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The Labors of Wisdom

To my friends

κοινὰ τὰ φίλων, Arist. *EN* IX.8, 1168b7-8

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Introduction

0.1 Practical Wisdom in Aristotle's Ethics

This dissertation is an inquiry into the nature of practical wisdom (*φρόνησις*) in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*.[1] I aim to provide a systematic account of Aristotle's moral epistemology, in which practical wisdom is the focal concept. Since the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* constitute an inquiry into the human good that seeks to make a practical difference in its readers' lives, understanding Aristotle's moral epistemology is essential not only to appreciating the core arguments of these treatises but also to grasping what Aristotle took himself to be doing in and through writing them. As I shall set out in the remainder of this introduction, this connection between the distinctive character of ethical inquiry and Aristotle's moral epistemology is crucial to understanding both.[2]

[1] I draw on other parts of the corpus where they illuminate Aristotle's thought generally, but my project is to interpret the continuous argument I find in the two treatises mentioned. Together, they constitute Aristotle's thinking about the human good, which is the subject matter treated by political science (*πολιτική*, *EN* I.1, X.9). The *Eudemian Ethics*, another ethical treatise indisputably from Aristotle's hand, takes a different approach to many of the questions at the center of my interest (especially the proper mode or modes of ethical inquiry and the nature of ethical deliberation). While scholarly attention to the *EE* has grown in recent decades, with some scholars even maintaining that it represents Aristotle's more mature thought, I take these differences to justify my selective treatment of it. Moreover, I retain the traditional approach of attributing the common books (*EN* V-VII = *EE* IV-VI) to the *Nicomachean* treatise. This represents my thought, which would take another monograph-length treatment altogether to show, that the common books contribute to an argument that fits the *EN* better, especially its conclusion that human happiness takes two forms in the exercise both of practical and of theoretical reason.

[2] I shall continue to speak of ethical inquiry, since that is what *we* call an inquiry into the human good. But as I noted (n. 1 above), Aristotle calls his inquiry *political* or *civic* (*μέθοδος πολιτικὴ*: *EN* I.2, 1094b10-11). As he says in the same breath, 'we should be content (*ἀγαπητὸν*) even [to grasp and preserve the human good] for a single person, though it is more beautiful and godly [to do so] for a people and for cities' (1094b9-10). Aristotle here foreshadows what he will later argue for explicitly in *EN* VI.8: political

My approach to this topic makes an advance on earlier treatments in three main respects.[3] I will return to these themes when I lay out my argument more fully at the end of this Introduction, but here I simply mention them in the order they feature most prominently in the dissertation.

First, in the bulk of this dissertation I try to constrain an interpretation of the difficult sixth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics,* where at least one of Aristotle's central topics if not his sole concern is the nature of practical wisdom[4], by setting out an account of how he thinks we are to *develop* practical wisdom. This aspect of my approach comes in two stages. I begin by characterizing the epistemic state of Aristotle's audience, who are well-habituated but fall short of (full) possession of practical wisdom, in terms of his notion of *experience* (*ἐμπειρία*). Experience in any domain is the requisite starting point for inquiry, but its ethical form has been widely misunderstood by interpreters, leading them in turn to mistake the epistemic and practical contribution of ethical inquiry. I then consider what we can learn about practical wisdom by considering, first, the fact that ethical experience is the characteristic intellectual endowment of those who have been well-habituated and thereby possess the virtues of character to some and perhaps a considerable extent; and second, the continued role of ethical experience in wise deliberation.

Second, I develop a philosophical justification for Aristotle's distinction between the kind of practical knowledge that allows for the exercise of the virtues and the kind

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and practical wisdom are the same state of soul, which entails that the same grasp of the human good belongs to both states. I discuss this argument in some detail in Chapter 5. For now, I note that our own conceptions of 'ethical' and 'political' do not neatly line up with anything in Aristotle. In particular, our intuition that these are different spheres, say the sphere of individual perfection and the sphere of social cooperation or competition, is not one he shares, despite his willingness to distinguish his topic in the *Ethics* from that in the *Politics*. For Aristotle, the difference is that the topic of the latter is *legislation* (*νομοθετική*), which is only a part of political wisdom.

[3]Despite the large and excellent secondary literature on Aristotle, there is no monograph-length treatment that takes *φρόνησις* as its subject of which I am aware. The closest sustained analyses are Reeve (1992) and Chapter 4 in Broadie (1991), but they pass over many important texts and topics. There is also the recent commentary on Book VI by Reeve, but while Reeve's illumination of that text by parallels elsewhere in the corpus is often helpful, the arguments given for particular interpretive theses are dogmatic and depend in essentials on his 1992 book. Finally, Anselm Müller's 1982 book has much to say about *φρόνησις* in Aristotle, but as its title *Praktisches Folgern* suggests its main focus is on practical reasoning.

[4]See Kosman (2014) on the two ways Aristotle frames his inquiry into *φρόνησις* in Book VI.

of deeper insight into the good that is the province of the *φρόνιμος*. I argue that this insight, which is in part the fruit of ethical inquiry, is practical because its function is to guide deliberation where experience runs out and that this fact in turn explains how Aristotle can insist that ethical theory is for the sake of action and not merely knowledge. But Aristotle never tells us explicitly what insight is insight *into*, except in cryptic formulations, such as that it is knowledge of the goal or of the reason why. On his behalf, I develop an account on which the insight of the *φρόνιμος* is a grasp of what is worthwhile about the several virtues, i.e., what makes what is noble noble. It is not, then, either an understanding of the definition of happiness or of the virtues nor a sort of quasi-perceptual intuition of what to do in novel circumstances.

Third, I take Aristotle to be fully serious when he describes his inquiry in the *Nicomachean Ethics* as a political one, which is extended into a comprehensive investigation of human affairs in the *Politics* (*ἡ περὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπεια φιλοσοφία*, *EN* X.9, 1181b14-15). Given the continuity between the argument of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*, it is a desideratum of any account of practical wisdom in the *Ethics* that it can explain why, for instance, Aristotle thinks of practical wisdom in the *Politics* as the characteristic excellence of the ruler (*Politics* III.4, 1277b25). Hence, once I have developed my account of Aristotle's moral epistemology in the *Ethics*, I turn to the *Politics* for further illumination about the nature of practical wisdom, how we acquire it, and its relationship to virtue of character. In each of these respects, I find that the *Politics* confirms and extends my account in broad outline.

0.2 The State of Play

In recent scholarship on *φρόνησις*, two broad and opposed tendencies may be identified. The two tendencies offer different answers to the question, what does the *φρόνιμος* know? After describing these tendencies, I will characterize the position I defend as a *via media* that seeks not only to avoid the excesses of each tendency but also to make good on their respective motivations.[5]

[5]I call these tendencies rather than positions because different interpreters instantiate these tendencies to varying degrees, with some trying to accommodate the insights of the other pole.

The first tendency I will call *intellectualism*, which is well represented by the interpretations of C.D.C Reeve and T.H. Irwin, though I will speak more generally here.[6] The intellectualist notes that Aristotle conceives of *φρόνησις* as the intellectual virtue responsible for action (*πρᾶξις*), just as *τέχνη* is the intellectual virtue responsible for production (*ποίησις*) and *σοφία* is the intellectual virtue responsible for reflective study (*θεωρία*). In Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle is at pains to distinguish *φρόνησις* from *τέχνη* and *σοφία* (in VI.4-5 and VI.6, respectively), but he begins from the idea that each of these states is an intellectual perfection that guarantees truth or success in each of these domains. Hence, the intellectualist infers that these states differ primarily as to their domain of operation. Furthermore, the intellectualist argues that Aristotle's method of inquiry into the human good shows that the domain of action is susceptible of the kind of systematization that we also find in each of the productive and theoretic disciplines. There, the craftsman and the theoretician grasp the first principles and are thereby able to explain why one ought to make or think as they do. So, too, in the case of action, the intellectualist argues, we can expect the *φρόνιμος* to be capable of explaining why one ought to act as he does, that is, as is demanded by the virtues of character. The intellectualist then is committed by this line of thought to a pair of theses: (I1) *φρόνησις* is knowledge of the first principles that govern action in virtue of which the *φρόνιμος* comes to choose what is good and which serve as the explanation for so acting; (I2) the regularities in question are scientific, i.e., claims about the human good that hold good for the most part, just as claims about what is changeable in nature hold good for the most part.

The second tendency I will call *anti-intellectualism,* which is well represented by the interpretations of John McDowell and Sarah Broadie.[7] (Again, I will speak generally in characterizing the tendency.) The anti-intellectualist places more weight on the differences Aristotle identifies between *φρόνησις* on the one hand and scientific understanding (*ἐπιστήμη*) and *σοφία* on the other. In particular, the anti-intellectualist notes that the difference Aristotle identifies is not merely one of subject matter but of the *function* of these states: *φρόνησις* governs the process of thinking one's way to a good

[6]See Reeve (1992) and Irwin (2000).
[7]See McDowell (1979), McDowell (1998), and Broadie (1991).

action, that is, deliberation (*βούλευσις*), whereas *ἐπιστήμη* and *σοφία* govern the process of thinking one's way to the conclusion of an inference, that is, demonstration (*ἀπόδειξις*). Moreover, the anti-intellectualist observes, Aristotle insists that deliberation is concerned with particulars, since action is particular, while demonstration is of what is universal. This remark they link to Aristotle's assertion of the variability of practical affairs: whatever regularities there are in ethics are not of the sort that permit useful generalizations, because what is good is always relative to the demands of a concrete situation. The anti-intellectualist then is committed to a pair of theses corresponding to those held by the intellectualist: (A1) *φρόνησις* is knowledge only of what is good in any given concrete circumstance; (A2) for there are no useful regularities that would ground (quasi-)scientific knowledge of the human good.

The theses (A1) and (I1) are the core of the intellectualist and anti-intellectualist positions, since they answer the question of what the *φρόνιμος* knows, while theses (I2) and (A2) are characterizations of the domain of ethics that provide (part of) the grounds for these answers. In the following sections of this Introduction, I will argue that a middle ground exists between (I2) and (A2) on the issue of the nature of regularities in ethics, which opens up the possibility of a *via media* as to (A1) and (I1) that I call moderate intellectualism. I consider the position to be a form of intellectualism rather than a form of anti-intellectualism because it adopts the general strategy of the intellectualist of identifying an analogical relationship between the intellectual virtues in the domains of action, production, and theory. In other words, this view holds that, if *φρόνησις* is to be an intellectual virtue, then it must be knowledge of the human good not only in the sense of what one should do in this or that circumstance.

Where my view differs from the intellectualism of Reeve and Irwin, which I will hereafter label *strict* intellectualism, is that I deny that the regularities can ground anything like scientific knowledge. For as the anti-intellectualist rightly notes, the explanatory structure of demonstrative science is not present in the case of ethics.[8] But what the analogy does allow is a distinction between what is commonly known about the

[8]Here I go further than Anagnostopoulos (1994), who identifies many of the same differences between theoretical disciplines and ethics as I do, but concludes that ethics 'may be said to have a theoretical component' (66).

human good and deeper insights that lie behind these more familiar claims. Ethical inquiry is in service of bringing us from ordinary moral knowledge to a more secure epistemic footing with respect to the human good, and it is the *φρόνιμος* who possesses complete knowledge in this domain, the domain of *πρᾶξις*.[9] In the remainder of this introduction, I will build up my account of what Aristotle thinks of the domain of ethics and the nature of ethical inquiry as a preliminary to my positive defense of moderate intellectualism in the remainder of the dissertation.

0.3 Regularities in Ethics

Aristotle first addresses the nature of the ethical domain in *EN* I.3 in order to describe the proper method of ethical inquiry (as well as the epistemic state needed by an appropriate student and fellow-inquirer). He returns to the nature of these ethical regularities in *EN* VI.2, this time in order to characterize the *objects* of the kind of intellect of which practical wisdom is the perfection as opposed to theoretical wisdom. I shall read these passages, which are not often put side by side, as offering complementary characterizations of the nature of regularities in the ethical domain. I will then suggest that another passage in *EN* II.2, which has attracted a good deal more attention in recent scholarship than the other two, should be read in line with them, since it is clearly stated as an aside.

Let us begin with the *EN* I.3 passage.[10]

> A sufficient account would be given if clarification is given in line with the subject matter. For one shouldn't seek precision to the same extent in all accounts, just as one shouldn't in the products of craft. The things that are noble and just, which are the concern of a political inquiry, admit of great variation and deviation; hence, they are thought purely conventional and not natural. Goods, too, admit of some deviation of this kind, since harms

[9] At this level of description, my view of Aristotle's method and its purpose is most similar to that of Hardie (1968, ch. 1). But Hardie is mainly concerned to argue against the view (held, e.g., by Burnet (1900)) that Aristotle's ethics is a dialectical inquiry. He does not distinguish as I do, through contrasting my view with strict intellectualism, between a scientific inquiry and the *sui generis* character of ethical inquiry. I say more about this in §5 below.

[10] All translations in this dissertation are mine. Unless otherwise noted, I adopt the text of Bywater (Oxford Classical Text, 1894).

> come to many people as a result of them. For in fact some people are ruined by wealth, and others by courage. Hence, one must be content to reveal the truth roughly and in outline when one speaks about such things and on the basis of such facts - that is to say, when one speaks about what holds good for the most part and on the basis of what is like this, [one must be content] also to draw conclusions of this kind. (*EN* I.3, 1094b11-22)

We can unfold Aristotle's thinking in this passage in three stages. First, notice that Aristotle argues that variation in what is noble, just, and good entails a corresponding variation in the *account* (λόγος) given of these things, where this account is taken to clarify or reveal the truth about what is noble, just, and good. Hence, though Aristotle speaks first only of political inquiry,[11] he goes further here and speaks of the target of such an inquiry: a true and general account of what is noble, just, and good. This much might be taken to be fairly obvious, but some anti-intellectualist accounts of the function of ethical inquiry for Aristotle seem to suggest that we do not learn anything *new* from it or that no true and general account can be given of the ethical.[12]

Second, one of Aristotle's concerns in this passage is to argue against the inference from the extent of variation in ethical matters to their pure conventionality. The proper response to variation is instead setting one's sights lower in rendering an account of the subject - 'one must be content' to speak 'roughly and in outline'. Variation (διαφορά), which signifies that an expected outcome does not obtain, and even deviation (πλανή), which signifies a reversal of such an expectation[13], are consistent with true generalizations.

Third, he offers a further characterization of these generalizations: they are claims that hold only for the most part (ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ). We know from the *Physics* that what happens by nature (φύσει), which is the primary target of explanations of the natural (that is, changing) world, happens invariably or for the most part (ἢ ἁπλῶς ἢ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ: II.7, 198b7). This latter is not a statistical notion, but rather a normative one,

[11] I am supplying 'inquiry' (μέθοδος) from 1094b9-10 as the noun implied by ἡ πολιτικὴ in b15, but ἐπιστήμη ἢ δύναμις from 1094a24-27 is another possibility - the latter would only bolster my account.

[12] See for instance Vasiliou (1996), developing an idea from McDowell.

[13] For this sense of πλανή, see the discussion of perceptual illusion at Plato, *Rep.* X. 602c-d. At the very least, some intensification over διαφορά is meant by this term, and the examples that follow bear out my gloss.

which we may cash out in epistemic terms, as follows. A further explanation is needed when the natural outcome fails to obtain; but since what is natural proceeds from an internal principle of change and rest, such a principle (a nature, *φύσις*) is a sufficient explanation of what is natural or happens naturally. We can apply the same analysis to Aristotle's remark in *EN* I.3 - without taking a stance yet on whether these generalizations are sufficient for scientific knowledge - and observe that his general account of what is noble, just, and good will supply *global* explanations of why something in particular is noble, just, and good when these outcomes are natural, and guide us to seek a specific defeater to account for divergences from and even reversals of our expectations. This structure will obtain even if (i) no scientific knowledge is possible in ethics and (ii) the extent of variation is far greater than in the study of nature. (With the anti-intellectualist, I hold that (i) is true; (ii) is not in dispute, though the strict intellectualist Reeve at times comes close to denying it.)

How broadly should we interpret Aristotle's remarks in this passage? Do they apply to all the claims in the *EN*? Notice that in this passage, Aristotle foreshadows his later discussion in *EN* I.8-12 when he notes that wealth and even virtue are insufficient for the practical success that is happiness.[14] As we would expect based on my reading of this passage, Aristotle's positive account of the highest human good as excellent rational activity is not only consistent with various kinds of interference that hinder the exercise of the capacities for such activity (i.e., the virtues), it also frames the explanation of such interference. It is only when a lack of external goods or other comparable sorts of misfortune prevent us from exercising the virtues over a sufficient period of time that a gap might open up between our being capable of the activities constitutive of happiness and our actually being happy, just as happened to Priam in the Trojan cycle. The neat fit between this passage and what Aristotle says in I.8-12, then, suggests that the core case he has in mind of a claim that holds only for the most part is his 'outline' account of the happy life as depending on excellent rational activity.

But since the rest of the *EN* fills out this outline by making determinations about the

[14]Courage, of course, is the most striking case of the defeasible link between virtue and flourishing (in some suitably pre-theoretic sense), since it is a virtue whose exercise might well lead to the destruction of its possessor.

virtues of character and of intellect (*EN* I.13-VI), the promotion of virtuous activity in the context of friendship, pleasure, and weakness of will (VII-X.5), and the specific activities that make for happiness (X.6-8), we can extend the same analysis to very many of the claims made therein. By seeing the characterization of regularities in ethics in *EN* I.3 as applying in the first instance to *goods* and corresponding outcomes for human beings, while also allowing that the inquiry of the *EN* as a whole centers on this topic, we can avoid the difficulties that seem to result when we try to press Aristotle's analysis on the clarifications and definitions he uses along the way. We are not forced to conclude, for instance, that happiness is excellent rational activity *only for the most part* - for this is a conceptual and not a substantive claim about the human good. Again, saying this much does not commit me one way or another to the status of this account of happiness as a fit object of scientific knowledge.

We can now turn to *EN* VI.2, where Aristotle characterizes the *objects* of the intellectual virtues *φρόνησις* and *σοφία*, which correspond to the domains of ethics and science as the epistemic perfections appropriate to each. One might argue that because Aristotle's method here is owed to Plato (e.g., in *Republic* V-VII or *Phaedo* 77d-84b), we should not put much weight on the specific characterizations of the domains of deliberation and action on the one hand and scientific knowledge and contemplation on the other. Even though the genealogical point is surely right, we should note that Aristotle recommends precisely the same method in his inquiry into the various capacities of living things in *De Anima* II - to understand the capacities, we must first grasp the activities, and to understand the activities, we must first grasp their objects (II.4, 415a14-22). Hence, we should think his procedure in VI.2 a serious part of the unfolding investigation of the intellect and right reason (*ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος*) in *EN* VI.

> And let us posit two [parts of the soul] that have reason, one by which we judge the sorts of realities whose principles cannot be otherwise, and one by which [we judge] those that can [be otherwise]. For in relation to what is different in kind, the parts of the soul oriented to each sort differ in kind, given that they obtain knowledge by a certain similarity and affinity. Let it be stated that one of these is scientific, the other calculative, since deliberating and calculating are the same and no one deliberates about what cannot be otherwise. (*EN* VI.2, 1139a6-14)

Here, we learn that cognition of ethical matters concerns what can be otherwise, i.e., contingent matters, which Aristotle reminds us accords with his description of the objects of deliberation in *EN* III.2-4. But the contrast that he provides with the objects of scientific knowledge is new to his account and instructive. For in this passage, Aristotle draws a *metaphysical* distinction between the domain of ethics and the domain of science.[15] (Recall that the force of 'for the most part' in *EN* I.3 is primarily epistemic, since it is relative to a framework of explanation.) Ethics deals with contingents, while science deals with the necessary. Note the mild lack of parallelism in his description of these domains: in science, we are told, the *principles* are invariable, which entails that what is derived from them, the specific theorems of the several sciences, are likewise invariable; in ethics, the objects are themselves simply described as contingent.

This asymmetry receives a further explanation later on in Book VI, when Aristotle is speaking of the role of insight (*νοῦς*) in the exercise of practical and theoretical wisdom. In both domains, insight is responsible for grasping the starting points or what is ultimate, but in science, what is ultimate are the first principles of demonstration which are known immediately and not on the basis of anything else, whereas in ethics, what is ultimate are the contingent particulars grasped as to be done (VI.11, 1143a35-b5). It would be wrong to think, however, that the contingency of the practical is inconsistent with there being a true and general account of the human good or what ought to be done. Alongside particular actions, Aristotle refers specifically to the second ('minor') premise (*ἑτέρα πρότασις*) in the VI.11 passage as among the objects of practical insight. This specificity suggests that insight is *not* responsible for our grasp of the first ('major') premise, which indicates what in general we ought to pursue or do.

That Aristotle thinks of his own account of the human good as falling on the side of the major premise of practical reasoning is made plain in the third of the three passages I proposed to discuss above, which appears in *EN* II.2. This passage has received significant critical attention because some interpreters have found in it the claim that ethics is uncodifiable.[16] I propose to read this text, which is a brief aside, in light of the

[15] I am grateful to Katja Vogt for discussion on this topic. See Chapter 7 of her forthcoming *Desiring the Good: Ancient Proposals and Contemporary Theory.*

[16] I deal with the relationship between Aristotle's moral epistemology and concerns about rules and principles in moral philosophy of the second half of the twentieth century, especially neo-Aristotelian

two I have already discussed, which are Aristotle's self-conscious treatments of ethical regularities and the objects of ethical knowledge.

> Matters of action and advantage admit of no stability, just as matters of health do not. When the universal account is like this, still more does that concerning the particulars not admit of precision. For it falls under no craft or rule at all, and those who act must on each occasion look to what is appropriate, as in medicine and navigation. (*EN* II.2, 1104a3-10)

What has not sufficiently been emphasized in discussions of this passage is the contrast between what Aristotle calls the universal account and what he calls the account of the particulars. The language of stability and precision calls to mind the *EN* I.3 passage - we have already been told that an account of regularities in ethics will not be precise because of variation and deviation from expected outcomes. (Note also that this passage strongly confirms that what Aristotle had in mind as the hoped-for result of ethical-political inquiry in I.3 was a *universal* account.) What, then, is ruled out by this passage? What Aristotle says is that it is the account of the *particulars* that does not fall under craft or rule (*παραγγελία*)[17], and in this respect ethics is no different from medicine or navigation. The doctor's knowledge does not obviate his need to look to the demands of a particular situation. Therefore any account we give of medicine, likewise of navigation and of ethics, cannot go so far as to prescribe a scheme that could be implemented without a proper appraisal of its applicability. The need for situational appreciation (here I borrow David Wiggins's nice phrase - 1976, 43) is always present.

I shall now synthesize my interpretations of Aristotle's remarks on ethical regularities and the explanations they afford (*EN* I.3), the corresponding metaphysics of the ethical domain (*EN* VI.2), and the practical consequences of this conception of the ethical (*EN* II.2). In ethics, claims about the human good are subject to great variation, such that any general account of what happens and what ought to be done holds good only for the most part. While this variation is presumably greater than that in the study of nature, the same connection of regularity to understanding applies, since this gen-

moral philosophy, in the Conclusion.

[17] I use 'rule' to translate *παραγγελία* in the sense of the precepts for monastic orders such as the Rule of St. Benedict (Regula S. Benedicti), which are in fact the origin of the notion of moral rules in the current philosophical sense of maxims (OED, s.v.).

eral account guides us to see exceptions as calling for further explanation. A further difference, however, does distinguish ethics from natural philosophy: the objects of calculation, the form of reasoning that characterizes the ethical domain, are contingent particulars. To the extent that true and general principles of action and advantage exist, then, these will belong to a universal account that cannot serve as an invariable guide to action - situational appreciation is always required for implementation. Nevertheless, rendering such a universal account in outline is the target of ethical inquiry, and Aristotle begins his discussion of the human good with the thought that such an account could make a great difference to our lives (*EN* I.2, 1094a22-26).

0.4 The Proper Equipment of the Inquirer

Aristotle thinks that a suitable auditor of lectures on ethics will be equipped to engage in ethical argument because he[18] has been well-educated. As he explains in *EN* I.3, in the sequel to the passage discussed above, and again in I.4, such an education has both a cognitive and an affective dimension, both of which are the product of habituation. These claims are the first inkling in the *EN* that habituation is linked to cognitive achievements, which will be a major point of discussion in the body of the dissertation. For now, my interest is in what this claim tells us about where ethical inquiry begins, or to put it in Aristotelian terms, what the starting points of ethical inquiry are. Establishing this in turn will allow me to characterize the sought-after end-point of ethical inquiry, and from there we may return to the debate between the intellectualist and anti-intellectualist interpretations of what the *φρόνιμος* knows.

> One must of course also accept each claim in the same way, since it is the mark of an educated man to seek precision in any given area just to the extent the nature of the topic permits. For accepting the lobbying of a mathematician is very like plying an orator for demonstrations. Each man judges

[18] As he makes plain in *Politics* I.13, Aristotle does not merely use sexist language to characterize his audience, he is also a principled sexist, since he judges that a woman's deliberative faculty lacks authority. We may surmise that among the effects of this impairment, in Aristotle's judgment, is the unsuitability of women to ethical inquiry. My convention will be that when I am characterizing Aristotle's positions, I follow his sexist language; when I am developing examples or making my own philosophical points in engaging Aristotle, I will strive to avoid it.

> well what he knows and in these matters is a good judge. Hence, on a given topic it is the educated man [who judges well], and in general it is the man educated on all subjects. For this reason, a young man is not an appropriate student of politics, since he lacks experience in the actions that make up life and the arguments start from and concern these. Besides, being inclined to follow his passions, he will listen to no purpose or benefit, since the goal is not knowledge but action. (*EN* I.3, 1094b22-95a6)

Here we learn that the education in question is a matter of possessing *experience* in certain types of actions (*πράξεις*), which in turns makes you a qualified judge of ethical arguments (*οἱ* [*πολιτικοὶ*] *λόγοι*), whose premises and conclusions are similarly about matters of action. Aristotle adds that even if a young man were in a position to learn something from such inquiry, youth tends to interfere with putting such knowledge to use, which is the whole point of this type of learning. (Recall Aristotle's remark in the previous chapter that coming to know the nature of the highest good would have a considerable influence on one's life - I.2, 1094a22-24.)

But all this passage says on its own is *that* experience is invaluable; it doesn't go further and identify what the mature person knows that makes him a suitable auditor. As a result, some interpreters have conflated Aristotle's two points in this passage and taken the relevant experience to consist of *experiences* of fine and noble actions as, say, pleasant (e.g., Burnyeat 1980). That is to identify Aristotle's educated man with John Stuart Mill's competent judge, who can appreciate the *value* of different sorts of pleasures.[19] It is not clear, however, why experiences of the pleasure (or generally, the value) of certain kinds of actions would lead one to competently assess the content and proper degree of precision of ethical arguments. It is rather more likely that Aristotle deploys the notion of experience in the way he does in the context of other sorts of philosophical inquiries or indeed in the case of crafts.[20] This is a matter not of knowing what something is like but rather of knowing how things stand in a certain domain. (Note: the former is a far more prominent connotation of the English word 'experience' than of the Greek *ἐμπειρία*, which is connected rather to *expertise*.)

[19] See (Mill, 1863, ch. 2).

[20] I defend this view at greater length in chapter 1.

Confirmation of this more cognitive interpretation comes in *EN* I.4, when Aristotle returns to the subject of the suitable auditor of his lectures.

> We should not overlook the fact that arguments from first principles and arguments toward first principles differ. For Plato also rightly puzzled over and inquired whether the path led from first principles or to them, as from the judges to the turning post in a stadium or the other way round. [Rightly,] since we must begin from what is knowable to us, and this [sc. knowable] has two senses, some things being knowable to us, and others knowable simply speaking. Perhaps, then, we at least must begin from what is knowable to us. That is why one must be raised with noble habits if one is to be a capable student of the noble and the just and politics in general. For the starting point is what is so and if this is sufficiently apparent, there is no need in addition for the reason why: someone in this position either has or could easily get the starting points. (*EN* I.4, 1095a30-b7)

Having remarked that knowledge of the highest good is the object of ethical inquiry in I.2 and that experience is a pre-requisite for it in I.3, Aristotle puts these thoughts together in this passage of I.4, drawing again on his general framework for inquiry. We begin from what is familiar or better known to us and work our way to what is better known simply speaking (*τὰ γνώριμα ἁπλῶς*), that is, what is epistemologically superior. At the end of this passage, Aristotle draws on the language of the *Posterior Analytics* to describe these two states as knowing what is so ('the that') as opposed to knowing why it is so ('the because') (see *Post. An.* I.13, II.1 *et passim*). When we are already equipped with (or could easily get) the starting points[21], that is because we grasp what is so in our domain of inquiry. Aristotle likewise pairs the notions of experience and what is so in *Metaphysics* A.1, though he is not there considering inquiry, but only exhorting us to pursue wisdom understood as knowledge of causes.

What is added by this passage to our understanding of the equipment of the suitable auditor is the idea that experience of actions is a kind of knowledge that could *lead*

[21] Notice that Aristotle begins with the Platonic conception of the *ἀρχή* as the ground of knowledge - the unhypothetical first principle - but then develops his own conception of *ἀρχαί* as where we begin, both when we set out to inquire and after inquiry is concluded. Only the latter corresponds to the Platonic *ἀρχή* (what is better known by nature) whereas the former is the starting point (what is better known to us). Hence, we must be careful to translate *ἀρχή* in these two senses in the passage, with the pivot provided in the words *ἡμῖν γε ἀρκτεόν*. At the end of the passage, Aristotle is describing what we need to be appropriate students, i.e., what we need to begin our inquiry. Cf. Vasiliou (1996), who insists wrongly on rendering *ἀρχή* consistently in this passage.

us toward explanations. For it was consistent with what Aristotle said in *EN* I.3 that properly rendered ethical arguments *resonate* in some way with the experienced auditor, but the content of the arguments had nothing to do with the content of what the auditor knew from experience. On this reading - let us call it the 'externalist' reading - experience would furnish its possessor with a sort of skill for detecting improper ethical arguments, but not in virtue of some content of which the auditor was aware. What *EN* I.4 shows is that Aristotle is an *internalist* about ethical inquiry, as he seems to be in other domains. We *build* on our experience by inquiring, starting from a grasp, perhaps rough and ready, of what is so, and proceed in the hope of discovering the principles that underlie this very experience. We do not of course *need* these principles to make a start, but we do not start either in a vacuum.

We may now conjoin this account of experience as the internalist starting point of ethical inquiry to my characterization in the previous section of the ambitions of such an inquiry. How can we get from experience to a universal account of the human good? If we suppose that experience itself is knowledge of what sorts of things are (for the most part) good in human endeavor, then we have a neat explanation for what Aristotle says about the beginning and end of ethical inquiry in *EN* I.3-4. What we learn from ethical inquiry is a way of making sense of the diverse range of things we already know about what is good in action. Presumably - though Aristotle does not highlight this point in his discussions of inquiry - we have been mistaken about some of what we thought initially, at least around the margins. (Too much error and our status as good judges is surely compromised.) This hypothesis would also account for the close link in Aristotle's presentation between the cognitive and affective aspects of being a suitable auditor of his lectures. One only has genuine *experience* of actions in life, we may surmise, when one knows reliably how to carry them off, and that in turn would require being able to subordinate one's desires to a conception of what is good. Any further cognitive achievements with respect to the practical good will likewise depend on such a control of one's desires.

I have thus far provided what Aristotle would regard as only an outline sketch of the nature of ethical inquiry. I will further develop these ideas by drawing on the discussion of political inquiry and experience in *EN* X.9 in the body of the dissertation, showing

that there are many continuities in the epistemic characterization of experience in the ethical and the theoretical works, despite there being crucial differences in the nature and aim of the inquiries that experience serves. For now, let us return to the debate between the strict intellectualists and the anti-intellectualists.

0.5 A Moderate Intellectualism

Recall that the strict intellectualist and anti-intellectualist answers to the question of what the *φρόνιμος* knows are driven by competing visions of the nature of ethical *facts* for Aristotle. For the anti-intellectualist interpreter, Aristotle's remarks distinguishing the contingency of the ethical from the necessity of the principles of science entail a certain superficiality to ethical facts. We can form rough and ready generalizations, of course - what these interpreters often call 'rules of thumb' - but these are not of a different sort from the ordinary moral knowledge of the reasonably well-habituated person. Hence, they hold (A1) *φρόνησις* is knowledge only of what is good in any given concrete circumstance; (A2) for there are no useful regularities that would ground (quasi-)scientific knowledge of the human good.

I have to this point prescinded from the issue of whether ethical regularities can ground properly scientific knowledge on Aristotle's view. In fact, I tend to think that the anti-intellectualist arguments are sound on this score: it is difficult to see how the contingency of ethical facts can be grounded in essences that support demonstration, properly speaking. Note that in formulating what is denied in (A2), I have added the qualified expression '(quasi-)scientific'. A conciliatory intellectualist may well grant that Aristotle would not accord the term science (*ἐπιστήμη*) to ethics, but may still insist that this point is merely terminological; given that ethical universals exist, such an intellectualist supposes, there is no reason to think demonstration is not possible in ethics. I agree with the anti-intellectualist that this inference is too quick.

But the way to undercut the inference is *not* to deny the existence or utility of ethical universals. I hope to have shown above that Aristotle thinks a universal account (*ὁ καθόλου λόγος*) exists in ethics, though it is subject to the kind of variation and devi-

ation to which the universal accounts of medicine and navigation are likewise subject. Moreover, setting out such a universal account of the human good is the purpose of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and it is only our *starting point* in such inquiry that consists of ordinary moral knowledge, i.e., experience. The account Aristotle aims to develop is at once rigorously philosophical, in the sense that it aims to go beyond what is apparent to anyone with the right sort of familiarity with the subject matter to reveal certain underlying truths; and at the same time it is essentially practical, since these truths are not the *scientific* or *demonstrative* ground of what we ordinarily know, but rather (in a way to be specified) are such as to make a contribution to our deliberation. What Aristotle aims to do in his ethical inquiry is no less than to inaugurate a genuinely *practical* philosophy, where intellectual refinement and insight depend on philosophical tools with which we are meant to be familiar from other sorts of inquiry, but whose purpose is moral improvement.

In relation to the anti-intellectualist position as I have characterized it, the position I am developing, moderate intellectualism, firmly rejects (A1) and accepts only a modified version of (A2). That is to say, moderate intellectualism accepts that *(quasi-)scientific* knowledge is not Aristotle's aspiration in ethics; but it nevertheless maintains that he takes his inquiry to reveal a universal account that forms part of what is known by the *φρόνιμος* and that this knowledge goes beyond knowing what is good in any given circumstance (and even beyond knowing rules of thumb that generalize over a type of circumstance). Recall that the strict intellectualist holds that (I1) *φρόνησις* is knowledge of the first principles that govern action in virtue of which the *φρόνιμος* comes to choose what is good and which serves as the explanation for so acting; and (I2) ethical regularities are (quasi-)scientific claims about the human good that hold good for the most part. With regard to this view, moderate intellectualism firmly rejects (I2) for reasons already outlined and accepts only a modified version of (I1). The more-than-superficial knowledge of the *φρόνιμος* is knowledge of universals, which we can in a manner of speaking call first principles, as Aristotle does in the passage of *EN* I.4 discussed above. But these are not the *demonstrative* basis for a choice of a particular action such that we can begin from these principles and derive a suitable action. As we learn from *EN* II.2, situational appreciation is always required because ethical universals cannot specify what to do in

any given circumstance. A consequence of moderate intellectualism as I have framed it is that there is no *simple* answer to what the φρόνιμος knows, on Aristotle's view. No doubt the practically wise man has a firmer and broader grasp of that in which ordinary moral knowledge consists. But he will also possess knowledge of the universal account.

What I have provided so far is only an outline sketch of a *via media* that seeks to avoid the problems that both strict intellectualism and anti-intellectualism face. The problem with strict intellectualism is that Aristotle insists that in ethics we cannot expect either the certainty or the necessity of scientific knowledge. The problem with anti-intellectualism is that it deprives Aristotle's own inquiry of its stated purpose: if we cannot get beyond what is known by experience, then it is difficult to see how Aristotle's inquiry can contribute to practice. Moderate intellectualism allows that there is something genuinely to be discovered through ethical inquiry despite its not being scientific. But just as Aristotle takes his task in the *EN* to be filling in his outline sketch of happiness as excellent rational activity, my task in the remainder of this dissertation will be to defend moderate intellectualism as a textually-grounded and philosophically attractive account of Aristotle's moral epistemology by filling in this sketch.

0.6 A Map of the Dissertation

In the first section, I indicated the three most distinctive features of my interpretation of φρόνησις in Aristotle. Briefly, these were (1) my focus on how φρόνησις is acquired and the crucial role played by ἐμπειρία; (2) my provision of a new philosophical account of what ethical insight might be insight into; and (3) my treatment of the *Politics* as further expounding and refining Aristotle's conception of φρόνησις. Now I will lay out how these themes emerge in the logical structure of this dissertation.

