerned. Such includes an individual's delight when he engages in activities such as learning and studying. As he finds knowledge pleasurable, he takes satisfaction in acquiring such knowledge. However, according to Aristotle, even though the activities that involve truth-seeking deal with pleasure, it is not within the sphere of actions of self-control. Hence, a man who feels pleasure in seeking truth, such as in reading and studying, cannot be self-indulgent. Accordingly, it is also not proper to say that a man is self-controlled when it comes to the said activities. This is because truth and knowledge, as well as activities involving pleasures of the mind and soul, do not involve one's bodily appetites; hence, in pursuing these kinds of activities, "it is not his body but rather his thought that is affected" (Aristotle 1962, §1117b30).

In addition, Aristotle (1962, §1118a5) claims that not all pleasures of one's senses can be qualified as objects of self-control. In particular, one's delight in a particular sight or smell that does not relate to one's sense of touch and taste cannot be within the sphere of self-control. For instance, one's delight in looking at and smelling roses would not be included in the realm of such virtue. Hence, even if someone takes pleasure, for instance, in looking at roses or smelling them, Aristotle would not consider that person self-indulgent.

According to Aristotle (1962, §1118a15), the objects of pleasure that self-control deals with are those that appeal to one's senses of touch and taste. He claims this because these senses involve the appetites that human beings share with "lower animals" (Aristotle 1962, §1118a15). Animals such as dogs and lions, Aristotle (1962, §1118a20) claims, find joy in objects that appeal to their sense of touch and taste. In cases where they derive pleasure from their other senses, these are simply felt "incidentally." For instance, when a dog finds joy in "smelling hares," it does so because it appeals to the dog's desire to eat the said hare (Aristotle 1962, §1118a20). Similarly, when a lion sees a "stag or mountain goat," the enjoyment it feels is not because of the view itself but because of "the prospect of a meal" (Aristotle 1962, §1118a20). Hence, Aristotle states that only objects of touch and taste fall within the domain of self-control.

The reason Aristotle (1962, §1118a20) delineates pleasures involved with the virtue of self-control as objects only of taste and touch is that, as mentioned, these are the faculties that human beings share with other animals. Aristotle (1962, §1118a20) states that to indulge in these pleasures "inheres in [people] not as human beings but as animals." As a result, when humans improperly engage or take delight in these kinds of pleasure, they are reduced to the state of lower animals, as it makes them slavish and bestial. This reduction of a human to a slavish and bestial state, Aristotle finds, is reprehensible.

While looking at and smelling roses does not involve self-control, it is not the same as looking at and smelling a chocolate cake, for instance. This is because the

former involves simply appreciating roses, while the latter appeals to one's love for the taste of the chocolate cake. However, when the person takes delight in seeing rose petals placed on top of a white bed, for instance, it is a different matter. This is because the particular example involves self-indulgence, as it already appeals to the sense of touch and the prospect of sexual intercourse. Hence, Aristotle (1962, §1118a5-10) asserts that on its own, the object and the kind of pleasure that is involved with the senses of sight, sound, and smell are not necessarily the concern of self-control; unless they already relate and appeal to the senses of touch and taste.

However, it appears difficult, if not impossible, to separate the pleasure of the senses and regard them as isolated instances. The sense impression brought about by one particular sense would almost always appeal to another sense—and, as a result, the person's overall perception and experience of an object. Even Kant's philosophy, for instance, supports—or is at least coherent—with this claim. According to Golob (2011, 5), Kant argued that perceptions are included in those kinds of "representations of which the agent is conscious." Golob (2011, 5) claims that for Kant, it is true that when one perceives a person, its representation entails representing "his eyes, nose, mouth, etc' since 'the representation of the whole (of the head or of the human being) is composed of these partial ideas'." However, Golob (2011, 5) notes that despite this, one is "not conscious of these various parts" because Kant states that "as contained in one moment, no representation can ever be anything other than absolute unity."

Furthermore, it is logical to claim that the pleasure that comes with the experiences from these objects would be influenced by, if not comprised of, these sense perceptions. For instance, when one encounters a flower, one has impressions about it through their senses—that it is yellow or that it is fragrant. However, their overall experience of the object as a whole would not be isolated instances of these sense impressions. This means that when one experiences the flower, one takes in the various sense impressions as one. This means that it is not simply a fragrant flower—it is a fragrant yellow flower. This claim that sense perceptions, and therefore, the pleasure that comes with them, are vital, as this study revises the Aristotelian account of the scope of *sophrosyne*, which is originally limited to senses of touch and taste.

The fields of psychology and neurology also support the claim that senses interact with one another. For instance, according to McCann et al. (2022, 150), human beings have what is referred to as the olfactory system. In this system, one's nose and mouth "work together to produce the flavours" that they experience. They also claim that in "culinary circles, it is often asserted that 75 percent to 95 percent of flavour is determined by smell" (McCann et al., 2022). Likewise, according to Schiltz et al. (1999, 58), the "visual and vestibular systems are deeply intertwined so as to induce the sensation of movement when the vestibular system is activated." Vision, then, "can influence perception of auditory or proprioceptive input and vice versa" (Schiltz et al. 1999, 58). Furthermore, Hornbostel (1938, 114-19) also claims that sensuous perception "is not limited to one single sense" since "all the senses have not such clear-cut individualities." Given this, what Aristotle argues as the pleasures of the sense of taste are really connected with the sense of smell; and that all the other sense perceptions interact with and impact one another.

Additionally, this concept of the unity of the senses is not a notion that goes against Aristotle's whole philosophy. Firstly, according to Marmodoro (2014, 79), in

metaphysical terms, Aristotle asserts a "hylomorphic account of reality of all things, manmade or nature-made." This entails that, for every object, there is a form, "which is the principle of functional organization" (Marmodoro 2014, 79). Likewise, there is also the matter of how the form is carried through, and while they are two different aspects of an object, one cannot essentially exist without the other. For instance, Marmodoro (2014, 80) cites the example of a round ball; while the roundness of the ball is different from "the matter the ball is made of," the former cannot exist "without being implemented in matter." Consequently, this entails that, in perceiving, what can be identified is not simply roundness, or the redness of that ball, or the ball itself isolated from its other qualities and categories; rather, what is perceived is a round ball. In the case of the fragrant yellow flower, this is also applicable. One cannot perceive the qualities detached from other qualities, simply because the perceptible qualities in the object itself cannot be isolated as well.

