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PHRONESIS AND VIRTUE IN NICOMACHEAN ETHICS

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*PHRONESIS AND VIRTUE IN NICOMACHEAN
ETHICS*

A Master's Thesis

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May 2024

To my family



*PHRONESIS AND VIRTUE IN NICOMACHEAN
ETHICS*

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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By Kerem Özcan

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

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Phronesis is the intellectual virtue of deliberating well regarding human goods. Aristotle introduces a biconditional requirement between *phronesis* and moral virtue; one cannot be present without the other. It seems puzzling, considering that they are different types of virtues with different tasks and acquisition processes. Therefore, a proper, detailed account of *phronesis* should be in accordance with what Aristotle directly says about *phronesis* and should shed light on the biconditional requirement. One attempt to understand *phronesis* is to form a parallelism between *techne* (art, skill, craft) and *phronesis*. This model attributes *phronesis* to power to an intellectual grasp of goodness, causal justifications, and ethical principles that underlie our actions. I argue that even though the technical conception of *phronesis* seems sufficient to explain why virtue requires *phronesis*, it fails to explain why *phronesis* requires virtue. Therefore, I suggest forming an analogy between *empeiria* (experience, knack) and *phronesis* that can

explain both parts of the biconditional. In this empirical understanding, *phronesis* can be defined as an ethically significant intellectual virtue not based on cognitively high-powered reasoning but on everyday reasoning equipped with experience, memory, and observation. Accordingly, I argue that the empirical conception of *phronesis* forms a unified dispositional state with the virtue of character for two reasons. Firstly, it weakens the strict division of labor between virtue and *phronesis* concerning ends and the things toward ends. Moreover, since the acquisition processes of virtue and the empirical conception of *phronesis* become intertwined, it seems more plausible to identify them as integrated parts of one dispositional state rather than two distinct cooperating states.

Key Words: *Empeiria, Phronesis, Techne, Virtue,*

ÖZET

NIKOMAKHOS'A ETİK'TE PHRONESIS VE ERDEM

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Phronesis, insani iyilikler konusunda iyi düşünmenin entelektüel erdemidir. Aristoteles, *phronesis* ile ahlaki erdem arasında iki koşullu bir gereklilik ortaya koyar; biri olmadan diğeri var olamaz. Farklı görevlere ve edinim süreçlerine sahip farklı türde erdemler olduğu düşünüldüğünde bu durum kafa karıştırıcı görünmektedir. Bu nedenle, *phronesis*'in doğru ve ayrıntılı bir açıklaması, Aristoteles'in doğrudan *phronesis* hakkında söyledikleriyle uyumlu olmalı ve bu iki koşullu gereksinime ışık tutmalıdır. *Phronesis*'i anlama çabalarından biri, *techne* (sanat, beceri, zanaat) ile *phronesis* arasında bir paralellik oluşturmaktır. Bu model, *phronesis*'e, eylemlerimizin altında yatan iyiliğe, nedensel gerekçelere ve etik ilkelere dair entelektüel bir kavrayış gücü atfeder. *Phronesis*'in *techne* gibi kavranışı, erdemin neden *phronesis*'i gerektirdiğini açıklamak için yeterli görünse de, *phronesis*'in neden erdem gerektirdiğini açıklamakta başarısız olduğunu iddia ediyorum. Bu nedenle *empeiria* (deneyim, ustalık) ile *phronesis* arasında

iki kořulluluęun her iki kısmını da açıklayabilecek bir analogi kurmayı öneriyorum. Bu ampirik anlayışta, *phronesis*, bilişsel açıdan yüksek güçlü akıl yürütmeye değil, deneyim, hafıza ve gözlemle donatılmış günlük akıl yürütmeye dayalı, etik açıdan belirleyici bir entelektüel erdem olarak tanımlanabilir. Buna göre, *Phronesis'in* ampirik kavranışının iki nedenden dolayı karakter erdemiyle birleşik bir eğilimsel durum oluşturduęunu ileri sürüyorum. Birincisi, amaçlar ve amaçlara yönelik şeylerle ilgili olarak erdem ve *phronesis* arasındaki güçlü iş bölümünü zayıflatır. Dahası, erdemin kazanılma süreçleri ve ampirik olarak kavranan *phronesis* iç içe geçtiğinden, onları iş birliği yapan iki farklı durumdan ziyade tek bir eğilimsel durumun bütünleşmiş parçaları olarak tanımlamak daha makul görünmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Empeiria*, Erdem, *Phronesis*, *Techne*,

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INTRODUCTION

Aristotle divides virtues into two groups, intellectual virtues, and character virtues, in accordance with the twofold sense of reason. While reason in the strict sense refers to the capability of producing reasoning by itself, reason in the extended sense refers to the capability or tendency to obey and be persuaded by reason (*NE*: 1102b29-1103a3). The division raises the question of the role that intellect plays in the virtues of character. *Phronesis* (practical wisdom) seems crucial in understanding the role of intellect in virtue character since it is an intellectual virtue (1103a6); yet, *phronesis* is related to ethical issues since it is related to deliberating well and associated with seeing “what is good for themselves and what is good for men in general” (1140a24-1140b19). Moreover, practical wisdom is identified as the “true state of capacity to act with regard to human goods” (1140b20- 21). Therefore, to understand the role of intellect in virtue of character, it is necessary to understand whether *phronesis* and virtue form an integrated dispositional state to act or whether they are two distinct states. This is why, it is crucial to give a descriptive and detailed understanding of *phronesis* with its relation to character virtues. One way to approach the issue is to address the difference between natural and proper virtues.