In chapters 1 to 3, I provide my account of how φρόνησις develops from ἐμπειρία. I argued above that the well-habituated auditor is in possession of the starting points for inquiry in the form of ethical experience and that this grasp falls short of practical wisdom. In chapter 1, I characterize this knowledge as a matter of knowing what kinds

of actions are the thing to do in what kinds of situations. The clearest characterization of ethical ἐμπειρία comes in Aristotle's discussion of political inquiry in *EN* X.9. I use this text to show that more minimalist accounts of ἐμπειρία in ethics are mistaken and depend on too restrictive a reading of certain passages in Aristotle's theoretical epistemology (especially *Metaphysics* A.1 and *Posterior Analytics* II.19). In chapter 2 I show that this grasp of the ethical landscape is precisely the knowledge that is required to exercise the virtues according to Aristotle's account in *EN* II.4. I offer a reading of that passage, to which Aristotle returns in *EN* VI.12-13 in uniting his account of virtue of character with his account of practical wisdom, which is exegetically and philosophically superior to various deflationary accounts found in the secondary literature. An implication of this account is that Aristotle sets the bar lower for the attribution of the virtues than is commonly thought, allowing that *partial* possession is possible when one has ethical experience, even though he goes on to argue that authoritative virtue (ἡ κυρία ἀρετή) entails the possession of practical wisdom and all the virtues. I extend this account in chapter 3 to the issue of why Aristotle thinks of φρόνησις as being excellence in *deliberation*. Properly understood, ethical deliberation is a sort of open-ended thinking about what to do that cannot be reduced to weighing options, narrowly instrumental reasoning, or specification. Rather, it is a kind of imaginative search that may combine any or all of these kinds of practical thought. That is why ethical experience is of great use to the deliberator. In thinking through what to do in this radically open-ended way, it is of great use to know the sorts of things that have tended to work in similar kinds of situation. And this knowledge is just what experience of actions is.

In chapter 4, I cap my positive argument in defense of moderate intellectualism by considering what special insight into the human good is possessed by the φρόνιμος over and above experience. With the picture of experience, virtue, and deliberation developed in chapters 1-3, I argue that Aristotle's account of the φρόνιμος in *EN* VI demands that he possesses a universal account of what is good in human life and why, not just a piecemeal grasp of what to do in various situations. The latter would be just (more) experience, but the φρόνιμος knows how to go on when his experience runs out. That requires a grasp not only of what things are virtuous but what the point of the virtues is in a human life. This understanding is insight into the distinctive value of the

virtues, which stems from the contribution they make to our individual and collective lives, and it provides norms or standards relative to which a candidate action can be compared.

In chapter 5, I turn to the topic of political wisdom and why Aristotle thinks of it as the same state of soul as practical wisdom. Aristotle's argument begins with his characterization of practical wisdom as architectonic in *EN* VI and continues in *Politics* III where he identifies practical wisdom as the special excellence of the ruler, while the virtues of character befit other citizens, who nevertheless must be equipped to participate in political life. This division of labor gives strong confirmation to my moderate intellectualism, and adds a social dimension to Aristotle's account of how we learn to be wise.

Finally, in a brief Conclusion to my dissertation, I show how moderate intellectualism relates to various neo-Aristotelian views of practical reasoning and moral perception, particularly those defended by John McDowell, David Wiggins, and Martha Nussbaum.

Chapter 1

Experience and the Path to Practical Wisdom

1.1 What the Experienced Person Knows

I have already sketched a line of thought in the Introduction about how practical wisdom develops out of experience (*ἐμπειρία*) as a preliminary to my positive defense of moderate intellectualism. The basic proposal was that ethical experience is itself an intellectual grasp of what is good for a human being to do. The intellectual nature of experience in turn explains its dual role as the internalist starting point for ethical inquiry ('the that') and as the source of the deeper understanding that the practically wise person possesses. In this chapter, I bring together Aristotle's scattered remarks on experience in the *Nicomachean Ethics* to make this account more precise; in particular, I show in what sense ethical experience is a grasp of what to do and not just a collection of ethical observations or intuitions.[1]

I also consider what Aristotle says about (non-ethical) experience in relation to developing other intellectual states, especially craft and scientific understanding, to show the strong analogy between the theoretical and practical cases. This analogy bolsters my intellectualist account of experience. Contrary to received wisdom, Aristotle says

[1] I leave discussion of the secondary literature to the following chapters. Here I will simply present a series of crucial texts and comment on them.

little or nothing in *Metaphysics* A.1 or *Posterior Analytics* II.19 that should lead us to think of experience as anything less than a fully intellectual state, despite his frequent emphasis in those contexts on the *practical* success of the ἔμπειροι rather than their intellectual achievements. That is because, in both contexts, he is arguing for the superiority of (theoretical) wisdom over mere experience. In the *Ethics* he is more concerned to outline the positive role of experience as the guide to proper inquiry and the source of practical wisdom.

My task in this chapter will be to begin my defense of moderate intellectualism by arguing that on Aristotle's considered view, ethical experience is practical knowledge of what sorts of actions are appropriate to what sorts of circumstances. In the following chapters, I illuminate the nature of practical wisdom by applying this account of experience to virtuous action, deliberation, and the achievement of ethical insight through inquiry.

Two of the passages I discussed in the Introduction, from *EN* I.3 and I.4, are again relevant to understanding what ἐμπειρία is. But the fullest treatment of ἐμπειρία in the *Ethics* comes in X.9, where the topic under discussion is political wisdom (πολιτική). As I shall demonstrate more fully in Chapter 5, Aristotle consistently maintains in the *Ethics* and the *Politics* that φρόνησις and πολιτική are the same state, so we should have few qualms about importing his analysis, with appropriate modifications, from the political to the ethical domain. It is enough for now that Aristotle in X.9 makes several remarks of a perfectly general nature about experience in practical contexts, without restricting himself to the specific case of politics.

In the remainder of this chapter, I proceed as follows. I analyze Aristotle's treatment of ἐμπειρία in *EN* X.9, a lengthy discussion that will already suggest some of the possible alternative interpretations. My main target will be anti-intellectualist views that take ἐμπειρία simply to be a kind of perceptual competence. Since these interpretations also draw on the theoretical works for support, I will then turn my attention to *Metaphysics* A.1 and *Posterior Analytics* II.19 to show that these texts, too, support an intellectualist conception of ἐμπειρία.

First, however, let us return to *EN* I.3-4. Aristotle claims there that the experience needed to properly follow an inquiry into the good is a grasp of 'the that' (τὸ ὅτι), which

we may also render as 'what is so' or 'what is the case' in ethics. The anti-intellectualist takes this grasp to be a quasi-perceptual judgment (or intuition) of the rightness or appropriateness of particular actions on particular occasions, a sensitivity that is inculcated through habituation, which is itself envisioned as a process of shaping pleasures and pains. Ethical inquiry at best organizes and labels these quasi-perceptual judgments. The strict intellectualist, meanwhile, thinks of experience as a collection of ethical observations, the raw matter for a scientific account of the human good. Here, inquiry identifies the explanatory basis of first-order judgments. On the view I am defending, ethical experience is neither a set of quasi-perceptual judgments nor a memory of ethical observations but rather practical knowledge. For now, my task will be to show that in *EN* X.9, Aristotle thinks of experience in any practical domain as consisting of narrowly specific generalizations specifying what sort of action is suitable in what kinds of circumstances. This rules out the anti-intellectualist view of experience as a sort of sedimentation of perceptual judgment rather than a genuinely intellectual grasp, while leaving it open whether to prefer moderate or strict intellectualism.

Aristotle's treatment of experience and good judgment in X.9 is both circuitous and dialectical. What I mean by the latter term is that he entertains a range of positions and does not consistently speak in his own voice. Nevertheless, as I will show, the summation of his position both makes it clear that experience is a grasp of generalizations not a collection of perceptual judgments and explains why he thinks it is needed for ethical and political inquiry. Rather than begin from these confident assertions at the end of Aristotle's discussion, it will help to follow the twists and turns, a task seldom attempted in commentary on this chapter. A linear treatment will help expose why some interpreters have been tempted to accord experience less-than-intellectual status, especially since they tend to come to this passage with a view of experience primarily informed by (misunderstandings of) the epistemological passages in the theoretical works. I will proceed the other way round - first reading X.9 as a chief witness for my moderate intellectualism, then showing that the theoretical works present largely the same view.

EN X.9 as a whole is framed by the idea that there are three sources of goodness: nature, habit, and reason (1179b20-1). Aristotle focuses on the third of these, and begins

by pointing out some limits to *arguing* people into being good, unless they are suitably prepared (1179b4-20). In a way, then, this is very much the same territory as we find in *EN* I.3-4, where he describes the features of a suitable auditor. But in returning to this topic, Aristotle is presaging a new discussion of the need for a second inquiry into legislation to complete the work of the *EN* (1180a10 ff.). The proposed inquiry covers the same territory as the text we have received as the *Politics* (see esp. 1181b12-23), and it makes very good sense to think of *EN* X.9 as a sort of introduction to the *Politics*, even allowing for some differences from this proposed inquiry in the version of the *Politics* we have.[2]

The topic of experience enters Aristotle's discussion in X.9 in two places. First, he argues that experience is an insufficient basis for a rational system of education imparted by law; what is needed is legislative understanding, *νομοθετικήν* (1180a14-b28, especially 1180b11-25). Second, he argues that experience is an indispensable preliminary to acquiring political wisdom (1181a9-b12). When interpreters of Aristotle on experience turn to *EN* X.9, they tend to focus on the first of these passages, where familiar themes from the theoretical works emerge, such as that experience is connected to knowing what to do in a particular case, but not in general. Even here, however, Aristotle valorizes experience to some extent, as we shall see. The second passage has been, comparatively, ignored, but in it Aristotle uses a clear analogy between political experience - indeed, experience in *any* practical domain - and medical knowledge to argue that experience goes beyond case-by-case perceptual judgment.

The two passages taken together demonstrate that experience is an intellectual state, though one that falls short of and differs from universal knowledge. Moreover, the second passage undermines the anti-intellectualist interpretation that experience is a set of perceptual judgments or even a reliable capacity to form such judgments, at least insofar as this capacity is understood *not* to be an intellectual achievement. *EN* X.9, therefore, offers support for many aspects of the moderately intellectualist position I am developing. Since my focus for the moment is showing that experience is an intellectual achievement, I will concentrate on the evidence the chapter provides against the anti-

[2]See Newman (1887), *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. 1, pp. 1-3.

intellectualist alternative.

1.2 Education and the Insufficiency of Experience

In the first part of his discussion of legislation, Aristotle mounts a defense of common education, which, he says, depends for its success on the establishment of good laws (1179b34-5). He states at the outset that it hardly matters whether the laws or customs (*νόμοι*) are employed in the education of just one person or many. It is this claim that generates the question about who is best placed to establish such an education and leads us to the topic of experience.

> Common care, clearly, is effected through laws, and the care is decent when the laws are serious. It would seem to make no difference whether the laws are written or unwritten, or for the education of one or many, just as it does not in music and gymnastics and other pursuits. For just as what is lawful and customary has force in cities, so too in households do paternal prescriptions (*λόγοι*) and habits, and still the more thanks to kinship and kindness, since they [sc. the children] are loving from the first and naturally compliant. Moreover, individual courses of education are even superior to common ones, as in medicine. For rest and fasting on the whole (*καθόλου*) help someone with fever, but perhaps not a certain person, and the pugilist perhaps does not prescribe the same mode of fighting to everyone. Indeed, it would seem that the individual [course] (*τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον*) is more precise when the care is personal (*ἰδίας*), since each more likely obtains what suits him. But the best care for each is that of the doctor, likewise the trainer and everyone else who has universal knowledge, [knowledge of] what holds for all cases or for all of a particular type (for knowledge is and is held to be of what is common). (1180a34-b16)

There is a somewhat vertiginous movement in this passage between two views of authority and education, each of which in turn frames two opposed positions. The difficulty in disentangling these views lies not so much in identifying which one Aristotle eventually lands on, but rather in keeping up with the speed of his thought. On one side of the first of these two views of authority is a commonplace: that it is the person 'close to home', the father or the parent generally, who knows what is best for a child's upbringing. For the first view of authority thinks of it in terms of *who* possesses

it. Just before the passage cited above, Aristotle has dismissively cited the description of the Cyclopes in *Odyssey* IX (ll. 114-115) as laying down the law for their children and wives (1180a26-28). But in our passage, Aristotle affirms this line of thought by noting that paternal authority, the rule of reason in the household, is every bit as effective as - indeed, more effective than - impersonal strictures. He confirms this by drawing on a familiar analogy to the cases of medicine and physical training, recalling his remarks about the mean and the need to individualize prescriptions in *EN* II.5, 1106a26-b6.

But this very analogy generates a shift to the second way of thinking about authority in this passage, which takes it to depend not on a person but on *what they know*. For even if we acknowledge that the person close to home is best placed to carry out a program of education, we may ask what knowledge they have in virtue of which their prescriptions are successful. Implicit in the commonplace about paternal education is an answer to this second question, which says that paternal *experience* is sufficient. The thought evidently is that if it is only some individual that is to be educated, *universal*, that is to say, *scientific* knowledge is unnecessary (this is of course a loose use of the notion, which includes practical, productive, and theoretical pursuits). Aristotle rejects this claim of parity between experience and more comprehensive knowledge in establishing an individual course of education, at least as a claim about what knowledge would underwrite the *best* such care. He concludes, unequivocally, that 'the best care for each is that of the doctor, likewise the trainer and everyone else who has universal knowledge'. This conclusion forces the reader to revisit the premise that there is no difference between an education prescribed for one or for many. At first, this claim was used to suggest that private education by parental command might be no worse than public education by law. But now this assimilation has the *opposite* force: even the parent must aspire to some share of legislative knowledge, a claim that runs contrary to the spirit of the commonplace about paternal prescriptions if not its letter.

The remainder of this passage bears out my interpretation, though some anti-intellectualists have cited it (typically out of context) as evidence that universal knowledge is otiose.

> Nevertheless, perhaps nothing prevents some one person from being educated well by someone who lacks knowledge but is aware of what happens

> to that person on given occasions thanks to experience, just as some people are thought to be their own best doctors though they are of no help to another. But all the same it would seem that someone who wants to be skilled and knowledgeable, anyway, must advance to the universal and come to know it insofar as it is possible, since it is said that knowledge concerns this [sc. the universal]. Perhaps also someone who wants to make people better through discipline, whether many or few, must try to acquire legislative knowledge, since it is through laws that we become good. For not just anyone can handle well someone put in front of him, but if anyone can, it is the one who knows, as in medicine and the rest of what is governed by care of any kind and prudence (*ἐπιμέλειά τις καὶ φρόνησις*). (1180b16-28)

Aristotle now mentions both sides of the second way of thinking about authority in terms of knowledge: either experience is sufficient for success or knowing the universal is in some way superior. He sides, albeit cautiously, with the second view. It is necessary for him to restate the debate, given the shift from thinking in terms of persons, as in the earlier passage, to thinking in terms of what they know. But the fact that Aristotle restates the issue is not evidence that he is ambivalent about which side of the issue to take. There may be domains where experience is sufficient - e.g., taking care of oneself in routine circumstances on the grounds that one knows more than a doctor about one's medical idiosyncrasies. But speaking generally about care as well as more specifically about the *education* of others, knowledge is required to guarantee practical success. The mention of *φρόνησις*, the last word quoted above, is especially significant for our inquiry. Aristotle evidently means his conclusion to hold not only for legislative knowledge, but for all those domains enumerated in *EN* VI.8 where the word *φρόνησις* is appropriate, not least the primary home of the word in matters of action, i.e., what we call practical wisdom.

What is most important for present purposes is the idea that *even when* we turn to thinking of authority in terms of knowledge, experience presents itself as an alternative to knowledge of the universal. While Aristotle concludes - quite surprisingly, we may imagine, to some of his readers - that universal knowledge is needed in order to successfully educate others, the fact that experience is a genuine alternative suggests that it is intellectual. As we know from many other passages across the corpus and learn again here, experience is connected more to knowing what is good in the particular case

(τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον) than to knowing what is good on the whole or universally (τὸ καθόλου). But this contrast, which on its own is rather over-simplifying of the differences between these cognitive states, gains another dimension in the present passage.

We are told not just that knowing what is good on the whole is superior (more honored, nobler), but that someone who knows what is good on the whole is also in the best position to know what is good on any given particular occasion. This is also in a way knowledge of the particular, since it is knowledge of *any given particular*; but it is of a superior sort, since it is not confined to one or a small handful of cases. This comparison between experience and knowledge of the universal shows how the two states can differ *not simply* in terms of the mode of awareness of the knower. It is not that the experienced person has one kind of grasp of some subject matter while the person with universal knowledge grasps the same thing in a different way. Rather, both the experienced person and the person with universal knowledge are in a position to come to a *judgment* of a particular case, but on the basis of two distinct bodies of knowledge. As I shall show in my discussion of *Metaphysics* A.1 and *Posterior Analytics* II.19 below, this is also the best way to understand the epistemological hierarchies outlined there, which in turn provides further confirmation for my interpretation.

1.3 Between Perception and Insight

The question to which Aristotle turns at the conclusion of his discussion of common versus individual education is this: given that attaining some share of legislative knowledge is a practical necessity for us, where shall we acquire it? As it happens, the question is not easy to answer; the obvious routes are closed. For neither those who practice politics nor those who profess to teach it are in a position to help, and here again Aristotle thematizes experience, this time as the essential prerequisite for inquiry.

> So then must we not take up next how one could come to have legislative knowledge? Or as in other cases, is it from those who practice politics, since it [legislative knowledge] seems to be a part of political knowledge? Or is the case of politics dissimilar to the other kinds of knowledge and ability?

> For in other areas, the same people manifestly transmit their abilities and engage in their work on the basis of them, e.g., doctor and scribes. But in political matters, it is the sophists who profess to teach, though none of them practices, while the practicing politicians are thought to do this by an ability and some form of experience rather than thought (*οἷ δόξαιεν ἂν δυνάμει τινὶ τοῦτο πράττειν καὶ ἐμπειρίᾳ μᾶλλον ἢ διανοίᾳ*). For evidently they neither write or speak about such topics. (*EN* X.9, 1180b28-81a4)

Here we meet experience a second time, again, at least at first, with a somewhat negative valence. Unlike doctors and scribes, experienced politicians cannot transmit their ability in the form of teaching, lacking an understanding of what they are doing. Notice, however, that the implication that experience is an *alternative* to thought rather than simply a state of thought inferior to complete understanding only occurs in the report of an *ἔνδοξον* and not in Aristotle's own voice. Indeed, just a few lines later, Aristotle defends the superiority of experience to the total absence of understanding displayed by the sophists, and identifies a key role for it to play in inquiry.

> But surely experience seems to contribute not a little, since people do not become politically capable [merely] through a familiarity (*συνηθείας*) with politics. Hence, those who want to have political knowledge seem to require experience in addition [sc. to such a familiarity]. Of the sophists, those who profess [to teach politics] seem to be very far indeed from teaching. For as a whole they do not know what sort of thing it is or what it concerns. (1181a9–12)

The contrast between *mere* familiarity and genuine experience is of central importance to understanding the general account of practical experience Aristotle is about to offer. These terms are often paired, e.g., when Aristotle says that the best sort of friendship demands both experience and familiarity with a would-be friend (*EN* VIII.6, 1158a14-15). But here, Aristotle disparages mere familiarity as an insufficient basis for developing true political understanding. The suggestion, evidently, is that familiarity can be divorced from practical engagement, since the sophists can possess the former while having no share of experience. To fill in Aristotle's remarks somewhat, we might well imagine that any adult member of a political community has familiarity with political life, a sense of how things tend to go in the political sphere. Such a familiarity falls well

short of the knowledge even the practicing politicians possess, though that in turn falls short of the form of understanding we should aspire to have.

But what kinds of knowledge correspond to these three tiers of political understanding - mere familiarity, political experience, and full political understanding? This question Aristotle addresses next in his fullest remarks about practical experience anywhere in the corpus:

> In each area, those with experience make discriminations about products correctly (*οἱ γὰρ ἔμπειροι περὶ ἕκαστα κρίνουσι ὀρθῶς τὰ ἔργα*), i.e., they comprehend the means and modes of bringing them about and what sorts [of products] harmonize with what sorts [of situations], while those who lack experience must be content with not failing to notice whether a product is well or badly made, as in painting. Laws appear to be the products of political knowledge. How, then, could one acquire legislative understanding from [studying] these, or able to determine [which are] the best? For people don't seem to become doctors from handbooks. Yet these [handbooks] try not just to specify treatments but also to describe how people might be healed and how one ought to treat each type of case, by distinguishing conditions. These seem to be useful for those with experience, though useless for the ignorant. Now perhaps, also, collections of laws and constitutions could be useful for those capable of theorizing and making determinations about what is [done] well or the opposite and what sorts of things fit what sorts [of cases]. If those who do not possess the state (*ἄνευ ἕξεως*) go through these sorts of things, it wouldn't belong to them to make determinations well except by accident, though they might gain some comprehension in these matters (*εὐσυνετώτεροι δ' εἰς ταῦτα τάχ' ἂν γένοιντο*). (1181a19-b12)

This passage confirms that there are *three* conditions one might be in with respect to politics and fills in some of the details about each. The key point is that political judgment, judgment about which laws might be appropriate to a given political community at a particular time for a specific purpose, belongs both to those with experience and those with complete legislative understanding. This is *practical* knowledge, knowledge of what to do when presented with a situation.

For someone who lacks experience, only comprehension after the fact is possible, which at the start of the passage is described as judging whether the product is well or badly fashioned, the ability of the art critic in painting. At the end of the passage, this ability is demoted even further - such judgment is successful only accidentally in

the political case, presumably since it depends on familiarity with the constitution in question or a sufficient similarity between what one was familiar with and the case in question. All such a person could hope to gain from investigating the full range of constitutions and laws is improving this critical facility, which Aristotle calls comprehension (εὐσυνεσία), invoking his discussion of it as a virtue of the practical intellect in *EN* VI.10. There, comprehension was a virtue possessed by the person of practical wisdom, but unlike his ability to actually formulate what to do, that is, to deliberate and choose correctly, comprehension was limited to judging what others have done (1143a4-18).[3]

The three levels of cognitive ability, then, correspond to increasing levels of success in political judgment as well as increasing levels of generality in one's knowledge. At the level of mere familiarity with politics, one can perhaps judge with some degree of success whether a law succeeded in a given political community, presumably one's own, but only after the fact. This is a quasi-perceptual ability, perhaps best described as a sense of fit or suitability. At the level of political experience, one can formulate *how to bring about a result* antecedently on the basis of practical knowledge of what kinds of laws accord with what kinds of situations (or perhaps with the kind of constitution one's political community has). That is why experienced politicians appear to have some success in their own communities, despite lacking genuine legislative understanding. Finally, there is this legislative understanding, which goes beyond the particularities of any given community and embraces the principles of constitutional design. Yet despite its generality, this knowledge too is practical, since with it one can envision, for instance, how a constitution ought to change. Such change is a matter for the law-giver (ὁ νομοθετικός) and not the practicing politician (ὁ πολιτευόμενος), who must respond to the concerns of the day.

Perhaps not every detail of this account of political experience will carry over to the ethical case, though we must remember that the inquiry of the *Ethics* is a part of πολιτική and Aristotle does not envision a separate realm of ethical knowledge. But Aristotle's analogy to medicine, as well as his opening remark that those with experience *in each*

[3]I shall identify an important role for comprehension in political deliberation in Chapter 5.

area (περὶ ἕκαστα) have sound practical judgment, ensure that his point is not parochial to politics. In particular, he extends and fills in the general framework, already suggested by the first half of his discussion, that there are three tiers of cognitive states relative to practical judgment. As I shall goes on to discuss, these also correspond to the three stages in the epistemological hierarchy of the theoretical works: (1) perception/memory, which are grouped together and belong to the same faculty per the psychological works; (2) experience; and (3) insight. Hence, we have strong confirmation, both internal to his discussion in X.9 and elsewhere in the corpus, that experience is to be distinguished, on the one hand from an aggregation of perceptual judgments, which at best allow after-the-fact evaluation, and on the other hand from a more universal but nevertheless equally practical form of understanding.

Before I turn to the evidence of the theoretical works, let me sum up what I have argued to this point. A close investigation of *EN* X.9 reveals that in Aristotle's most sustained discussion of ἐμπειρία in the corpus, he identifies it as a state of the intellect that enables its possessor to form judgments about what to do on the basis of narrowly specific generalizations about what sort of action to take relative to a certain class of circumstances or situations. For in Aristotle's terse language, generalizing over all types of experience and so the nature of work and circumstances in each area, experience is knowledge of 'what sorts suit what sorts' (ποῖα ποίοις συνᾴδει/ἁρμόττει, 1181a21, b9); in this passage, the exemplary case is knowing how to fashion laws for a specific type of constitution. Moreover, although he describes experience as a knowledge of the particular and grounded in actual familiarity with particular cases, he distinguishes it from two other states, *mere* familiarity, which is cashed out in terms of an ability to make perceptual judgments after the fact, and a deeper form of intellectual understanding that involves knowledge of the universal and a grasp of principles.

These facts emerge from two phases in his discussion, which I have treated in the previous section and this one. First, Aristotle defends the need for anyone interested in educating others in more than a haphazard way to inquire into the *principles* of legislation and not settle for the practical success that experience of an individual student might render possible. Second, he explains how *political* experience is a *sine qua non* for inquiry into these principles. In both these discussions, experience is valorized to some

extent, but we are instructed not to rest content with it. If we mistakenly emphasize one side of this view over the other, then it will either seem (per the anti-intellectualist) that experience is enough for full practical competence and so the fuller understanding of legislation is not required; or it will seem (per the intellectualist) that only this fuller understanding is worth being treated as real knowledge and so the importance of experience will go unnoticed. My moderate intellectualism offers a middle course that avoids both these mistakes - on it, both experience and *φρόνησις* or *πολιτική* are forms of practical knowledge, though the latter is superior in some way we have yet to fully understand.

It is this superiority of an understanding of underlying principles that is Aristotle's focus in the theoretical discussions of *Metaphysics* A.1 and *Posterior Analytics* II.19, which has led some interpreters to think that Aristotle does not think much of experience on the whole. I believe the intellectualists are absolutely right to identify a strong analogical relationship between Aristotle's theoretical and the practical epistemology. But I shall now argue that the analogy and more generally the evidence of the theoretical works support not strict intellectualism but rather my moderate intellectualism, which emphasizes that Aristotle values experience as the essential starting point of inquiry and that he takes it to be more than a ability to form quasi-perceptual judgments.

1.4 All Insight Derives from Experience

The same threefold distinction of perception, experience, and insight into principles governs the epistemological hierarchies presented in *Metaphysics* A.1 and *Posterior Analytics* II.19. While these discussions are clearly related - one might even say they are the product of the same set of reflections on Aristotle's part - the two clearly constitute distinct argumentative contexts. In *Metaphysics* A.1, Aristotle's chief goal is to identify insight into theoretical principles, especially the most fundamental and far-reaching ones, as the substance of wisdom (*σοφία*), thereby inaugurating the set of treatises on being we know as the *Metaphysics*. In *Posterior Analytics* II.19, by contrast, his goal is to fill a gap in the arguments that precede: namely, given that scientific understanding

depends on our knowing the principles, how is knowledge of those principles so much as possible? For we do not come to know these principles in the way we come to have scientific understanding of a theorem in a given science, i.e., *from* more basic principles. It will be important, therefore, to take these two discussions in turn. Indeed, I will argue that, although the epistemological hierarchies presented in both works conform to the model I have been developing on the basis of *EN* I.3-4 and X.9, the *Metaphysics* A.1 version is ultimately more informative about the precise nature of experience, such that it can make possible the highest cognitive achievements.

Let us begin, then, from *Posterior Analytics* II.19. A great deal of ink has been spilt, some of it quite recently, on this passage. My own interest in it is fairly specific, however, so I shall pass over numerous points of contention in the scholarly literature.[4] Instead, I shall simply lay out how I see the argument of the chapter unfold in order to identify the central role of experience in the argument. We are helped in this task by the fact that the chapter is extremely well-organized. After general orientation, Aristotle offers a list of three questions to be answered about knowledge of first principles (99b15-19; b20-26). The argumentative portion of the chapter is divided into three sections correspondingly. In the first, he offers his answer to the last of the questions he raises at the outset, i.e., whether a grasp of first principles is something we acquire or something we latently possess (99b26-100a3). In the second, he elaborates this answer further in order to tackle the second to last of the questions, i.e., whether we have scientific understanding or a different sort of knowledge of the first principles (100a3-b5). In the third and final section, he uses this further conclusion to address the first of his questions, i.e., whether the grasp of first principles belongs to the same state as demonstrative knowledge (100b5-17). Since the third section does not deal directly with the cognitive hierarchy, I shall set it aside except to note that Aristotle only there names the grasp of first principles insight (*νοῦς*) as opposed to demonstrative scientific knowledge.

Aristotle's answer to the question 'whence knowledge of first principles?' in the chapter is clearly stated, both in the first and second argumentative sections - this

[4] My thinking about the passage has been shaped largely in response to David Bronstein's recent (2016) book on the *Analytics* and unpublished work by Robert Howton.

knowledge derives from sense-perception (*αἴσθησις*, 99b32-35; 100a9-11). His approach to this important puzzle is systematic. First, he argues that the knowledge of first principles cannot be innate but unknown to us (99b26-32). Since it follows that we must acquire it on the basis of a different state we possess (b32-34), he concludes that the only plausible source is perception (b34-35). This he remarks is a capacity all animals share, but which only for some (perhaps only for us) bears reason (*λόγος*) as its fruit (99b36-100a3). This transition from perception to reason is marked by a difference (*διαφορά τις*, 100a1-2), that is, our reasoned grasp is not a mere accumulation of perceptions, not simply a further exercise of the same capacity (note *τινα δύναμιν*, 99b32-3).

A proper answer to the question 'whence knowledge of first principles?' demands an explanation of this transition, and effecting such an explanation is the task of the second section of the chapter. As it happens, that exposition leads to Aristotle's answer to the question of *what sort* of exercise of reason knowledge of first principles could be. As it turns out, the path from perception to reason goes via other cognitive states: from perception comes memory, from memory, experience, and finally from experience craft and science, depending as the subject matter is becoming or being (100b3-9). As I have framed the logical structure of the chapter, the question becomes this: *where* does the transition occur? The scholarly orthodoxy holds that the transition lies *between* experience and insight (my provisional description for what is common to craft and scientific understanding, which Aristotle first leaves nameless, but will, as I mentioned, later describe as *νοῦς*). But all that Aristotle explicitly says is that the transition happens as a result of perception. For instance, in his conclusion to the second section of the chapter, he remarks that 'indeed it is perception that implants the universal in this way' (*καὶ γὰρ ἡ αἴσθησις οὕτω τὸ κάθολου ἐμποιεῖ*, 100b4-5). We know from Aristotle's treatise on memory that he thinks of the exercise of memory as an aspect of the imaginative capacity (*Mem.* I.449b22-25), which itself is closely allied to perception. Aristotle's mention of memory in passing, then, should be understood as identifying not a stage distinct in kind but rather as identifying the exercise of broadly perceptual capacities most relevant to his topic, which is the acquisition of a reasoned grasp of first principles. We are left, then, with two possibilities: either the transition to a reasoned grasp occurs, as the standard reading has it, between experience and insight, or it happens between

memory and experience.

I believe the text itself favors the latter reading. My argument is simple: Aristotle identifies reason with knowing the universal, and he says that the universal is in our soul when we have experience.

> From perception, then, comes memory, as we say, and from frequent memory occuring of the same thing comes experience, since many memories are numerically one experience. And from experience or rather from the universal as a whole coming to rest in the soul (ἐκ δ' ἐμπειρία ἢ ἐκ παντὸς ἠρεμήσαντος τοῦ κάθολου ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ), a one over many, which is one and the same thing present in all these [many] things, there is the first principle of craft and science, of craft if it concerns generation, of science if it concerns being. (99b3-9)

Aristotle's interest in the transition to reason requires a degree of specificity not contained in ordinary language, so he re-describes the path from experience to insight as the path from the universal at rest (ἠρεμήσαντος τοῦ κάθολου) to the first principle (ἀρχή). It has seemed obvious to interpreters to *identify* the universal at rest with the first principle, but this identification makes a hash of the orderly sequence of transitions described, starting with perception, each subsequent stage described as coming *from* (ἐκ) the previous. It is rather more plausible to read the correction after ἢ as a redescription, an account of the way in which experience generates the first principle. We should therefore not identify the universal at rest with the first principle, unless of course it is impossible to make sense of the universal at rest being a redescription of experience.

Aristotle's remarks earlier in the *Posterior Analytics* in the parallel case of demonstrative knowledge provide some justification for why we should resist the identification of the universal at rest with the first principle. In *APo.* I.4-5, Aristotle argues that attributes can seem to belong universally to a subject without belonging essentially or per se, and hence that our knowledge of such claims can be of what is universal in logical form (κατὰ παντὸς) yet fall short of scientific knowledge in several respects.[5] One such failure is misidentifying *in virtue of what essence* the attribute belongs. If we think a certain property belongs to isosceles triangles because they are isosceles, but it turns out to be an essential attribute of all triangles, then the demonstration will be faulty (I.5,

[5]See Hasper and Yurdin (2014).

74a32-b4). What we can gain from this discussion for the purposes of interperting II.19 is straightforward: universality in form is no guarantee of demonstrative knowledge, let alone the immediacy that characterizes knowledge of first principles. It will be true, of course, that knowing a first principle counts as knowing something universal, but the converse does not follow. In *APo.* I.4-5, Aristotle departs from his normal usage and reserves the term *καθόλου* for predications that are not only universal in logical form (*κατὰ παντὸς*) but also per se and essential (or more literally, in virtue of the thing, i.e., in virtue of what it is) - *καθ' αὐτὸ καὶ ᾗ αὐτὸ*. Already this shows that there are more and less demanding senses of universality in Aristotle's epistemology.

When we encounter *experience* seemingly identified with the universal at rest, however, we may be puzzled. Doesn't Aristotle repeatedly identify experience with knowing particulars? How can this, too, be a knowledge of a universal? Help is forthcoming in this very section of II.19. Aristotle remarks by way of clarification that in a way even *perception* is of universals, since although 'what we perceive is a particular, perception is of something universal, e.g., of a human not of the human Callias' (100a16-b1). What Aristotle means is that we perceive *of Callias* that he is *a human*, and it would be misleading to describe perception as a kind of mere contact with a particular thing, since part of its content, as we would put it, is generalizable. But in perceiving something we do not thereby generalize. Only in experience, which is constituted from many memories or preserved percepts, does a 'one over many' (*τοῦ ἑνὸς παρὰ τὰ πολλά*) present itself to our consciousness. (It would take us too far afield to discuss memory extensively, but as a preservation of a perception, even when reinforced by repetition, memory does not lose perception's singularity, only the need to be in contact with the object.)

Let me be clear: I am *not* suggesting that experience involves knowing a universal in the way that even perception can be said to involve knowing something universal. For in perception, what is grasped is some particular; whereas in experience, what is grasped is a generalization over particulars. Where confusion arises on this point is that experience is a basis for judging something particular, which Aristotle regularly describes as having knowledge *of* particulars. But saying only this much, as Aristotle often does, because of the argumentative context, obscures the fact that experience is a grasp of a one-over-many. There are many ways, then, in which cognitive states can

be said to be or involve universals. Perception is of generalizable contents, experience generalizes over perceptual episodes, and insight into first principles will have further conditions, such as being a grasp of essence and being immediate. We are not told in *Posterior Analytics* II.19 exactly what sort of generalizations are involved in experience of the kind that leads to insight. That is where Aristotle's discussion in *Metaphysics* A.1 is more informative.

1.5 Knowing Without the Reason Why

Experience recurs as the middle state between memory and insight in *Metaphysics* A.1, but Aristotle's remarks about experience, while more detailed than in the *Posterior Analytics*, also do not seem at first glance to add up. As Ross puts it, '[i]t is not easy to see what Aristotle wants to say about *ἐμπειρία*' (Ross (1912), 116). For at first, he seems willing to attribute a little experience to brute animals, but pretty soon he connects it to thought or conception in human beings (980b26-81a7). Likewise, though he begins by remarking that 'experience is thought very like science and craft, and people acquire science and craft through experience' (981a1-3), he goes on to sharply distinguish between experience and these states. What is being suppressed at the outset of this discussion, however, is that Aristotle's main concern is insight into *causes*, which is the sole possession of the craftsman and scientific knower, a thought that does not emerge clearly until 981a28-30. As a result, it is easy to get the wrong impression from his initial example, which is taken from medicine, as well as his later reflections on it.