Furthermore, according to Twomey (2019), for a perception of a particular object to be regarded as successful, it is vital for the senses to work in unison. In his *De Anima*, Aristotle (2016, 52) claims that one "perceives that [they] are seeing and hearing" and that the "senses perceive one another's exclusive objects co-incidentally, not insofar as they are the senses, but insofar as they are one, whenever perception occurs of the same thing at the same time" (Aristotle 2016, 51). He gives the example of bile—"that it is bitter and yellow" (Aristotle 2016, 51). While the two different impressions, namely bitterness and yellow, belong to the senses of taste and sight respectively, when people experience the object, bile, they perceive these two perceptions in unison—as a "single perceptual" activity (Twomey 2019, 153). Furthermore, it is because of this, according to Aristotle, that people get deceived when they see something that is yellow and think it is bile. Twomey (2019) further explicates this by giving the example of one's experience of an orchestral performance. In this experience, "an array of perceptual information" including a variety of shapes, sizes, colors, and sounds is involved (Twomey 2019, 163). While it is the case that the perceiver is able to experience "countless seeings of diverse colors as well as hearings of particular sounds, and soon," he is also able to do so "in a single unitary act, an act that must itself be a perception" (Twomey 2019, 163). Hence, according to Twomey (2019, 163), despite the encounter with various perceptible sense impressions, when one experiences an object or a phenomenon, they are "aware of this array as a unitary phenomenon." ²

Given this concept of the unity of senses, it is logical to assume that the pleasure experienced by a person when experiencing an object cannot simply be isolated based on the senses involved. This entails that when one perceives a fragrant yellow flower, one cannot simply take in the perceptual information and, consequently, the pleasure that arises from it, as isolated instances. The implication of this claim is twofold. Firstly, as Aristotle (1962, §1118a10) has likewise claimed, while the virtue of self-control supposedly only involves one's senses of taste and touch as these are what one shares with "lower animals," there are instances wherein a perception of an object that involves the senses of sight, smell, and hearing also appeals to the senses of taste and touch. In addition, it can also be claimed that while the pleasure that appeals to the senses of sight, smell, and hearing is not within the realm of self-control, the overall

experience that ought to be included in the realm of the said virtue would have to include pleasure from these senses.

For the first instance, Aristotle (1962, §1118a20) gives the example of the dog "seeing the hares" or the lion seeing the "stag or mountain goat." The pleasure derived from an impression of the sense of sight appeals to the dog's or the lion's sense of taste as they are prospective meals. For human beings, this can be likened to the pleasure of seeing a chocolate cake, as the cake is—like the hares and the mountain goats—a prospective meal. Another example of this is looking at a bright red apple—it is pleasurable to look at because it gives the impression that it is delicious and scrumptious. This means that while one appreciates and finds pleasure in looking at a particular object that may not initially appear to the senses of touch and taste, there are instances when it can be traced back to the aforementioned senses. In the same manner, a rotten apple that has turned brown is not a delightful sight because it gives the impression that it tastes awful. Aristotle has made this instance clear.

As for the second instance, however, this is a concept that needs to be further explored as it posits that while some objects are not initially within the realm of self-control, there are instances wherein objects require an experience of the senses in unison, in order for pleasures to arrive. This means that without the senses of sight, smell, and hearing, the experience with that object cannot be counted as successful perception. This also means that for a successful experience, and consequently pleasure, to arise, all the senses, not just touch and taste, have to be at play. For instance, when one eats a certain dish, the full experience of eating that dish involves not just the sense of taste but also the senses of sight and smell. A tasteful dish with exquisite plating and a savory aroma appears to be much preferable to one that has a disorganized presentation and an awful smell. Consequently, the latter would not be as delightful as the former, even though both of them may taste similarly delicious. This entails that sight, smell, and sound contribute to a person's perspective of how pleasurable objects are, even though they only initially appeal to the senses of touch and taste. Likewise, a person's experience of a particular object that only initially appeals to the senses of touch and taste remains to be influenced by all the other senses.

Given this claim about the second instance, it appears that a revision of Aristotle's conclusion—that self-control and its vices only deal with the senses of taste and touch—is in order. Brown and Lamb (2022, 49-50) also argued that a case of digital *sophrosyne* entails 1) "including "nonbodily pleasures" within temperance's scope" and 2) "recognizing the potentially harmful capacity of bodily pleasures beyond those of touch and taste, such as those of sight and sound." One vital implication of this would be that it opens the plausibility and reasonability that the aforementioned virtue and its objects of pleasure no longer simply deal with the pleasures that are shared with other animals. As a result, this claim would open the plausibility and reasonability of other objects to be included within the realm of self-control.

EXTENDING THE OBJECTS OF SELF-CONTROL

Given the discussion in the previous section, the question that this study ought to answer is this: to which objects should self-control be extended?³ Initially, as

Aristotle has discussed, the virtue of self-control is mainly concerned with objects that appeal to the senses of touch and taste, namely, food, drink, and sex. This is because, like other animals, human beings eat food, drink beverages, and perform sexual intercourse. Additionally, Aristotle (1962, §1118b25) also discusses that a person may become self-indulgent in three ways. Firstly, one becomes self-indulgent when one desires, consumes, and enjoys these objects, which they should not find delightful. Secondly, when the object is indeed delightful, they take delight in a wrongful manner. Lastly, whenever one takes delight in these objects, they do so more than most people.

The first way demonstrates self-indulgence because, in this instance, one feels desire and pleasure in something that should not appear pleasurable and desirable in the first place. For instance, eating one's hair ought not to be desirable as it is not pleasurable. This is because hair is not food, is not edible, or even if it is, it does not taste good at all. However, when a person feels pleasure in this case, it would be seen as peculiar. This is because it is unreasonable to think that any form of pleasure can be derived from eating and ingesting one's hair. In this case, then, the pleasure and the desire become deviant, and the person is, therefore, self-indulgent in the first way.