> Craft arises when, from many thoughts on the basis of experience, a single universal judgment (*μία καθόλου ὑπόληψις*) arises about [a class of] similar things. For it belongs to experience to have the judgment (*τὸ ἔχειν ὑπόληψιν*) that this helped Kallias when he was sick from this fever and Socrates and likewise many people taken one by one (*καθ' ἕκαστον οὕτω πολλοῖς*). But it belongs to craft [to have the judgment] that it helped all those who are of this certain sort, distinguished into one kind, e.g., phlegmatic or bilious people when burning with fever. (981a5-12)

The standard interpretation has been that experience is presented here as a mere 'coagulation of memories' (again, Ross, I.116-17). But Aristotle emphasizes that the ex-

perienced person knows that *this* (τοδὶ), presumably some particular treatment, was of use to *many* people. In other words, the experienced person knows a treatment that works for some fevers, though perhaps not all, on the basis of *memories* of Kallias and Socrates. But this is not a mere coagulation - rather it is the possession of a judgment (ὑπόληψιν), the very word also used of the craftsman's cognitive state. What the experienced person lacks is a diagnostic criterion of the underlying condition that facilitates the treatment, not an awareness of the *generality* of his own proposed treatment.

These are two kinds of generality, then, both necessary in the ascent to full understanding: (1) grouping a class of experiences together under a single head and (2) identifying the underlying cause that makes that grouping valid. To see that the first is a genuine kind of generality, we may contrast the imagined empiric doctor with someone who knows just of a one-off success of a certain treatment, without even recognizing that it was a treatment for fever. This is an application of a mere memory to a new case without apt generalization. Aristotle himself does not sharply distinguish these two kinds of generality, describing the experienced person simply as knowing the particular and so able to judge in particular cases. But we have already seen in the context of *Posterior Analytics* II.19 that this simpler contrast obscures significant complexity, even in the case of perception.

> So then, in relation to acting, experience is thought not to differ at all from craft; rather the experienced seem to fare even better than those who lack experience but have the principle [or account] (λόγον). The cause is that experience is knowledge of things taken individually (τῶν καθ' ἕκαστον), while craft is knowledge of universals, and all actions and productions concern an individual thing (τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον). For the healer does not heal a human being, except incidentally, but rather Kallias or Socrates or any other picked out in this way who happens to be a human being. So if someone has the principle but lacks experience and knows the universal but fails to recognize an individual [belongs] in it, often he'll go wrong in treatment, since what must be treated is an individual. (981a12-24)

To understand the argument of this passage, we must attend to the distinction, observed in the passage, between *a plurality of things taken individually*, τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον, and a particular, τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον. Though Aristotle is not always scrupulous in observing this distinction, it is certainly relevant to his argument here. For there is a specific

way in which things go wrong for the person who has been taught a principle or an account but lacks the experience needed to apply it. Their failure is a failure to identify an individual as belonging to a class. This would be an extremely peculiar failure if the principle mentioned a perceptible quality, since it is assumed that both the experienced person and the figure under consideration now (let us call him the man of book-learning) are in full possession of their sense faculties. The problem is a lack of a certain kind of knowledge that would bridge a grasp of the principle, e.g., that some treatment helps phlegmatics when they have a burning fever, and the particular case at hand. Clearly, to apply such a principle, one would have to recognize phlegmatics as well as cases of burning fever (though we may guess that the latter is close to perception, in which case it is the former universal that is meant).

The experienced person, by contrast to the man of book-learning, is at least in a position to attempt treatment, even though his knowledge does not extend to the causal principles of medicine. He can identify individuals as relevant candidates for treatment and is familiar with treatments that have worked in the past. If it so happens that his treatment is only good for the bilious, then in attempting to treat a phlegmatic patient, he may well go wrong or have no effect. But he may well know a second treatment for such people should the first not work. Practical success, then, is a real possibility even when we lack the account, and the pattern of practical success is a guide to identifying underlying conditions.

Aristotle reframes the contrast between the experienced person and the person of insight (the craftsman or scientific knower) in language that is familiar to us from the passages of *EN* I that I discussed in the Introduction. But it is important to note that we have met *three* personae so far - not only these two but also the man of book-learning, who has what the person of insight possesses without also possessing the experience needed to apply it. To these, Aristotle adds a fourth, someone who lacks even the knowledge of the experienced person but who seems to be capable of operating in the domain.

> But all the same, knowledge and understanding, anyway, we think belong more to craft than experience and we judge craftsman to be wiser than those with experience, on the grounds that wisdom in all matters corresponds to

> greater knowledge (*κατὰ τὸ εἰδέναι μᾶλλον*), and this is because they [the craftsmen] know the cause while the others do not. For those with experience know what is so, but they do not know why it is so (*οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἔμπειροι τὸ ὅτι μὲν ἴσαι, διότι δ' οὐκ ἴσασιν*); whereas they [the craftsmen] grasp the reason why and the cause. For that reason, too, we regard the master-craftsmen in each area with greater honor and as knowing more and being wiser than the hand-workers, since they know the reasons for what is being done (and the latter, like even some lifeless things, act but do not know what they do, as fire burns - all the same, lifeless things perform each thing by some nature [they possess], but the hand-workers do it through habit). Hence, we do not regard them [the craftsmen] as wiser because they are more capable of acting, but because they possess the principle themselves and know the causes. (981a24-b6)

Many interpreters take Aristotle to be identifying the hand-workers with the people of experience. Three points internal to the argument of the passage tell against this reading heavily. First, and most simply, the point about the hand-workers is introduced as a corollary of the main point (*διὸ καὶ*) about those with experience, rather than as a restatement of it. Second, the main point is that those with insight have *greater knowledge* (*κατὰ τὸ εἰδέναι μᾶλλον*) than those with experience, which would be highly infelicitous if Aristotle were claiming that those with experience did not know what they were doing. Third, Aristotle explains the contrast in the main point as having to do with knowing *what* as opposed to (also) knowing *why*. But knowing *what* is precisely what is denied to the hand-workers. To these points internal to the argument of the passage should be added two other considerations. First, the whole parenthesis may be a gloss or an insertion, since it is absent (apparently) in Alexander's text and in the first hand of the Laurentianus. Notably, the language of habit has not been mentioned in the main text, which suggests its origin in a different context. Moreover, the connective *τοὺς δ'* has the awkwardness characteristic of a gloss or insertion (for which Moerbeke, perhaps sensing the awkwardnes, has the more elegant *illi* standing for *οἱ δ'*). Second, when Aristotle summarizes his remarks about who is wiser than whom at the end of the chapter, the craftsman/person with experience contrast is mentioned separately from the master-craftsman/hand-worker contrast (981b30-82a1).

Very much the same picture of experience, then, emerges from *Metaphysics* A.1 as from the *Posterior Analytics*. Experience is introduced again as an intermediate stage between memory and insight. While it is connected closely to particulars, it must be construed as making some cognitive advance on memory and so cannot be a mere coagulation of it, as has been commonly assumed. Its intellectual nature is suggested by the connection to thought or conception (*ἐννοημάτων*) and to judgment (*ὑπόληψις*), and despite the confusing introduction of the hand-workers, experience is evidently far from mindless. Indeed, Aristotle's final word is that experience should be understood as knowing *what is so* in a domain while lacking the reason why. When it comes to craft (and of course ethical action), this knowledge is a matter of knowing *what to do* and results in some measure, perhaps considerable, of practical success.

What *Metaphysics* A.1 adds with its focus on practical success is a hint about how experience might actually do the work that was attributed to it both in the *Ethics* and in *Posterior Analytics* II.19, viz. serving as a stepping stone to insight. In the case of craft and ethical action, patterns of practical success enabled by experience can direct us to the features that underlie this success. The experienced doctor, who has treated a large number of patients with burning fever, might come to realize that what Kallias and Socrates share that they do not share with Alcibiades or Hippias is precisely what makes one treatment work for one group and another for another. It is important for our purposes that this is not simply a sort of empty theorizing. We want to know *why* these treatments work because we want to treat people better, to practice medicine with practically relevant bodies of medical knowledge rather than the hunches and trial-and-error that limit what even the most experienced person can manage. We may surmise that this is just what experience contributes in the case of our hope to acquire practical wisdom, too. (This is a line of thought to which I shall return in discussing *EN* VI.7-8 in Chapters 4 and 5.)

1.6 Ethical Experience and Ethical Insight

By turning to the remarks in the theoretical works about experience in relation to craft and science, we have found confirmation for my account of ethical experience as an intellectual understanding of what types of actions are appropriate to what types of circumstances. At the very least, there is nothing in those works that rules out, and much that points to the line of thought about experience I have been developing. At the same time, we are also faced with a new set of questions. What is ethical insight? Is it likewise a matter of knowing the *causes* of our action? Is this to be filled out as a matter of knowing that certain explanations are true? Or is it, as I have sketched in my presentation of moderate intellectualism, a type of practical knowledge? Aristotle's name for ethical insight, the correlate in the case of action to craft in the case of production and theoretical wisdom in the case of scientific knowledge, is of course practical wisdom (*φρόνησις*). My overall approach in this dissertation is that these questions are an especially fruitful way of understanding the nature of practical wisdom. In this chapter, I have taken the first steps toward offering an answer by presenting an account of the nature of ethical experience.

In the next two chapters, I develop this account further by applying it first to Aristotle's account of virtuous choice and then to his theory of ethical deliberation, the practical reasoning that issues in choice. As I show in the next chapter, ethical experience is the product of habituation, which of necessity has a concomitant effect on our intellect as it strives to shape our non-rational desires and emotions. That means that experience grows together with ethical virtue, and this fact is the key to understanding a set of highly challenging issues to do with the relationship between virtue of character and practical wisdom. I will argue that when Aristotle speaks of the need for knowledge to act virtuously in *EN* II.4, he is speaking of ethical experience and not mere awareness of what one is doing or practical wisdom. When Aristotle refers back to this claim in *EN* VI.12-13 in order to explain why practical wisdom is useful, then, he means to identify practical wisdom as the *full* excellence of practical intellect, which in turn sheds new light on his remarks about full or authoritative virtue. The unification of the virtues will turn out to be an achievement that accompanies the development of practical wisdom

and not merely an analytical truth.

But this analysis will leave us in need of an account of how ethical experience contributes to virtuous choice, since Aristotle insists that the role of the intellect in virtue is to govern *deliberation*. I will show in the following chapter that deliberation cannot be understood on the models typically ascribed to Aristotle - as a matter of either weighing alternatives, applying narrowly instrumental thinking, or repeatedly specifying a given end. True, deliberation can involve any of these, but its hallmark is *searching* for a particular action that is a realization of an ethical end, something wished for for its own sake. This heuristic model of deliberation, in turn, suggests both the use of experience and its limits. In the easiest of cases, our experience will simply prescribe an action to take, provided the circumstances meet the description. Since this is never purely automatic, the basic framework of searching for an action remains intact. When our experience runs out, deliberation takes the form of creative thought, which might require modifying or extending what we know from experience or innovating. It is in these latter cases that we can see the function of ethical insight as a guide to practical thought - insight can go beyond experience by helping us to recognize first that our experience does not apply and second to look to particular features of our situation that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Chapter 2

Knowledge and Virtuous Choice

2.1 Reasoning and the Virtues of Character

My goal in this chapter is to show that the distinctions between kinds of ethical knowledge I have been developing can solve a set of related problems in Aristotle's theory of virtue. Attending to this theory will also bring out a number of features that are distinctive of ethical knowledge, including ethical experience. My treatment of virtuous choice in this chapter will also set up the treatment of deliberation in Chapter 3.

Aristotle organizes his theory of virtue in *EN* II–VI around a distinction between the virtues of character and the virtues of intellect. Despite emphasizing the importance of this distinction throughout, he argues at the end of this account that the work of the character virtues and of practical wisdom is intertwined and that possessing the one is impossible without the other (VI.12–13). As a result, starkly different views of the structure of Aristotle's virtue theory continue to be advanced in the literature on the *EN*. On the one hand, strict intellectualists about virtue such as Hendrik Lorenz have argued that by the end of Book VI Aristotle erodes the distinction between the two kinds of virtue and makes practical wisdom a constituent of the virtues of character Lorenz (2009).[1] On the other hand, anti-intellectualists about virtue such as Jessica Moss have

[1] For similar views see Irwin (1975); Sorabji (1974). See below (fn. 5) on the relationship between this view of character virtue and strict intellectualism about practical wisdom.

argued that Aristotle maintains a rigid distinction between the two kinds of virtue and does not give up on the thought that the virtues of character are non-rational excellences (Moss (2011, 2012)).[2] At stake in this dispute is a central question in ethics: what role does reasoning play in possessing the virtues of character?[3]

Both types of view face textual and philosophical problems. As I'll argue, the strict intellectualist assimilates virtue of character too much to practical wisdom. This move undoes Aristotle's important insight that character virtues are habits of feeling and acting rather than intellectual excellences, as Aristotle reprovingly reports that Socrates held.[4] The anti-intellectualist meanwhile is forced to deny that rational, virtuous choice is the work of the virtues of character. This threatens to turn the virtues into sentiments of good-will rather than dispositions to choose and act rightly, as Aristotle insists they are. Yet it seems at first blush that one is forced to choose between specifying what the virtues of character are partly in terms of reasoning (strict intellectualism) or wholly apart from reasoning (anti-intellectualism).

My aim in this chapter is to defend a third way that captures both Aristotle's commitments in Book II's account of character virtue and what he says about its close relationship to practical wisdom in VI.12–13. I propose that a better understanding of the relationship between the virtues of character and practical wisdom will emerge if we step back from considerations about the constituents of virtue and ask what sort of knowledge is needed for virtuous action, a topic Aristotle takes up in Book II. I argue that Aristotle holds that a lower grade of knowledge than practical wisdom is necessary for someone to act virtuously and that this lower grade of knowledge is ethical experience (*ἐμπειρία*). Defending this claim will help resolve the puzzles about character virtue and reasoning in *EN* VI. It will also prove Aristotle to have a subtler and more philosophically defensible view of the role of reasoning and knowledge in the virtuous

[2]For similar views see Burnet (1900); Fortenbaugh (1964). Again, see below (fn. 5) on the varieties of anti-intellectualism.

[3]I am grateful to Terence Irwin for a seminar (Hilary Term 2010, Oxford) during which this central problem of Aristotle's ethics was first brought to my attention; to David Charles for helpful discussion on that occasion and again on several occasions more recently; and to Jessica Moss for her patience in discussing the problem with me, despite our disagreements, over the past seven years.

[4]More precisely, Aristotle denies that the virtues are 'forms of practical wisdom' (*φρόνησεις*) in the very text on which the intellectualist view is founded (*EN* VI.13 at 1144b19–21).

life than is commonly recognized.

The key is a passage of *EN* II.4 that is seldom examined in relation to broader issues about virtue and reason. I draw on Aristotle's comparison of virtue and craft (*τέχνη*), which structures the II.4 passage. Virtue and craft share two key features: (1) practical success is the standard for possessing both states, and (2) ground-level knowledge in each domain (what Aristotle calls experience) comes from habituation. These features together suggest a middle way that avoids the problematic consequences of both the strict intellectualist and anti-intellectualist views of virtue of character. On the *moderately intellectualist* of the virtues view I will defend, the exercise of the virtues of character, at least in ordinary circumstances, requires only ethical experience not practical wisdom.[5] This knowledge is instilled by habituation, but is not a constituent of the character virtues, which are the perfections of the non-rational soul.[6] Briefly put, moderate intellectualism asserts that the *exercise* of the character virtues requires knowledge and the ability to reason well, but that their *essence* is non-rational.

Moderate intellectualism is able to respect the competing motivations of both the strict intellectualist and the anti-intellectualist. The dispute between these views can be traced to an apparent tension between two explicit claims in Aristotle's theory of

[5]Moderate intellectualism about the virtues of character is a natural fit with moderate intellectualism about practical wisdom. Why? Moderate intellectualism about practical wisdom holds that the practically wise person deliberates well on the basis of *practical* knowledge of the human good in general, which goes beyond knowledge of what to do in particular situations. The latter view requires that we be able to distinguish between ethical experience and knowledge of the human good, while seeing how both kinds of knowledge can be practical. My view grounds this distinction in Aristotle's account of the virtues of character, whose exercise is enabled by experience but perfected by practical wisdom.

Anti-intellectualists about practical wisdom (e.g., Sarah Broadie and John McDowell), meanwhile, will tend toward anti-intellectualism about the virtues of character, since, to the extent they make practical wisdom a kind of intuitive ability, reasoning will drop out of the account of exercising the virtues in favor of moral perception. Strict intellectualists about practical wisdom (e.g., C.D.C. Reeve) will tend toward intellectualism about the virtues of character, since virtue is seen as a dim or preliminary way of apprehending what practically wisdom grasps more precisely. These tendencies are reinforced by the common assumption that Aristotle thinks possession of the virtues to any degree logically entails possession of practical wisdom.

Hybrid views, however, are certainly possible. See the end of §5 below for a qualification of my claim that the view of character-virtue I defend is a form of intellectualism.

[6]I use the customary expression 'non-rational soul' to pick out what Aristotle more precisely describes as the part of the soul that does not itself engage in reasoning but can obey (or oppose) reason (*EN* I.13, 1102b23-1103a3), which is the seat of appetite, impulse, and according to *EN* II, emotion. Likewise, when I say that the essence of the character virtues is non-rational, I mean to say simply that they are not (even partly) excellences of reasoning.

virtue:

1. Virtue of character is an excellence of the non-rational soul. (*EN* I.13–II.1, 1103a1–18)

2. Virtue of character is a state issuing in choice (*EN* II.6, 1106b36–1107a2; III.8, 1117a4–5)

The strict intellectualist takes (2) plus the fact that choice (*προαίρεσις*) is the product of reasoning to entail that (1) is only a partial truth. In order to issue in rational choices, so the intellectualist argument goes, the virtues of character must be partly excellences of reason. By contrast, the anti-intellectualist takes (1) plus the fact that the non-rational soul does not itself reason to entail that (2) is misleading. The virtues of character, by perfecting the goals that their possessors wish to bring about, do have a decisive influence on choice. But strictly speaking, the virtues only determine the wish for the goal, not the choice of a particular action itself, which is the work instead of practical wisdom.

I shall argue that it is possible and preferable to take Aristotle at his word concerning both (1) and (2). The anti-intellectualist rightly resists the suggestion that the virtues of character *incorporate* practical wisdom and are thereby partly excellences of reasoning. But we must then account in some other way for a familiar intuition about virtue: acting well requires a degree of reliability and control in what one does. The anti-intellectualist will concede to the intellectualist that it is the distinct excellence of practical wisdom that accounts for this capability, since it is by practical wisdom that one deliberates well about what to do.[7] But in that case, it is hard to see why (2) is true, that is, why character virtue determines us to choose well.

Granted, *some* intellectual state is needed to explain the virtuous person's ability to choose particular actions as the thing to do. But unlike practical wisdom, ethical experience will play this role without jeopardizing (2). For experience comes about through

[7] After arguing that practical wisdom turns proto-virtue into genuine virtue of character, Moss (2014: 225-7) entertains the possibility that habituation could all by itself make us practically successful. But that possibility is conceived in terms of immediate responsiveness rather than a working-out of what to do.

habit-learning, just as the virtues do; through habituation, desire is shaped, and intellect develops with it. Experience, then, is the natural concomitant of the virtues, and we might speak, as Aristotle often does, of possessing experience as an *aspect* of possessing the virtues of character. Practical wisdom, on the other hand, is a deliberative excellence and involves knowing *why* it is good to act as one ought.[8] Such knowledge evidently goes well beyond what habituation could effect, and Aristotle says explicitly that the intellectual virtues come about through teaching not habit (*EN* II.1, 1103a15–16). Hence, with the anti-intellectualist, we should continue to maintain that character virtue is *entirely* an excellence of the non-rational soul.

In the remainder of this chapter, I set out my interpretation of ethical knowledge in *EN* II (§§2-5), which I then use to explain the account of the relationship between virtue of character and practical wisdom in *EN* VI (§6). I conclude by arguing that moderate intellectualism is an attractive position on independent, philosophical grounds, and set up my discussion of deliberation in the next chapter (§7).

2.2 The Knowledge Condition on Virtuous Action

Let us turn now to the discussion of knowledge and virtuous choice in *EN* II.4. In this passage, Aristotle is presenting his solution to the seeming paradox that we become virtuous by doing virtuous actions, even though virtuous actions are the characteristic actions of an already virtuous person (1105a17-21). The solution takes the form of a distinction: there is more to an action *done virtuously* than being the sort of action a virtuous person does. As I shall suggest is crucial, Aristotle's analysis depends on a comparison to the crafts.

> The case of the crafts and of the virtues is not similar. For craft products have goodness in themselves, so it is enough for them to be a certain way. [Actions] that come about in accordance with the virtues are not done justly or

[8]Moss (2014) herself defends this view of practical wisdom. Her account of virtue of character is anti-intellectualist because she attributes the evaluative perceptions that are the cognitive side of the character-virtues to the non-rational soul. Cf. also Hasper and Yurdin (2014), who demonstrate the cognitive sophistication of experience in Aristotle's view, but assimilate it too closely to the recognitional abilities Aristotle allows even to animals.

> temperately just because they are a certain way, but only provided that the agent is also in a certain state when he acts: first, provided he has knowledge [εἰδώς], second, provided he exercises choice and chooses things because of what they are, and third, provided he acts being himself stable and unchanging. These [conditions] are not taken into account, by contrast, with regard to possessing any of the crafts, except for knowing [αὐτὸ τὸ εἰδέναι]. But in connection with [possessing] the virtues, knowledge is of no or little significance, while the other [conditions], which arise from doing what is just and temperate many times, have no small influence but rather are all-important. (1105a22–34)

A version of the same tension between the rational and non-rational elements of virtue that I identified above recurs in this passage. That is why the passage ought to be of interest to the parties in the dispute between intellectualism and anti-intellectualism about character virtue. Here, the tension surfaces in Aristotle's exposition of the three conditions that mark off a truly virtuous action, which I shall call the knowledge condition, the choice condition, and the stability condition. In including the knowledge condition, Aristotle is saying that knowledge helps distinguish a truly virtuous action from one that merely coincides with virtue, just as knowledge helps distinguish the work of a craftsman from the success of an amateur.[9] Yet he downplays its importance at the end of the passage, saying knowledge is of no or little significance. We are left then to wonder: does knowledge matter for virtuous action or does it not?

How should we resolve this puzzle? I shall argue that taking the knowledge in question to be ethical experience offers a way forward. Before explicating this view, however, I must dispense with three interpretations of the knowledge condition in *EN* II.4 that do away with the puzzle I have identified without engaging the substantive question it raises about the role of knowledge in choice. These moves are natural to

[9]It may seem that Aristotle in fact denies this claim about craft in the opening two sentences of the passage when he says 'it is enough for [craft products] to be a certain way'. But his point here is epistemological. It is not that the goodness of a craft product *makes* it the case that its creator made it well. Rather, we can *tell* from the goodness of a craft product alone that its creator possessed the craft, which is a matter of possessing knowledge. By contrast, in the case of virtue, a learner (or a vicious or weak-willed person) can do what appears at first glance to be a truly virtuous action but in fact merely accords with virtue. What would mark it off as an action done virtuously is a *set* of dispositional properties, including but not limited to knowledge. Cf. (Jimenez, 2016, 16-18) for a different reading of this remark, on which the point is about what the craft-learner's attention should be focused on in the process of learning, viz., the quality of the product.

make because the reference to knowledge seems cryptic and – unless we attend carefully to the context – sudden. The first two of these alternative interpretations are deflationary and construe the knowledge in question as needed for (at least some) virtuous actions, but irrelevant or only weakly related to their being *virtuous* actions. The last interpretation makes the knowledge an essential feature of virtuous actions but collapses the knowledge condition and the choice condition in a way that is untenable given the contrast Aristotle goes on to draw between virtue and craft. More generally, each of these three accounts fails to do justice to the fact that knowledge is important enough for Aristotle to mention in his most polished account of what makes for a virtuous action but less important (in a way that must be specified further) than the choice and stability conditions.

2.3 Three Strategies for Dissolving the Puzzle

The first of the two deflationary positions is popular enough to be considered the standard interpretation of the passage. According to it, Aristotle means by 'having knowledge' nothing other than 'knowing what one is doing' in just the way that features in the no-ignorance condition on voluntary action in *EN* III.1, 1111a2–6. In other words, all Aristotle is saying in mentioning knowledge is that the action must be voluntary. This view appears to be held by Bostock ('[The virtuous person] knows what he is doing (i.e. his performance is not a mere accident)', (Bostock, 2000, 39)), Broadie ('[T]he sheer ability to know what one is doing', (Broadie, 2002, 301))[10], Burnet ('It is essential that he should know what he is doing', (Burnet, 1900, n. ad loc.)), Price ('one must know what one is doing', (Price, 2011, 223)), Taylor ('It is clearly a necessary condition of an action's instantiating a virtue that the agent should know what he or she is doing in performing that action', (Taylor, 2006, 84)), and St. Thomas ('He who acts from virtue would not act out of ignorance or by accident but would know what is he doing',[11] (Aquinas, 1969, n. ad loc.)), amongst others.

[10] At 1105a31, Broadie seems to hold the third of the views I discuss in this section, but at 1105b2–5, she seems to switch to the voluntariness view.

[11] *ille qui facit opus virtutis non operetur ex ignorantia vel a casu sed sciat quid faciat*

There are a number of reasons to reject this view. First, voluntariness is not at issue in *EN* II.4, since it does not distinguish the doing of a virtuous action virtuously and the mere doing of it. What Aristotle is concerned to explain in this passage is how the actions of a learner, the ones that help us acquire the virtues, differ from those done by the virtuous person. It is *presupposed* by the discussion that the actions on either side of the distinction are voluntary and under the control of the agent. (Voluntariness must be understood in some suitable pre-theoretic way, since Aristotle has not yet provided his precise taxonomy of voluntary and involuntary actions.) Otherwise, the actions of learners are not really even their own actions, but mere happenings. It would be bizarre for Aristotle, therefore, to include voluntariness as one of the three conditions marking off actions that are virtuous in the strict sense from those done by the learner, since actions of both kinds are voluntary.

Second, voluntariness is equally a mark of virtuous action and craft action; hence, it is difficult to see why Aristotle remarks that knowledge makes little difference to virtue but is essential to craft. Indeed, the relevance of the comparison to crafts depends on there being more to craft action than voluntariness. Both the craftsman and the virtuous person have a mastery over their actions that someone who requires extensive guidance lacks, even if the learner's actions are every bit as voluntary as the expert's.

So much for voluntariness. A second deflationary strategy, not to my knowledge advocated by any commentators in connection with this passage, would understand the knowledge at issue as worldly knowledge, that is, theoretical knowledge about the world that is useful in action. This interpretation is more promising than the first on several grounds. First, worldly knowledge, by making its possessor more effective in acting, can plausibly be seen to make a moral difference at least some of the time. Indeed, Rosalind Hursthouse has argued in this vein that one important difference between mature ethical agents and well-intentioned adolescents lies in the worldly knowledge the former possess Hursthouse (2006). (To illustrate this point, Hursthouse approvingly cites Philippa Foot: 'It is contrary to charity to fail to find out about elementary first aid'.[12]) Second, the comparison between virtue and craft makes good

[12](Foot, 1978, 4) cited by (Hursthouse, 2006, 308)

sense on this interpretation. For worldly knowledge is plainly involved in both, but is very reasonably seen by Aristotle to be more important in the attribution of the crafts than the virtues.

Despite these advantages over the more common deflationary strategy, however, the worldly knowledge interpretation of the knowledge condition founders at much the same point when we consider the *EN* II.4 passage in its context. For it cannot explain why Aristotle makes this kind of knowledge *essential* to the state of someone acting virtuously. In many circumstances, determining what the virtuous thing is to do and executing it effectively do not depend on any worldly knowledge. Unlike the first interpretation, then, this one is not even extensionally adequate. Hence, even if Hursthouse is right to point out that worldly knowledge *can* make a moral difference – that is, even if she is right to say that we are loath to attribute the virtues and practical wisdom to someone who has good intentions but is too feckless or naive to act successfully on them – it seems implausible that Aristotle would *characterize* the virtuousness of truly virtuous action even partly in terms of worldly knowledge. Hence, the knowledge Aristotle attributes to the virtuous in *EN* II.4 cannot be worldly knowledge either.

The two deflationary readings I have discussed so far each do away with the puzzle, but I have pressed the case that they cannot make sense of the passage from *EN* II.4 in its context. Aristotle is not simply giving us a list of necessary conditions for virtuous action; rather, he is aiming to explain the difference between the virtuous actions of the learner and those of the virtuous person. On the last of the views I will consider here, the puzzle is avoided in a different respect, by taking the knowledge condition to capture the knowledgeable nature of excellent choice, that is, a virtuous person's grasp of the particular action to be done as virtuous.

On this interpretation, mooted briefly but then (rightly) rejected by Taylor (Taylor, 2006, 85–86), our attention is being drawn by Aristotle to the fact that the virtuous agent chooses the virtuous action knowing it to be, say, courageous or noble. This view neglects the puzzle because even though the knowledge evidently is relevant for acting virtuously, we are given no explanation for why Aristotle downplays the knowledge condition relative to the other conditions. Moreover, it makes Aristotle's point entirely redundant, since it takes the knowledge condition to add nothing over and above the

choice condition; the knowledge in question is simply the knowledge expressed in correct choice.

All the same, inasmuch as this third reading of the knowledge condition characterizes the knowledge in question as genuinely ethical knowledge that is involved in any correct choice (unlike the second deflationary reading) and knowledge what to do rather than merely knowledge of what one is doing (unlike the first), it is superior to the other two. Indeed, this view can be modified to overcome the objections I have raised against it, as I show in §5.[13] As it stands, however, it does not engage with the puzzle about virtue and knowledge that I identified in §2.

2.4 Experience and Practical Success

There are two strong *prima facie* reasons to consider ethical experience as a candidate for the knowledge referred to by Aristotle in the knowledge condition on virtuous choice in *EN* II.4. First, Aristotle connects experience closely to habit both in the theoretical works and in the *EN* itself, and habituation is how we acquire the character virtues. In the opening methodological chapters of *EN* I, which I discussed in the Introduction, Aristotle says in close succession that habituation is what gives us the starting points of ethical inquiry (I.4, 1095b4–8) and that young people are unable to engage in ethical inquiry because they lack experience of life activities (I.3, 1095a2–4). Hence, the person who is well-habituated will *eo ipso* possess ethical experience.[14]

Second, Aristotle attributes practical success to those with experience several times in the *EN*, and practical success is the topic of II.4 as a whole. Most notably, Aristotle claims in *EN* VI that a person with experience is more capable of acting than someone who has knowledge of the universal alone.

> Nor is practical wisdom [knowledge] of universals alone; rather one must also have knowledge of the particulars [*οὐδ' ἐστὶν ἡ φρόνησις τῶν καθόλου*

[13] See fn. 23 below.

[14] Aristotle must also think that experience at least roughly tracks deeper truths about its domain, since he takes it to be a stepping stone to explanatory knowledge. This empiricism is prominent in his theory of science, but it is no less present in his treatment of ethical and political knowledge, as I argued in the Introduction and Chapter 1.

> μόνον, ἀλλὰ δεῖ καὶ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα γνωρίζειν], since it is oriented to action and action concerns the particulars. That is why even some who do not know [the universal] are more capable of action than others who do, and in other cases those with experience [are more capable]. For if someone knows that light meats are easy to digest and healthy, but is ignorant of which meats were light, he won't create health, but the one who knows that bird meats are light and[15] thus, healthy, will instead [be the one to] create health. (VI.7, 1141b14–21)

Aristotle's point is that knowing that light meat is healthy is no help to you unless you know from experience that chicken, for instance, is light.[16] Indeed, Aristotle offers this as an explanation for why the person of practical wisdom must know both universals and particulars, i.e., that the practically wise person must possess experience.[17] Since practical success is precisely the topic of the wider context in *EN* II.4, we have further reason to take ethical experience to characterize the knowledge needed to exercise the virtues.[18]

One might object that Aristotle does not theorize ethical experience in any detail in *EN* II-VI and that it is therefore unlikely that he takes having experience to be part of possessing virtue of character. Indeed, in one passage in these books he seems to sharply distinguish experience and virtue. When Aristotle dismisses the pseudo-courage of professional soldiers in *EN* III.8, 1116a36-b23, he claims that instead of virtue the professionals have experience (ἐμπειρία), and there is no suggestion that these soldiers are somehow on their way to genuine virtue. To see why this passage poses no difficulty, we must remember that the concept of experience arises for Aristotle in each of the different categories of knowledge: theoretical, productive, and ethical. For expe-

[15]Reading the text of the mss. at 1141b20 (κοῦφα καὶ), which Bywater brackets.

[16]Practical success is also attributed to the person with experience in *Metaphysics* A.1, 981a13–15, and *EN* X.9, 1181a19ff. See Chapter 1 and cf. (Hasper and Yurdin, 2014, 137–143).

[17]Hasper and Yurdin (2014) have shown convincingly that Aristotle sometimes uses the expression knowledge of universals to mean knowledge of explanatory universals. That is clearly the usage in this passage, where practical wisdom, which requires knowledge of both universals and particulars, is contrasted with experience, which involves knowledge of particulars alone. Notice that the content of knowledge of particulars, such as that bird meats are light, is still logically universal (see Devereux (1986)).

[18]Notice that practical wisdom involves a further form of understanding over and above experience. As I discuss below in §§5-6, Aristotle will go on to argue in VI.12-13 that this further understanding contributes to action by being the perfection of the practical intelligence needed to act well. I extend this analysis in Chapters 3-4.

rience is necessary for the acquisition of theoretical wisdom (*σοφία*), craft (*τέχνη*), and practical wisdom (*φρόνησις*). The professional soldiers have a sort of theoretical or craft experience, not the kind of ethical experience that Aristotle introduces in the *EN*.[19] In the ethical case, experience is the starting point for the development of practical wisdom, which is also a sort of knowledge of causes.[20]

But since in ethics it is *action* that matters and not knowledge, experience can be valorized as more than a stepping stone. An especially telling passage in this regard is found in *EN* VI.11, where Aristotle declares that 'we should pay heed to what is said or judged without explanation by those who are older and have experience or by the practically wise no less than to explanations, since they perceive correctly thanks to the eye experience has given them' (1143b6–14). It is a matter of controversy whether the reference to perception is analogical or literal, but in either case, it is clear that experience gives its possessor a grasp of how things are in the ethical landscape.[21]

Both in the theoretical works and in *EN* VI.7, Aristotle identifies experience as the knowledge necessary for practical success. I have argued that we should therefore take seriously the possibility that the knowledge condition in *EN* II.4 makes ethical experience a requirement on acting virtuously. In drawing on the crafts to make this point, Aristotle is not sharply distinguishing between the craftsman as a knower of causes and the empiric craftsman. Instead, the comparison focuses on the way in which we come to know what to do, both in craft and in virtue, by repeatedly doing as we ought.[22]

[19] E.g., Aristotle speaks of the professionals' ability to use weapons as a product of their experience (1116b10). This is what I referred to above as worldly knowledge.

[20] Moss argues for this conception of practical wisdom as part of a general account of reason (*λόγος*) in her 2014 essay. I give a considerably different account of what 'knowledge of the why' or the cause is in the ethical case in Chapter 4.

[21] For my take on the issue of perception, see below §7 and the Conclusion.

[22] See (Jimenez, 2016, 10-11) for further discussion of the positive force of the analogy in *EN* II.4. While Jimenez is primarily concerned to analyze the motivations of the learner, she also provides a model on which the learner must have something of the disposition of the person who can act virtuously (2016: 29-30). I disagree with her assumption (not central to her argument) that the latter sort of person has perfect practical knowledge, since in Aristotle's picture this turns out to be practical wisdom, a grasp of not only what one should do but also why. I entirely share Jimenez's judgment that interpreters need to pay closer attention to the continuities between stages in Aristotle's developmental picture. This paper is part of an attempt to sketch the intellectual side of this development, just as Jimenez charts the motivational side. Cf. also Burnyeat (1980).

2.5 Experience and the Knowledge Condition

How does this suggestion about the knowledge needed to exercise the virtues play out in the rest of Aristotle's virtue theory? I argued in Chapter 1 that ethical experience consists of a grasp of generalizations concerning what kinds of virtuous action suit or are worth doing in what kinds of circumstances. It will help to make this more concrete. We may take as a model the claim that 'in battle, standing one's ground is a courageous thing to do', which anyone counted a courageous person by Aristotle would know and live by. This is evidently a kind of ethical knowledge what to do, and so avoids the pitfalls of both deflationary readings discussed above in §3. It is also of a higher level of generality than the knowledge expressed in a particular choice, which might for instance take the form 'here and now, standing my ground is to-be-done'. Hence, it is also not strictly redundant as was the third alternative I discussed there.[23]

Unlike practical wisdom, moreover, ethical experience has a genuine claim to mark out genuinely virtuous actions without jeopardizing Aristotle's division of labor between virtue of character and practical wisdom. For ethical experience is a secondary product of habituation, a result of the shaping of the rational soul that is concomitant with though not the primary object of the shaping of the non-rational soul. Certainly, in order to possess a virtue one must know what in general counts as meeting the demands of that virtue, and it is plausible that this knowledge can inform the deliberations of those who may not yet possess practical wisdom. If this is so, Aristotle does not think that it is only when one is fully virtuous (and hence also practically wise) that one can know what one is up to in acting virtuously. Contra the strict intellectualist, we need not attribute full-blown practical wisdom to those who possess the virtues of character to any extent, simply because of the essential role that choice plays in virtuous action.[24] Choice must indeed be directed by a rational grasp of what is to be done,

[23] This was the modification that I remarked above was needed to salvage the truth in that view.

[24] It is no doubt obvious by now that I am committing myself to the existence of degrees of virtue, ranging from what we might call empiric or ordinary virtue to authoritative virtue (*κυρία ἀρετή*), which is said in *EN* VI.13 to entail the possession of practical wisdom. This idea is confirmed by the *Politics*, especially III.4–5 (see Inglis (2014) and Chapter 5). Some suggestion of this thought may also be present in Aristotle's reference to *habituated* virtue in *EN* VII.8, 1151a15–19.

but this grasp could be the product of experience rather than practical wisdom.[25] For deliberation can be rational without the fully determinate account of the purpose of virtuous actions that is characteristic of practical wisdom.

But doesn't Aristotle state plainly in *EN* VI.13 that to possess the virtues at all, one must have practical wisdom? I believe his claim in that chapter is rather more subtle. While Aristotle does here contrast natural virtue, which lacks intelligence and is therefore wholly unreliable, and perfect virtue, which requires practical wisdom and guarantees practical success, he does not suggest that this contrast is exhaustive (1144b1-17). Indeed, any plausible developmental account would have to explain how we proceed in stages from natural virtue to perfect virtue. Moreover, Aristotle refers to the perfect state both as *κυρίως ἀρετή* 'virtue in the most proper sense', and *κυρία ἀρετή*, 'authoritative virtue', and the second of these formulations suggests a contrast with more ordinary virtue. At any rate, the idea that there exists a lower grade of genuine virtue, which requires a correspondingly lower grade of cognitive achievement, is consistent with the view of VI.13, which is part of Aristotle's argument that we must aspire to perfect virtue and practical wisdom alike.

Virtuous action, then, does not require full-blown practical wisdom. If this impression is given by Aristotle's characterization of virtue of character in *EN* VI.13, then it must surely be outweighed by the evidence of *EN* II–V, where action in *accordance* with practical wisdom seems to be enough for virtue.[26] In particular, that is certainly the most natural reading of the definition of virtue of character given in *EN* II.6, where Aristotle claims that the mean in which virtue consists is specified (*ὡρισμένῃ*) by the account possessed by the practically wise person (1106b36–1107a2). This circumlocution strongly suggests that the selection of the mean by the virtuous person need not itself be the product of *his own* wise reasoning. Hence, we are not forced to Lorenz's brand of intellectualism simply by agreeing to the claim that virtuous action requires *some* intellectual accomplishment or form of knowledge that governs choice. In particular, the demand in Lorenz's claim that a grasp of *reasons* must be involved in virtue of character can be met (leaving aside this demand's anachronism) without appealing to practical

[25] I suggest below in §7 how experience can inform good reasoning about what to do.
[26] Cf. (Lorenz, 2009, 209–11).

wisdom.

Does ethical experience count as important enough to virtue to partly characterize the soul of the person who acts virtuously while clearly being less important than the choice and stability conditions? I believe so. I have already argued that experience can be understood as a necessary and even intrinsic aspect of the well-habituated soul, even though in itself it is merely concomitant to the non-rational process of habituation. Insofar as it plays a role in virtuous choice itself – something I have so far only suggested but not fully explained (see §7 below) – experience is genuinely a part of what it is to exercise the virtues of character. Still, virtue of character itself is, as the anti-intellectualist rightly insists, the well-ordered disposition of one's non-rational soul. What it is to have the virtues of character is to have desires and emotions that display a sensitivity to what one ought to care about in acting well along with a readiness to see it through.

We now have in view an explanation for why Aristotle claims in II.4 that 'in connection with [possessing] the virtues, knowledge is of no or little significance'. On the basis of the interpretation of the knowledge condition I have proposed, I want to suggest that this dismissal of knowledge picks out a crucial difference between the *essence* of virtue and that of craft, even though knowledge is needed to *exercise* both. All it takes for one to count as a craftsman is the knowledge of the appropriate subject matter rather than any desiderative element. By contrast, what makes a person virtuous or vicious is the state of that person's passions and desires. But as the inclusion of the knowledge condition suggests, in coming to acquire the virtues, there will be a concomitant shaping of the rational soul, and this knowledge is required to exercise the virtues. Hence, Aristotle need not be denying at the end of the II.4 passage that the virtuous person is necessarily a knowledgeable one. Rather, his point is that the virtues do not arise by our directly trying to acquire such knowledge; that is instead the role of repeatedly choosing to do what is in fact virtuous.

I have tried to show that in the light of Aristotle's appeal to the crafts for illumination and his other commitments about virtue of character, interpreting the knowledge condition in terms of ethical experience is not only plausible, it also avoids the disadvantages of the other interpretations considered thus far. These disadvantages include dismissing some aspect of the account of virtuous action in *EN* II.4 or, as Moss and

Lorenz are forced to do, other fairly uncontroversial aspects of Aristotle's ethical theory. Compared to Moss's anti-intellectualism about virtue of character and Lorenz's strict intellectualism, this view deserves to be called *moderate* intellectualism. For it posits an important role for an intellectual grasp of what one is doing in the possession and exercise of the virtues without making virtue of character itself partly a rational state of soul.

I suggested above that anti-intellectualism be understood as the claim that the nature of character virtue is specified independently of reasoning. We can understand this in two ways: in terms of the essence of character virtue or its exercise. I have argued in favor of anti-intellectualism understood the first way and against it understood the second way. Hence, one might think it makes as much sense to consider my view a form of anti-intellectualism. Since my goal in this dissertation is to defend moderate intellectualism about *practical wisdom*, it does not matter how we label my corresponding account of character-virtue.

2.6 The Cooperation of Wisdom and Virtue

With this account of knowledge and virtue in hand, we may now return to the interpretation of the final chapters of *EN* VI (12–13), where Aristotle ties together his discussions of virtue of character and practical wisdom. These chapters pose difficulties for both the strictly intellectualist and the anti-intellectualist views discussed above. The moderate intellectualism that I have been defending helps solve many of these difficulties, though we must allow for the fact that Aristotle is here concerned with the perfect virtue possessed by the person of practical wisdom. The main point of contention is what to make of the division of labor between virtue of character, which Aristotle says makes us aim at the right goal, and practical wisdom, which he says makes us choose the right way of achieving that goal. Lorenz draws on the claim at the end of VI.13 that virtue of character involves reason (that it is *μετὰ λόγου*) to argue that the division of labor is not a division between distinct states of soul, but only between the rational and non-rational components of virtue. Moss rightly notes that this is an implausible

reading of the text, but she must in turn weaken the claim that virtue involves reason.[27]

The best way into this controversy is to look more closely at the question Aristotle himself raises at the beginning of *EN* VI.12, which frames both the division of labor passages and the entire discussion of the relationship between virtue and wisdom in VI.12-13. Once this question has been clearly identified, we will be in a position to apply the lessons gained from thinking through the knowledge condition in II.4, a discussion Aristotle invokes explicitly in making his point. In VI.12, Aristotle is addressing the question of what practical wisdom *adds* to virtue of character in terms of practical success:

> One may wonder in what way they [theoretical and practical wisdom] are useful.[...] If in fact practical wisdom is concerned with what is right and noble and good for a person, and these are what belongs to a good man to do, we won't be made more capable of action by having knowledge [τῷ εἰδέναι] of these matters, provided that the virtues are states. Nor [are we made more capable by having knowledge of] what is healthy and what is in a good condition [in general], which are attributed not by agency but on the basis of the state [one is in], since we are no more capable of action by having medical and gymnastic knowledge. (1143b18–28)

Aristotle's answer to this challenge comes in stages.[28] The first response is to remind us that practical wisdom is itself a virtue: 'First, let us say that these states [practical and theoretical wisdom] are necessarily worth choosing for themselves, since each is the virtue of one of two parts [of the rational soul], and this is so even if neither produces anything' (1144a1–3). It is tempting to take this to indicate that Aristotle's response to the challenge is *simply* that, whether or not practical wisdom is useful, it is worth pursuing and having. It is true enough that Aristotle thinks that practical wisdom is worth pursuing and having, but if this is all Aristotle is saying here it is no response to the challenge. The question, after all, is whether practical wisdom is *useful* for anything apart from itself.

[27] The division of labor passages are Lorenz's 'Passage 1' (1144a20–2) and 'Passage 2' (1145a4–6), discussed especially on pp. 198–206, as well as two of Moss's three 'Goal passages', discussed throughout her 2011 paper. The passage at the end of VI.13 is 1144b26–27, discussed by Lorenz on pp. 206–211.

[28] Cf. (Moss, 2014, 224–25), who interprets the structure of the passage differently. The two-part structure of Aristotle's response is explicitly recapitulated in VI.13, 1145a2-6.

I contend that Aristotle *does* address the challenge directly, both here and in the rest of the passage. First, notice that in making this claim Aristotle is implicitly denying an important presupposition of the challenge, which is that we can define a completely good state of someone's soul independently of practical wisdom. Aristotle's claim is that practical wisdom is a virtue or good state of soul, too, namely, the virtue of that part of the intrinsically rational part of the soul that concerns what can be otherwise (VI.2, 1139a6–15). In other words, the virtues of character are not all the virtues we have. One cannot therefore posit, as Aristotle's objector tries to do, a division between a good state of soul and wisdom or knowledge and ask what the latter adds to the former.

Second, Aristotle goes on to rebut the challenge directly in what follows (1144a6 ff.). Drawing on *EN* II.4, he reminds us that virtue requires not merely performing certain actions, but acting on the basis of choice and choice for its own sake (a11-20). Moreover, virtue of character and practical wisdom together perfect choice and action, virtue of character by making the goal right and practical wisdom by making the actions for the sake of that goal right (a6-9). Without virtue of character, practical wisdom would be mere cleverness (δεινότης, a22-29).[29] What this passage suggests is a *cooperative* account of the roles of virtue and practical wisdom, on which it is not strictly true to say that practical wisdom concerns *merely* the identification of particular actions for the sake of a given goal. For one must add that practical wisdom not only presupposes but also makes effective a correct grasp of the end.[30]

This second response in turn denies another presupposition of the challenge of VI.12. For virtue differs from health and a good bodily condition precisely because it is the state that is choiceworthy in the latter case, whereas to possess virtue but never to be capable of *acting* virtuously cannot secure the happiness that we seek.[31] Equivalently, what is good and bad for a human being, unlike what is healthy, is partly de-

[29]We might add that without practical wisdom, virtue of character would be mere good will. That is the upshot of Aristotle's treatment of natural virtue in VI.13, which I discuss immediately below.

[30]That is why Aristotle says earlier that practical wisdom is 'true supposition about the end' (VI.9, 1142b33), though that text is the site of considerable philological wrangling. Of course, on my interpretation, experience too makes one's grasp of the end effective. Nevertheless, as this passage explains, we must aspire to possess practical wisdom, in part because it perfects virtuous choice.

[31]Note especially τῷ ἐνεργεῖν εὐδαίμονα at 1144a6 – the reference to a life of active happiness is clear, the probable corruption of the text notwithstanding.

fined in terms of action and not only in terms of the state of possessing good or bad things. Indeed, actions and activities are the greatest and most important goods (*EN* I.8, 1098b12–22).

This cooperative account of virtue of character and practical wisdom is borne out by VI.13, where Aristotle describes a state of having the right goals but being unable to act well as a state of mere 'natural virtue' (1144b1–17). When Aristotle claims at the end of this discussion that the virtues of character involve reason (*μετὰ λόγου*) and are not only in accordance with reason (*κατὰ λόγον*), he is picking up on another thread of the challenge from VI.12. There it was suggested that, just as with medical or gymnastic knowledge, we need not possess practical wisdom ourselves but could simply follow the dictates of someone who did possess it (1143b30–33). Neither Lorenz nor Moss ties this passage back to the challenge that introduces the single line of thought that runs through nearly all of VI.12–13. As a result, they misconstrue the contrast between involving reason and being in accordance with it. Lorenz takes the contrast to be between virtue of character's being intrinsically rational and its being extrinsically rational, that is to say, between the virtues themselves involving reasoning or not (Lorenz, 2009, 207–11). Moss takes it to be between virtue of character involving a mere coincidence with what reason dictates and actually being obedient to reason (Moss, 2011, 213).

In light of the challenge of VI.12, we can now see that what it is for virtue of character to involve reason (literally, to be 'with reason') is just to be present in the same soul as practical wisdom or experience. This compresence is not a mere coincidence, however. For we cannot imagine the virtues being present in someone who is somehow capable of doing what a virtuous person would do while not being able to reason about what to do. That is why the character virtues cannot merely accord with reason – it is a conceptual fact about the virtues that their exercise demands the ability to reason out what to do, as the strict intellectualist rightly claims.[32] This explanation of the contrast also neatly explains Aristotle's thought experiment about the naturally virtuous person as an illustration of what virtue would be like without the ability to exercise it. Without experience or practical wisdom to guide choice, one cannot achieve practical success or

[32]In more Aristotelian terms, possessing ethical knowledge is a *per se* accident of virtue.

indeed possess virtue at all.

On the moderately intellectualist position I have been defending, reason (λόγος), as it features in the expression 'involving reason', need not be the product of practical wisdom, but may instead be the product of ethical experience. Moreover, there is no need to conclude that practical wisdom or any other intellectual accomplishment is a component part of virtue of character. Virtue of character is, as the anti-intellectualists rightly insist, the excellence of the non-rational but potentially obedient part of the soul, although it is characteristically accompanied by intellectual accomplishments that allow for good choice. That accompaniment is not a matter of mere coincidence as the end of *EN* VI.13 shows us; it depends on the cooperative nature of practical wisdom and virtue of character in perfecting fully excellent choice. Indeed, that is the force of the single line of thought in *EN* VI.12–13 as I have reconstructed it.

2.7 Experience in Action

The strict intellectualist may object that ethical experience is not a sufficiently robust state to ground rational choice.[33] How can one be said to act for a reason, or rather, to act on the basis of reasoning when one acts from experience?[34] If this objection holds, the account I have proposed saddles Aristotle with an unattractive philosophical view. I will conclude by taking up this objection and showing that the view is not only defensible but also accounts for an important aspect of ordinary ethical reasoning. Doing

[33] A related worry is that it is implausible to attribute any of the virtues to someone who lacks the unity of virtue guaranteed by practical wisdom (*EN* VI.13, 1144b32-45a2). But on my reconstruction, Aristotle need only commit to the claim that sensitivity to the demands of each of the virtues is required for the possession of any – that someone unmoved by the demands of courage, e.g., cannot be just. One needn't be equally practically successful with respect to each of the virtues to be entitled to the attribution of some subset of them. Only perfect virtue, here called being good without qualification (ἁπλῶς ἀγαθός, 1145a1), demands total convergence. (In the case of some closely related virtues, it may be that experience gained with respect to one inevitably contributes to the development of another, but this is an issue Aristotle nowhere clearly addresses.) This line of thought allows that practical wisdom is needed for full practical success, just as my reading of *EN* VI.12-13 above suggests. Cf. (Russell, 2009, 13-34), who argues for the stronger unity thesis on behalf of Aristotle.

[34] The contemporary notion of 'acting for a reason' is absent from Aristotle, so it may well be misleading to use it to interpret him. Since we share with Aristotle the related idea of *reasoning* our way to a decision, I generally prefer this formulation.

so will also lead us into the topic of deliberation, which I take up in considerably more detail in Chapter 3.

My main contention is that a generalization, known through experience, can serve as the basis for reasoning to a particular choice in a way that displays virtue. Imagine the following (purposely artificial) conversation:

> O.: Why did you stand your ground at Potidaea when so many people were retreating around you?
>
> A.: I knew it was the courageous [or decent or noble] thing to do.
>
> O.: Why is that?
>
> A.: Just because standing your ground in battle *is* courageous [or decent or noble] when you're a soldier fighting for your country.

Interpreters of Aristotle often present conversations like this to show that the virtuous agent's reasons for acting can seem *shallow* to an outside observer. That is, such judgments do not rest on an elaborate structure of further explicit or implicit justification. Some are therefore quick to assume that this shallowness reflects the essential *particularity* of moral choice.[35] This particularity is taken to entail that one must be in a situation really to see what one has to do and that the virtuous person is attuned to seeing at once what this is. The shallowness or depth of any justification, however, depends not simply on the case at hand but also on the shared assumptions of the questioner and the respondent. If I fail to see that being courageous is a way an action has of being worthwhile, then I will be in no position to grasp the reasons the agent had, no matter how much detail she is willing or able to provide.[36] That is why Aristotle brilliantly describes those who have not been brought up well as not having 'any conception of what is fine and truly pleasant, since they have never tasted it' (*EN* X.9, 1179b15–16).

If we take the perceptual metaphor as a metaphor for the shallowness of justification, however, it only goes so far toward capturing the nature of the reasons the virtuous

[35]This line of reasoning has been influentially and forcefully defended by McDowell, starting with his seminal 1979 essay. See the Conclusion for a fuller set of thoughts about problems with McDowell's view as well as how my view relates to the particularist views of David Wiggins and Martha Nussbaum.

[36]Hursthouse objects that the kind of ethical generalizations I have made central to the exercise of the virtues of character are just as comprehensible to the non-virtuous person as to the virtuous (Hursthouse, 2011, 48–50). But what matters is whether these generalizations can motivate someone. The gist of her solution – that only the practically wise person can fully apply the virtue concepts – is compatible with, though less informative than the view I defend in this section.

agent can give and on which she presumably acted. In the scenario I have described, the agent plainly provides a reason that is more general than the quasi-perceptual 'I just saw that it was what I had to do'. (Indeed, there is something uninformative about the latter formulation, since the anaphoric pronoun 'it' is ambiguous between picking out some particular and picking it out under a general description.) Plausibly, it is only the formulation that picks out an action under a general description that offers a genuine reason. When the agent in my scenario appeals to the rightness - or courageousness or nobility or decency - of standing one's ground as a soldier, he is appealing to a generalization, one which is not situation-specific in itself. His *application* of this principle in the moment of action, of course, depended on the particularity of the situation he found himself in. The facts that *he* was a soldier fighting for his country, that *this* was still an active battle and not an orderly retreat, meant that any other course of action would have been unacceptable.

Such generalizations can of course be known in many ways. Imagine the agent in such a conversation continuing her reason-giving by saying 'That's what I was taught, anyway'. Would we still be willing to describe the agent's knowledge as experience in this case? To answer this question, it is helpful to turn to Aristotle's discussion of the law as a kind of educative reason (λόγος). When Aristotle describes the laws as prescribing courses of action in accordance with the virtues, he mentions the very kind of generalizations that have been my concern, though he focuses on the negative cases, such as that casting aside one's shield is cowardly, striking a fellow-citizen hubristic, and so on (*EN* V.1, 1129b19–25). As he argues at the end of the *EN,* the law plays two distinct roles in moral education, an exhortatory role that is effective only on those who already have the appropriate affective disposition and a compulsive role that uses the threat of punishment to shape the affective dispositions of those who are not or not yet in that position (*EN* X.9, 1180a1–14). If we consider the exhortatory role, then we shall find that the law teaches by picking out under the appropriate description some range of actions that the learner is antecedently motivated to do. Still, learning this way can be understood as adding to what one knows from experience.

It is true that the term ἐμπειρία, just like its Latinate analogue in English 'experience', connotes discovering things on one's own by trying them out. Yet this allows for

the ultimate recognition of some generalizations to be prompted by sources other than one's own reflection. This diversity in the origins of what is known from experience adds some nuance to the picture I have been developing, but it also comports with the thought that ethical experience is an explicit grasp of a generalization that allows for reasoning to particular choices.[37] Choosing a virtuous action requires more than an appropriate affective orientation; it requires the backing of some situation-independent ground, which is known by the agent. The structure of choice and deliberation demands that the agent come to know that a particular action is worthwhile or desirable by reasoning from such a basis.[38]

In the case of virtuous choice, I have argued that we often reason from ethical generalizations known from experience. Yet one can in some sense know what one ought to do in terms of such generalizations and be far from virtue. As Aristotle explains in accounting for weakness of will (*ἀκρασία*), 'making knowledgeable claims (*τὸ δὲ λέγειν τοὺς λόγους τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς ἐπιστήμης*) is not evidence [that one really knows], since [...] those at the beginning of learning string together the words but do not yet know. For there must be a growing together, and this takes time' (*EN* VII.3, 1147a18–22). The metaphor of growing together (*συμφυῆναι*) suggests the gradual harmonization of the non-rational and the rational parts of the soul. In many cases, one's rational grasp will be further ahead, leading to the case as familiar to most of us as it is to children of knowing what one ought to do but being unable to bring oneself to do it or to enjoy doing it.

Aristotle therefore is absolutely right to claim in *EN* II.4 that what it is to possess the virtues of character is to choose well from a stable disposition, not to have accumulated a stock of relevant knowledge. This is so even if such knowledge is inevitably and necessarily an endowment of a virtuous person. In other words, only habituation of

[37] When Aristotle puts stress on habituation in making ethical matters familiar enough to us for us to judge ethical arguments in *EN* I.4 (1095b4–8), he is not clearly distinguishing the implicit grasp (manifested in one's habits) and the explicit grasp (in one's reason). That passage, however, strongly suggests that the latter is needed, since Aristotle goes on to say that a well-habituated person either 'has or could easily get the starting points' (1095b7–8). The two cases envisioned here correspond to an explicit and an implicit grasp, respectively, and the transition from the latter to the former is taken to be easy or natural. Yet without an explicit grasp of the generalization, one could not begin the work of ethical inquiry or of acquiring practical wisdom.

[38] I show how this idea plays out in Aristotle's theory of deliberation in Chapter 3.

our non-rational dispositions can lead us to act in ways that are right, even though virtuous choice always requires knowledge. I have argued here that we have good exegetical and philosophical reasons to take that knowledge to be ethical experience.

Chapter 3

The Uncertainties of Practical Reasoning

3.1 Knowing What to Do

I have argued in the preceding chapters that for Aristotle practical wisdom arises from experience, which is the knowledge what to do that characteristically accompanies the virtues of character. Yet Aristotle's own account of the practically wise person in *EN* VI focuses not on such knowledge but on excellence in deliberation, and deliberation, by Aristotle's lights as much as our own, is relevant only when we are uncertain about what to do. Practical wisdom, then, though it essentially involves knowledge of the reason why, cannot simply be an extension of ethical experience into the hidden crevices of practical life. Rather, knowing why enables the wise agent to judge what must be done when ordinary practical knowledge runs out. For just as we would expect from the analogy between the theoretical and practical cases, knowledge of the reason why is not simply *more* or *better* knowledge of what is so, but a different sort of knowledge altogether, albeit of the same subject matter.

While the cooperative account of virtue of character and practical wisdom that I began to develop in the previous chapter explains what Aristotle means in assigning roles to both states in perfecting virtuous action, it leaves unexplained why practical wisdom is to be explained in terms of wise *deliberation*. In other words, why must the

virtuous person be an excellent deliberator, too? There are at least three reasons to find this idea somewhat puzzling on the basis of Aristotle's characterization of the virtuous person.

First, as we are told repeatedly in the account of the virtues of character, these virtues have to do with striking the mean, that is, with acting and feeling in the right way at the right time to the right degree and so on (e.g., II.6, 1106b21-3). The account of deliberation Aristotle provides, however, seems entirely open-ended, or at least not explicitly constrained by this aspect of virtue. If, for instance, virtue identifies the mean but deliberation is required to make it precise (as argued, e.g., by Taylor (2006)), then Aristotle's emphasis on deliberation is mysterious, since deliberation would be involved only in a final step of precisification. But at any rate, Aristotle says nowhere that deliberation is involved in rationally identifying the mean.

Second, which is closely related to the previous point, if the virtues are produced by habituation, they seem to be essentially forms of responsiveness to the world. Indeed, Aristotle claims that virtue is most evident when agents do not have the opportunity to think through what they ought to do (*EN* III.8, 1117a17-22). Yet as Aristotle quite naturally emphasizes, deliberation is a kind of thinking that takes time, perhaps a good deal of time, allowing for false starts, the discovery of new and relevant information, and so on. Why, then, should choice require prior deliberation when, presumably, only some of the time do we require explicit reasoning before we can choose a virtuous action?

Third, as I stated above, it seems plain that deliberation is only needed under conditions of uncertainty, but not only do we often know what we must do, presumably the more virtuous we are the more we know what to do. From this standpoint, deliberation seems to be not only sometimes superfluous but even a mark of imperfection.

The importance of deliberation in Aristotle's account of wise choice and virtuous action has long bedevilled interpreters on both sides of the intellectualist question, leading some of them to downplay Aristotle's emphasis on deliberation as a special form of thinking through what to do. On some strongly anti-intellectualist readings, deliberation is either eclipsed altogether by wise perception or reinterpreted to play a strictly subordinate role to it. For instance, the account of deliberation given by McDowell makes deliberation relevant only when one is confronted with a menu of options from

which no single option is immediately seen by the agent as the thing to do (McDowell (1998)). Deliberation on such a view of wisdom is at best an ancilla to the central task of wise choice, and so Aristotle's claim that practical wisdom is a kind of deliberative excellence is a serious mistake, not merely misleading but also philosophically wrong-headed. By contrast, on a strongly intellectualist reading such as that of Reeve, who seems to represent something like McDowell's deductivist opponent, it is unclear why, given that practical wisdom is essentially a kind of scientific knowledge, deliberation should be represented by Aristotle as a kind of open-ended search or inquiry rather than as a kind of inference with a specific but not formally distinctive subject matter (Reeve (1992)).

I will argue in this chapter that we can account for Aristotle's emphasis on deliberation, without reducing deliberation to a secondary role or conflating it with a form of inference, and that moderate intellectualism helps explain how this view is plausible. In what follows, I shall take as a fixed point of interpretation the thought that deliberation must be an open-ended kind of thinking things through that is essential to wise choice and virtuous action, such that Aristotle's theory of choice and deliberation in *EN* III can usefully inform his account of practical wisdom in *EN* VI. If we can take this view seriously - if, that is, such a view is not simply a kind of philosophical mistake on Aristotle's part - then we will not be driven to assimilate deliberation either to perception (per McDowell) or to inference (per Reeve).

One of the central interpretive challenges in addressing Aristotle's conception of deliberation, however, is the panoply of philosophical accounts of deliberation for which his may be mistaken. Interpreters have typically - and quite naturally - taken as a starting point Aristotle's discussion of choice and deliberation in *EN* III.1-5, which bridges his general account of virtue of character in *EN* II and his account of the particular virtues of character in *EN* III.6-V. A difficulty with that treatment of deliberation is that much of what Aristotle says concerns practical reasoning in general, which includes craft or productive reasoning, rather than ethical deliberation in particular. Moreover, he mentions many features of practical reasoning without making it clear which are central to the different kinds of deliberation. The confusion over Aristotle's view of ethical deliberation in the secondary literature stems in part from the failure to distin-

guish carefully what belongs to practical reasoning in general and what belongs specifically to ethical deliberation, which in turn has led to misidentification of the essential features of ethical deliberation.

In order to reach what I take to be Aristotle's view, I shall first discuss three alternative views, each with some basis in the text and also with a partly independent philosophical pedigree. By exposing the inability of these views to account fully for the texts and for Aristotle's own philosophical commitments, while also retaining what I take them to get right about ethical deliberation, we shall be in the best position to work out the contours of the complex conception of deliberation in the *EN*. The three views I shall discuss take Aristotelian deliberation to be essentially a matter of (1) instrumental reasoning, (2) weighing options, or (3) specification.

I will argue in §§2-3 that instrumental reasoning and weighing options, while having some textual grounding and perhaps independent plausibility, fail to be distinctively ethical.[1] If deliberation is simply either, it is difficult to see why Aristotle makes it essential to choice in *EN* III or why practical wisdom turns out to be a kind of excellence in deliberation in *EN* VI. On the other hand, these views successfully capture the central idea of *EN* III.2-4, which also features prominently in the cooperative account of virtue of character and practical wisdom in *EN* VI: that deliberation and choice are of the means while wish is of the end. I then argue in §4 that although specification is a distinctively ethical kind of practical reasoning, it fails where the other two views succeed, namely in explaining the difference between wish and choice and the way that deliberation bridges the two. In light of the considerations that arise from engaging with these three views, in §5 I elucidate a *heuristic* account of deliberation, on which deliberation is a kind of open-ended search, the goal of which is to find an action that instantiates or *realizes* the end that is the object of our wish.[2] As I show through consideration of a detailed example in §6, such deliberation may involve instrumental reasoning, weighing options, and specification, but none of these or even a combination of them fully explains it. I conclude in §7 by showing how the heuristic view can explain

[1] The same style of argument is made by Agnes Callard in a forthcoming paper. I thank her also for a seminar on Deliberation in Winter 2014 that introduced me to the contemporary landscape on this issue.

[2] Here and throughout I mean by the term 'open-ended' that no particular menu of options exists in advance not that there is no determinate goal for deliberation.

the puzzles with which I began about the importance of deliberation to Aristotle's account of wisdom and virtuous choice and how ethical experience can play a central role in deliberation while still allowing for the uncertainties inherent to practical reasoning.

3.2 Deliberation as Instrumental Reasoning

The notion that deliberation is a kind of instrumental reasoning is suggested by the craft analogy, which features prominently in the initial account of deliberation in *EN* III.2-4. While Aristotle will go on to say that moral deliberation differs importantly from craft reasoning (VI.4-5), one might nevertheless think that craft reasoning is in effect his formal model for ethical deliberation. Instrumental reasoning is characterized by (perhaps recursively) identifying what one must do in order that something distinct from that action will be brought about, forming a chain or sequence of means and ends. I shall argue in this section that deliberating cannot be understood as engaging in such instrumental reasoning because of the kind of end with regard to which we deliberate, viz. the human good in general, and the kind of desire we have for it, which Aristotle calls wish.[3]

It will be helpful to have to hand an example of the structure of craft reasoning according to Aristotle. In a famous passage of *De Motu Animalium*, Aristotle writes in the voice of the reasoner,

> 'I require a covering, and a cloak is a covering. [Hence,] I need a cloak. What I need, I must make. I need a cloak. [Hence,] I must make a cloak.' And the conclusion, that one must make a cloak, is an action, and one acts from a starting point (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς), [i.e.,] if there is to be a cloak, *this* thing must first exist, and if *this* then *that*, and one does this [the last thing] straightaway. (*MA* 7, 701b16-23)

Here, the idea of reasoning to an action as an exercise in sequential instrumental reasoning is laid bare, albeit highly tersely. The key moment in the passage is Aristotle's

[3]Why then does instrumental reasoning feature so prominently in *EN* III? It may be that Aristotle uses the example of instrumental reasoning in *EN* III when he is illustrating practical reasoning in general because he takes this case to be the most perspicuous one. As I shall suggest below in §6, he may also grant that instrumental reasoning is sometimes required as part of deliberative thinking to determine whether a proposed action is practicable.

claim that action proceeds from a starting point, that is, as he will say in *EN* III.3, something it is in the power of an agent to do straightaway (1112b20-27). What terminates the sequence, then, is an answer to the question 'What should I do?' that I can set about immediately. This point in turn shows how the very same question is where the reasoner *began* her reasoning, namely, with the question 'What should I do?' *in light of* the thought that she requires a covering. Without this problem already in view and fully concrete, reasoning of the kind Aristotle describes in this passage cannot begin. On one end of this chain of reasoning is an action it is in the power of the agent to do, and on the other is a problem the agent is aware of in full specificity.

Aristotle begins from a different idea in his treatment of ethical deliberation in *EN* III.2-4. There, deliberation is said to begin from *wish*, where wish is for the end. Since the nature of wish will play an important role in my positive account and helps to resist the conception of deliberation as instrumental reasoning, it is worth investigating it in detail here. While Aristotle is far from as perspicuous as he ought to be, the balance of evidence indicates that the claim that wish is for the end amounts to the following: everyone wishes for certain final ends on the grounds that they are the human good, but only the virtuous have the right final ends such that their choices successfully bear out that wish.[4]

As Gronroos (2015) argues, this is the best way of making sense of the dilemma posed by Aristotle in III.4, in which he notes that the object of wish (*τὸ βουλητόν*) seems neither to be what is actually good, since it seems perverse to say that what a non-virtuous person wants (*βούλεται*) is not the object of their wish, nor what is merely apparently good, since that does away with the idea that there is something that is by nature the object of wish (1113a15-22). Gronroos rightly observes (72-74) that the standard view, which takes Aristotle to go on to say in response to the dilemma simply that everyone wishes for what seems good to them, has Aristotle accepting the second horn of the dilemma without explaining how the idea of a natural object of wish is preserved, an idea that he defends in the psychological works.[5] Rather, we all wish

[4] An end is final (*τέλειον*) just in case it is choiceworthy for its own sake, even if nothing else comes of it (*EN* I.7, 1097a28 ff.). In this category fall honor, pleasure, intellect, and virtue, the ends that define the various kinds of lives Aristotle discusses in *EN* I.

[5] I disagree with Gronroos, however, that the best characterization of Aristotle's positive view is that

for certain final ends *as being* the human good, or to put it in more familiar terms, as if they were the point of life. In some sense then, we all wish for the actual good (we wish for final ends on the grounds that they are actually the human good), but only the virtuous succeed or succeed fully in this wish, since what strikes them as ultimately choiceworthy is what is naturally such as to be so.[6]

As a consequence of Aristotle's conception of wish, deliberation cannot be modeled on craft reasoning or the sort of practical reasoning described in *MA* 7, which begins from a determinate practical problem. For one cannot begin to reason in this way about what to do from the thought that one should do well or act virtuously. Note that even an incorrect picture of which final end is ultimately choiceworthy, such as the hedonist's or the honor-lover's, has the same indeterminacy. By contrast, with the practical problem 'I need a covering' to mind, I can at once begin considering what sorts of things count as coverings. In the case of an end such as 'act virtuously' (or 'pursue pleasure'), I must take stock of my circumstances before I can consider what if anything I can do that will count as realizing that end. Of course taking stock of my circumstances will at some stage be involved in finding a solution to even mundane practical problems, unless they are such as to require no real deliberation at all (i.e., if the solution to my problem is 'in front of my nose'). But the distinction being drawn here is meant to be a logical one, between problems solutions to which do not *essentially* require reference to the circumstances and ends such as 'act virtuously' which cannot receive any further specification without a grasp of one's practical situation.[7]

there are two senses of wish, one sense in which it is simply a basic, unreasoned but nevertheless rational desire for the human good and another sense in which it is an intentional state requiring in addition a representation of the good that only the virtuous get right. Instead, we can take Aristotle to argue in the remainder of *EN* III.4 that it is the term *τὸ βουλητόν*, what is *wished for,* that has two senses. That, at least is the most natural reading of the rhetorical question that immediately follows the statement of the puzzle: 'But if [both of] these [views] are unacceptable, must we then say that the *object of wish* (*τὸ βουλητόν*), without qualification and in truth, is the [actual] good, but for each person it is what appears [good to them]?' (1113a22-24).

[6] A further attraction of this view is that it allows for approximation to the actual good to count as partial success. I return to this point in the next chapter.

[7] Aristotle's frequent comparisons of virtuous reasoning to that in the stochastic arts of medicine and navigation is helpful here. Like acting well, health and safety are formal ends, which require the balancing of many considerations and a constant attunement to the specifics of each situation. Health for this or that patient with these or those physical attributes, safety for this or that voyage in these or those conditions, cannot be known more determinately and so cannot be realized independently of the context

We can further understand the force of the distinction between wish-guided deliberation and instrumental reasoning by considering the way in which Aristotle thinks his account of the human good is action-guiding. Aristotle argues for the conclusion that the end of acting virtuously is not by itself action-guiding at the outset of *EN* VI, where he points out that the doctrine of the mean is no help to an agent (1138b29-34). For the right reason (ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος) by which the practically wise person specifies the mean remains opaque to us if all we know to do is to avoid doing too much or too little in any situation. As Aristotle notes, saying only this would be tantamount to saying that what is healthy is whatever the medical art prescribes and what conduces to health rather than too much or too little. This is not to say, of course, that there *is* any more determinate formula that is generally valid, but only that we have not yet understood the nature of the right reasoning that would help us discover what to do simply by accepting the doctrine of the mean. We do not even know, as it were, whom to consult about what to do as we consult doctors about medicine.[8]

When Aristotle goes on to characterize the form of right reasoning as excellence in deliberating about one's own actions with regard to the human good in general (or equivalently, for the sake of acting well), he takes himself to have answered his initial question in *EN* VI. Nevertheless, the same observation he made there holds good - simply by accepting the maxim 'do as the wise person does', we are no better equipped to act and choose in accordance with virtue. What we as readers have learned is that we need to know what the human good in general is, or better, that we need to know *how* in general we can go about achieving the human good before we can hope to deliberate well in any given situation. Hence, Aristotle's account is action-guiding in this more indirect sense, that we now realize the nature of the knowledge that we need to possess in order to act well. The very way in which Aristotle's account is action-guiding, then, entails that the practical problem as such, that is, the question how to act well here and now, is not determinate. Therefore, ethical deliberation cannot be modelled on instrumental reasoning.

in which they are pursued.