Accordingly, the other ways in which one may become self-indulgent also demonstrate this deviance. For the second way, it is self-indulgent if the pleasure felt by the person is excessive and therefore vicious. For the third way, it is self-indulgent when the pleasure felt by the person has been derived in a wrongful or distasteful manner. Hence, one can claim that a person becomes self-indulgent when they desire and engage with objects and when they derive pleasure from these objects beyond what is prescribed, what is usual, or what is necessary.

To further illustrate, take self-indulgence using food as the object. One may become self-indulgent in terms of food if they find the wrong objects delightful (such as regarding eating hair to be pleasurable), if they take delight more than most people do (such as eating ten times a day), or if they take delight in food in the wrong manner (such as being sexually aroused because of food). In these cases, it appears that self-indulgence arises in two ways. On the one hand, it arises when a person treats food beyond what it is originally intended to do, which is to supply nourishment to the body. Whatever pleasure one experiences, then, when engaging with food should be only secondary and should not be the main reason why one pursues whatever food items they choose.

On the other hand, the pleasure that one experiences from desiring, consuming, and enjoying food should simply be the usual, neither excessive nor wrongful. Unfortunately, it is not usual for human beings to desire, consume, and enjoy a wrong object, such as a distasteful item like hair. It can be said then that if one pursues such distasteful items, it is simply because a person desires them unnaturally, as it is naturally undesirable. The nature of this desire, then, as it is unnatural, becomes questionable primarily because it is deviant and unusual. While indeed people desire food items in various degrees, desires that involve food, according to Aristotle (1962, §1118b25), involve an "appetite for nourishment" and are common to all. If a person desires a distasteful item, i.e., not naturally desired by others as it does not naturally appeal to their "appetite for nourishment," such as hair, then they desire the wrong object. In this manner, they can become self-indulgent in the first way.

Given this, it can be inferred that self-indulgence arises in an individual when the activities conducted and objects pursued are done merely for the sake of pleasure. In the case of the first way presented above, when a person pursues the wrong objects, i.e., those which should not be desired and pursued as it is unnatural and uncommon to do so, they do so for the sake of their own pleasure, which is questionable. A person pursues such objects not for their natural appeal to them, which should be the case, but simply because they experience a dreadful, unnatural pleasure in pursuing them and possibly a significant pain in abstaining from them. Furthermore, if one pursues objects or performs activities in the second and third ways, i.e., experiencing pleasure that is excessive and/or derived in a wrongful manner, respectively, one does so again simply for the sake of pleasure. The reason being is that the pleasure is excessive and is acquired in a wrong manner. As Aristotle has established, self-indulgence is said to arise from these.

These show that there is a justifiable reason to claim that some of the activities that Aristotle originally disqualified as objects of self-control may now be actually and properly included in the virtue's realm. Aristotle originally disqualified these objects and activities mainly because they do not appeal to the senses of touch and taste. As one has argued previously, self-control and self-indulgence are no longer exclusive to objects of touch and taste. When one engages with objects, they do not simply isolate one or two senses from the rest, and their experiences and perceptions of objects entail a unity of their senses. For instance, one cannot just experience a dish and claim that it appeals only to the sense of taste and not to the sense of smell. Likewise, one cannot just engage with a flower and state that it appeals only to their senses of sight and smell but not to their sense of touch.

As self-indulgence can arise when objects and actions are pursued primarily for the sake of satisfying desires and deriving pleasures, such objects and activities, even though they do not exclusively appeal to the senses of touch and taste, ought to be included in the realm of the virtue of self-control primarily because they bring about bodily pleasures. This is because, due to the pleasure that such activities bring, it can be easy for people to become too absorbed in these pleasurable activities. Consequently, one can also imagine how they can go wrong with such activities. One can imagine engaging in an object that they ought not to find delightful in the first way, gaining pleasure from it excessively and in the wrong manner, as in the second and third ways, respectively.

Take, for instance, the original claim of Aristotle (1962, §1118b5) that pleasures of touch in a liberal sense are not included in the sphere of self-control and self-indulgence. These include the pleasures produced by going to the *gymnasia* for warm baths and massages. Aristotle initially states that this kind of pleasure is not included since self-indulgence appeals to pleasure only in certain parts of the body and not the whole. Similar to the argument presented about the unity of senses, it appears problematic to state that one can experience pleasure in a certain part of one's body isolated from the whole body itself. Consequently, when one is in pain at a particular part of the body, the whole body likewise experiences that pain, albeit not to a similar degree.⁴

Considering this, it is justifiable not to eliminate the pleasure that is brought about by going to the spa for baths, massages, and relaxation from the realm of self-

control. It is plausible for one to think that they may become self-indulgent when it comes to these activities. This may happen when one desires and enjoys it in the wrong manner for the wrong reasons and motivations, and more than one ought to enjoy. Likewise, it appears logical to conclude that self-indulgence becomes evident when one already pursues going to the gym or to the spa solely because of the pleasure that it brings and not because it is proper to do so. In this case, if the activity is motivated by pleasure alone, and if in failing to satisfy this desire the person feels pain and annoyance, then it can be said to be an act of self-indulgence. Hence, even pleasures that Aristotle refers to as "liberal" may easily fall within the sphere of self-control and, thus, may be subject to self-indulgence.

It is clear, then, that the sphere of self-control and the vice of self-indulgence and insensibility need not be limited to pleasures of touch and taste, as Aristotle originally posits. Accordingly, since self-control includes activities pursued for the sake of pleasure, it is rational to conclude that activities of leisure and recreation ought to be included as well. Objects that bring about pleasure ought to be included in the realm of self-control as well. What this study is particularly concerned about are activities involving digital technologies as well as modern objects of pleasure,⁵ of which are used and pursued primarily for leisure and recreation. Examples of such modern objects of pleasure, which will be examined in this study, include playing video games, watching movies and TV shows, and browsing social networking sites using mobile devices, particularly smartphones. This study refers to smartphones in particular because people who use them may easily become self-indulgent,⁶ as they are extremely accessible and people almost always use them.

Consequently, it seems that it is easier to become self-indulgent with respect to these modern objects than with some traditional objects of self-indulgence, such as alcohol and sexual intercourse. This is because, unlike alcohol, smartphones are not consumable and are usually used for a long period of time. In the case of alcohol, one would stop drinking once the contents have been consumed. However, this is not the case for digital technologies. Additionally, unlike alcoholic beverages, people bring their smartphones anywhere, and they use them at any time throughout the day. It is not possible to consume the contents of a smartphone, or a social media account in the same manner as consuming alcohol; hence, once a person signs up for an account or purchases a device, one has continuous access to it for an extended period of time. The usage of such devices is unlimited, making it more difficult to control and more prone to self-indulgence.