[8]The analogy is somewhat imprecise since Aristotle will argue (in VI.8-11) that we must become wise ourselves rather than relying on anyone else's wisdom.

My argument depending on the nature of wish and the way in which Aristotle understands his account to be action-guiding can be supplemented by a simpler if more tendentious point: instrumental reasoning is not distinctively *ethical*, even if the ends one begins with happen to be ethical ones. Obviously this point depends on considerations that I do not take myself to have fully argued for here, but I will elucidate this objection when I consider in the following section the second of the views of deliberation I proposed to discuss. For that view faces the same difficulty.

3.3 Deliberation as Weighing Options

A popular conception, perhaps even the dominant conception, of deliberation in the current philosophical imagination takes it to involve the evaluation of a menu of options with regard to a specified goal or value. When Aristotle writes that deliberation, like choice, concerns not the end but what promotes or leads to it (*τὰ πρὸς τὸ τέλος*), interpreters have sometimes taken him to be thinking along similar lines. This view of deliberation as weighing options has or seems to have several advantages. First, like instrumental reasoning, weighing options succeeds in capturing the division of labor between wish on the one hand and choice on the other. Second, this view seems to find some textual grounding, since an explicit reference to comparing alternatives appears in Aristotle's treatment of deliberation in *EN* III.3. Finally, it is a commonplace of philosophical treatments of deliberation that it is reasonable only if more than one alternative action is open to the agent, and so Aristotle may be taken to be thinking along similar lines. The second and third of these advantages, however, are merely apparent, and the first advantage is countered by the same difficulty that I suggested haunts deliberation as instrumental reasoning: weighing options is not distinctively ethical and so we cannot account for the role that Aristotle attributes to deliberation in either *EN* III or VI.

As to the philosophical commonplace, Nielsen (2011) has argued that the view that deliberation requires open alternatives is bound up with concerns about free choice and the will that originate in the debate between the Stoics and later Peripatetics, especially

Alexander of Aphrodisias, who wrote five centuries after Aristotle. Further influence may stem from the metaphor of the scales, encoded in the etymological history of the Latinate term deliberation (ultimately derived from *libra*, scales), by contrast with the Greek *βούλευσις* and its connotations of the assembly or a council of advisors (*βούλη*), where the latent idea is of the ratification of a proposal, not the weighing of many options. At any rate, if Nielsen is right, then motivating the weighing options view by appealing to the philosophical requirement of open alternatives is anachronistic.[9]

I take Nielsen's arguments on this historical point to be largely persuasive, so I leave them aside. Turning now to the textual point, let us consider in detail the passage from *EN* III.3 that makes reference to a comparison between alternatives. I shall argue that even insofar as this thought is present in Aristotle's account of deliberation, it is inessential and intended as an illustration of a more general feature of practical reasoning.

First, a remark about the context. The main question of III.3 is the nature of the object of deliberation, a topic which emerges from the claim at the end of III.2 that the object of choice is what has been previously deliberated (*τὸ προβεβουλευμένον*, 1112a15). In the first part of III.3, Aristotle takes this question up by elucidating the types of cases in which we deliberate. His answer comes in two stages, first, that 'we deliberate about what is up to us and achievable in action' (1112a30-31), and second, that 'deliberation is present in matters that occur with regularity, but where the outcome is unclear and where there is indeterminacy [concerning what to do]' (1112b8-9).

Now, in the passage that concerns us, he turns to a *formal* description of the object of deliberation in terms of its concerning what leads to our ends:

> [1] We deliberate not about ends but about what leads to our end [*τὰ πρὸς τὸ τέλος*]. [2] For the doctor does not deliberate about whether he will heal, nor the orator about whether he will persuade, nor the statesman whether he will bring about civic order, nor does anyone else do so about their end. [3] Rather, after they set down an end, people examine [*σκοποῦσι*] in what way and through what things it will come about. [4a] Further, when it [sc. the end] seems to come about through many things, they go on to examine [*ἐπισκοποῦσι*] through which one [it comes about] most easily and well, [4b]

[9] In addition to its being anachronistic, I am inclined to think that the libertarian impulse behind the presumption of open alternatives is a philosophical mistake, albeit one that has penetrated very deeply into our conceptual repertoire.

> but if it is accomplished through one, [they go on to examine] how it [sc. the end] will come about through this and through what *that* [in turn will come about], [5a] until they reach the first cause, which is last in discovery. [5b] For the deliberator seems to search, that is, to find a solution by the aforementioned method just as one does with a geometric figure [...] and the final element in the process of finding a solution is first in coming about. (1112b11-24, numbers inserted)

Aristotle explains what he means by the curious expression 'what leads to our end', literally 'what is for the end', in three successive stages in this passage. First, he illustrates the point from the crafts, which he takes to show that deliberation presupposes that one's ultimate end (*qua* doctor, orator, or statesman, that is) is settled ([2]). This is of course a negative point about what falls *outside* the scope of what leads to the end. Next he makes the notion more precise by claiming that the object of our examination is 'in what way and through what things' (*πῶς καὶ διὰ τίνων*) our end may be achieved ([3]). For ease of exposition, let us label these characterizations the mode and the means, respectively. In the rest of the passage, and especially in the two claims ([4a] and [4b]) that follow and are clearly meant to further elucidate [3], Aristotle focuses on the case of means alone. Finally, Aristotle explains (in [5a] and [5b]) how the process of looking for means bridges the gap between the end and something that is in our power to do.[10]

The thought that comes closest to a weighing of options turns up in this passage as one of two parallel alternatives ([4a] and [4b]): either one means strikes one or a variety of means do.[11] But notice that nothing crucial seems to ride on the availability (more precisely, the accessibility to thought) of more than one means, except that it entails a kind of subsidiary investigation into the most effective or efficient of these before further progress in the overall search can be made.[12] The movement of thought in this passage is instead firmly directed toward what follows in [5a] and [5b]: we inquire through successive stages of refinement until we find something we can do.[13]

[10] I return to the thought that deliberation is like geometric analysis in my positive account in §5.

[11] That these are parallel alternatives is plain from the *μὲν ... δὲ* construction.

[12] Note the switch from *σκοποῦσι* 'examine' to *ἐπισκοποῦσι* 'examine further' or as I have rendered it 'go on to examine'. I see no grounds for taking *κάλλιστα* to mean 'noblest' at 1112b17 (as often, *καλῶς* is used in a morally neutral sense of 'well', i.e., as a synonym of *εὖ*). For otherwise the expression 'easily and well' makes little sense; as Aristotle knew full well, what is morally best is often hardest to bring off!

[13] That is an aspect of deliberation captured by the interpretation of it as a form of instrumental rea-

Indeed, when Aristotle recapitulates this passage below at 1113a5-7, he writes 'each person stops inquiring into how he will act when he brings the starting point (*τὴν ἀρχὴν*) back to himself, i.e., his leading part'. What we are looking for in deliberation is something to *enact*, and it is the more general process of considering what we need to do in order to bring about our end that Aristotle is concerned to describe. A plurality of means at any given stage, therefore, is no more than a wrinkle, something that fills out the picture of deliberation as a kind of non-inferential search but which is in fact inessential to the story Aristotle wants to tell.

I noted above that the point of III.3 as a whole is to characterize the object of deliberation so that the connection between choice and deliberation may be laid bare.[14] In this chapter, it is *choice* that signifies a specifically moral concept, whereas deliberation is at least some of the time characterized quite broadly. That is why Aristotle writes, e.g., 'what comes about through our power but not always in the same way - that's what we deliberate about, as for instance in matters of medicine and money-making' (1112b2-4). Hence, as I have already suggested, the chapter sometimes speaks of practical deliberation as such, and it remains for Aristotle to specify further the kind of deliberation that is a form of ethical reasoning. Whatever that specific difference is, it cannot be weighing options, since I have shown already that that is at most a special problem that may arise in the course of some episodes of deliberation.

We are now in a position to see more generally why weighing options (and instrumental reasoning) cannot capture the nature of ethical deliberation. First of all, if what it is to deliberate is to weigh options, then it is hard to see how deliberative excellence could have anything to do with virtuous reasoning at all.[15] Weighing options, as much on Aristotle's account of it as ours, is a matter of finding the most effective possible means to one's end, and there are many effective means that a virtuous person would

soning, which I treated in the previous section. It does not follow that it is necessarily a feature of all deliberation.

[14]This is especially obvious from the summary and conclusion of the discussion: 1113a2-15. Aristotle concludes by saying his discussion of *choice* is now over, not that he has made determinations about choice and deliberation. This is one of many points in the argument of the *EN* where (both) the post-classical chapter divisions can easily mislead us.

[15]See also (Nielsen, 2011, 402).

never have recourse to.[16] Later on, Aristotle characterizes the person who is good at taking means to any given end as merely clever rather than practically wise (VI.12, 1144a23-29). Of course, being ineffective or inefficient might well be a bar to possessing practical wisdom, but that doesn't mean that wise deliberation simply is a kind of effectiveness or efficiency in the specific practical domain of ethics.

But the thought that excellence in weighing options fails to characterize *virtuous* reasoning appropriately is just a special version of a more general idea. For it is unclear that weighing options is *ethical* reasoning at all, even if one has a faulty view of the end, that is to say, even if one is not or not perfectly virtuous.[17] For the act of weighing, just like the act of reasoning instrumentally, is not intrinsically bounded by the ends to which it is put. In other words, in both of these kinds of practical reasoning, the end is *external* to the activity of working out what will satisfy it or bring it about.

A mundane example will elucidate this abstruse claim. Suppose my end is being in Prague, where I am currently not. Then my deliberation will concern getting to Prague, which is to say, my deliberation will constitute a course of practical reasoning that proceeds on the assumption that I am able to work toward bringing about my being in Prague.

If deliberation is a matter of instrumental reasoning, then my deliberation will concern what I might do that will have as a consequence being in Prague, perhaps buying a plane ticket, which in turn might require making a booking with the travel agent, which in turn might require phoning up the travel agency, and so on. Nothing about *the state of being in Prague* directly shapes my thinking about what to do that is more proximate than that end goal. My thinking is instead directed toward causal relations in the world that can bring it about that I am in Prague. If I am in a funny world where I know trying to buy a flight ticket to Warsaw reliably brings about possessing a ticket to Prague, then buying a ticket to Warsaw is what I shall seek to do.

Likewise, if deliberation is a matter of weighing options in light of an end, then my *weighing* does not involve constraint from the end. Whatever will bring it about will do, so the constraints on my reasoning must come from elsewhere. If I am weighing a

[16] See note 12 above.

[17] The notion of ethicality here picks out what Aristotle means by πρᾶξις, human action as such.

train to Prague versus a flight to Prague, then my concern is with other values, such as affordability or ease, considerations that may be summed up by the notion of efficiency or effectiveness. That is why Aristotle speaks about discovering what is *easiest* and best when he turns his attention briefly to the problem of multiple means in *EN* III.3. Of course, simply being in Prague is not an end that *could* directly constrain my reasoning about bringing it about - for if being in Prague is valuable, it is for further reasons or in light of other valuable ends. Only *final* ends, ends that are choiceworthy for their own sake, have the sort of value that can directly constrain reasoning about how to bring them about.

What I have been trying to press here is the thought that for ethical deliberation to do the work Aristotle assigns to it, it must be a form of reasoning where the ends shape our thinking about how to achieve them rather than merely identifying the limit that is to be brought about.[18] We will need a notion other than efficiency, which belongs properly to productive or technical reasoning, in order to characterize the formal relationship between means and ends in ethical deliberation.

3.4 Deliberation as Specification

Indeed, in light of these difficulties with conceiving of deliberation as either instrumental reasoning or weighing options, we may think that the very notion of a *means* is somewhat out of place in the context of ethical reasoning. Interpreters who are concerned not to reduce ethical deliberation to a form of productive or technical reasoning have proposed that Aristotle's talk of taking means to ends is innocent of such an implication because he makes deliberation a form of specification.[19] For given an ethical end

[18]The contrast between a goal (*τέλος*) and a limit (*πέρας*) is echt-Aristotelian, featuring in the crucial passage of *Metaphysics* Θ.6, 1048b18-36, where changes are distinguished from activities on the grounds that changes have limits that bound them. Only an activity (*ἐνέργεια*) has a goal (*τέλος*) in the strict sense, as is shown by the word Aristotle elsewhere coins for being-in-activity: *ἐντελέχεια*. Aristotle sometimes uses *τέλος* in a broader sense, as in *EN* I.1, where products over and above the activities that produce them are taken to be one kind of *τέλος*.

[19]For the suggestion that specification is important in the Aristotelian account of practical reasoning, see Wiggins (1976). Arguably, such a view is to be found in Aquinas (MacDonald (1991)), though even there the exegetical evidence is uncertain.

(whether happiness or some other final end), all further specifications will be equally ethical, and so will the work of moving from the end to a more specific means.

At any rate, on a conception of deliberation as specification, the moral deliberator, given a general end such as virtuous activity or pleasure or honor, works to make this notion more specific in such a way that she can realize it in her particular circumstances. This view, therefore, leans heavily on Aristotle's remarks in *EN* III.3, discussed above in §2, that the deliberator works backward until he reaches something it is in his power to do.[20] The question remains, however, whether this work exhaustively characterizes deliberation or whether it is simply one of a number of features of deliberation Aristotle introduces to capture his more general thought that deliberation concerns means and not ends.

I argued above that the purpose of *EN* III.3 is not to characterize what ethical deliberation is but only to secure the conclusion that deliberation is of means and not ends, which in turn is a supporting premise in the larger argument of *EN* III.2-4, which seeks to show that the object of choice is what has been deliberated upon previously. The relationship between means and ends is that the means is for the sake of the end, which explains the relationships amongst wish, deliberation, and choice: wish is for the end, deliberation bridges the gap between the means and the end, and choice is for the means, which must be something it is in the power of the agent to effect.

In considering the conception of deliberation as specification, we must inquire therefore into whether it can properly explain two of Aristotle's central ideas in *EN* III.2-4, first, that the means is for the sake of the end, and second, that deliberation bridges wish and choice. I shall argue in the remainder of this section that despite successfully accounting for how deliberation is a specifically ethical form of practical reasoning, the conception of deliberation as specification falters on both of these counts. The advocate of this conception is forced to understand the relationship between the end and the means as one of formal rather than final causation and to elide the conceptual distinction between wish and choice.

[20]It should be noted that there is little direct evidence for the specificationist view in the text - but if Aristotle's conception of deliberative excellence in *EN* VI requires such a view, then it may be taken to represent what is merely implicit throughout the *EN*.

In order to see these shortcomings of the deliberation as specification view as an interpretation of Aristotle, let us consider a concrete example from the work of Henry Richardson, a defender of the philosophical view that one way we deliberate is by specification.[21] Note that while Richardson's overall concern is to show that there can be deliberation about ends, his commitment to the idea that in deliberation we specify ends is a central pillar of his theory.

Richardson's example concerns the deliberation of a college student named Charlene who aspires to become the surgeon-general.[22] When Charlene discovers that she would have to cheat in organic chemistry to even have a shot of entering medical school, which is of course a necessary step given her goal, she balks. Further reflection makes her realize she does not want to enter a profession in order to gain the respect of those who have no qualms about such behavior. Instead, she settles on pursuing a legal career, realizing that her performance in history and philosophy classes has been much better than in her science classes anyway.

Leaving aside the question of whether the mores of law students are any better than those of medical students, we can view Charlene - so Richardson thinks - as having successfully deliberated about what to do through an organic shift in the way she specifies her career goals. Becoming a lawyer, it turns out, is something she could see herself as pursuing though she didn't realize it before she began reflecting on her life-long but now unviable dream of becoming the surgeon-general.

There is something attractive about Richardson's analysis of this course of practical reasoning in terms of a shifting specification of a more ultimate end. We can suppose that Charlene's more ultimate end is something like 'pursuing a fulfilling career', which would plausibly make the example an instance of ethical deliberation.[23] Therefore, analyzing this example and Richardson's treatment of it should shed light on the viability of the deliberation as specification interpretation of Aristotle. What we will find is that

[21] Richardson (1994). It is worth noting that Richardson claims to base his view of deliberation partly on Aristotle's and that he offers a number of exegetical suggestions about the *EN* along the way.

[22] (Richardson, 1994, 58-62). I severely abbreviate this lengthy example, while retaining its essential features.

[23] Here, Aristotle, the great defender of leisure, might well disagree with us about what counts as a suitably final end.

the shifts between choosing to go to medical school and to go to law school and between becoming the surgeon-general and becoming a lawyer do not correspond to changes in the kinds of means and ends that Aristotle takes to stand at the beginning and end of ethical deliberation.

The problem is that Charlene's 'choice' is not a decision of something to do, and deliberation is aimed at making such decisive choices. Constraints in her present circumstances - the (hypothetical) necessity of cheating in organic chemistry - occasion Charlene's thoughts about what she should do in general, but the question of whether to cheat or not is already settled in her mind, and that is the question of action at hand. Having already decided not to cheat, she is reconsidering her career goals, since medical school is obviously closed off to her. Coming to be aware of the impossibility of a certain end, however, does not seem to involve any deliberation. The link between the circumstances of action and Charlene's practical thought is therefore rather tenuous. When she reflects on goals consistent with her academic performance, she realizes that law school remains open to her and is attractive in the same way that medical school used to be. But in the example, we are not told that Charlene signs up for an LSAT class or decides to take more history and philosophy classes as a budding lawyer. Indeed, we are not told that Charlene decides to do anything at all. She merely has the realization that her old goal of medical school is out and her current practical situation suggests law school as an alternative.

If there is any deliberation here, then, it is abortive or incomplete. The path from her more general goal of pursuing a fulfilling career to doing something in service of it would indeed be a deliberative one. But in changing her mind about the comparative merits of medical school and law school, Charlene has done nothing other than adjusted her practical beliefs to suit better the facts of her circumstances. While this could certainly be an important precursor to genuine deliberation, it is not itself deliberative, at least by Aristotle's lights.

This basic feature of the specificationist view leads to the two problems I identified above for it as an interpretation of Aristotle. The first problem was that specification is a formal rather than a final causal notion. For if a more particular goal X specifies an end Y, then Y is part of the account of what X is. In just this way, Charlene's new goal

of going to law school rather than medical school is explained by her general goal of pursuing a fulfilling career.

That the relations here are formal can at first glance be hard to see, because of the descriptions given to her more general and more particular goals. The most felicitous description of the more particular goal can be found by considering the conditions under which Charlene would in fact pursue this goal. Imagine that she has no scruples about some morally illegitimate activities required by her new career path. In that case, we would think she never really had the goal of pursuing a fulfilling career in the first place (as opposed to something like making lots of money), since it was moral scruples that ruled out continuing with the medical school plan. If the ascription of the more particular goal to Charlene is correct, then, that more particular goal is really shorthand for pursuing a fulfilling legal career, which imposes constraints on what she is willing to do. She won't go to law school under just any circumstances. That's not really her new goal, provided she has really changed her specification of the overall goal of pursuing a fulfilling career.

I don't want to deny, of course, that going to law school for Charlene might be rightly understood as being for the sake of pursuing a fulfilling career. But the notion of specification alone can't make sense of that relation. While final causes are often also formal causes, their logic differs. For instance, suppose that a similar course of reflection led Charlene to decide that her career goals needed to incorporate her interest in pursuing her environmental activism. Her goal might then have become, via an act of specification, pursuing a fulfilling and not-too-time-consuming career. While this more particular goal is also explained formally by the more general goal, it is hard to see how the former is in any sense *for the sake of* the latter. This example shows that while specification can be an important step in deliberative thought for Aristotle, it cannot explain what it essentially is, the finding of means that are for the sake of a given end.

The second problem was that deliberation as specification elides Aristotle's distinction between wish, which is for the end, and choice, which is for the means. Both wish and choice are rational desires, but wish is for a final end while choice is for something to be done. It strains language - and Aristotle's conceptual framework - to say that a legal career is something Charlene *chooses* or *decides on* in light of a more general end

of pursuing a fulfilling career. Better to say that she adopts having a legal career as a new and more particular end, though Aristotle is, as I noted above in §2, unclear about whether one wishes only for the highest good or whether one wishes for ends of all levels of generality. Of course, in light of this new and more particular end Charlene might engage in some deliberation and decide as a result to take an LSAT course, for instance. Only once we reach something it is in her power to embark upon do we have something in view that she may choose. Before this point, the practical thought in which she has engaged is either not deliberative at all or only an incomplete exercise that does not in fact issue in action.

Changes in my practical beliefs might make me realize what my overall ends commit me to or point me toward, but they do not in themselves constitute deliberation, at least according to Aristotle.

3.5 The Heuristic Conception

I have shown that ethical deliberation cannot be understood narrowly as instrumental reasoning, weighing options, or specification. Since instrumental reasoning and weighing options share many of the same difficulties, I shall from now on treat these two positions together as 'instrumentalism'. The positive proposal I shall characterize and explicate in this section and those following is that deliberation is instead a kind of search (*ζητήσις*), for that is in fact how Aristotle describes it. I shall call this, following Nielsen (2011), the heuristic conception of deliberation. The heuristic conception is not as vacuous as it may sound. A search is a type of investigation, given a certain description, for something particular that matches or satisfies that description. If deliberation takes this form, it is not obvious that either instrumentalism or specificationism by itself can capture it.

Nevertheless, the substance of the heuristic conception will depend on the answers given to two further questions: (i) what is the object of the deliberator's search, and (ii) what is the method by which or manner in which she conducts it? I shall argue in this section that the outline of an answer to these questions about the nature of the

deliberator's searching may be found by attending to Aristotle's analogy between deliberation and geometric construction. In so doing, we will discover also what is true in the instrumentalist and the specificationist interpretations of Aristotle's conception of deliberation, though neither interpretation on its own nor even the two combined can account for the essence of deliberation.

Aristotle describes deliberation as a search at the end of the passage about the means quoted above (in §3):

> For the deliberator seems to search (ζήτειν), that is, to find a solution (ἀναλύειν) by the aforementioned method just as one does with a geometric figure (διάγραμμα) – but not every search is a case of deliberation, e.g., mathematical ones, though every case of deliberation is a search – and the final element in the process of finding a solution (ἀνάλυσις) is first in coming about (γένεσις). (III.3, 1112b20-24)

We should first note that the reference to 'the aforementioned method' is to the immediately prior lines, which describe sequential reasoning leading to the discovery of something it is in one's power to do. Aristotle pithily recapitulates this point in the last clause of this sentence, indicating that what is crucial to this sort of reasoning is that it connects immediately to action, that is, to bringing something about in the world.

Let us now consider the analogy to geometry in more detail. A venerable tradition of interpretation takes the reference to ἀνάλυσις to accord with later Greek mathematical texts where this procedure refers to discovering the conditions that must be in place for a given claim to be possible (LSJ, s.v. 3). But the word can simply mean finding the solution to a problem (LSJ, s.v. 5), and it is plausible that semantic narrowing gave rise to the technical sense as it appears in Archimedes and later authors. Aristotle's reference to a geometric figure (διάγραμμα) suggests immediately that he has in mind proof by construction, as exemplified, e.g., by the first few propositions of Euclid's *Elements*. This interpretation is confirmed by the analogical link between geometric and deliberative search, namely, that when we find a construction, the result is that something is *generated* (γένεσις, 1112b24). Hence, the passage is not suggesting that the search is for the conditions of a construction (Burnet (1900)), or for the indemonstrable geometric principles (Aquinas (1969)), or for reducing one construction problem to another (Tay-

lor (2006)). Rather, Aristotle is describing a search for a successful construction that exemplifies the geometric claim under consideration.

It will help to consider a concrete example of a proof by construction. Consider proposition 1 of the *Elements*, which states that an equilateral triangle exists in the plane, given a line segment. The proof proceeds by constructing two circles which have the segment as a radius and either endpoint as their respective centers. Where these circles intersect, we have a third point, equally distant from each endpoint and forming the same length as the initial segment. For the lines from the endpoints of the segment to this point, which lies on the circumference of each circle, are also radii of the circles. Hence, the required triangle is constructed.

The proof is imperfect (as the Epicurean Zeno of Sidon already argued in antiquity – see (Heath, 1981, 359)), and reflection on this fact will help elucidate what counts as a successful case of construction. The problem arises when the proof posits the third point, which lies at the intersection of the two circles. This point is meant to be the third vertex of the equilateral triangle, but it has not been shown – and indeed cannot without a further postulate be shown – to form a closed figure on the plane with the endpoints. For the lines from the endpoints may meet before they reach the circumferences of the circles or they may meet more than once. This gap vitiates the proof as stated. The construction we are given, therefore, does not exemplify with perfect generality the proposition, i.e., it does not show that it follows simply from the initial assumption (given what is allowed by the definitions, common notions, and postulates).

Reflection on this example of geometric construction suggests a preliminary answer to each of the questions I introduced above as characterizing the heuristic conception, which shows how it differs from the instrumentalist and specificationist views. First, if the analogy has substance, we should expect the object of deliberative search to be a particular that exemplifies the general end toward which we are deliberating. In trying to find a construction, we are not looking for something truly distinct from the initial proposition, as the instrumentalist view suggests, but rather a particular in which the universal proposition is, as it were, contained. So too, in deliberation, we are searching for an action that instantiates or realizes the end. (I shall say more about the nature of the realization relation between actions and ends shortly.) These twin aspects of the

object of deliberative search, (1) its particularity, (2) and the fact that it nevertheless realizes a universal end, are the first and perhaps most important result suggested by the analogy to geometry.

Second, we should expect that the method of deliberative search involves progressive but nevertheless open-ended thinking about what might satisfy this criterion. For in the initial inquiry of a geometer, if not necessarily in the student learning a constructive proof from someone else, there is no algorithm or plan according to which one tries to carry off the construction. Unlike the specificationist, who takes the form of this thinking to essentially be making a given end more concrete, the heuristic conception allows that a variety of different paths are open to the deliberator, which may start from the end or from potential answers to the deliberative question or even from the resources that are at the deliberator's disposal. Moreover, the geometer need not begin with some particular construction and try to work backward to what one already knows how to construct, as a common interpretation of the analogy suggests. Certainly, the proof of the first proposition of the *Elements* does not rely on such sub-proofs, but only on what we might call geometric ingenuity. This ingenuity is guided directly by the content of the stated proposition, since, as I noted above in relation to the flawed construction of the equilateral triangle, only a result that exemplifies the original proposition with full generality can count as a success.

The object of deliberative search, then, is a particular action that instantiates or realizes the end, and the manner in which we carry out this search is an open-ended inquiry that is directly guided by the end. As I noted briefly above, these two considerations already help to reveal what is inadequate about the instrumentalist and specificationist conceptions of deliberation. Each can only capture one of these features and only imperfectly. The specificationist is right that the end must be present in the actions that we seek; otherwise it is not clear how deliberation will be ethical. Yet starting from the end and trying to specify it does not seem to lead necessarily to particular actions that are for the sake of the end sought as opposed merely to more concrete ends. By contrast, the instrumentalist is right to see that the search is for some particular action that will satisfy the end we have proposed. They cannot, however, capture the way in which this search is open-ended and guided directly by the end, rather than being guided by

causal relationships that reliably bring the end about (as with instrumental reasoning) or by further external constraints such as efficiency (as with weighing options). Even if we combine instrumental reasoning and specification, as Nielsen suggests, we do not identify the essence of deliberation. For we do not in that case identify the object of deliberative search, which is a particular action that is not merely productive of the end but instantiates it; nor do we fully characterize the manner of the search, which is both open-ended and directly guided by the end.

In the next section, I will introduce a concrete example in order to explain how instrumental reasoning, weighing options, and specification can enter into a longer course of deliberative thought, which further explains why Aristotle has so often been taken to appeal to these notions in giving his account of the essence of deliberative thinking. For now, I will consider whether the account I have provided successfully avoids the objections I lodged against the instrumental views of deliberation. (In characterizing the object of deliberative search as a particular action, I have in a straightforward way avoided the main objection I lodged against the specificationist view.)

What is distinctively ethical about the heuristic conception of deliberation in contrast to the instrumental views? I have already argued that ethical ends must be final, that is, they must be choiceworthy for their own sake, such that they close off questions about why one would pursue them. Final ends include pleasure, honor, virtue, and of course excellent rational activity, ends that can serve to organize not only particular practical pursuits but an entire life. Only such ends can be present in particular actions in such a way that the actions realize the ends. The heuristic conception uniquely captures this feature of the object of ethical deliberation.

In order to see that this is so, compare ends that are instead the goals of productive thinking – victory in battle (a state or product) or making the journey to Athens (an action or movement). Particular actions that I undertake for the sake of these ends – say, marching out to meet the enemy for the sake of achieving victory in battle; or walking the first mile east from Eleusis for the sake of making the journey to Athens – do not realize these ends, but rather tend to produce them. Of course, it may be that my marching out to meet the enemy was instead a courageous action, chosen for its nobility, or that my walking the first mile east from Eleusis was instead a hedonic action, chosen

for the delight I take in it. In these cases, though these actions share the structure of those aimed at a productive end, they are nevertheless ethical actions, which contain their ends. Since the heuristic conception characterizes the object of deliberative search not merely as a particular action in prospect but as an action that realizes the proposed end, only actions sought for final ends will meet this criterion. Hence, the heuristic conception marks out ethical deliberation from other forms of practical reasoning.

One may object that some craft actions do not aim at producing anything further, and so this criterion does not distinguish practical and productive reasoning. Indeed, the Stoic Cato in Cicero's *De Finibus* compares wisdom, whose aim is itself, to dancing for just this reason (III.24). While dancing has no product, that is, it creates no medium-sized dry good, it is nevertheless plainly aimed at generating something, just as much as generalship is aimed at generating victory. If a dancer is dancing just to dance, then the action no longer counts as a craft action by my lights, and some other end must be sought to explain the dancing – for instance, pleasure, which would make the action an ethical one by my criterion. Or perhaps the dancer is dancing for the sake of health, in which case the dancing is a step in a larger productive process.

In either case, the example fails to show that the distinction between *πρᾶξις*, ethical action, and *ποίησις*, productive action, does not completely parallel the distinction between final and non-final ends. My argument here has been that only final ends are such that particular actions can realize them, and that since the heuristic conception characterizes the object of deliberative search in just this way, deliberation on this view turns out to be a distinctively ethical form of reasoning.

3.6 Finding a Way to Realize One's Ends

I noted above that instrumental reasoning, weighing options, and specification may enter into a course of ethical deliberation, though none of these captures the form of such deliberation. To see how the heuristic conception can account for this diversity within practical reasoning, let us consider a concrete example. It will be best to take a case of virtuous deliberation, since further complications enter with the ethical delib-

eration of non-virtuous agents seeking to realize final ends such as pleasure or honor. All the same, it is a significant advantage of my view that it explains both how such agents undertake genuine ethical deliberation and yet how the deliberation of the wise person is superior *qua* deliberation to that of the others. I shall take this comparison up again in the next chapter when I discuss the practical difference made by knowing ethical universals or 'the reason why'. Let us consider the following case of virtuous deliberation, rendered in free indirect style to depict the course of thought:

> Marta has come into the possession of a small library, given to her by a former teacher who has recently retired. Some of the books, however, seem unlikely to attract her interest, and it would be a shame (she thinks) to let them languish on her shelves. Her friend Luis has a pet interest in Russian history; perhaps one of the books could make a fine gift - a happy thought. Despite the topic, the volume on Stalin's early life isn't suitable, as it has been annotated thoroughly. It doesn't do to give a gift whose past life is too much present. An illustrated treatment of the royal hunt, by contrast, is in beautiful condition on the inside, but the boards are falling apart. Perhaps she can have it rebound. That would also have the salutary result that the gift would involve her own efforts and care, too, and not merely her being a sort of intermediary in its possession. Luis is sure to be delighted. Settled then: she'll see Joe on Tuesday and ask him if he can take a look at the boards....

First some general remarks about the case. Let us suppose that Marta is a truly generous person, ready to give unstintingly and seeking to act generously for its own sake and nothing further, and also that the reasoning I have described reflects the thoughtfulness appropriate to such a person. (Since nothing much turns on it, I shall discuss generosity as I understand it and bracket any exegetical concerns about Aristotle's treatment of the virtue in *EN* IV.1.) The sketch I have given of the course of Marta's deliberative thought focuses mainly on the gift to be given, though other factors will often be relevant. That is because in this scenario it is the possession of alienable objects that leads Marta to see her situation as one in which she might make a gift. We could equally well construct examples where it is the beneficiary or the occasion instead that is foremost under consideration.

Before turning to the diversity in forms of practical reasoning to be found even in this relatively brief example, let us note how the heuristic conception makes sense of

Marta's thinking as ethical deliberation. What Marta ends up choosing as a result of her deliberation is giving the book on the Russian royal hunt to Luis. This is a particular generous action that flows from Marta's overall wish to act virtuously. The wish is active in the background, not forming any part of Marta's explicit thought (though it might), but rather guiding her to see coming to have her teacher's library as an opportunity to act for the sake of what is noble. (It is characteristic of virtuous people to see their actions this way and not merely, e.g., as what would please an observer, as what one is compelled to do, or even, usually, as what is one's duty.) Finally, the action chosen *realizes* her goal - it is itself an instantiation of the overall end Marta has of acting virtuously, since we have supposed, per Aristotle's criteria, that she knowledgeably chooses the generous action for its own sake from a stable disposition.

All the same, as I have described it, Marta's practical thought is not simply directed at finding a way (that is, some way or another) of acting virtuously. For it is possible to have this thought speculatively, as an imaginative exercise given circumstances that do not obtain or on behalf of someone else to whom one is giving advice. Marta's deliberative thought is directed instead at finding a way for *her* to do well, and to do so here and now. It is this orientation in deliberation to what is in an agent's power immediately to do, that is, to what is practicable, that has given the appearance that instrumental reasoning, weighing options, or specification might alone or in combination characterize deliberation on Aristotle's view.

Notice for instance the moment at which more than one way of proceeding occurs to Marta: in working out whether she might be able to give Luis a book on Russian history from her teacher's library, she considers two options in turn. This weighing is not, however, a direct comparison of options in light of the overall end, but rather, just as Aristotle says, a consideration of the easiest and best way forward within a particular sub-part of deliberative thinking, here the selection of the right book. Likewise, the movement in Marta's thought from proposing to give some book to proposing to give a book to her friend Luis, given the latter's interests, might be brought under the rubric of specification. But we can easily see that Marta's thought in the larger course of deliberative thinking is broader than this act of specification suggests - the opportunity to give, her friend's interests, and the availability of a suitable book strike her in sequence,

but not as increasingly specific determinations of her overall goal. Hence, although in some sense the action Marta chooses for the sake of the end specifies that end, she did not reach that action through an act of specification. Finally, instrumental reasoning enters Marta's thought about whether the course of action she is entertaining is really practicable or not. This is part of her deliberation proper, since the impossibility of implementation would be an obstacle to choice and would require either reconsidering or giving up on what she proposes to herself to do. When she settles on something to do - that is, when she chooses - she has satisfied herself that some course of action will put her in a position to undertake the object of her choice. But that course of action, here, going to see Joe in order to have the book rebound, is not itself the object of her *choice*, if we use this term to represent Aristotle's strict sense of προαίρεσις.[24] It is instead something she goes for in order to be in a position to do what she chooses.

In this way, each of the three features identified as central to deliberation by the competing accounts I considered above can form part of a course of deliberative thinking without thereby constituting part or all of what deliberation is. Moreover, none of these kinds of reasoning is so much as necessary for deliberative thinking. For although it may be implausible in some situations, we can imagine the thought of giving the rebound hunting book to Luis occuring to Marta all at once as if by inspiration. Provided that the thought follows on some interpretation of the situation as one which allows or perhaps even calls for acting virtuously and that the action that is chosen really does realize the agent's overall end, nothing can impeach such a sudden realization as a genuine instance of deliberation. Aristotle's insistence on the sequential character of deliberative thought is ultimately, then, a characterization of what is usual or ordinary in our practical thinking. What is essential, as I have pressed in this and the previous section, is instead that deliberation be an open-ended search that terminates in the choice of a particular action that is for the sake of a final end that it instantiates.