Secondly, given today's technological climate, these modern objects are inextricably incorporated into people's lives and are regarded as "necessities." According to Park and Kaye (2018, 215-231), these modern objects have already become "an invaluable tool for everyday living." Additionally, many scholars have posited the Extended Self thesis—that these modern objects, particularly the smartphone, are treated by individuals as extensions of themselves. In the study conducted by Park and Kaye, these extensions have been classified as functional, anthropomorphic, and ontological.⁷

However, traditional objects of self-control, such as alcoholic beverages, do not hold the same value for they are rarely, if ever, treated as extensions of oneself. Likewise, people may see some traditional objects as no longer necessary in one's life.

For instance, in the case of alcoholic beverages, one can live one's life without ever tasting or consuming them. It is not the case, however, with smartphones. Given the current dynamics of society, it is vital for one to own a smartphone. As people nowadays are globally connected, they communicate with others and acquire information using these devices. As the 21st century is defined by digital information and communication technologies, it is extremely difficult to move away from owning and using them. Hence, it is equally important to actually determine a demarcation between what is virtuous and what is vicious when it comes to using these devices.

Lastly, mobile devices and social media can be accessed and used by young people, such as children. This makes it more important to identify how one can become either self-indulgent or self-controlled with respect to these. Unlike alcohol or sex, the aforementioned objects, as well as their applications, are introduced to people early in their lives. This entails that they can become self-indulgent at a young age. Additionally, one must note that people can develop illnesses from self-indulgence with traditional objects. In the case of alcohol, it is alcoholism; in the case of food, eating disorders; and in the case of sexual activities, sex addiction. Similarly, young children can develop cognitive and behavioral problems, along with other adverse health outcomes, from self-indulgence with smartphones.

Various studies have explored the effects of using mobile gadgets on children and young people. For instance, in the systematic review conducted by Stiglic and Viner (2019, 14), they found that there is "evidence that higher levels of screentime are associated with a variety of health harms" for children and young people. Some of these health harms include "adiposity, unhealthy diet, depressive symptoms and quality of life" (Stiglic and Viner 2019, 1). Likewise, the meta-analysis and systematic review conducted by Chao Li et al. (2020, 2) also showed that excessive use of these gadgets has been associated with "overweight/obesity and shorter sleep duration among toddlers and preschoolers." Youjie Zhang et al. (2022, 1) also found, in their systematic review and meta-analysis, that too much screen time is also associated with "greater risks of various health issues."

Meanwhile, there are also studies that have investigated the impact of excessive screen time on the cognitive and behavioral aspects of children and young individuals. For instance, Guerrero et al. (2019, 1) found that too much use of gadgets among children has led to poor length and quality of sleep, which was "associated with greater problem behaviors." Tezol et al. (2022, 61) also found in their study that "children with excessive screen time were significantly more likely to have poor psychosocial well-being." Lastly, Paulich et al. (2021, 1) found that among adolescents, increased screen time is "moderately associated with worse mental health, increased behavioral problems, decreased academic performance, and poorer sleep."⁸

This, then, may make it more difficult for young individuals to practice and acquire the virtue of self-control as well as other virtues. By knowing how one can strike the mean with respect to actions involving recreational technologies such as mobile devices, one is able to educate a child on how to become a self-controlled and, eventually, virtuous individual as he grows older. Hence, the implications of knowing how one can become self-indulgent with respect to these objects are vital as they can be integrated into a child's moral education.

MODERN OBJECTS OF PLEASURE AND SELF-INDULGENCE

As established in the previous sections, it is easy to become self-indulgent with respect to these objects. This is because the usage of these modern objects, particularly those that are used for leisure and recreation, brings about pleasure for individuals. Examples of these technologies are smartphones, which people use to play video games, watch shows and movies, and access social networking sites. As established in the previous sections as well, they do not directly appeal to one's sense of taste and touch and are not pleasures that one shares with other animals; however, there is a justifiable reason to regard them as objects of self-control. This is primarily because the effects of self-indulgence with respect to these objects on a person's behavior and attitude are extremely similar to what Aristotle initially regards as the characteristics of a self-indulgent man. How one can go wrong with objects of taste and touch is analogous to how one can go wrong with these modern objects.

For instance, suppose X is self-indulgent with alcohol. As previously mentioned, as a self-indulgent man, X is unable to master his appetite when it comes to alcohol. This means that X desires, consumes, and enjoys alcohol viciously. X's self-indulgence may transpire in three ways: firstly, X desires, consumes, and enjoys alcohol, which he should not find delightful. For instance, this is when X finds grain alcohol,⁹ and not the alcoholic drink itself, as delightful. Secondly, assuming that alcohol is indeed delightful, X desires, consumes, and enjoys it in a wrongful manner, such as when X drinks alcohol through body shots only. Lastly, X is self-indulgent when X desires, consumes, and enjoys alcohol more than most people do, such as when X drinks alcohol 4 to 5 times a day.

As a result of this self-indulgence, X becomes slavish, as X's manner of thinking is affected; hence, the way he or she acts is affected as well. This is brought about by how alcohol affects a person's body, and, if engaged in excessively, would have an overall effect on his health. As a result, X is unable to perform his or her daily tasks properly. Similarly, X, as he is unable to think properly because of the effect of alcohol, is also unable to master his emotions, desires, and appetites. For instance, X may become violent or highly emotional. He may also become obsessive and unable to control his urge to drink at the sight of alcohol. In such cases, it is reasonable to claim that X has become bestial, as he exhibits animal-like qualities, i.e., violence, emotionality, and lack of control.