The remaining task for this chapter is to show that the heuristic view resolves the puzzles about deliberation, virtue, and practical wisdom with which I began. Doing

[24] In just this same sense, Aristotle says that the akratic - even the one who calculates - acts contrary to his choice (compare 1142b18-20 with 1151a5-7). Not every deliverance of calculative reasoning counts as choice, just as not every rational goal-directed movement counts as action, that is, πρᾶξις.

so will in turn allow me to illustrate the relationship of mutual support between the heuristic view and the moderately intellectualist conception of practical wisdom that I have defended in the previous chapters. For ethical experience helps explain how deliberative search on the heuristic view is reasonable, while the heuristic view explains why we need practical wisdom over and above experience.

3.7 Deliberating with Experience

Why does Aristotle think deliberation is central to virtuous choice and practical wisdom? The heuristic conception is well-positioned to answer this question. I shall show that this is so by returning to the puzzles I introduced in §1, which unpack different aspects of this question.

The first puzzle concerned the open-endedness of the subject matter of deliberation by contrast with the virtues of character, which aim at the mean. Aristotle does not say, as we might hope, that deliberation is used to make the mean precise. Why then must we deliberate *in order to* choose virtuously? The heuristic conception answers this question by identifying the relationship between the means and the end as one of realization. In other words, the end is present in the means that is chosen for its sake. While the heuristic conception is meant to explain all forms of ethical deliberation, including the deliberation of those with non-virtuous final ends, when it is applied to the case of the virtuous person, the result is that the individual virtuous acts that are chosen are directly constrained by the end of acting virtuously or achieving what is noble. Since the heuristic conception makes central to the deliberator's thought the question of how to make the final end real in her circumstances, it explains how excellent choice is the product of a virtuous soul via deliberation.

The second puzzle concerned the apparent mismatch between the responsive character of the virtues and the time that deliberation takes. Why must we deliberate *before* we choose virtuously? In order to resolve this puzzle we must make a qualification: although responsiveness is an important aspect of possessing the virtues of character, we cannot conceive of virtuous *action* as unreflective or immediate in this way. When

Aristotle emphasizes the immediacy of virtue, he is pointing to the way in which pleasure, pain, and the other passions figure in such action. If I am less than temperate but aspire to be so, I may have to *think my way into* enjoying a temperate meal. By contrast, the temperate person at once enjoys that meal, on no other grounds than that it is simple and orderly. Pleasure and pain, as Aristotle saw, are a mark of our natures in this way. But when it comes to working out *what in particular* is temperate, then deliberation is required. Making my ends concrete in the particular circumstances in which I find myself requires attention and reflection and this is the work of practical thought. Even when a meal is simply put in front of me, such an evaluation is needed, even if the marks by which I recognize what is temperate are readily to hand. Making these determinations is just what the heuristic conception makes central to deliberation.

The third puzzle concerned the uncertainty that makes deliberation necessary as against the knowledge that we take the wise or virtuous to have. Wouldn't it be better if one didn't have to deliberate at all, but knew at once what to do? This puzzle is especially pressing for intellectualist views such as mine that make knowledge of the human good central to virtue and wisdom. Here we must bring in the indeterminacy of what is good: it is seldom simply obvious what is called for by the demands of virtue.

To see this, consider the famous example due to Bernard Williams that is meant to illustrate his 'one thought too many' objection to certain theories of morality (Williams, 1976, 213-215). If a moral view demands that you need to check that it is permissible to save your spouse over a stranger, Williams thought, that was a strike against it. But notice the difference between this sort of thought and wondering whether it is *foolhardy* to jump in a river to rescue anyone at all, spouse or stranger. In situations that demand courage, working out what would be bold enough not to be cowardly but cautious enough not to be rash is typically a difficult matter.[25] It has sometimes been thought that a parallel version of Williams' objection applies to the virtue concepts, too. If a moral view demands that you have to think 'be courageous' before you act courageously, then perhaps indeed that is a strike against it. All the heuristic conception suggests, however, is that it takes some (deliberative) effort to work out *what in particular* counts

[25]I do not mean to suggest that one must think explicitly in terms of avoiding the vices of excess and deficiency, though they may certainly be an aid to our reasoning.

as courageous.[26] (There is nothing in Aristotle's picture that demands that virtuous thinking be self-effacing, i.e., that the virtue concepts themselves must not figure in the process of reasoning, and much that points away from it. All the same, if the virtuous person should be thought of as someone who thinks in terms of what would be best for them to do, then the heuristic conception of deliberation can accommodate that thought easily.)

This last point shows how the heuristic conception of deliberation provides support for and receives support from moderate intellectualism about practical wisdom. If in deliberating well, we are trying to work out what realizes the goal of acting virtuously in particular circumstances, it is evidently a great help to know what *generally* counts as virtuous in circumstances *like these*. (Consider, for example, the principle about good gifts and their past lives that Marta invokes in my example in §6 above.) Otherwise, we would be reasoning in a void, since acting well is, taken on its own, a merely formal end. It is this radical indeterminacy of the good that has led anti-intellectualists such as McDowell to propose that virtue and practical wisdom equally must be kinds of responsiveness, since it is unclear where one's practical thought would be able to get a foothold if one had to think things through all the way from the start (say, from happiness itself) before choosing. Moderate intellectualism makes heuristic deliberation reasonable, since ethical experience helps guide us toward actions that we know to work.

But inasmuch as ethical experience cannot be exhaustive, the heuristic conception also provides support for moderate intellectualism, since it explains why excellence in deliberation is needed over and above experience, that is, why we need to learn the reason why in order to be assured of acting well. For making use of one's experience is not merely a matter of relying on it, but improving on it where needed. Often enough, we must work out what is distinctive about a particular situation that was not already part of our experience.

At the beginning of acquiring genuine practical wisdom, one relies on one's experience where one can and on the counsel of others where one cannot. The process

[26] Indeed, the need for such effort in turn explains why virtuous activity is rational in such a way that it is an expression of our best nature.

of becoming practically wise can in part be understood in terms of coming to rely on one's own wits as opposed to others'. Indeed, this was suggested by the cooperative account of virtue and practical wisdom that I defended in the last chapter, where I argued that Aristotle's point in saying that complete virtue of character is 'with reason' in *EN* VI.13 is that the perfection of its exercise requires that one also have practical wisdom, since both are required for fully virtuous choice. I shall take up the social aspect of this thought as it is developed in the *Politics* in Chapter 5. For now, we must return to the question that emerged in chapter 1, but that we are only now, with a suitable conception of deliberation to hand, in a position to answer. In what sense does practical wisdom involve not simply deliberative excellence but also knowledge of the reason why in ethics?

Chapter 4

Ethical Universals

4.1 Reflection and Ethical Knowledge

I have aimed to show (in chapters 1 and 2) that Aristotle recognizes two stages in the intellectual maturation of the virtuous agent: first, ethical experience and later, practical wisdom. Both enable rational deliberation in light of ethical ends, but because ethical deliberation often requires us to judge beyond what we know from experience (as I noted at the end of chapter 3), the perfection demanded by practical wisdom requires more - yet what is this further grasp? I argued in the Introduction and Chapter 1 that Aristotle's method in ethics and his epistemological framework strongly suggest that this grasp is not to be analyzed simply as a special ability to intuit the thing to do when moral principles run out, but is itself non-situation-specific knowledge. Knowledge, then, of what? That is the question I shall undertake to answer more fully in this chapter.

On this matter, as we have already seen, Aristotle offers us a variety of formulations: in the starting-points passage of *EN* I.4, he suggestively describes it as knowledge of 'the reason why', modeling it on (but not, as I argued, reducing it to) scientific understanding; when he distinguishes practical wisdom from craft in *EN* VI.5, he calls it knowledge of the goal of actions; in a passage of *EN* VI.7 I will discuss in more detail below, he refers to it as universal rather than particular knowledge, where both belong properly to the person of practical wisdom. How do these formulations relate to one another? What is Aristotle's *committed* view on the special knowledge or insight

accorded the *φρόνιμος*?

The analysis provided in chapter 3 of wish and choice as the termini of deliberation helps to tie these three thoughts together. Schematically, what we (each) wish for, and what guides our deliberations and choices, is X *as being* the good, where X stands for an ethical end. To serve as a starting point for deliberation, such an end must be something that we wish for just for its own sake, such as pleasure, honor, or virtue. But in addition to being driven unreflectively to pursue such ends simply as a matter of our character, we are also capable of having a substantive conception of what that end is and in what it consists (or, to put it more briefly, *insight* into this end).[1]

Hence, the unreflective hedonist wishes for pleasure and pursues it, but it is quite likely in the ordinary course of things for him to develop, eventually, a picture of what things count as really or most pleasant and perhaps also how his pleasures can be fit together so as to enhance and not interfere with one another. In so doing, the initially unreflective hedonist is steadily becoming more reflective and can be said to have a picture of a pleasant (or hedonist) *life* that structures his deliberations. The unreflectively virtuous person, who, as I have already argued, possesses ample ethical experience, begins from a different starting point, namely, a wish for *the noble* (*τὸ καλόν*). What she develops in developing a substantive conception of the noble is just the universal aspect of practical wisdom, which serves as the reason why for her virtuous choices, i.e., the goal her virtuous actions seek to embody and realize.

The proposal I am defending here may be summed up as follows: the knowledge that practical wisdom adds over and above either experience or an unreflective attachment to what is noble is an articulate grasp of the point of virtuous actions and the virtuous life as a whole, on the basis of which one may deliberate well when one's experience runs out. The main challenges to this view comes from the anti-intellectualists, such as Broadie, who among other criticisms charges that it supposes that the person

[1] In discussing Gronroos (2015) above in Chapter 3, §2, I rejected his interpretation of the term 'wish' (*βούλησις*) on which it can refer either to an unreflective and simple or an articulate and complex rational desire. But while this distinction does not hold for wish, it does hold between two kinds of rational apprehension of ends. For wish in general is always and naturally for the good just as such, but only the virtuous person wishes for what is really good, since only he *understands* what it is. We must therefore posit a more articulate conception that provides the starting points for deliberation. That opens up the possibility, which I shall explore below, of purely rational mistakes about the end.

of practical wisdom would have to be a philosopher or at least learn from philosophers what his Grand End is; and Moss, who in like fashion takes Aristotle to think that such universal knowledge would be irrelevant to action. Moreover, it may seem that despite my efforts in the previous chapters, my moderately intellectualist view cannot hope to unite universal knowledge and deliberative excellence because it falls prey to the worries about deductivism that motivated McDowell to his classic anti-intellectualist position. For how can a comprehensive conception of the good be relevant to the demands of particular circumstances except by prescribing what to do in them? My task in this chapter will be to point to considerations in favor of my proposal as an interpretation of Aristotle and show that it represents a moderate form of intellectualism that does not succumb to these difficulties.

I have already tried to suggest that Aristotle's conception of inquiry does not limit it to philosophical engagement or to an unpracticable sort of theoretical activity. But I shall aim to show in this chapter, first, that Aristotle is himself committed to a rational and articulate conception of the end over and above simple wishes for pleasure, honor, or virtue. For he makes two arguments, which I shall call the Master Value Argument and the Categorical Argument, that highlight rational mistakes we can make about the end, regardless of the orientation of our character (§§2-3). Avoiding these mistakes and the practical errors to which they lead requires a rational and articulate conception of the end, which I analyze in terms of the notion of *universal* knowledge (§4). I show that a philosophically attractive account of the value of virtuous actions stands behind Aristotle's thought that this universal knowledge is knowledge of the goal of virtuous actions (§5). Then, I consider whether this view has the unpalatable consequences identified by the anti-intellectualist, namely that the *φρόνιμος* would be too much of a theorizer or that his knowledge would be irrelevant to acting well (§§6-7). I conclude by considering how a rational and articulate conception of the end can inform our deliberation without falling prey to McDowell's charge of deductivism (§8).

4.2 The Master Value Argument

The first of the two arguments that show that Aristotle is committed to our need of an articulate grasp of the end can be called the Master Value Argument. This argument turns on a principle deployed twice in the *EN*, once in the famous and controversial discussion of the superiority of the life of contemplation to the life of politics in *EN* X.7-8 and once in the neglected discussion of honor as a goal in the choice of lives passage of *EN* I.5. For the sake of simplicity, I shall confine my treatment of the principle and the argument it generates to the latter, though I take its second invocation in *EN* X to confirm that Aristotle is committed to the conclusion I draw from his use of the principle here.[2]

The methodological remarks of *EN* I.4 interrupt Aristotle's investigation of the highest good, which as he notes is the subject of significant contention. He resumes his investigation in *EN* I.5, beginning with pleasure (only to swiftly dismiss it) and moving on to treat honor, virtue, and contemplation. The choice of lives passage in *EN* I.5, however, is not merely a canvassing of various ἔνδοξα, as it is commonly described[3], but already a consideration of what sorts of goals can intelligibly feature as candidates for the highest good. It is in this context that we find an invocation of the Master Value Argument with regard to honor.

> The refined sort and men of action, on the other hand, [suppose happiness and the good to be] honor, since this is very nearly the goal of the political life [τοῦ γὰρ πολιτικοῦ βίου σχεδὸν τοῦτο τέλος]. But honor seems more adventitious than what we are after. For it is thought to depend on those who give it rather than those who receive it, and we intuit that the good is something proper [to a person] and hard to take away. Furthermore, people seem to pursue honor in order to confirm that they are good - at the very least, they seek to be honored by the wise, by those who know them, and for their virtue. It is therefore evident that *by their own lights* [κατά γε τούτους] virtue is superior [to honor]. (*EN* I.5, 1095b22-30).

The point of this discussion is easy to miss: it is not *only* that virtue is a better end

[2]Two recent studies (Brown (2013); Lockwood (2014)) attend to different aspects of the choice of lives passage in light of the overall argument of the *EN*, but neither addresses honor in any detail.

[3]E.g., Irwin's gloss on the chapter in his commentary: 'The 'three lives' embody common beliefs about the highest good' (Irwin, 1999, 177).

at which to aim than honor (which follows from honor's being adventitious), but also and especially that virtue is in a way already the goal of the honor-seekers. That is why Aristotle begins with the qualification that honor is very nearly (*σχεδὸν*) but not actually the goal of the political life and concludes that virtue is superior to honor 'by their own lights' (*κατά γε τούτους*). But it would be mistaken to say without qualification that those who pursue honor do not in fact take honor to be their end. Which, then, is their end - honor or virtue?

The best way to see through this interpretive tension is to formulate Aristotle's characteristically compressed argument for the conclusion that virtue is superior to honor by the lights of the honor-seekers. This argument is what I have labeled the Master Value Argument, for reasons that will shortly be clear.

1. The men of action pursue honor only when it is given on the basis of the reliable attribution of virtue to them.

2. Hence, the pursuit of honor by the men of action is conditioned by their pursuit of virtue.

3. When the pursuit of an end X is conditioned by a distinct end Y, then X is not pursued as an ultimate end. [The Master Value Principle]

4. Hence, the men of action do not pursue honor as an ultimate end.

Premise 1 offers a way of tying together the apparently distinct appeals to the wisdom, familiarity, and orientation to virtue of those whom the honor-seeker accepts as bestowers of honor. Aristotle's claim is that behind the honor-seekers' desire for honor lies a desire to know that they are virtuous. But of course these people do not pursue virtue just to get honor - virtue is not something to be pursued in that manner. Rather, their pursuit of honor is conditioned by *their own* pursuit of virtue (Premise 2). To see the force of this point, compare the case where the honor-seekers' pursuit of honor is conditioned by facts about how to get honor in their particular society. In this case, honor still plays the role of an ultimate and unconditional end for the honor-seeker. But since, for the people Aristotle considers, the pursuit of honor is conditioned by their pursuit

of virtue, virtue has a better claim than honor to structuring their deliberation. That is the force of the Master Value Principle, which as I noted above will be invoked again by Aristotle to demonstrate the superiority of the contemplative life.[4] The conclusion to be drawn is that, contrary to what they say, the men of action do not in fact pursue honor as their ultimate end.

We can understand this conclusion in a weaker and a stronger sense. In the weaker sense, the men of action are making a merely verbal mistake about what they take to be the highest end, and their deliberations are just as sound as they would be if they understood their own ends better. In the stronger sense, the men of action are making an intellectual mistake about the ultimate end to which their actions are in fact committed, and this error may influence their deliberations. There is ultimately little textual evidence to pick between these interpretations, but the preface to the choice of lives passage suggests the stronger interpretation. There, Aristotle speaks of how people reasonably get their conceptions of what the good and happiness are from the lives they lead (*EN* I.5, 1095b14-16).[5] That claim suggests a close link between what people pursue and what they take themselves to value, a link that would be obscured if the weaker interpretation were all Aristotle meant. At any rate, it is plausible that our beliefs about the end matter for our deliberations and choices; indeed, Aristotle says such beliefs have a controlling influence on choice in *EE* II.10 (1226a15-17; 1226b2-9).

On the stronger interpretation of its conclusion, then, the Master Value Argument

[4]There his argument is that the pursuit of virtuous activity invokes other ends that limit the extent to which it can be understood as a self-sufficient ultimate end. These are the constraints of necessity inherent to political life. Cf. Brown (2013), who argues that this argument depends on a new, monastic notion of self-sufficiency, different from the political notion operative earlier in the *EN*. I believe the shift to a more stringent standard of self-sufficiency reflects a refined rather than a different understanding of the same concept, though it would be beside the point to take up the question in any detail here.

[5]'Now, as for the good and happiness, people seem, with some reason, to judge what they are from their lives - the majority and the vulgar take it to be pleasure.' There is an ambiguity in this sentence as to what is done with some reason - either (a) judging that the good is pleasure, or (b) judging what the good is on the basis of their own lives. But given how swiftly the life of enjoyment is dismissed in the lines that follow, Aristotle cannot mean (a), though elsewhere he may be more willing to entertain hedonism as a view to be refuted and not simply dismissed out of hand. Hence, we should take him to mean (b), that it is reasonable to form a conception of the good on the basis of how one lives. After all, it is from considering the teleology of action that Aristotle thinks we come to realize what the highest end is. For that is the very project he undertakes in the first part of *EN* I together with his well-brought-up auditors.

shows the possibility of rational mistakes about the end that can disrupt our practical thought, even if we possess a good upbringing. Therefore, Aristotle is committed to the need for a correct conception of the end over and above an unreflective wish for what is noble.

4.3 The Categorical Argument

The second argument that shows the possibility of rational mistakes about the end is what we may call the Categorical Argument. Aristotle uses this argument to show that *virtuous activity* and not simply *virtue* must be the goal of the political life. He does so immediately after proving that honor is inadequate in *EN* I.5, the passage quoted above:

> One may perhaps suppose that this [sc. virtue] instead is the goal of the political life. But it too seems too incomplete as an end [ἀτελεστέρα], since it is thought possible to have virtue but to be asleep or inactive throughout one's life, and in addition to suffer and to meet the greatest misfortunes. (*EN* I.5, 1095b30-96a1)

This argument is at first glance far simpler than the Master Value Argument and seems to be making quite a different point. For Aristotle seems here to declare that virtue is not a suitable ultimate end simply because it is consistent with inactivity and misfortune, in other words, with not living well. But what grounds does he have at this stage of the discussion for this claim? He cannot reasonably borrow on the discussion, yet to come, of the self-sufficiency of the highest end, that is, the claim that it must by itself make a life worthwhile. Rather, his claim is that virtue, like honor, is insufficiently end-like. But what is the commonality? What feature of virtue makes it unsuitable as an end?

Here, it is helpful to consider the relationship between virtue and the actively virtuous life, which Aristotle puts us in mind of by setting virtue on a par with sleep or inactivity (ἀπρακτεῖν). The possession of virtue is certainly necessary for – indeed, a constitutive part of – the actively virtuous life, but it is not itself the same as that life. In saying that virtue is insufficiently end-like, then, Aristotle seems to be reminding us that a virtuous life and not virtue itself must be the goal of the kind of person under

consideration. Indeed, were any state or disposition a goal of ours it would be consistent with not really living a life at all.[6] Therefore, activities (or an activity) and not a state such as virtue must be our highest practical goal.

This general principle, which is surely an Aristotelian thought if not expressed explicitly in this passage, gives rise to the reconstruction of the line of thinking in this passage that I call the Categorical Argument:

1. Virtue is consistent with sleep and generally inactivity.

2. Hence, virtue is a state.

3. States, relative to activities (including and especially the activities to which they immediately give rise), are insufficiently end-like to be an ultimate end.

4. Hence, virtue is not an ultimate end.

Aristotle suppresses the intervening steps, no doubt because he cannot yet draw on the metaphysical analysis of virtue that will be provided in *EN* II.3-4.

On this reconstruction of Aristotle's argument, his remarks about suffering and misfortune are relegated to the status of an afterthought. Indeed, despite these remarks foreshadowing his later discussion of virtue and misfortune (*EN* I.10), that is precisely how they appear in the text, being marked by the words 'and in addition' (*πρὸς τούτοις*). One may then well ask, why does Aristotle go on in this way? I answer that the point about misfortune is added to emphasize the sheer *passivity* of virtue, taken as an end. But this point is liable to mislead us by distracting us from the Categorical Argument, which underlies Aristotle's overall claim in this section, that virtue, like honor, is insufficiently end-like to be an ultimate end.[7]

[6] Compare the status of God (or more precisely, the beatific vision) as the ultimate end in Aquinas, who thinks it is precisely because this good transcends our worldly lives that it is a fitting point of rest for the will (*STh* I-II, q. 2, a. 8).

[7] There is another striking instance of foreshadowing in this stretch of the text: Aristotle invokes something that looks like the finality criterion to rule out honor as an ultimate end, since virtue is pursued as a further end beyond honor, and something that looks like the self-sufficiency criterion to rule out (the mere possession of) virtue as an ultimate end, since it is only virtuous activity that makes for a life worth living. These are of course the two criteria used to bring forward Aristotle's account of happiness in *EN* I.7, 1097a24-b21.

The reason that the Categorical Argument bears on our discussion of rational mistakes about the end is that Aristotle here identifies a subtle type of mistake one may make in pursuing the object of one's wish, certainly subtler than the honor-lover's misunderstanding. It is quite natural to think that a life dedicated to the virtues has virtue itself as its ultimate end. But the Categorical Argument shows that this judgment is in error – if one is truly a lover of the noble (*τὸ καλόν*) what one is committed to pursuing is neither honor nor virtue but virtuous activity. Indeed, one of the most important conclusions of Book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is that an actively virtuous life is its own highest end.

Despite being a subtle error, mistaking virtue for the ultimate end to which one is committed nevertheless has practical consequences, just as mistaking honor for the ultimate end does. One may, for instance, think wrongly that one should avoid difficult situations that are liable to strain or damage one's character. A more concrete example will illustrate this thought. Suppose one thinks that political life has a strong tendency to degrade one's character, since unsavory deals must be made for the greater good and repeatedly making such decisions – no matter one's inner scruples – tends to erode one's judgment that they are unsavory. In this case, if one took virtue to be one's end rather than leading an actively virtuous life, one would be inclined not to sacrifice one's character even if on balance it were the best and noblest thing to do. Likewise, in more humdrum circumstances, an excessive concern for one's character can be a form of prissiness or meanness of spirit.

Just as with honor, then, taking virtue to be the end in the sense of possessing rather than exercising it can lead to practical mistakes, and the possibility of these mistakes in turn indicates the need for a substantive, rational conception of the end over and above a disposition to love the noble.

4.4 Universal Knowledge

In the remainder of *EN* I, Aristotle provides his schematic (*ἐν τυπῳ̣*) answer to the question that the Master Value Argument and the Categorical Argument raise: how

should the actively virtuous life be understood as an ultimate end? Then in *EN* II-VI, he undertakes to analyze the various human excellences both as a further explication of this thought and as a necessarily preliminary to the determination of the *highest* virtue, whose exercise, as we learn in *EN* I.7, will be the focus of this life.[8] Toward the end of this discussion, when he has introduced the idea that practical wisdom is the right reason that governs virtuous deliberation and choice, he speaks of the knowledge it involves as not only universal but also particular, since the wise person rightly judges particular actions. As I noted above in §1, this is yet another formulation of the best and fullest sort of practical knowledge we were enjoined to pursue right at the outset of the *EN*, that is, knowledge of the reason why in ethics.

We are now in a position to understand why Aristotle assumes that this knowledge is universal in light of the case I have built in §§2-3:

> Nor is practical wisdom [knowledge] of universals alone; rather one must also have knowledge of the particulars [*οὐδ' ἐστὶν ἡ φρόνησις τῶν καθόλου μόνον, ἀλλὰ δεῖ καὶ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα γνωρίζειν*], since it is oriented to action and action concerns the particulars. That is why even some who do not know are more capable of action than others who do, and in other cases those with experience [are more capable]. *(EN* VI.7, 1141b14-18)

There is much on which to remark in this dense thicket of argument, not least the subtle analogy to medical reasoning that recurs in *EN* X.9.[9] For now, what is crucial to note is Aristotle's *presupposition* in the opening words of this passage that practical wisdom is of universals. While his stress here is on the way these universals both originate in more particular experiential knowledge – confirming the developmental story I have advanced in earlier chapters – and are directed toward application to particular practical scenarios, he takes it for granted that his reader has already accepted the universality of practical wisdom.

But where has this been shown in the preceding inquiry into practical wisdom? The only plausible back-reference is to a passage of *EN* VI.5. Aristotle there argues

[8] Note that my formulation here does not take a stance on whether happiness simply is the exercise of the highest virtue or whether it includes in some sense the exercise of the other virtues (i.e., between dominant versus inclusive accounts of the ultimate end).

[9] I discussed what this passage tells us about ethical experience above in Chapter 2, §4.

that the *φρόνιμος* has knowledge of the first principle of actions, which is their *goal* (*οὗ ἕνεκα*), and grasps what the human good in general is (1140b4-17). Aristotle goes on to remark that by contrast someone corrupted fails to realize that 'one must choose all things and act for the sake of this [sc. the end] and because of it' (1140b18-19). The anti-intellectualists are quick to claim that this must mean that we need virtue to acquire and maintain our grasp of this end (Moss (2012)). Does this not entail that practical wisdom is only indirectly responsible for our grasp of the end because its possession entails the possession of virtue? As I have argued, having the virtues of character requires only an inarticulate wish for the noble. But as I showed in §§2-3, such a wish is consistent with making various rational mistakes about the nature and identity of the ultimate end to which one is committed. The role of practical wisdom, then, must be more capacious. While lack of virtue or other kinds of characterological frailty may corrupt us by interfering with or destroying a wish for what is noble, practical wisdom involves a grasp of the human good in general that goes beyond such a wish.

The passage from *EN* VI.7, then, confirms that Aristotle's account of what it is to grasp the goal of one's virtuous actions is to have universal knowledge of the human good and that this is the special endowment of the *φρόνιμος*. In this context, the contrast between universals and particulars is a contrast between what is (relatively) situation-specific and what is (relatively) situation-independent.[10] Hence, what Aristotle attributes to the practically wise person over and above experience is a situation-independent grasp of the ultimate practical good. This knowledge is knowledge of that in which an actively virtuous life consists, which in turn is that for the sake of which one's particular virtuous activities are undertaken. But these fairly schematic claims in *EN* VI do more to rule out various notions of the knowledge of the end or the highest good than to say very much about what it is supposed to be. In order to better understand Aristotle's account of this knowledge, we must consider the way that someone who possesses the virtues can develop a further understanding of what those virtues are for.

[10] I argued in chapter 1 that the contents of what is known by experience are logically universal, since experience concerns the kinds of actions that are appropriate to kinds of circumstances. On the correlative character of universality and particularity in Aristotle's account of practical knowledge, see Devereux (1986).

4.5 The Value of Virtue and a Virtuous Life

I argued in Chapter 2 that possession of the virtues of character to any extent implies possession of the experience needed to exercise those virtues knowledgeably in ordinary circumstances, but not necessarily the possession of practical wisdom. In the example of deliberation I gave in Chapter 3, for instance, Marta knows that, typically, a good gift is one whose past life is not too present. Certainly this bit of knowledge is a good candidate for something one might learn from experience, specifically, from observing how beneficiaries react when given different sorts of gifts (or for that matter by being taught directly or by reading imaginative literature). But why should it be so? What is the ground of this guideline or precept, or any other that belongs to the characteristic exercise of generosity?

Here, perhaps, is the beginning of a plausible answer: generosity is not simply about the transfer of property from one person to another and the subsequent enjoyment of the beneficiary. A flatterer can do this sort thing, viz., what we might call a typically generous action though not an act *of* generosity, an expression that implies choice on the basis of a virtuous disposition. Nor is it quite enough to add in the disposition to choose this sort of action for its own sake and not as a means, say, to social advancement. That rules out the flatterer by ensuring that the act is done for the right reason, but leaves us with a bare moral injunction to perform generous actions unstintingly and for their own sake, without any further basis or ground. Yet generosity seems to be more than simply what reason bids in the domain of giving.

In fact, generosity has a particular place in a virtuous life that we can say more to characterize by way of pointing not simply to its necessity but also its goodness. Here is some of what we might say: generosity sustains friendships and communities; it encourages us not to put too much weight on what we possess; it is a source of beauty all by itself. These are apparently diverse sorts of answer to the following question: what makes *generosity* good, given that we must be generous? The first points to its social function, the second to its regulative function, and the third to the way its intrinsic value manifests itself.[11] The various virtues of character recognized by Aristotle differ

[11]One might think the third answer is not informative - in a way it isn't, but it is a reminder to those

in the extent to which these three types of answer seem natural. It may be easier to see the regulative value of temperance, the social value of wit, and the sheer splendor of courage. All the same, we can say that the virtues as a whole system order our individual and collective lives, and for that reason and also for their own sake they are worthwhile.

Here, then, is what wisdom adds to the sort of ethical experience that makes possible the exercise of the virtues: the knowledge of what makes the virtues good and of the sort of life to which they belong, which provides an answer both to why we should have them at all and (partly) why the actions characteristic of them are worth pursuing on any given occasion. As I shall take up in the next chapter, it is also essentially political knowledge, since the goodness of the virtues offers a regulative ideal not only for the individual but also her community. For now, let us note the way in which such knowledge counts as knowledge of the *goal* of virtuous actions. It may seem strange that Aristotle speaks this way at all. Did he not emphasize that virtuous actions are to be chosen for their own sake? Is their intrinsic choiceworthiness not endangered by talk of a further end beyond them?

To see why this worry is misplaced, we need to draw a distinction between the intrinsic value that virtuous actions have and what gives them this intrinsic value. My contention on Aristotle's behalf is that virtuous actions are *given* their intrinsic value by the social and regulative functions of the virtues from which they proceed.[12] We can therefore adopt an additional perspective on such actions beyond the familiar perspective of deliberation; from the deliberative perspective we have conclusive reason to perform any and all virtuous actions since they are all worth doing for their own sake. The other perspective is the perspective of appraisal, which we adopt, for instance, when we consider how we want our children or our fellow-citizens to live. In the second perspective, we do not consider isolated actions that might or might not occur - rather, we take into account the value of a whole life and its constituents. This

who can recognize this type of goodness. Aristotle certainly appeals to this distinct sort of value, e.g., in saying the virtuous person 'will let go of money and honors and, in general, the competitive goods while keeping *τὸ καλόν* for himself' (*EN* IX.8, 1169a20-1).

[12]This point is closely connected to my remark above that the demands of the virtues are not bare moral injunctions.

perspective is necessarily more comprehensive and architectonic than the deliberative perspective. One way to put Aristotle's point that we need knowledge of the goal of virtuous actions in order to have practical wisdom, then, is that the perspective of appraisal has a bearing on the perspective of deliberation, by providing the starting points for wise deliberation.[13]

Aristotle sometimes puts this point by saying that we choose virtuous actions both for their own sake and for the sake of happiness. What he means is that we choose virtuous actions as being part of living a certain kind of life. Indeed that much is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of the hedonist, who pursues hedonic actions for the sake of (what he takes to be) happiness, that is, a pleasant life without pains. As Aristotle tells us, the highest good, which people call happiness, is agreed by all to mean 'living well and faring well' (*εὖ ζῆν καὶ εὖ πράττειν*, *EN* I.4, 1095a17-20). So, knowledge of the highest good is not just knowledge of a sort of definition, i.e., that happiness is an actively virtuous life, or even this knowledge plus an account of which are the virtues. It is also knowledge of the determinate way in which the actively virtuous life is its own ultimate end.

Such knowledge demands an appreciation and familiarity with the distinctive kinds of value to be found in such a life - in other words, the very kind of appreciation that comes with the good upbringing Aristotle demands of his auditors. The anti-intellectualist is right, therefore, to insist on the central role of virtue in *preserving* our grasp of the end. But taken by itself, a practical orientation toward the *καλόν* involves only an inarticulate wish for what is noble. But being in that state is not yet to possess knowledge of the end. One must come to know discursively that a virtuous life is of such-and-such a sort, that the various virtues fit together into a whole that determines what one should do and pursue over and above the demands of the individual virtues in their particular spheres of life. Only then does one have the universal knowledge characteristic of practical wisdom.

[13] I will defend the philosophical merit of this position in §8 when I defend Aristotle from the charge of deductivism. Notice that Aristotle can speak of there being a goal for virtuous actions without it following that we choose virtuous actions as instrumentally valuable to some end distinct from them.

4.6 How Grand is the End?

I shall unpack this idea further by explaining how such knowledge can inform the deliberations of the *φρόνιμος* in particular circumstances. But first I must confront a prominent objection to the type of view I am defending, which Sarah Broadie calls 'The Grand End View'. While Broadie presents a long list of objections to such a view in service of her anti-intellectualist position (Broadie, 1991, 198-202), I will address two main categories of philosophical rather than exegetical objections to my position.[14] The first style of objection, advanced by Broadie and more recently by Moss, is that universal knowledge of the human good is too lofty or philosophical to be practically useful. The second is McDowell's charge of deductivism, which I will address in §8, since it will lead us to a fresh consideration of how my moderately intellectualist view can unite deliberative excellence to universal knowledge of the human good.

Does the person of practical wisdom, on my picture, need to be a philosopher or at least to study with one, as Broadie charges (Broadie, 1991, 199-200)? Certainly my argument above turned on the possibility of development from unreflectively desiring the noble to articulately knowing the goal of an actively virtuous life. That Aristotle - in this regard very like the Socrates of the *Republic* - thinks of such an unreflective attachment as a starting point for developing practical wisdom is made especially clear in *EN* X.9, where he is describing the efficacy of ethical reasoning or argument. Indicating reason's limits in effecting persuasion, Aristotle says that only young people who are lovers of the noble and ready to taken hold of by virtue can be educated by reason (1179b7-10). It is a mistake to infer from this passage (just as it is from the comparable passage about the guardians in *Republic* III, 401d-402c) that Aristotle admits the coherence of a state or stage in which one is merely well-disposed toward what is noble but lacks rational abilities altogether. Rather what educable young people lack but are ready to receive on Aristotle's account is a rational conception *of the goal*.

[14] In other words, these are the objections that do not turn immediately on how to understand difficult and controversial texts, such as the passage concerning the fixity of universals in ethics (*EN* II.2), the sense in which practical wisdom is architectonic (*EN* VI.7-8), and the interdependence of practical wisdom and the character virtues (*EN* VI.12-13). I remark on these texts elsewhere in my account: in the Introduction, Chapter 5, and Chapter 2, respectively.

Notice that *EN* X.9 offers a perfectly general account of the function of reason (λόγος) in ethics. It is easy to draw from the opening chapters of the *EN* the contrasting impression that it is only ethical *inquiry* that aims at uncovering such a rational conception of the end, where inquiry is understood as a sort of classroom matter. Yet this line of interpretation runs directly contrary to Aristotle's pretensions in the *EN* to offer practical guidance and not only theoretical understanding. *This* sort of inquiry, he says, is for the sake of action not theory (X.9, 1179a35-b4; see also II.2, 1103b25-30). The considerations of *EN* X.9 demonstrate that inquiry can be thought of not merely as a classroom matter but as part of a broader pursuit of the right rational conception of the goal of virtuous action.[15]

Such an interpretation aligns the noble youth of *EN* X.9 somewhere in the same range of the developmental scale as Aristotle's experienced but not-yet-wise auditors as described in *EN* I.3-4. But playing the part of the auditor, that is, hearing and accepting reasoned conclusions about practical life, does not seem to require an impulse to philosophize oneself. Indeed, when Aristotle laments the absence of genuine teachers of political knowledge or wisdom (πολιτικήν) at the end of the *EN*, he proposes an inquiry into the best laws whereby one might make some progress toward acquiring such knowledge on one's own. But the task of completing the philosophy of things peculiarly human (ἡ περὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπεια φιλοσοφία: 1181b14-15), a wonderful expression that spans the inquiry of both the *Ethics* and the *Politics*, is proposed specifically in order to educate one's children into virtue at the very least and improve one's city in the best case. What interpreters should be glad to accept about the *Politics*, given its undeniably practical orientation, they are forced by this bridge passage to accept about the *Ethics* too: its task is to provide useful knowledge, knowledge the enquirer is taken not to have. That is not to say that philosophical illumination is not abundantly on offer in both works, but the purported inconsistency of this claim with the works' practical pretensions reveals more about *our* conception of what is theoretical than about Aristotle's.