People who are self-indulgent when it comes to modern objects are similar to this. For instance, Y is self-indulgent in using his or her smartphone. Like X, Y's self-indulgence may also transpire in three ways: firstly, Y desires, consumes, and enjoys smartphone applications that he or she should not find delightful such as when Y uses, for instance, smartphone applications to watch sadist videos; or if the use of smartphone is indeed delightful, Y desires, consumes, and enjoys smartphone in a wrongful manner such as when Y uses his or her mobile devices, for instance, to con other users; or, Y desires, consumes, and enjoys the use of smartphones more than most people do such as when Y, for instance, always uses his or her smartphone even in instances that he or she ought not to use it such as during and in between other

activities. In this manner, Y's self-indulgence is similar to X. Firstly, Y's self-indulgence would likely make Y slavish and bestial. This is because of Y's inability to master his or her desire to use these devices. As a result, like in the case of X, Y's physical and mental health would eventually be affected and would deteriorate, and Y's daily tasks would be extremely disrupted.

In addition, social media networking applications in smartphones, such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and YouTube, can likewise be objects of actions that fall within the sphere of self-control and, thus, of self-indulgence. While they do not involve bodily pleasures, engaging with social media networks can also bring about pleasure. Likewise, people engage with social media for the sake of bringing about pleasurable feelings as well. However, in discussing pleasure with respect to social media, it should be noted that this only covers those that are gained through recreational acts. This is because various non-recreational activities can also be conducted through social media. For instance, people use it as a form of communication, information dissemination, or as a platform for business transactions. Some of these activities, however, are not performed for the sake of pleasure. Such activities, then, as they are non-recreational, would not be included in the scope of acts within the realm of self-control. As recreational activities have been identified as those which are pursued for the sake of pleasure, only these would be included in the realm of the virtue concerned. Some of these recreational activities may include posting pictures of oneself, of one's thoughts, or interacting with other users.

However, a question may be raised as to why social media ought to be included in the sphere of self-control and self-indulgence. This is because the pleasure that is derived from these mobile applications may be different from the kind of pleasure brought about by playing video games or even watching shows and videos. It has been established above that the reason one can include mobile devices in the sphere is due to the similarity of experiences that a person undergoes when compared to the experiences involving tactile pleasures. Likewise, self-indulgence with respect to mobile devices and self-indulgence with respect to tactile pleasures have similar effects on a person's activities and overall well-being. Both of these affect a person's overall health and well-being, such as how a person courses through his everyday tasks and activities.

On a similar note, too much engagement in social media may also affect the activities and the overall well-being of a person. An objection to this may be that social media engagement simply involves cognitive implications for a person. This is the form of views (for video posts), likes, posts, and comments. However, while these effects are simply cognitive, the manner in which they are absorbed by a person ought to be taken into consideration. In particular, the likes and shares that social media posts garner may actually give the user a sense of gratification and validation. This gratification and validation may give a person a pleasurable feeling. Hence, it is sound to state that a person does enjoy his or her social media engagements.

If a person, however, is unable to master his or her enjoyment, it may follow that he or she is unable to master his or her desires as well. A person may become too absorbed by the kind of validation that he or she experiences in social media, and this may motivate him or her to pursue social media activities only for the sake of satisfying his or her desire to be "liked" by other people. Likewise, an unsatisfied desire to obtain

these "likes" may drive him or her to perform other activities not for its originally intended purpose but for the satisfaction of that person's desire alone.¹⁰ In including these actions in the realm of self-control, going wrong with respect to it shares the same characteristics as self-indulgent actions in the traditional sense.

On the one hand, this can manifest when people use social media to post updates about themselves. For instance, person Z has posted a picture of herself on social media. After an hour, she saw that 100 users liked her photos. These 100 likes may lead Z to conclude that 100 people have indeed found her "likable" and "amiable." This adds to Z's confidence and self-esteem because Z believes that many people, in this case, 100, like her. Z then posted a picture of her dog, and 200 people liked the photo. Again, Z has concluded that 200 people like her or find her posted photo amusing. Again, this adds to Z's self-esteem. The next photo that Z posted, however, gained only 20 likes, which entails that fewer people have now found her photo "likable." If Z is able to master her desire and enjoyment with respect to social media, Z will not find this frustrating at all. However, if Z has become too absorbed with the likes she gets, she may find this frustrating and thereby feel pain and annoyance. This may cause Z to find a way for her to obtain more likes. She would then think of certain scenarios that other people may find likable.

An example of this may be a picture of her helping an orphan. In order for her to be able to post this, however, she would have to find a way to do it, or at least make it look like she did. On the one hand, she can find and help an orphan, which in the process, she would have to take a picture of. On the other hand, she can find someone to pretend to be an orphan so that she can pretentiously help him, and, in the process, she would take a picture to make it look like she actually did help the orphan. In both cases, Z's motivation stems from her desire to obtain a good picture that may likewise obtain many social media likes. Given this, she departs from virtuous actions and falls into vicious ones.

Z's self-indulgence now arises in a number of ways. As mentioned above, a self-indulgent person takes desires, consumes, and enjoys objects that she ought not to find delightful; if the object is delightful, she desires, consumes, and enjoys it in the wrong manner, or more than people should. Likewise, a self-indulgent person feels significant pain and annoyance from being unable to satisfy his or her desires. Z's act of helping an orphan in order to acquire a picture that she would post in order to gain likes appears to be a wrong object and a wrong manner of desiring. This is because the desire does not arise from the actual act of helping but rather from the prospect of getting a lot of likes on social media. Z also takes delight in posting in order to get likes more than most people should. This is evident in cases wherein people, such as Z, snap a picture of every instance of their lives just so they can post it on their social media accounts in order to gain likes. In addition, in cases where Z is unable to obtain the number of likes she desires, she may again feel pained and annoyed. This may again drive her to perform activities until she has satisfied her desire to obtain, and also probably maintain the amount of gratification she receives. In certain cases, people have also done extreme activities in order to satisfy such desires, e.g., taking and posting a picture of themselves on top of buildings or a picture of themselves doing extreme and rather dangerous stunts.

In addition, how one can be self-indulgent when it comes to mobile devices can also be similar to how one can be self-indulgent when it comes to social media. As demonstrated earlier, one can also be self-indulgent when it comes to social media applications. However, it is vital to provide a discussion on self-control with respect to mobile devices, separate from self-control with respect to social media. This is because there are instances wherein people utilize one without necessarily utilizing the other. When one identifies the object of self-indulgence so that they would be able to correct it, for instance, it is vital to know where their self-indulgence is directed.