Am I simply biting the bullet in response to Broadie's charge that the φρόνιμος will

[15] I suggested the connection between ethical inquiry and the exhortations of the laws at the end of chapter 2; cf. (Moss, 2011, 239-40).

have to learn his Grand End from a philosopher? No. For even if philosophical inquiry is thought by Aristotle to be the *best* means to acquiring the articulate grasp of the end, it is certainly not the only one. And besides, what Aristotle is pursuing in his work on the philosophy of things peculiarly human is not what is now called moral or political theory, but practical improvement. In the face of widespread moral disagreement, we are likely to imagine that an investigation of the grounds of our ethical beliefs will lead to their debunking. What Aristotle finds, by contrast, is a fully worked-out picture of an excellent life that can serve as an object of personal emulation as well as more widespread implementation in one's community.

4.7 Architectonic Knowledge

Taking it for granted that the philosophical inquiry into the highest good in the *EN* is meant to be practically relevant, we must still contend with a second version of the objection, advanced by Moss, which claims that the universal or architectonic knowledge Aristotle describes in *EN* VI is not relevant to implementation in action but only to teaching others. Moss makes this objection as part of a larger argument in favor of a version of anti-intellectualism that appears to be more modest than Broadie's, and it will help to distinguish this more modest anti-intellectualism precisely.

As I noted in chapter 2, the basis of this position is Moss's insistence on the following division of labor: virtue of character makes sure we have the right ultimate end, while practical wisdom tells us only what things in fact conduce to or constitute that end. But she grants that when Aristotle says that practical wisdom is 'true supposition of the end' in *EN* VI.10, he may well mean what he says, on the grounds that he means that practical wisdom grasps the end *as an end*, i.e., as a starting point for deliberation (Moss, 2012, 179-182). On this point I am entirely in agreement; but Moss goes a step further. She maintains that despite the fact that practical wisdom is responsible for grasping the end as an end, it in no way supplies the *content* of that end. Here I part ways with Moss.

There is a consistent interpretation that accounts for all the passages Moss marshals

on her side as well as all those she grants seem on their face to support the intellectualist position. But we must allow that while virtue of character makes us pursue the right goals - surely the most natural interpretation of 'virtue makes the goal right' - it is practical wisdom that supplies the content of this goal by making it determinate.[16] Moss rightly claims that everyone wishes for happiness, so it cannot be that goal that is given to us by virtue. However, she ignores the possibility that the inchoate object of wish supplied by virtue is simply the *καλόν*. That, I have argued above, is the likeliest account behind what Aristotle says about the choice of lives in *EN* I.5 and the place of reason in ethics in *EN* X.9. Taken together with Moss's own defense of the view that practical wisdom supplies a more determinate account of the end from which we can deliberate, this picture has strong textual support.

But does it fall prey to the philosophical worry Moss identifies that universal or architectonic knowledge would be irrelevant to action? In the face of the passages from *EN* I.4, VI.7-8, and X.9 that support the view that the *Ethics* contributes to our becoming practically wise, she argues as follows:

> We can hold on to a narrow view of *phronesis* by arguing either (a) that Aristotle thinks his lectures useful for the acquisition of architectonic *phronesis*, understood as the kind necessary for teaching and ruling others, while holding that people acquire ground-level *phronesis*, the kind necessary for individual virtue and happiness, in the course of ordinary experience; or alternatively (b) that the aim of the lectures is indeed to make us more *phronimos* with regard to our own lives, but precisely by aiding us in our deliberations - that is, by spelling out the "things toward" the ultimate end. (Moss, 2012, 189)

Moss explicitly makes a case for (b) somewhat further downstream in her argument, when she concedes to the intellectualist that it is by practical reasoning that we may eventually realize that contemplation is a way of pursuing the goal of virtuous rational

[16] This is the same line of thought pursued by (Russell, 2009, ch. 1), who defends intellectualism about character-virtue. Russell, however, divides the labor even further and identifies specification of the goal as *the* task of *φρόνησις*, while allocating determination of what conduces to the goal (*τὰ πρὸς τὸ τέλος*) to cleverness, a skill that is shared with sharp but wicked people. I do not think Aristotle countenances this sort of division of labor within the faculties of practical intellect. Cleverness (*δεινότης*) is an abstraction from what the *φρόνιμος* and the sharp but wicked person do alike; it does not follow that the *φρόνιμος* deploys cleverness in identifying what conduces to a determinate end. The expression *τὰ πρὸς τὸ τέλος* embraces everything that is not the ultimate end supplied by one's character.

activity (Moss, 2012, 232-3). But at this point she suggests that (a) would be a sufficient defense, taking her cue perhaps from Broadie, who makes much of the difference between architectonic *phronesis* and ground-level *phronesis*, where the former is the possession of the statesman and the latter the possession of the supposedly ordinary wise person.

A distinction between the two types of *phronesis* is essential to this argumentative move, but its textual basis is weak. Broadie, for instance, claims that Aristotle has two audiences in mind throughout the ethics, an ordinary person in search of moral advice and a would-be statesman trying to acquire political wisdom. But Aristotle is entirely innocent of this supposed division in his audience - not once in his methodological remarks at the beginning or end of the *Ethics* does he suggest that those in his audience who want to live well are not also interested in improving their families and cities. Indeed, a division between private and public life such as this is characteristically modern. So great is the presumption in ancient Greek ethics that an active life will radiate outward to one's community that the Epicurean motto 'Live in obscurity' was nearly as great a scandal as their hedonism.

Without a further textual basis, the claim that architectonic knowledge can have no bearing on practical affairs has the status of a philosophical prejudice. Along similar lines, most contemporary moral philosophy assumes that its theorizing is insulated from ordinary moral life. While moral theorists often assume that ordinary life provides the data for their analysis or that ordinary moral intuitions are a necessary starting point for theory, they do not think that the methods and the purpose of their inquiry are similarly constrained. By contrast, Aristotle seeks not only to begin from but to remain within the realm of moral discourse throughout his inquiry. He is not afraid to show the limits of conventional thinking, of course, or to bring to bear his philosophical system on thorny topics such as weakness of will or pleasure. But he never takes his aim to be doing something outside moral thinking itself, even while developing an evidently architectonic account of human goodness. In finding a distinction between ordinary practical wisdom and philosophical or architectonic knowledge in ethics, the anti-intellectualists are missing something distinctive - and alien - about the task Aris-

totle undertakes and the one he sets his reader.[17]

4.8 From Universal to Particular

We are left, however, with the question of how exactly ethical universals could be brought to bear on deliberation about what to do in a particular circumstance. Moreover, the relevance of the universal to the particular must be shown not to be a matter of *deducing* what to do from the 'Grand End'. For we must avoid what McDowell rightly criticizes as a deductivist assimilation of practical reason to the model of theoretical reasoning, when Aristotle has insisted on their distinctness.[18]

Let us note at the outset that making knowledge of universals part of practical wisdom does not immediately amount to deductivism. In a way, McDowell's own view relies on the *φρόνιμος* possessing a grasp of a universal, viz. *εὐδαιμονία*; indeed, for McDowell choosing wisely is understood as applying this universal. This view is nevertheless anti-intellectualist because practical wisdom is analyzed purely as an intuitive grasp of what to do in each situation. All the same McDowell is able to distinguish between an agent knowing what to do in some particular circumstance and knowing what to do generally and even to call the latter a kind of universal knowledge. If my interpretation of ethical universals is right, does Aristotle's view amount to a kind of deductivism?

To confront this problem, I will show how the universal knowledge I have attributed to the *φρόνιμος* could be relevant to virtuous choice without being a deductive basis for it. Recall that in chapter 3, I argued that ethical deliberation involves finding a particular action that realizes or instantiates an ethical end. In the example I developed, Marta sought to find an action that counted as generous. A more natural way of putting this idea, perhaps, is that Marta sought to *do well* by giving a gift, once she found an opportunity to do so. Aristotle himself adopts this language in the passage of *EN* VI.5 I

[17] Pertinent to my discussion, of course, is the ancient idea that a philosophical school or system can offer a way of life. For two accounts of this thought as a central theme of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, see Hadot (1995) and Cooper (2012).

[18] This we can maintain without granting all of McDowell's own philosophical reasons for opposing deductivism. See the Conclusion for more detailed engagement with his view.

mentioned above, where he states that the goal that practical wisdom seeks to realize is εὐπραξία, which we might translate, directly, as 'doing well' or more lavishly as 'success-in-action' (1140b6-7). How then should we characterize Marta's overall ends when she deliberates about how to act well?

Of course, it would be insane to think that acting generously was the end *tout court*. Despite the fact that acting generously is something worth doing for its own sake, it cannot serve as the organizing principle of a life. A superficial explanation for why this should be so is psychological. The sort of person who pursues generosity in the right spirit is motivated by its being noble; but courage, temperance, and justice are just as noble, and would be seen by such a person to be equally worthy of pursuit. Hence, no one would pursue generosity for its own sake apart from the other virtues. This fact about the necessary generality of pursuing what is noble may of course be true, but it fails to offer much of an explanation. A more adequate explanation appeals to the reciprocity of the virtues, a thesis defended by Aristotle in *EN* VI.13.[19] Whatever the right analysis of the reciprocity of virtues, however, it is a *conceptual* claim rather than a psychological one. According to it, the virtues themselves are unified in such a way that the pursuit of any must be the pursuit of all.

What unifies the virtues of character on my proposal is the common end to which these virtues are dedicated - εὐπραξία - pursuit of which requires practical wisdom.[20] That is why practical wisdom is invoked in the explanation of the reciprocity of virtues in *EN* VI.13. The generous person, then, cannot coherently aim simply at acting generously. Though he recognizes the value of acting generously for its own sake, he must also understand how the pursuit of generosity subserves an actively virtuous life as a whole.

This is not a surprising claim - Julia Annas identifies it as a core theoretical commitment of (Aristotelian) virtue ethics when she writes that '[a]ny theory of virtue will have something to say about the way the different virtues are valuable by contributing in a unified way to a further end' (Annas, 2008, 206).[21] In particular, Annas continues,

[19] See my treatment of this issue in Chapter 2, §7, n. 33.

[20] Recall my reading, in chapter 2, of VI.13 in light of the *aporia* introduced in VI.12 and the cooperative account of the virtues of character and practical wisdom that I developed there.

[21] I have inserted the qualification since a Humean virtue theory can posit conflicting sets of virtues;

'the virtues make sense within a conception of living, which takes the life I live to be a unity'. This unity is not an accidental relationship of harmony or mutual reinforcement. For the question *which* dispositions are virtues is settled by the conception of living one has. I argued above that in the choice of lives passage of *EN* I, Aristotle, with his listeners in tow, begins from the very general thought that what we should be after is the *καλόν*. With this assumption in place, the life of pleasure is not a serious choice, but honor, virtue, and contemplation remain as candidates. As I showed, Aristotle rejects honor and argues that virtue must be understood as virtuous *activity* in order to be a suitable goal. In *EN* X.6-8, he will show that contemplation fits the schema, too, as the kind of virtuous activity around which one can organize a life aimed at *εὐπραξία*.

In defending virtue ethics from the charge of egoism, Annas goes on to argue that the theory is self-effacing, in that the virtuous person only needs to be told the point of being virtuous as a beginner and that gradually such thoughts fade from consciousness (Annas, 2008, 212-13). In interpreting Aristotle, we should, I contend, conclude precisely the opposite. At the beginning, we do not yet know the point of the virtues, but only sense the promise and the worth of the life to which they belong. Our thoughts about what virtue is for, i.e., what *εὐδαιμονία* or *εὐπραξία* is, are at this stage relatively thin. As we acquire a comprehensive grasp of the human good as a life consisting of the exercise of virtues that regulate our activities and those of others - which, I have suggested, can also be understood as a growing understanding of the distinctive kinds of value virtuous actions have - our thoughts become more substantive.

One reason this theory need not be self-effacing is the practical value, beyond simply teaching others, that such knowledge can have. Consider once again Marta's deliberations about making a gift. Let us now imagine that her original plan to have the book she plans to give Luis rebound turns out to be impossible. Marta is liable to feel disappointed. Should she persist in finding a suitable gift for Luis? Here we can imagine two plausible outcomes. In the first scenario, Marta judges that it would be too self-regarding to insist on finding a *perfect* gift for Luis and decides to send him the book on the royal hunt anyway. In the second scenario, Marta judges that the circumstances no

for there is no guarantee that what is useful or agreeable to oneself is likewise useful or agreeable to others. But even here there will be more local unities.

longer make possible the endeavor, so she desists altogether from the attempt to give and to do so well.

What is the difference between these cases? We must note that there is no absolute *demand* on Marta to be generous in these circumstances. This is a situation of surfeit, not exigency.[22] In neither circumstance, then, does Marta go wrong. Indeed, allowing that Marta's desires, pleasures, emotions, and so on, are the same in the two cases, we may continue to suppose that both scenarios faithfully represent someone who is genuinely generous. All the same, it makes sense to say that in the first case, Marta is shown to have a better grip, not only on how to be generous, but on what generosity is for. She is thereby a more likely candidate for the possession of *φρόνησις* on the grounds that she understands the kind of life that makes generosity a virtue in the first place. Moreover, it is not unreasonable to think that Marta could make the choice to persist in giving the book to Luis precisely because of the thoughts she has about why giving this gift - giving any gift - is important. But there is no sense in which Marta deduces this conclusion from her 'Grand End'. Rather, her universal knowledge of the virtues regulates her pursuit of generosity.

In this way, a true conception of the nature of the virtues provides the wise deliberator with a set of norms or standards relative to which a candidate action may be compared. As with experience, practical success is the true mark of possessing even this universal knowledge. Only by employing such knowledge well in cases where one's experience runs out, where a novel situation must be confronted, will one manifest it fully. Of course, we may add that having universal knowledge of the nature of the virtues also helps one refine one's experience.

Both sorts of knowledge contribute to deliberation, then, though they enter into it in slightly different ways. Experience guides us in ordinary circumstances, while universal knowledge helps us see what to do when experience is incomplete or insufficient. As I will argue in the Conclusion, this view still makes situational appreciation essential to deliberation. Nevertheless, the virtuous person is equipped with discursive knowledge of the good in order to meet the challenges of concrete situations.

[22]It is instructive to compare the courageous soldier considering the risks of a heroic but doomed endeavor on the battlefield.

Chapter 5

Political Wisdom

5.1 Political and Practical Wisdom

In chapters 1-4, I provided an account of how Aristotle thinks practical wisdom emerges from ethical experience and what distinguishes these two states. In chapters 1-2, I argued that ethical experience is a robust intellectual state, which takes the form of practical knowledge of narrowly-specific ethical generalizations. This knowledge is sufficient for the attribution of virtue, at least in a qualified sense, and certainly sufficient for the choice of virtuous actions in ordinary circumstances. Yet it is not enough. We need practical wisdom not only in order to be happy - that is, in order to fulfill our rational nature - but also in order to succeed in many situations that outstrip our experience.

What distinguishes practical wisdom from ethical experience is a kind of insight, just as insight into causes distinguishes the master-craftsman and the possessor of theoretical wisdom from those with experience in their domains. In the ethical case, this insight is not a knowledge of a productive cause (why something should be *made* so) or of the highest principles of a science, but rather an understanding of the nature and purpose of a virtuous life. This is closely connected, of course, to the knowledge that is the goal of the kind of inquiry into the human good undertaken by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. And inasmuch as the practically wise person's insight explains what the virtues are *for* (where their value comes from such that virtuous activity can consti-

tute human happiness), this insight is in a way, a knowledge of a cause or explanation, namely, the final cause.

At the end of chapter 4, I sketched an example of how this understanding can be practical, that is, how it can make a difference to deliberation. The example showed that the limits of what courage or generosity demands can only be fully discerned by someone with this understanding. There, is, however, an additional role for this insight to play in the life of the wise person, or perhaps another way of describing this selfsame role. When Aristotle claims that political wisdom and practical wisdom are the same state of soul, though different in being, what he means to say is that the very understanding of the human good that regulates the deliberation and choices of the practically wise person is also the same understanding that regulates the deliberation and choices of the politically wise person. Or so I shall argue in this chapter, which rounds out my account of Aristotle's moral epistemology and brings the exegetical argument of this dissertation to its end.

Aristotle's makes this claim (which I shall call PPI, for the 'political-practical identity thesis') in *EN* VI.8, where it seems to intrude suddenly into his discussion of practical wisdom. PPI also plays a major role in the account of citizenship in *Politics* III, where the excellence of the citizen is said to be virtue of character, while the excellence of the ruler is simply practical wisdom. Both these discussions have been neglected in the analysis of Aristotle's moral epistemology, and even when they have been discussed, their *argumentative* form has not been fully appreciated. In addition to bringing out the argumentative character of Aristotle's account of political wisdom in both contexts, I have two further goals in this chapter. First, I will show that PPI is not an intrusion into Aristotle's remarks in *EN* VI, but rather an integral part of his explanation of the nature of practical wisdom; this helps rule out interpretations on which political wisdom has a subject matter or domain of operation wholly distinct from practical wisdom. Second, I will show that the treatment of political virtue and wisdom in *Politics* III provides significant confirmation for my moderately intellectualist interpretation of the moral epistemology of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

5.2 Political Wisdom in the *Ethics*

Aristotle book-ends his treatment of the human good in the *Nicomachean Ethics* with an insistence on the *political* character of his inquiry and its subject matter. I have already discussed at length what he says about political experience and our lack and need of legislative wisdom in the final chapter of the *EN*, X.9. But, as I noted in the Introduction, the *Ethics* also begins with this theme. The most architectonic science or power will aim at the highest and best human good[1], and this science or power must be (in some sense) *political*, since it is political wisdom that prescribes the extent to which other powers and crafts must be pursued (*EN* I.2, 1095a26-b7). Equally, any inquiry into the highest and best human good will be a political one, even if its practical aim is to describe the good for an individual (1094b10-11).

Why should this be? Why cannot there be one ethical inquiry into the human good for an individual and then a separate account of the political good? Most modern political philosophy, with its emphasis on autonomy and respect for individuals, proceeds on the assumption that only fairly minimal demands are placed on political theorizing by ethics and that ethical matters are anyway subject to reasonable disagreement. Likewise, modern ethical theory, even and perhaps especially neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, does not take its subject matter to extend to the ideal organization of a political community. There are of course exceptions to these tendencies, but even so, the conceptual distinction and division between ethics and political philosophy is assumed. Aristotle's rejection of this division may seem especially peculiar when so little of what follows in the *EN* seems political, except for the book on justice (*EN* V) and the material on justice and the political community in the treatise on friendship (*EN* VIII.9-11).

It is not surprising, then, to find interpreters accounting for this apparent mismatch between Aristotle's characterization of his own inquiry and the substance of what follows by claiming, e.g., that there are two intended audiences in the *EN*, the would-be

[1] The qualifier 'human good' or 'practical good' is required, since there are things better and finer than a human being in the cosmos (*EN* VI.7, 1141a20-22; a34-b2). That is why ethics is not the same as first philosophy or metaphysics and why practical-political wisdom is not the same as theoretical wisdom, *σοφία* (1141a28-33).

statesman and the ordinary citizen, as Sarah Broadie does.[2] On this view, political and practical wisdom are distinguished by their sphere of operation, and Aristotle's arguments in the *EN* can be categorized accordingly. Some interpreters, such as Richard Bodéüs, have taken the opposite interpretive strategy and argued that the book's audience is fully virtuous and the inquiry's results only relevant to them insofar as they are legislators (Bodeus, 1993, 3-5). The treatment of the human good in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, on this view, would simply be a preface to the inquiry into legislative science in the *Politics*. Neither strategy, I shall argue, makes adequate sense of Aristotle's insistence in PPI that practical and political wisdom are the same state of soul, the first since it makes practical wisdom subpolitical and the second since it makes political wisdom supraethical.[3]

But that very insistence on PPI has often been downplayed, and the difference between political and practical wisdom has correspondingly been exaggerated. The way Aristotle introduces the topic of political wisdom into *EN* VI has led interpreters to exaggerate this notional difference. For a common way of understanding the first half of *EN* VI.8 (1141b23-42a10), which begins with the statement of PPI, is as a digression that merely surveys various *senses* of the term *φρόνησις*, including, among others, political wisdom and household-management alongside practical wisdom.[4] I will show that Aristotle introduces the topic of political wisdom in *EN* VI.8 in order to show something about *practical wisdom* and that the use he makes of PPI in that argument ensures that the two states do not have different spheres of operation. First, let us investigate more closely what Aristotle means by claiming that his inquiry into the human good in the *EN* is political, which in turn sets the stage for Aristotle's introduction of PPI.

[2]Broadie (1991), whose view I discuss in Chapter 4, §§6-7, as it bears on the nature of wise practical thinking. See also Moss (2012) for a similar view.

[3]For a view similar to mine, see (Reeve, 2013, 190-192) - 'Popular thought narrows the true scope of practical wisdom, just as it does that of political science, obscuring the architectonic or universalist dimension of the latter and the political dimension of the former' (191). As I have already argued, I disagree with Reeve's overall intellectualist project of assimilating practical wisdom very closely to the model of scientific understanding.

[4]Despite the rather bold assertion of the two-audience view, Broadie demurs on the topic of the relation between political and practical wisdom (Broadie, 1991, 204-5). But see (Moss, 2012, 183-5), who works out some of the implications of the anti-intellectualist view of practical wisdom for our understanding of political wisdom.

5.3 Politics and the Human Good

As I remarked, Aristotle begins the *Nicomachean Ethics* with an argument that his inquiry into the highest human good belongs to politics, where this is plainly understood as the art of civic association.

> Doesn't knowledge of this [sc. the good] have great significance for our lives, and like archers, wouldn't we, taking this as our target, more likely strike where we ought? If this is so, we must try in outline, at least, to comprehend what this [sc. good] in fact is and to which expertise or power it belongs. It would seem to belong to the most authoritative and most masterful [expertise or power]. Political expertise has these qualities. For it arranges which kinds of expertise should exist in cities and which ones and to what extent each class of people should learn them. Indeed, we observe that even the most highly regarded powers are beneath it, e.g., military leadership, household management, and oratory. (*EN* I.2, 1094a22-b3)

He adds that it makes no difference to the character of the inquiry whether the intended implementation of this good is at the individual or the civic level.

> If in fact it [sc. the human good] is the same for an individual and a city, the city's good seems a better thing to achieve and preserve and more of a goal. […] Our inquiry, then, is after these [viz., what is good for an individual and for a city], and is political in nature. (1094b7-11)

In making the latter remark explicitly, Aristotle seems to recognize that there is something a little peculiar about characterizing his inquiry as political through and through when the arrangement of things in the city is not (yet) foremost on his mind. I think we can't fully account for this idea until we understand how civic association is theorized in the *Politics*. But for the moment I want to focus on one aspect of these remarks that should seem especially puzzling to us and that has not received much comment. What does it mean to say that the human good is the *same* for an individual and for a city, such that an inquiry into the human good is for that reason political?

It is natural to hear this claim as a claim of assimilation; for intuitively, an individual and a city are entirely different sorts of things. There are of course two possible directions of assimilation. Perhaps we have some rough idea of what the good for a city is, what its purpose is, and Aristotle is telling us to read that back into our account

of the individual human good. Suppose, then, that we think, on independent grounds, that the good of a city is self-preservation. Then perhaps the individual human good is whatever contributes most effectively to this. Or we might posit a city-soul analogy à la Plato's *Republic*. On this view, if the city's good is its self-preservation, then the individual's good, too, would be her own self-preservation.

Neither of these options seems attractive. The first makes it hard to see why the good in question should be the human good for individuals, especially given what Aristotle has argued up to this point. For in *EN* I.1-2, 1094a1-22, Aristotle uses the structure of human striving to come up with a formal account of the highest practical good, and when he speaks of what we desire, without qualification, this can only mean what any of us as an individual desires, and we are given no argument for reducing this to what is socially desirable. Even if we grant, as Aristotle claims in *Politics* I.2, that a human being is of its nature a political creature, born to live and destined to flourish only in civic association (1253a1-3), there will be more to the individual's good than civic participation.[5] The second option turns on the city-soul analogy, which is in this case an unargued-for premise that we could swiftly reject given its counterintuitive consequences.[6] Finally, both of these lines of thought get the actual order of Aristotle's inquiry backwards. If the human good must be understood politically first, then the *Politics* should precede the *Ethics* rather than the other way round.

We have conclusive reason, then, to think that Aristotle means us to investigate the individual human good on independent grounds and identify what we discover with the city's good. That is certainly suggested by the ethical arguments of Books I and X, from which we learn that the human good is excellent rational activity, an idea reinforced by the discussion of the individual human good in *Politics* VII.1-3.

All the same, there is an interpretive danger here. It would be wrong to conclude from the epistemic path of Aristotle's inquiry to a metaphysical conclusion about the priority of the individual's good over the city's.[7] For this individualist presumption is

[5]This difficulty would present itself even if Aristotle held that the political and not the contemplative life were the happiest life for a human being.

[6]Even in the *Republic* the analogy is presented as a heuristic device and not a premise in an argument (434d-e), though see (Ferrari, 2005, 80-1) for some doubts about its heuristic function.

[7]This is the mistake made by essentially liberal interpretations of Aristotle, e.g., Miller (1995).

overturned in the opening argument of the *Politics* which lays out the nature of civic association. Here is the conclusion of that argument:

> Evidently, then, the city is both natural and prior to the individual. For an individual apart is not self-sufficient, in the same way other parts stand to a whole, and one who can't participate or lacks nothing thanks to self-sufficiency is in no way a part of the city, and thus is either beast or god. (I.2, 1253a25-29)

We learn in this passage that we cannot conceive of an individual human apart from the whole of which that individual is a part – this feature is just what distinguishes natural wholes like the city from artificial conglomerates. But in natural wholes, the individual's good, which flows from its nature, is not strictly independent of the good and the nature of the whole.

It has been argued that this claim of Aristotle's all by itself entails a totalitarian politics, since the city is understood as a sort of organism and human beings as its appendages.[8] But Aristotle need not be saying that the city's good is strictly prior to the good of the individual. On this score, interpreters have been misled by Aristotle's vivid but metaphysically misleading analogy relating the citizen to a body part (I.2, 1253a20-25). For a hand has a function that is wholly subservient to the functioning of the whole organism. Aristotle's point is more charitably understood as negative: like a hand, the good of an individual is not strictly independent of the good of the city.[9]

There is happily a third way, which is neither totalitarian nor individualistic, and accommodates Aristotle's method of inquiry: the individual's good and the city's good might be interdefined.[10] Indeed, it might be more precise to say that there is a single good, the human good, which we understanding primarily though perhaps not exclusively through an investigation of the good for an individual, but which also constitutes the good of a city. This could be so, even though what it is to realize this good

[8] See Barnes (1990) for this provocative thesis.

[9] (Trott, 2013, 30-1) similarly resists the stronger reading. The point is not solely a matter of charity, but also of consistency with the doctrine of substance, to which Aristotle appeals in this chapter in his remarks on essence and end.

[10] See also (Trott, 2013, 64-6) for an argument that Aristotle's view is an alternative to individualism and totalitarianism; she describes the relationship between citizen as part and city as whole imprecisely as a 'dialectical interplay' (at 66). The teleological relation in question is *sui generis*, so admittedly it is difficult to describe with full precision.

is quite different in an individual life and in a city.[11] This view would explain Aristotle's insistence that both the *Ethics* and the *Politics* are parts of the same inquiry and his determination nevertheless to begin with the individual human good in the *Ethics*.

The idea that the good of the city and the good of the individual are interdefined is not an idle conclusion. It casts a shadow on quite central claims in the *Politics*, such as that the city is the uniquely political community (I.1, 1252a6-7). For this claim is defended by Aristotle on the grounds that only the city provides for a certain relation among all the individuals that constitute the community – that of ruling and being ruled.[12] No smaller community adequately provides for the leisure needed for distinctively political activity. Instead, 'the needs of the day' despotize us, as happens in pre-political tribal communities or small villages (*Politics* I.2, 1252b9-27). And no larger community allows for the mutual relation to extend throughout the community. Hence, others at a distance from us despotize us (*Politics* II.2, 1261a22-30; III.9). This line of thought only works if the city's nature depends on facts about individuals, their activities, and their good, even though an individual's nature and good is not independent of the city, either.

But what is the alternative to this sort of view? There are two, as I have already mentioned in passing. A totalitarian view argues that the goal of political community is to secure a political good over and above the good of any individuals – safety, say.[13] An individualist view, meanwhile, begins from the assumption that the good of individuals can be identified pre-politically and that this is an input to our thinking about the political good. A typical resulting view is that the goal of political community is to efficiently coordinate the private interests or preferences of its members.

[11] I am not sure how strong the claim about the end of the city and the individual can be made before it falls into implausibility. Sam Levey helpfully suggested to me that Aristotle's conception of the *polis* might work along the lines of Le Corbusier's principle that a house is a machine to live in (itself a perfectly Aristotelian thought!). The shared activity of the political community is of course natural and not artifactual.

[12] This is the single, though sometimes meandering argument of *Politics* I-III. See Riesbeck (2016) for a full statement of an approach to political community that has exerted considerable influence on my thinking about these books of the *Politics*.

[13] This claim is often masked as an appeal to a corporate good, the *salus populi*, but this is conceived in a way that it amounts, illegitimately, to the safety of the regime. That is why any regime that truly meets what Bernard Williams called the Basic Legitimacy Demand is not totalitarian, though it needn't for that reason be liberal (Williams, 2005, 4-9).

I have been arguing that Aristotle is best understood as thinking, in contrast to both the totalitarian and the individualist, that the good of the political community is neither prior to that of the individual nor the other way around. We can borrow some existing terminology to call his view communitarian, though I want to emphasize that I am here identifying a point about the nature of politics, namely, that the good of the political community is not supraethical. This point is logically distinct from communitarian claims about the 'communal nature of the self' or the need for cultural contexts to make possible practices of valuing, etc.[14] For these claims are perfectly consistent with individualism and perhaps even totalitarianism as I have conceived of them here. For instance, the basic communitarian insights about the self and valuing can be readily accommodated within individualism about the good by distinguishing between the political community as such and various sub-political communities.

With this account of the human good, we have already gone some distance toward understanding how the *Ethics* and the *Politics* jointly constitute a single investigation of the human good. This idea prepares us for understanding Aristotle's invocation of PPI in *EN* VI, to which I turn next.

5.4 The Argumentative Force of PPI

For the most part, PPI has been understood as saying that political wisdom is a matter of exercising good judgment about political matters (a truism); 'good judgment' on this deflationary view is not to be identified with the practical wisdom described by the rest of *EN* VI. The deflationary view, therefore, holds that there are two excellences, practical wisdom and political wisdom, each of these being in a way a species of some more general virtue of judgment that could also be called 'practical wisdom'. As Aristotle himself says, this is the ordinary way of talking about matters: normally, we mean by 'practical wisdom' good judgment about oneself and by 'political wisdom' effective deliberation in the assembly.[15] I take his point in asserting the identity of practical and

[14] Cf. (Yack, 1993, 2), who attributes to Aristotle this sort of communitarianism, defended, e.g., by MacIntyre (1984).

[15] I discuss the text in greater detail immediately below.

political wisdom to be a denial of both these commonplaces. Indeed, he is careful not to say something like 'political wisdom is, in a way, a practical wisdom', which would admit of the deflationary interpretation. Rather, he says 'political and practical wisdom are the same [state of soul], though they do not have the same being' (*EN* VI.8, 1141b24-25).

When Aristotle says that two things are the same but do not have the same being, he means that these two things are numerically identical, but not specified by the same definition. In this way, the road from Athens to Thebes and the road from Thebes to Athens are said to be the same (*Physics* III.3, 202b12-14).[16] In reality, these are one and the same road, but we can define the road in either of two directions, and in traversing the road we necessarily traverse one or the other. In Aristotle's logic and metaphysics, numerical sameness is distinguished from sameness in species or in genus.[17] If the deflationary view were true, then Aristotle should have said that practical and political wisdom are the same in genus, not that they are the same but different in being.[18]

The confusion over PPI is compounded by the way Aristotle goes on in this passage, which we should now examine in detail.

> [1] Indeed, political and practical wisdom are the same state, though they do not have the same being. [2] In knowledge pertaining to the city, one part, which is architectonic, is legislative wisdom; and another, which concerns the particulars, has the generic name political wisdom. [3] The latter is for acting and deliberation, since a vote is enacted as what is last [in deliberation]. [4] Hence these people alone are said to practise politics, since they alone act in the way hand-workers do. [5] But what is thought to be practical wisdom most of all concerns oneself and one person, and this has the generic name practical wisdom. [6] And of these [sc. forms of practical wisdom] there is household-management, legislation, and political wisdom, which is divided into the deliberative and the judicial. (VI.8, 1141b24-33)

The passage as a whole seems to land on [6], which flatly presents the various forms of practical wisdom, ranging from household-management to legislation, i.e., constitutional design. Claim [6] however, is not a summary, but part of an argument in which

[16] For more examples and the issues they pose, see (Irwin, 1988, ch. 13, n. 21) and the references cited there.

[17] See especially *Topics* 1.7 and *Metaphysics* Iota 1-4.

[18] Sameness in species is a relation borne by individuals belonging to the same kind, e.g., Bucephalus and Secretariat, and so is irrelevant here.

PPI is a premise. The claim to be defended actually comes at the end of (what the modern – and here, misleading – chapter division marks as) *EN* VI.7.

> [A] Practical wisdom is for acting; hence one must have both [universal and particular knowledge], or the latter more. [B] There would then be in this case, too, some [knowledge] that is architectonic. (1141b22-24)

Aristotle has just argued that neither experience ('knowledge of particulars') nor book-learning ('knowledge of universals') on its own suffices for practical wisdom, a claim he summarizes in [A].[19] Knowledge of particulars is sufficient for practical success, at least in familiar circumstances where one can apply one's experience of previous situations. Such experience is also necessary – someone with universal knowledge alone can't apply her knowledge. There is still, however, a difference between practical wisdom and experience that must be identified. That is Aristotle's conclusion in [B], which he goes on to defend in VI.8.

As is not often recognized, the language Aristotle reaches for in VI.7-8 is taken directly from Plato's *Statesman* (258b-260c).[20] In that dialogue, the Eleatic Visitor calls political expertise architectonic, which means literally 'like the expertise of a master-craftsman'. As the Visitor argues, the master-craftsman exercises his judgment about what is to be done through commanding subordinate workers. Using this model, political expertise is shown to be neither purely ratiocinative (concerned merely with forming judgments) nor practical in the way that manual arts are. It issues judgments that are efficacious in the world (via subordinates), but the work of the ruler, like the master-craftsman, is psychic not bodily.

While no doubt rejecting Plato's metaphysics of action, Aristotle borrows this distinction between the master-craftsman's expertise and that of his subordinates to suggest how practical wisdom goes beyond experience. But how could this distinction apply to practical wisdom, when there is no obvious division of labor? One does not command oneself on the basis of universal understanding of the good. Aristotle, I take it, would accept this claim. As he will argue more explicitly in *EN* VI.10, the point is that

[19] I recapitulate here the interpretation of the passage I gave in Chapter 4, §4.

[20] In the rest of this paragraph, I summarize the argument of my ms. 'Practical Knowledge in Plato's *Statesman*'.

what the practically wise person judges is prescriptive, where this is not conceived in terms of ordering others (the word for 'being prescriptive' is ἐπιτακτική, 1143a8, which Aristotle takes over from *Statesman* 260c). Rather, the idea is that the φρόνιμος acts on his own initiative.

Against this background, we can now see that Aristotle in *EN* VI.7-8 is defending the claim that practical wisdom is a sort of understanding that is at once architectonic and hands-on. It is architectonic because the wise person starts from a grasp of what is good in a universal, situation-independent way that goes beyond experience, just like an excellent writer of laws; and it is hands-on because the wise person uses that grasp to deliberate and choose well in concrete circumstances, like an excellent assemblyman or juror.

Political wisdom offers Aristotle a way of illustrating this point where we have a securer grip on there being one aspect of the knowledge in question that is prescriptive and one which is engaged with action. This is what he does in sentences [2-3] in the VI.8 passage. In the political case, we are inclined to identify a division of labor between those who set up legal systems and think architectonically about politics and those who apply their practical thinking to specific kinds of circumstances. The former are the law-givers and the latter are the deliberators. Both kinds of thinking are political, but excellence in the latter tends to be called the generic name political wisdom, because the connection to practice is more immediate. Indeed, Aristotle remarks in sentence [4], people go so far as to say that the latter are the ones who actually do politics.

But given the line of argument, Aristotle is best understood as rejecting this common view of what it is to do politics. For the idea from the *Statesman*, with which Aristotle concurs, is that the master-craftsmen is every bit or even more an agent than the hand-worker, a word that is, after all, pejorative.[21] Aristotle goes on to say in sentence [6] that, along with household management, deliberative wisdom in the assembly or law-court and legislative wisdom are on a par. They are forms, or better, guises of the same type of wisdom. Each of these figures – the householder, the designer of constitutions, and the practical politician – in a way engages in civic affairs.

[21] See *Metaphysics* A.1, 981a24-b6, which I discussed in chapter 1, §5.

Indeed, each of these excellences is a form or guise of *practical* wisdom, as Aristotle remarks in [5], despite the fact that this excellence is typically attributed to someone who can think through what is good for himself. Again, this is a report about ordinary language that the passage undermines. If practical and political wisdom are the same state, then the single state of soul they are is what is exercised in each of these domains, ranging from private life, to the quasi-community of the household, and into the highest reaches of political affairs. All these practical excellences are devoted to success in action – even the law-giver or constitutional designer is thinking about successful implementation in particular cases.

We can put the thought behind PPI this way: the number of people whose good is in question is incidental to the nature of practical thought. All thinking that belongs to practical wisdom is architectonic insofar as it takes the human good as such as its starting point and all practical wisdom is engaged in practice insofar as it is oriented to success in particular actions. What demarcates one deliberative excellence from another is the social role one is occupying, which is in a way an accident (just as what makes the road I'm traversing the road from Athens to Thebes is the direction in which I'm traversing it, which is incidental to the road). Am I here an individual, or a household-manager, or a deliberator in an assembly? The form of practical thought in each case is the same. That is why Aristotle claims that practical and political wisdom are the same state, though 'different in being', that is, differing in specification according to the context.

We now have a full answer to why the inquiry into the human good in the *Ethics* is political: in implementing the results of that inquiry, we are thinking architectonically, that is, about the human good as such, and the *paradigm* of architectonic thinking is politics proper. It is an accident if we are not presently occupying a social role in which our deliberative influence extends beyond our own lives, and it is most proper for practical thought to have as wide an influence as possible and to be able to shape the circumstances of implementation.

5.5 Deliberation and Rule in the *Politics*

With this account of PPI, we are now in a position to consider why in the *Politics* Aristotle affirms that practical wisdom is the excellence of a ruler, while virtue of character is the excellence of a citizen. Yet the line of thought of *Politics* III, in which these claims appear, itself raises a puzzle about why Aristotle invokes these ethical notions. How do they fit into the straightforwardly political account of citizenship and the city that structures the book?

Let us begin from what Aristotle says about being a citizen in *Politics* III.1-2. Aristotle characterizes citizenship functionally in terms of participation in the activities of exercising authority or rule (*ἀρχή*) and decision-making (*κρίσις*). Authority is especially prominent when individuals hold offices or magistracies, but in more democratic constitutions, authority is diffused through large multi-member institutions, such as the assembly and the jury. By participating in such institutions, as well as through elections and audits, citizens also exercise the power of decision-making, which can at least conceptually be distinguished from the implementation of decisions, which is authority or rule.

But notice that these two features describe the exercises of the power of practical thought in general – coming to a determination and then implementing it. These correspond quite well to the ethical notions of deliberation (*βούλευσις*) and choice (*προαίρεσις*), and it is worth noting that both terms that have a strong political resonance in Greek thought of the mid-4th century. Deliberation is something that takes place paradigmatically in a council (*βουλή*), though common usage extends this notion to an individual's practical thought. Likewise, choice is a term Aristotle takes over from political discourse where it means something like a 'standing policy' that has been adopted (LSJ, s.v.). But in addition to these consonances of thought and language, Aristotle is quite explicit throughout *Politics* III that what it takes to engage in political activities well is practical wisdom and virtue.

Why, then, is the virtue of a citizen not the deliberative excellence of practical wisdom but the virtues of character? One might be tempted to recall Aristotle's remark in *EN* I.13 that the character virtues are virtues of obedience to reason. The excellence

of citizenship, on this line of interpretation, would be obedience to rulers, who in the ideal case employ their reason to come to determinations about what we ought to do collectively.[22] My treatment of PPI shows us why this ought to seem to us to be an unattractive interpretation. If I am right, there is not a special domain of political questions that are the concern of some people, the rulers, and not others, the citizens, who go about their private lives. This distinction cannot be upheld given Aristotle's conception of the human good and its corresponding practical excellences.[23]

What most strongly undermines the 'obedience to reason' interpretation of citizenship, however, is Aristotle's claim in *Politics* III.4 that a citizen must be able both to rule well and to be ruled well. This duality reflects the distinctive character of political rule, which Aristotle contrasts sharply with the one-sidedness of despotic rule:

> Now, rule can be despotic, and we mean by this rule concerning necessities.[…] What those who are ruled in this way do should be learned neither by the good statesman nor by the good citizen, except perhaps for some personal need of theirs. But there is also a kind of rule by which those who are similar in kind, i.e., the free are ruled. This is what we call political rule, which a ruler must learn by being ruled. (1277a33-4; b3-10)

The key idea here is just that being ruled as a citizen is being ruled in a way where we are not compelled, but rather in which we freely participate and which prepares us to rule in turn. Moreover, being a citizen is not simply about being ruled – that would be a kind of despotism.

> The good citizen must know and be able both to be ruled and to rule, and this is the virtue of the citizen, to know the rule of the free from both sides. (1277b13-15)

The 'obedience to reason' interpretation also wrongly suggests that Aristotle is thinking of citizen virtue as something affective rather than rational, whereas Aristotle contrasts the subject (the citizen as ruled) and the citizen as ruler according to different rational states:

[22] See Frede (2005) for an interpretation along these lines.

[23] This interpretation has received illegitimate support from an error printed in many Greek texts and translations of the *Politics* that reads 'the good ruler must be wise, but the citizen need not be' at 1277a14-16. As Peter Simpson notes, what our manuscripts actually have is 'the good ruler must be practically wise, i.e., the statesman [participant in politics] must be' (Simpson, 1997, 83).

> Practical wisdom is the only virtue peculiar to a ruler, since the others, it seems, must be common to both rulers and subjects. But the subject's excellence, at any rate, is not practical wisdom but true belief. (1277b25-28)

This remark represents Aristotle's final statement of the different roles played by a ruler and by a subject in performing the work of citizenship. The citizen-subject is responsible for having true beliefs, while the citizen-ruler is responsible for deliberating. But couldn't these true beliefs just be a conviction in what the rulers have determined? This would lead us back in the direction of the obedience interpretation.

At this point, the two remarks about the excellence of citizenship being virtue of character and being true belief can be put together with the help of a claim from the *Ethics*: character virtue, especially moderation, preserves and furnishes a special kind of true belief, which is true belief about our end or goal (VI.5, 1140b11-13; VII.8, 1151a15-19). Grasping the end or goal, of course, is an essential part of deliberation, since it guarantees that we start in the right place. Such a belief, then, is a promising candidate for being what makes a citizen good. The good citizen, we may surmise, is ready to participate in deliberation because he has the right grasp of the starting point of deliberation. The good ruler is the person who, prepared in this way, actually deliberates well.

But this begins to sound as if Aristotle has collapsed the two roles into one. What is needed to keep them distinct is an account of participation or sharing in deliberation, which does not amount to deliberation simpliciter. Here, another concept from the *EN* that I discussed above in Chapter 1, §3 may help: in *EN* VI.10, Aristotle distinguishes between the virtue of comprehension (*σύνεσις* or *εὐσυνεσία*) and practical wisdom (1142b34-43a18). Comprehension is what enables you to see that what someone else has judged in a deliberative context is right after the fact, whereas practical wisdom is what lets you come up with such a judgment for yourself with the action in prospect. The citizen, then, is a good judge of the ruler's decisions, and judging in this way is a form of participation in the deliberative work of the community.

It is clear how learning to do this well would be the indispensable preparation for actually ruling oneself. This is not merely a matter of happening to have the right beliefs about the goal, but putting them to use in a certain way in the community. The

importance of elections and audits (both evaluations of rule) in Aristotle's theory of citizenship bears out this interpretation of the virtues of citizenship. We tend to think of these as democratic institutions, but by Aristotle's lights they are actually aristocratic, since they are devoted to making sure that those who rule are in fact those who are most capable of doing so.

We can now return to the initial functional characterization of citizenship in *Politics* III.1-3: as sharing in authority and decision-making. As it turns out, there are two ways of so sharing, directly by exercising practical wisdom on behalf of the community as a ruler, and indirectly by exercising comprehension as a citizen-subject. One must learn to rule and be ruled well to have the virtue of a citizen, and learning to be ruled well – exercising comprehension – is part of learning to rule well in one's turn.

5.6 Moderate Intellectualism and Politics

What emerges from Aristotle's account of the human good, the practical wisdom that grasps it, and this wisdom's exercise in the political community is a radically ethical conception of politics.[24] Moderate intellectualism is best placed to account for many features of this account, especially the division of labor between character-virtue and practical wisdom that is central to what Aristotle says about citizenship and rule.[25] Moreover, what Aristotle says about learning to rule well by being ruled well not only strongly reinforces the developmental story I have tried to bring to light, it also adds further details about how precisely our deliberative powers might be cultivated.

In the preceding chapters, I have not emphasized the social dimension of learning wisdom, but it is no surprise given what Aristotle says about habituation and the law in *EN* X.9. Inquiry will be part of the task of learning wisdom, as we refine the understanding of human excellence implicit in our ethical experience. This Aristotle helps us

[24] Cf. Schofield (2006). I agree with Schofield that the accounts of the specific virtues in the *EN* bear out the social character of Aristotle's ethical theory. What I have tried to do here is to go further and show the continuity of the *EN* with the specifically political arguments of the *Politics*.

[25] Cf. Frede (2005), who is rightly baffled by what Aristotle says about the citizen *on the assumption* that possession of the virtues of character entails the possession of practical wisdom. I argued in Chapter 2 that this claim must be qualified.

to do in the *EN* and the *Politics*. But inquiry always threatens to be sterile, to either tell us what we already know or to tell us something that is beyond our cognizance and so not practically helpful. As Aristotle puts it - probably needling his counterparts in the Academy - 'some people, conscious of their own ignorance, are amazed at those who say something grand and beyond them' (*EN* I.4, 1095a25-6). Consciousness of one's ignorance and amazement or wonder are of course the Socratic-Platonic beginnings of philosophy, but this philosophical impulse must be disciplined to the task to deliberation that lies just beyond the space of inquiry.

What we learn from the account of politics is that this task is, by Aristotle's lights, not simply the vague problem of learning to live our 'own' lives well, but the concrete and urgent demand of educating our children and organizing our community. If we are fortunate enough to live in a community where this task is taken seriously, our communal life will be an important site of discovery. These are the labors of wisdom - the deliberative work that is both the source and the fruit of understanding.

Conclusion

6.1 The Case for Moderate Intellectualism

Throughout this dissertation, I have endeavored to use Aristotle's moral epistemology to illuminate philosophical issues in ethics and the theory of practical reason. In this regard, I am following in a tradition of scholars, including Julia Annas, Rosalind Hursthouse, John McDowell, Martha Nussbaum, and David Wiggins, among others, who have made contributions to both historical and systematic questions. In particular, I have defended moderate intellectualism as an interpretation of Aristotle partly by pointing to its advantages as a philosophical view. As a way of taking stock of the significance of my exegetical arguments, I shall conclude by sketching how moderate intellectualism might figure in and contribute to a set of related debates in neo-Aristotelianism about particularism, uncodifiability, and the role of perception in moral reasoning. To be clear, I am not defending moderate intellectualism to the hilt; rather, I believe that entertaining the view as a coherent and plausible position is productive as philosophers try to develop the best version of Aristotelian virtue ethics to respond to issues of contemporary significance.

6.2 Particularism about Moral Reasons

In defining the central question of this dissertation and in mounting my positive argument, I have avoided using the concept of particularism, which features prominently in Aristotelian scholarship, in neo-Aristotelian theories of practical reason, and in non-Aristotelian meta-ethics. My reason for this avoidance is principled: particular-

ism, as Aristotle would put it, is said in many ways; as a result, the crucial interpretive questions about deliberation and practical reason have sometimes been muddled by appeal to it.

The term particularism gained currency as the name for a theory of moral reasons advanced by Jonathan Dancy (see especially Dancy (1993) and Dancy (2004)). Dancy's own position, however, has been subject to this very criticism of vagueness. Indeed, Sean McKeever and Michael Ridge, in their monograph responding to Dancy, spend a chapter outlining 'the many moral particularisms' (McKeever and Ridge, 2006, chapter 1). These form a family of positions that are united only by a negative attitude toward moral principles, more than one of which may be found even in Dancy's work.[1] Likewise, interpretations of Aristotle and neo-Aristotelian accounts of practical reason admit of important differences even when they affiliate themselves with moral particularism.[2]

Nevertheless, because particularism has been prominent in neo-Aristotelianism and my moderate intellectualism seeks to make good on the core insights of the anti-intellectualists (who tend to emphasize Aristotle's particularism), it is now appropriate to step back and to consider where my position stands in the debate between particularism and generalism. This consideration will be a helpful way in to the related issues of uncodifiability and moral perception, which I treat below. I wish especially to defuse the impression that, as a form of intellectualism, my position cannot account for what particularists have found attractive about Aristotle's moral epistemology.

Dancy's particularism centers on an insight he calls the holism of reasons, that is, the insight that the valence (positive, negative, neutral) of a reason in one moral context is no guarantee of its valence in another (Dancy, 2004, chapter 5). The very feature that makes X the thing to do in situation S1 might very well tell against X in situation S2 - e.g., the fact that someone is my sister is reason to help her in many circumstances, but is a reason to avoid helping her in a hiring process over which I have influence.

[1] See Dancy (2013) for his response as to which commitments are and are not central for the moral particularist.

[2] The major difference in Aristotelianism has been the prominence of the related idea of the uncodifiability of morality, which I take up below in §3. Both non-Aristotelian and Aristotelian particularists have emphasized perception, intuition, or situational judgment, which I take up in §4.

According to Dancy, this insight about reasons shapes appropriate patterns of moral inference and so has consequences for a theory of moral deliberation. In particular, the particularist will tell us that we cannot rely on what we know in advance of a situation to determine what to do in that situation.

There is an interesting debate to be had about how far holism may be generalized to all properties or features. Crisp (2000), for instance, argues that virtue (and vice) concepts constitute a invariant core of considerations - e.g., an action's being cowardly is conclusive reason against it. Such a view allows that features that do not directly reference the virtues or closely related normative concepts such as the good and the noble will display the valence-shifting on which the Dancyan particularist rests her case. Given my argument in chapter 4 of this dissertation that 'knowledge of universals' should be understood as knowledge of the nature of the virtues, I take Crisp's view to be close to the one I attribute to Aristotle in the following way: the virtue concepts provide the scheme by which the person of practical wisdom organizes considerations relevant to action. I take it that this is in part what Aristotle means when he says that virtue supplies the end toward which the person of practical wisdom deliberates.

But, as I argued, these concepts do not supply invariant action-guiding principles from which one could work out what to do. Rather, facts about their nature serve as a *norm* or *standard* relative to which a candidate action may be compared. Indeed, a person counts as knowing the universal only if they perform such comparisons successfully. This dependence of knowledge-attibution on practical success is of course also true of ethical experience, as I noted in chapter 2, as well as any other kind of practical knowledge, such as craft.[3]

Leaving aside how far the holism of reasons extends, even Dancy admits a certain kind of situation-to-situation reliability of reasons along with two corresponding facts about deliberation: we often rely on our experience and we do so with good reason. This reliability is what Dancy and others have captured by the notion of 'default reasons' - the presumptive weight that factors that generally tend to one moral conclusion or another have (Dancy, 2004, 111-17, 184-7). But this admission is enough in its own

[3]We should be careful not to reduce the knowledge to a bare capacity for such success: reliability, control, and the discursive awareness they presuppose must be included, too.

right for a kind of moral knowledge, knowledge of defeasible principles that represent default reasons [4] This is just the sort of knowledge I have argued constitutes ethical experience on Aristotle's view. As I argued at the end of chapter 2 and in chapter 3, one of the functions of such knowledge is to render deliberation tractable; without it, we would be bewildered. For it is implausible, as particularists have admitted, that we could 'see' afresh all the relevant factors when we consider a moral situation.[5]

Evidently, then, moderate intellectualism can make good on the core commitment of particularism, namely, that a moral agent must consider what is distinctive of each situation rather than working out what to do in advance. For the two kinds of situation-independent ethical knowledge relevant to deliberation, experience and the insight into the nature of the virtues that develops from it, are both consistent with this commitment. Experience corresponds to a knowledge of default reasons, which inform our deliberation but do not foreclose the need to see whether our experience applies to a situation. Insight into the nature of the virtues helps the person of practical wisdom determine when their experience applies and serves as a standard to determine what is appropriate when our experience runs out. The virtue concepts constitute an exception to holism about reasons, but that thesis is implausible if it is taken to apply even to fairly abstract normative concepts. In any event, even knowledge of universals does not prescribe what to do in advance of a situation.

I note here that moderate intellectualism differs in an important respect from the intellectualist and avowedly generalist view attributed to Aristotle and defended in its own right by Irwin (2000). For it does not make use of so-called v-rules, which also feature prominently in the neo-Aristotelian account of Rosalind Hursthouse (1999). These are rules that take the form 'Act courageously!', 'Act generously!' and so on. Such rules are not action-guiding, as, in effect, Aristotle himself points out when he notes that the doctrine of the mean is vacuous as a practical prescription (*EN* VI.1, 1138b25-32). In effect, moderate intellectualism splits the functions Irwin and Hursthouse attribute to

[4] Again, see (McKeever and Ridge, 2006, chapters 5-6).

[5] Dancy puts the point nicely: '[w]ithout the right sort of regularity, value judgment would be no better than guesswork, and probably worse' (Dancy, 2004, 184). This admission, late in his book, seems to flatly contradict the initial ambition to argue that 'there is nothing that [a moral agent] brings to the new situation other than a contentless ability to discern what matters where it matters' (18).

the v-rules into two kinds of knowledge: first, it identifies more specific ethical principles as relevant for deliberation, i.e., the defeasible principles that constitute ethical experience; second, it makes knowledge of the nature of the virtues relevant to deliberation when our experience runs out, but does not represent this knowledge as a set of rigid rules. By contrast to the v-rules, both kinds of knowledge are action-guiding, since they help orient and constrain deliberation.

6.3 Against Uncodifiability

What about specifically neo-Aristotelian theories of moral reasoning that might be called particularist? In this section and the next, I consider three such theories - those of David Wiggins, John McDowell, and Martha Nussbaum - and contrast them with moderate intellectualism in order to evaluate the views' comparative merits.[6] I shall organize the discussion around a pair of ideas these theorists find in Aristotle: (1) the idea that the ethical domain is uncodifiable and (2) the idea that the practically wise person possesses a kind of distinctly moral perception.

I shall briefly foreshadow my comparative and evaluative remarks. Moderate intellectualism is perhaps best seen as rejecting both (1) and (2), at least in the strongest form in which they appear in these theorists. On uncodifiability the view most closely approximates that of Nussbaum, who allows for the importance and even the indispensability of experience; and on moral perception the view is closest to Wiggins, who emphasizes what he calls situational appreciation, but does not insist it must be distinctly moral. The view is right, I think, to reject the extreme version of the uncodifiability thesis (and the associated meta-ethical intuitionism) of McDowell. On moral perception, the view fares well - as I have been arguing in relation to meta-ethical particularism - since it captures the important particularist insight that Nussbaum calls the priority of the particular, while still accommodating the existence of genuine situation-independent moral knowledge. Moderate intellectualism is also consistent with Nussbaum's extension of this insight to a distinctly moral form of perception of individuals,

[6]The exemplary works I have in mind are Wiggins (1976), McDowell (1979), and Nussbaum (1990).

though this is a commitment that the view does not make central. Whether this is a merit or demerit of the view will depend on the persuasiveness of arguments that individuals in their particularity are an essential part of ethical thought.

Let us begin from uncodifiability. I argued in the Introduction that the passage of *EN* II.2 frequently used by anti-intellectualists to defend their reading of Aristotle says less than it is often taken to mean, and that if we begin from the more detailed remarks about the ethical domain that Aristotle makes in *EN* I.3-4 and VI.2, the Book II passage takes on a different cast. In particular, I argued that in distinguishing the account of the universal from the account of the particulars, Aristotle is allowing that, as must be possible given his inquiry into ethical matters, we can systematize the ethical domain to some extent, while emphasizing that the results cannot guide action in advance of the challenges of particular situations. As I noted in the previous section, moderate intellectualism, as much as typical particularist views, involves the latter thought about deliberation.

By contrast, Wiggins and McDowell both insist that Aristotle rules out systematization in ethics and that he is right to do so. But in making this case they set up a false dilemma. Either, it is claimed, we must allow that there are no genuine moral rules or we are saddled with a rule-bound ethics, which is inflexible or insensitive to particularity. But moderate intellectualism shows us how to hold on to *some* systematization without losing flexibility and sensitivity. Ultimately, I believe this thought would be hospitable to Wiggins's view or at least a close cousin of it. (I shall take up McDowell's view shortly.)

Wiggins recognizes that 'it may be complained that in the end very little is said, because everything which is hard has been permitted to take refuge in the notion of aisthêsis or situational appreciation as I have paraphrased this' (Wiggins, 1976, 48). But the invokation of situational appreciation is meant to avoid turning a theory of rational action 'into a regulative or normative discipline, or into a system of rules' (ibid., 49). It is uncertain just what Wiggins means by 'a regulative or normative discipline', but what is suggested throughout his essay as the view of action and deliberation to be resisted is something like an *algorithmic decision procedure*. Such a decision procedure may be a temptation for the strict intellectualist, but is not for the moderate one. Certainly, the

moderate intellectualist can share Wiggins's sentiment that '[i]n no case will there be a rule which a man can simply appeal to to tell him exactly what to do' (ibid., 48).

Yet assuredly there is a difference in emphasis between moderate intellectualism and the view Wiggins defends: on the former, rules and precepts are not held to be helpful only in the course of education. For I have argued that the kind of creative thought that does belong to the person of practical wisdom is itself guided by experience.

Beyond the issue of the possibility of deliberating well with or without such experience as one's starting points, there is a further philosophical point in favor of precepts that has been defended, e.g., by McKeever and Ridge (2006), among others. Rules and precepts are a way of sharing insights in a broader moral community, perhaps even a trans-historical one. Whether or not Aristotle himself countenanced the trans-historical version of such an idea is unclear, though his methodological commitment to taking seriously what wise people before his time have said about philosophical issues suggests he would be amenable to it (this is the so-called endoxic method). But in any event, Aristotle remarks that 'we should pay heed to what is said or judged without explanation by those who are older and have experience or by the practically wise no less than to explanations' (*EN* VI.11, 1143b11-13). This remark shows that Aristotle thinks moral theory or structured inquiry in search of explanations is not the only source of insight. We depend in our search for moral knowledge on the others around us who have seen better or at least first. (My discussion of the political character of practical wisdom in Chapter 5 was meant in part to illustrate this feature of Aristotle's view.)

While McDowell shares Wiggins's antipathy to modelling practical reason on inference from rules (what McDowell labels the 'deductive paradigm'), his view of uncodifibiality is more radical than Wiggins's (McDowell, 1979, esp. 336-342). For he is motivated not simply by a hostility to the quasi-scientific aspirations of utilitarian ethics but by Wittgensteinian concerns about rule-following quite generally.[7] On the Wittgensteinian view, it is certainly taken for granted that a rule or set of rules requires situational appreciation in order to apply. But McDowell takes this idea to show that

[7]In seeing what is especially radical about McDowell's view, I have been helped by (O'Neill, 1996, chapter 3).

a practical rule is at best *posterior* to the situated agent's capacity for seeing what to do, and it is a distortion to suppose when that agent exercises her capacity that she is thereby 'following' that rule. Nothing in the rule could tell her how to go on, after all. As McDowell puts it, reflecting on Wittgenstein's example of adding 2:

> [i]f someone is extending the series correctly, and one takes his behaviour to be compliance with the understood instruction, then, according to this picture, one has postulated such a psychological mechanism, underlying his behaviour, by an inference analogous to that whereby one might hypothesize a physical structure underlying the observable motions of some inanimate object. But this picture is profoundly suspect. (1979, 337)

McDowell's picture of rules and what it is to follow them conflates two very different sorts of principles: descriptions of behavioral regularities and normative precepts. Certainly, descriptions of behavioral regularities are always posterior to the agency they describe, and if they are put to us as authoritative over our agency, we will rightly resist. But only if we conflate normative precepts with such descriptive regularities will it seem inevitable that we must be alienated from normative precepts, too. For I do not have to take myself to be *bound* by a rule (as if the rule were acting through me) to take it to have normative weight, that is, to show me how I *might* go on. Indeed, the usefulness of a precept such as the principle of generosity that emerged from the example I discussed in chapters 3 and 4 - that a gift need not be perfect to be given well - depends on the agent's ability to deliberate with it. As I argued, our embrace of this precept would *display* our understanding of generosity rather than undermining it. For in being ready to invoke the precept as an explanation for the appropriateness of our action, we do not offer the kind of action-explanation that circumvents our agency.

To sum up, if all rules could do is substitute for agency, then they would rightly have no place in ethical reasoning. McDowell himself recognizes that in making sense of our actions to others, we will often bring up general considerations to try to get them to see the case we have seen it (1979, 342). But in denying that they could have any role in working out what to do, he goes further than Wiggins.

By contrast to Wiggins and McDowell, Nussbaum makes considerable room for rules and experience on her picture of practical reasoning 'so long as they keep their

place' (Nussbaum, 1990, 73). In addition to their role in moral development (noted in passing by Wiggins and McDowell), they can be useful for the mature moral agent in three other respects: as a back-up plan if time is short, as a bulwark against bias, and as a way of identifying salient features even when time is not short and bias not a worry. Elaborating on this last function, Nussbaum continues:

> Our emphasis on flexibility should not, however, make us imagine that Aristotelian perception is rootless and ad hoc, rejecting all guidance from the past. The good navigator does not go by the rule book; and she is prepared to deal with what she has not seen before. But she knows, too, how to use what she has seen; she does not pretend that she has never been on a boat before. Experience is concrete and not exhaustively summarizable in a system of rules. Unlike mathematical wisdom it cannot be adequately encompassed in a treatise. But it does offer guidance, and it does urge on the recognition of repeated as well as unique features. Even if rules are not sufficient, they may be highly useful, frequently even necessary. (1990, 75)

In defending moderate intellectualism, I have tried to show that the usefulness and necessity of experience for wise deliberation are absolutely central to Aristotle's moral epistemology. Even more so than with Wiggins, whose account of deliberation Nussbaum cites approvingly just before the passage quoted, my disagreements with Nussbaum's view of the uncodifiability of the practical can be understood as one of emphasis. On moderate intellectualism, quite a bit of the ethical domain can be captured in true, defeasible generalizations, knowledge of which constitutes ethical experience. As a result, not everything important is left to situational appreciation as Wiggins holds. Moreover, if Aristotle holds the picture of ordinary virtue I have attributed to him, and he is right to think that the ability to deliberate wisely is something extraordinary, then we have additional reason to approve of experience as often our best guide.

Of course, even applying one's experience takes situational appreciation or careful discernment, which is enough to resist the algorithmic decision procedures or deductive paradigms that each of Wiggins, McDowell, and Nussbaum identifies as their common target. One of the attractions of moderate intellectualism, then, is allowing for systematicity in ethical matters without jeopardizing the need for situational appreciation.

6.4 Bounding the Role of Perception

Having said that the importance of situational appreciation is what allies me to the neo-Aristotelian particularists despite our differences over uncodifiability, I must clarify how I conceive of such situational appreciation in contrast to at least some of what these theorists say. The most pressing question is whether *perception itself* can be distinctly moral. One way of holding this view amounts to a form of meta-ethical intuitionism, on which *moral properties* are (part of) what we perceive.[8] McDowell can reasonably be taken to hold this view.

It is difficult to find any direct evidence for such a view in either the psychological or ethical works of Aristotle. Indeed, it is difficult even to formulate such a view in the language of proper, common, and incidental objects of perception (see *De Anima* II.6). Aristotle does of course use perceptual metaphors to describe acquaintance and other forms of knowledge.[9] I discussed one example of this tendency at the end of Chapter 2, the idea that the base have not 'tasted' the fine (*τοῦ καλοῦ ἄγευστοι* at *EN* X.9, 1179b15-16). (I note that readers have not been inclined to take this gustatory metaphor to entail anything about how the virtuous know what is fine, though the visual metaphors in *EN* VI have attracted just such inferences.) When Aristotle discusses perception directly in the context of deliberation, it is to note that we must simply notice certain facts rather than reasoning about them - in his wonderfully down-to-earth example, whether the bread is fully baked (*EN* III.3, 1112b33-13a2). Aristotle also allies perception to the minor premise of the practical syllogism, 'the premise of the possible' as opposed to 'the premise of the good' per *De Motu Animalium* (701a23-25). These considerations strongly suggest that moral properties are not themselves perceived.

On a purely exegetical level, then, we should reject intuitionism as an interpretation of Aristotle. Is it a more attractive view than Aristotle's in its own right? The problem with intuitionism and views in its near vicinity is that they assign to perception a function that is not subject to further rational scrutiny. Indeed, McDowell makes exactly

[8] For a recent defense of such a view, which tries to respond to some of the most obvious objections to it, see Audi (2013).

[9] This is a pervasive philosophical and indeed cultural phenomenon - see Lakoff and Johnson (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, 349).

this point about rational scrutiny in his remarks about the application of ethical concepts, while claiming it as an advantage rather than a drawback of his view. (We may label this view *conceptual ethical intuitionism*.)

> Consider, for instance, a concept whose application gives rise to hard cases, in this sense: there are disagreements which resist resolution by argument, as to whether or not the concept applies. Convinced that one is in the right on a hard case, one will find oneself saying, as one's arguments tail off without securing assent, "You simply aren't seeing it," or "But don't you see?" (McDowell, 1979, 340)

McDowell thinks it is an 'illusion' to think we do not necessarily reach this point. I agree with McDowell that there must be *some* such cases, in other words, that explanation must give out at some point and that we should not aspire to answering every question with a deductively valid argument. As Aristotle would put it, a person who asks for a reason in such a case does not need an argument but rather education. But the point need not favor ethical intuitionism, provided that we do not literally perceive the fit between a case and the moral concept or standard to be applied.

Returning to Aristotle (as McDowell also takes himself to be doing in his essay) will illustrate this point. When Aristotle claims that what the virtuous person perceives sets the standard of what is the case ethically speaking, he is appealing to their *virtue* and not to their faculty of perception as fixing the standard (*EN* X.5, 1176a10-29 *et passim*). It is true that when our emotions and desires are cultivated a certain way so as to constitute virtue of character, the courageous and the generous will simply be appealing to us and the cowardly and the miserly unappealing. But in trying to discover *what action or policy* is in point of fact courageous or cowardly, generous or miserly, we must employ practical reasoning and cannot simply rely on our perception. For as Aristotle says, virtue of character makes us have good goals, while practical wisdom makes us find what promotes these goals. When we identify a candidate action as the thing to do, no deductive argument can show us that it *is* the thing to do. But our practical reasoning succeeds insofar as we are right that this action is courageous or not, and getting this right is about the *upshot* of what we perceive - e.g., our *judgments* of salience - not about our perceptions themselves.

McDowell's point about commanding the assent of someone else is therefore a red herring. It does not settle the issue of whether the other person ought to assent on the basis of sharing a perception or on the basis of appreciating the considerations we raise as an exercise of their practical reason, which Aristotle calls 'comprehension' (*σύνεσις*) in *EN* VI.10.[10] The latter account, which dovetails with moderate intellectualism, can account for much of what McDowell wants out of his conceptual ethical intuitionism, while avoiding the difficulty about the lack of rational scrutiny (or what we might call the 'ineffability' objection to his view).

Nussbaum's view of moral perception is *not* a form of intuitionism. She argues instead that the indispensability of perception to moral reasoning is partly due to the fact that nonrepeatable properties or indeed individual people can and must feature in our moral thought. These claims also amount to a defense of the idea of distinctly moral perception, since it is partly constitutive of good practical thought that we be attuned to such nonrepeatable properties or individuals. I regard this position to be an extension of the Aristotelian position to accommodate an insight we might think it makes possible, but which Aristotle himself does not tend to exploit. On this view, in addition to situational appreciation being a crucial part of how we negotiate the manifold considerations of practical reasoning, only by it can we recognize the moral significance of the uniquely particular. This is a special way of attending to things and people that Iris Murdoch called love.[11]

Despite Aristotle's remarks that true friends love one another because of who the other is, his conception of personal identity is far from individualistic in the way needed to make this insight central to his moral theory.[12] At the very least, he says little or nothing about how individuals *in their individuality* matter to the virtuous person, even in his treatment of friendship and love. His emphasis is instead on the possibility of shared activity, where we might think the uniqueness of the other tends to fall away from focus.

By juxtaposing what I take to be Aristotle's more modest view of moral perception

[10] Recall my remarks about the political exercise of this faculty in Chapter 5, in which I draw on *EN* X.9.

[11] See especially (Murdoch, 1970, 99-101).

[12] See (Gill, 1996, chapter 5).

and reasoning and Nussbaum's extension of it, we are in a position, again, to ask: which is superior? As far as nonrepeatable or unique features of situations go, I doubt that these cannot be analyzed as bundles of repeatable features and thereby accommodated even on Aristotle's view. Individual people pose a different problem. I am tempted to say that Aristotle's view succumbs to Nussbaum's critique of other ethical positions, despite its emphasis on the value of the emotions and the need for creative or imaginative thought: individuals are not as such part of the ethical landscape for Aristotle.[13] Nevertheless, our attachments to particular individuals will, I think, figure indirectly in the conception of a good human life possessed by the virtuous and wise person. Surely it makes little sense for one to be moved by the idea that courage is valuable because it preserves one's political community or by the idea that generosity is valuable because it helps sustain friendship and other social relations if one were not attached to one's particular community and one's particular friends. But on Aristotle's view such attachments will not directly move us to act in one way or another, except as mediated by the more general and impersonal concepts.

In the end, it may be that carving out an explicit place for the ethical significance of individual attachments matters more in a time when the dominant ethical theories, such as most Kantian and utilitarian ones, insist on the irrelevance or even perniciousness of those attachments. While nothing in Aristotle's theory of moral reasoning rules out perception of the significance of individuals, it is a thought that must, I think, be added to his view rather than taken to be constitutive of it. As a dialectical matter, if one is not moved by Nussbaum's arguments about the significance of individuals to moral thought, moderate intellectualism can still emphasize situational appreciation without taking on board this commitment, though it is consistent with it. On the question of perception, then, the view ends up being most similar to that of Wiggins, who does not seem to be advocating a distinctly moral kind of perception. This may be a superficial agreement, since Wiggins's view is less fully worked out than McDowell's or Nussbaum's, who each say a good deal about the wider significance of their theories of practical reasoning for how our lives go in general.

[13] See Williams (1976) for a slightly different critique of such positions.

6.5 Prospects for Further Work

I have confined my remarks about the merits of moderate intellectualism in this conclusion to issues that are prominent in the neo-Aristotelian literature on ethics and practical reason, where it is most directly relevant. There are other areas in which the view might be of interest, one of which I will develop briefly here by way of example, namely, elitism in virtue ethics and political philosophy.

A concern about Aristotle's virtue theory, aired for instance by Julia Driver in her 2001 monograph, is that his demanding intellectual conception of practical wisdom represents an unwelcome form of elitism in his moral theory: only a very few people could ever hope to attain its heights and this for the wrong reasons (for lack of ability rather than laziness). For Driver, this is an opening gambit in an argument that some virtues depend not on knowledge, but ignorance; all the same, this initial move would be endorsed by many ethicists and requires a response from those who wish to defend an Aristotelian view in contemporary ethics.

If I'm right, then Aristotle has a good deal more to say about ordinary virtue than he is typically taken to. Moreover, if we can have a share of the virtues without fully having the intellectual insights he takes to belong to practical wisdom, then practical wisdom can serve as a target for aspiration rather than a requirement to meet basic moral demands. Whatever elitism is left is of the kind that should inspire moral progress rather than pessimism. Difficult issues will remain, e.g., whether the cognitively disabled can be virtuous, but the Aristotelian view is more promising on the moderately intellectualist reading than on the view of him assumed by Driver. Likewise, if the insight needed to be a good citizen depends on virtue and can be cultivated in the more ordinary aspects of social life and not only in the highest reaches of political office, then Aristotle's view in fact provides resources for combating technocracy and epistocracy, the forms of political elitism most prevalent today.[14]

In future work, I plan to take up this issue in greater detail, as well as others, such as

[14]See Estlund (2008) for an account of the challenge posed by epistocracy and resources for responding to it and Brennan (2016) for a brash defense of epistocracy over democracy. While these theorists are not talking about technocracy (rule by domain-specific experts), it is a close cousin or perhaps even a version of epistocracy (rule by the politically knowledgeable).

the nature of the virtue-skill analogy, how habit plays a role in shaping our deliberative faculties, and whether we revise our values through engagement or reflection. Because moderate intellectualism emphasizes both situation-independent ethical knowledge and situation-specific judgment, it is well-equipped to address a range of challenges to an Aristotelian moral epistemology.

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