Drew and Berney (2015, 14-19) define a mobile device as that "with a mobile operating system (OS), such as feature phones, smartphones, and tablets." This means, then, that other gadgets, such as laptop computers, desktop computers, smart televisions, and smart refrigerators, are not categorized as mobile devices. Accordingly, it should be noted that, on the one hand, one can do a variety of things when they use mobile devices, and accessing social media is only one of them. For instance, people utilize their mobile devices for various purposes, such as communicating with others, playing games, accessing websites, and video viewing and streaming (that is not necessarily social media).¹¹

On the one hand, there are activities that can be considered online or those that require an Internet connection. This includes accessing social media applications, playing online games, and watching trending videos. On the other hand, there are activities that are offline or those that do not require an internet connection. This includes taking and editing photos and videos, calling or texting with other people, and playing offline games. As all of these activities materialize because of the use of mobile devices and are pursued primarily for the sake of pleasure, mobile devices, as the medium of mobile device applications, in this case, are the modern objects of self-control. Consequently, going wrong with respect to mobile devices and their applications¹² is an instance of self-indulgence.

Self-control with respect to mobile devices then entails medially desiring and enjoying the right applications installed in the devices, at appropriate occasions, and consuming these given the right goals. Consequently, a person can go wrong with respect to mobile devices when they desire, consume, and enjoy applications that they should not find delightful.¹³ If the application is delightful, then they can still go wrong if they desire, consume, and enjoy them in a wrongful manner or more than most people do. An example of this is the case of Y, which was given earlier. Similarly, one can say that Z is self-indulgent with his mobile phone because he desires, consumes, and enjoys mobile games that he should not find delightful (e.g., role-playing games with horror themes); or if it is indeed delightful, he desires, consumes, and enjoys them in a wrongful manner (e.g., he plays it to satisfy his fetish), or more than most people do (e.g., he plays it for 24 hours non-stop).

Various studies have emphasized the detrimental effects of excessive mobile device use on both physical and mental well-being, identifying it as a form of self-indulgence. Wacks and Weinstein (2021) found that mobile device self-indulgence is closely associated with cognitive-emotion regulation difficulties, impulsivity, impaired cognitive function, and addiction to social networking. Their findings further reveal that these behaviors are linked to social issues such as shyness and low self-esteem, as well as medical concerns including sleep disturbances, reduced physical

fitness, unhealthy eating habits, pain, migraines, reduced cognitive control, and changes in brain gray matter volume. Moreover, Wang et al. (2024) examined the broader consequences of mobile phone addiction and found a significant correlation between such addiction and suicidal ideation or attempts. Their study reveals that individuals who excessively indulge in mobile devices may suffer from heightened social isolation, poor sleep quality, and increased emotional distress, which ultimately diminishes their psychological resilience. These findings collectively demonstrate how self-indulgence with respect to mobile devices—whether through excessive gaming, social media use, or other pleasurable activities—parallels the characteristics of self-indulgence found in more traditional objects of self-control.

Furthermore, perfect examples of self-indulgence with respect to mobile devices are phenomena known as *binge-gaming* and *binge-watching*. According to Marmet et al. (2023), binge-gaming refers to a pattern of behavior whereby a person plays video games for an extensive period of time—usually lasting for five consecutive hours or more. Meanwhile, Starosta and Izydorczyk (2020, 2) describe binge-watching as a pattern of behavior that emerged after the rise of prominent video streaming platforms such as Netflix and Hulu. Because multiple episodes of shows are made available at once, users spend an extensive amount of time finishing these shows. Media scholars also regard binge-watching as a "highly immersive behavior" that "provides immediate gratification, and thus it may lead to the loss of self-control" (Starosta and Izydorczyk 2020, 2). This is because when an individual binge-watches, he tends to spend "much more time on watching TV series than [he] originally wanted" (Starosta and Izydorczyk 2020, 2).

These instances of self-indulgence are examples of what it means to desire, consume, and enjoy delightful objects in the wrong manner, or more than most people do. Binge-watching or binge-gaming, or even the more general smartphone bingeing, impacts an individual's actions. In particular, people who do this often do not eat properly or on time, or they are unable to immediately stop their activities because of the desire to finish what they are watching or playing. Furthermore, they become highly emotional; for instance, they get annoyed even with the slightest disturbance in their environment while they are watching or playing. In this instance, then, their self-indulgence with respect to mobile devices is similar to the characteristics of a self-indulgent man when it comes to traditional objects. They become slavish, and they exhibit bestial-like attitudes (e.g., violence and being highly emotional). Likewise, pain and annoyance can also arise in cases wherein their urges and desires are not satisfied. In fact, it should be noted as well that there are phenomena, such as binge eating and binge drinking, which are patterns of behavior that can be regarded as self-indulgent and which involve traditional objects, i.e., food and alcohol. Hence, self-indulgence with respect to mobile devices can be likened to self-indulgence with respect to tactile pleasures.

Recent studies further emphasize the negative consequences of binge-gaming and binge-watching behaviors. According to Chang and Peng (2022), binge-watching is often linked to negative emotions such as sadness, frustration, and even anxiety when individuals are unable to continue watching. Similarly, Alimoradi et al. (2022) found that binge-watching is significantly associated with mental health concerns such as depression, anxiety, stress, and sleep disturbances. Their study showed that binge-

watchers often experience a loss of self-control, which mirrors the characteristics of self-indulgence with respect to traditional objects. In particular, the intense pleasure derived from binge-watching can reinforce patterns of procrastination, social withdrawal, and deteriorating mental well-being. Meanwhile, research has emphasized that binge gaming is linked to impulsive behavior, cognitive impairment, and emotional instability. According to Bastos et al. (2024), binge gaming can override conscious decision-making and reinforce an addictive cycle that encourages prolonged gameplay, often at the expense of essential activities such as eating, exercising, and socializing. All of these are patterns of excessive consumption that show what it means to desire, consume, and enjoy delightful objects in an inappropriate or excessive manner. Consequently, binge-watching and binge-gaming closely resemble other forms of self-indulgence, wherein individuals become overwhelmed by their desires and struggle to exercise self-control.

On the other hand, while social media is an application installed on mobile devices, it is still important to discuss self-indulgence with respect to social media specifically. This is because self-indulgence with respect to social media can go beyond a mobile device. On the one hand, some people access social media applications through mobile devices, and on the other hand, some also access them through non-mobile devices such as laptops and desktop computers. Likewise, it is also the case that one can access social media applications through both mobile and non-mobile devices simultaneously. Hence, in this instance, the object of self-control, and consequently self-indulgence, is the social media site or application and not necessarily the mobile device.

Furthermore, it is vital to dedicate a discussion to self-indulgence with respect to social media, and not solely with respect to mobile devices, because of the kind of activities that come with social media sites or applications. For instance, there is a social media platform that hosts video content, not simply pictures. It can be used in two ways: 1) for uploading (i.e., the content comes from the user, which others may view) and 2) for viewing (i.e., the content comes from others that the user views).¹⁴ Mobile games and video streaming, however, do not involve such activities. In these instances, the individual simply consumes what is made available in the games and videos. In social media, the individual can be both the producer and consumer of the content and, hence, can go wrong in either of the aspects.

In particular, self-control and, consequently, self-indulgence, with respect to social media but not necessarily to mobile devices, can occur in three ways. Firstly, one desires, consumes (i.e., uploads or views), and enjoys content that he should not find delightful (such as watching or creating animal torture videos for pleasure); or if it is indeed delightful, uploads or views, and enjoys contents in a wrongful manner (such as videos encouraging harmful acts) or more than most people do (such as uploading or viewing contents excessively and without minding the right time and place for it). In this case, one can also become slavish and bestial as one is unable to master one's desire and one's urge to consume content. As a result, his health deteriorates due to his excessive usage, and his daily tasks are then extremely disrupted. People may do these actions for recreational purposes, which entails that they primarily find it pleasurable.

A significant aspect of self-indulgence concerning social media lies in the dual role users adopt—as both consumers and producers of content. Unlike mobile games or video streaming platforms, activities in social media platforms are more complex as they involve interactions that may elicit strong emotional responses and social feedback. According to Hou et al. (2019), self-indulgence when it comes to social media has been linked to mental health concerns such as stress, anxiety, and depression. This often manifests through compulsive behavior patterns, which include excessive content creation, obsessive viewing habits, and an inability to moderate one's engagement with the platform.

Furthermore, some studies emphasize that social media's immersive nature fosters cognitive-emotional struggles. For instance, according to Maruthachalam (2023), adolescents who excessively use social media may experience social anxiety, emotional distress, and decreased psychological well-being. He found that the urge to produce and consume content without restraint not only hinders academic performance but can also impair sleep quality, reduce physical activity, and contribute to social withdrawal. Additionally, Wu et al. (2023) demonstrated that social media's ability to provide instant gratification can lead to impulsive behaviors. This consequently weakens one's ability to regulate their online activities. This results in addictive tendencies where individuals overindulge in content consumption, seeking heightened pleasure at the expense of mental well-being. Lastly, Liu et al. (2023, 1) found that individuals who experience social media self-control failure are more susceptible to procrastination, academic stress, and mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression. According to them, such indulgent behaviors contribute to "adverse emotional health."

These findings reinforce the notion that self-indulgence with respect to social media, whether through content creation or consumption, mirrors the characteristics of traditional self-indulgent behaviors. As individuals lose self-control and struggle to regulate their engagement, they risk becoming enslaved to these behaviors, resulting in emotional instability, social detachment, and disruptions to their physical and psychological well-being. Therefore, it is sound to conclude that how one can go wrong with respect to mobile devices and with respect to social media sites share similar characteristics. Due to this, it is sound to include both mobile devices and social media as objects in the sphere of self-control.

CONCLUSION

This study has conducted a re-examination of the Aristotelian virtue of *sophrosyne* within the digital milieu. On the one hand, it argued for the revision of the virtue by 1) critiquing the scope of the virtue as originally discussed in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and 2) extending the said scope to other possible areas that do not necessarily appeal to one's tactile pleasure. As established in this study, the virtue of self-control, along with its corresponding vices, are no longer exclusive to objects that appeal to the senses of touch and taste. This is because when one engages with an object, multiple senses—not just of touch and taste—are at play. This phenomenon,

argued in this article as the unity of senses, enables one to experience a single unified perceptual activity, and not simply isolated ones.

This study has also argued for the inclusion of modern objects of pleasure such as mobile gadgets and social media applications. This is because, like traditional objects of self-control, modern objects bring about pleasure, which mirrors the pleasure brought about by traditional objects. Likewise, this study has also argued that self-indulgence with respect to modern objects of pleasure can be analogous to self-indulgence with respect to traditional objects. In this case, one can also become slavish and bestial as one is unable to master one's desire and one's urge to consume modern objects of pleasure, as one would with respect to traditional objects.

NOTES

1. Aristotle places a limit on the kind of pleasure involved with the virtue of self-control so that it does not overlap with other virtues. For instance, the virtue of *eleutheriotes* or generosity is concerned with matters that involve material goods such as wealth and money. Accordingly, the pleasure that comes with giving and spending such material goods is thereby mediated by the said virtue. Similarly, the virtue of *eutrapelos* or wittiness is concerned with actions that are involved in social entertainment and amusement; hence, the pleasure that comes with it falls within the sphere of the aforementioned virtue. Although both spheres are concerned with objects that are pleasurable and thus involve pleasure, this does not entail that it is within the realm of actions mediated by self-control. Hence, Aristotle deemed it vital to delineate which pleasures were concerned with each particular virtue.

2. The notion of unitary perception is also consistent with some concepts in the field of Psychology. According to Treisman and Gelade (1980, 98), the Feature-Integration Theory of Attention states that when one sees a "visual scene," qualities and dimensions "such as color, orientation, spatial frequency, brightness, direction of movement," which have been initially separately coded by the senses are recombined "to ensure the correct synthesis of features for each object in a complex display." Hence, these "separable dimensions" perceived by a person are "combined to form a single object" and are "perceived and stored" in one's memory as such. Likewise, there is also the concept of multisensory processing, which, according to Quak et al. (2015, 1), is based on the claim that senses interact with one another in an "intimate manner". Hence, one's "sensory experience is mostly multisensory in nature."

3. The importance of answering this question is two-fold. On the one hand, it would aid this paper in determining how one ought to properly and virtuously deal with objects of self-control. Moreover, this would help one identify how one could go wrong in engaging with them. Without proper identification of these objects of self-control, a person may be falling into self-indulgence without even knowing it. Once they become self-indulgent, they may be easily reduced to a slavish and bestial-like state when it comes to these objects.

On the other hand, it has been established that self-control is the most basic and the most fundamental virtue, as it acts as a gateway to all the other virtues. A man without self-control, then, would not be able to practice all the other virtues as he can

be easily reduced to a slavish and bestial state. Aristotle (1962, §1119b5) notes that "if appetite and desire do not obey and do not subject themselves to the ruling element, they will go far astray." This is because, according to Aristotle (1962, §1119b5), "the desire for pleasure is insatiable in a senseless creature and knows no bounds, and the active gratification of appetite with which [people] were born, and if appetites are great and intense, they push aside the power of reasoning." As a result, without knowing which objects one ought to properly and virtuously engage with, they may easily become either vicious or morally weak; thereby making it difficult for them to live a good life and attain *eudaimonia*.

4. For instance, when a person is experiencing a stomach ache, the whole body is affected. While the pain in the stomach does not mean that the foot will feel it as well, the whole body cannot function properly if the stomach is in pain, especially if the pain is severe. Likewise, when a certain part of the body experiences pleasure, the whole body is affected as well. For instance, when one is experiencing a head massage, while the hand cannot experience the same pleasure as the head, one can say that the whole body feels relaxed. This is because each part of the body is interconnected and is not independent and isolated from one another. A hand cannot function independently and is isolated from the whole body system. Hence, when one part feels pain or pleasure, then the whole body feels it as well.

5. Here, the study adopted the phrase and concept of "modern objects of pleasure" from Humphreys' (2018) "Virtue and Video Games: False Pleasure in the Digital Age."

6. By self-indulgent, this study means excessively desiring, enjoying the wrong objects at inappropriate occasions, and consuming the wrong objects at inappropriate occasions, and towards the wrong goals.

7. Park and Kaye (2018, 215-231) also noted that smartphones act as functional extensions as they "extend and advance human capabilities to a dramatic extent." Smartphones enhance a person's "physical and intellectual capabilities" because they allow them "access to news or information," conduct "job search," perform "road navigation," and monitor the activities of their children, to name a few. Furthermore, smartphones act as an anthropomorphic extension as they attribute "their personal characteristics to their smartphone." This means that, when using their smartphones, people showcase their "personality and identity." Lastly, they presented an ontological form of extension. This means that using these devices blurs whatever boundaries there are between the smartphone and the human self. As a result, individuals develop "an interdependent relationship" with their smartphones "that is not easy to separate."

8. The study of Paulich et al. also found that despite the negative effects, the use of mobile devices improved the "quality of peer relationship" of their participants. Hence, while the impact of mobile devices is still being explored by scholars, evidence remains that the excessive use of or self-indulgence with respect to mobile gadgets has potential detrimental impacts on children and young people.

9. Also known as ethanol or "rectified spirit," this is pure alcohol that is a byproduct of fermenting grains. It does not have any smell or taste but drinking it is regarded as dangerous. It is often mixed with other substances to create alcoholic drinks such as vodka and wine. See Allison Manolis' (2023) "Grain Alcohol (Definition, Uses & Dangers)."

10. One may take such an instance as that which may properly belong to *hubris* rather than to self-control. This is because the concept of *hubris* is identified with pride and confidence. One may claim that sharing posts on social media, gaining likes, and feeling happy about it feeds not a person's pleasure that can be included in the realm of self-control, but rather, one's pride. However, in the "Poetics," *hubris* is when one belittles others "for the sheer pleasure of causing pain through shame" (Aristotle, 2006, 9). Likewise, according to Cudjoe et al. (2011, 3), in Aristotle's discussion in the "Rhetoric," *hubris* is closely linked to inflicting harm on others in order for them to feel superior. In particular, Cudjoe (2011, 3) shared that it is defined as "doing and saying things at which the victim incurs shame, not in order that one may achieve anything other than what is done, but simply to get pleasure from it." For those who act in return for something, do not commit *hubris*; they avenge themselves. The cause of the pleasure for those committing *hubris* is that by harming people, they think themselves superior; that is why the young and the rich are *hubristic*, as they think themselves superior when they commit *hubris*. Likewise, North (1966, 342), in her discussion of *sophrosyne*, mentioned *hubris* (*hybris*) multiple times. She states that there is an "ancient contrast between *sophrosyne* and *hybris*" and that "classical Greek morality, *sophrosyne* was early recognized as the antithesis of *hybris*" (North 1966, 375). Given this, it should be noted that getting pleasure and satisfaction from the likes and attention from social media does not necessarily entail harming or shaming others. While there are other individuals who may engage in *hubristic* actions and, therefore, get pleasure from them, the subject of this discussion would not include such actions. As mentioned above, the concept of self-control would only entail actions for social media that are conducted as a form of leisure or recreation.

11. Examples of this are applications that offer on-demand shows, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, and Disney+.

12. When this study refers to mobile devices as modern objects of pleasure, it refers to them along with the applications that come with them. This is because these mobile applications are designed primarily for mobile devices and are not necessarily accessible using other gadgets (e.g., the game Mobile Legends can only be played using a mobile device; it cannot be played using a computer). In turn, these mobile devices are not really pleasurable without mobile applications, i.e., one cannot really use smartphones or tablet computers without any applications installed. Hence, the value of mobile applications is derived from the fact that they can be accessed using mobile devices, and consequently, the value of the mobile devices is derived from the fact that they have applications installed in them.

13. Aristotle never really gave a measure as to what constitutes delightful or appropriately pleasurable. He simply states that objects are naturally delightful and that while "different people find different things pleasant, some things are extraordinarily pleasant to everyone." This seems to mean that the more people find it pleasurable, the more it is rightfully delightful.

14. While it may appear that (2) is a more appropriate kind of action to include for self-control because it involves desiring, consuming, and enjoying the video contents of other viewers, it should be noted that uploading may still be included in the realm of the virtue if the action is done simply for the sake of leisure and pleasure.

However, contents uploaded for the sake of monetary aspects (such as sponsored posts and advertisements) do not belong to self-control.

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