In *Nicomachean Ethics* Book VI 13, Aristotle draws a distinction between natural virtue and proper virtue by pointing out three distinctive features of proper virtue. Firstly, Aristotle asserts a mutual dependency between proper virtue and practical wisdom (*phronesis*) when he claims: “It is clear, then, from what has been said, that it is not possible to be good in the strict sense without practical wisdom, nor practically wise without moral excellence” (1144b30-32). Moreover, he suggests, thanks to *phronesis*, proper virtues cannot exist in isolation “for with the presence of the one quality, practical wisdom, will be given all the excellences” (1145a1-2). In the case of natural virtues, on the other hand, there is no requirement of complete virtue of character to have one: “the same man, it might be said, is not best equipped by nature for all the excellences, so that he will have already acquired one when he has not yet acquired another” (1145a9-11). To shed light on our debate, whether *phronesis* is an integral part of the virtue of character or not, we need to analyze three main questions with regard to the distinction between natural and genuine virtue to understand which camp is better positioned to explain the way proper virtue is distinguished from natural ones:

- 1) Why does genuine virtue require *phronesis*?
- 2) Why does *phronesis* require genuine virtue?
- 3) Why does having one virtue require all of them?

These questions are directly relevant to the debate concerning whether virtues of character are partly rational states since it might be the involvement of reason that differentiates genuine virtues from natural ones. Indeed, according to Aristotle, some natural dispositions, which can be called natural virtues, are distinguished from genuine virtues by lack of thought (1144b1-1144b29). Similarly, Aristotle claims that natural

virtues can be possessed by non-rational agents (such as children or brutes), whereas virtue in the strict sense requires practical wisdom (1144b1- 1144b29). Now, genuinely virtuous actions require more than merely a non-rational disposition to act in a certain way; that can also be accomplished by natural virtues. What is required more seems to be the correct reasoning (or rational decision-making process) concerning what to do. Otherwise, we would have to admit that agents without rationality (children and brutes) can be virtuous as well as adult human beings, which Aristotle denies (1144b8-9). In addition to failure to accomplish proper virtue, natural dispositions (to act virtuously) can even be hurtful for us if the agent lacks proper thought (*nous*); Aristotle forms an analogy between natural virtues (without thought) and a strong body (without sight) to express insufficiency and dangers of having merely non-rational dispositions (1144b9-11) which are not guided by a rational capacity, which is called “eye of the soul” (1144a31). He also clarifies that the necessary quality to reach genuine virtue is *phronesis*, practical wisdom. Because while genuine virtue should be “in accordance with the reason”, the right reason should be “in accordance with practical wisdom” (1144b21-22). Aristotle also seems to make a further step to avoid confusion by saying that virtue in the strict sense “is not merely the state in accordance with right reason, but the state that implies the presence of right reason” (1144b25-26). Also, the right reason is associated with *phronesis*, so *phronesis* and proper virtue cannot be present without each other (1144b30-32). Furthermore, unlike in the case of natural virtues, one of which might be equipped by one without others, virtues in the strict sense cannot be acquired separately since *phronesis* guarantees the acquisition of all the virtues (1145a1-2). In other words, unlike natural virtues, in the case of genuine virtue, the presence of one would also imply others.

Three features of genuine virtue distinguish it from natural virtue. The first is that virtue, in the strict sense, involves utilizing rationality or thought with respect to action (1144b11-13). In parallel, the genuine virtue of character depends on *phronesis*, which leads us to the second and third features of genuine virtue. The second feature is that there is a biconditional requirement between *phronesis* and the genuine virtue of character, meaning that one can have a genuine virtue only if she has *phronesis* and one can have *phronesis* only if she is genuinely virtuous (1144b30-32). The last feature stemming from the second is that if a person has one genuine virtue, he must have acquired all others as well since the condition of developing virtue in the strict sense is to develop *phronesis*, which also guarantees that you have all virtues (1144b37-38). One cannot have a genuine virtue without having all others; following Irwin, we may call this argument the reciprocity of virtues (RV) (1988: p. 61). This is why Aristotle says that the presence of *phronesis* implies being “without qualification good” (1144b36-37). In other words, while a single virtue (e.g., courage) secures goodness in the limited and specified sense (only for braveness), the good that *phronesis* provides has no qualification or it is not limited to one aspect of ethical life so that “with the presence of the one quality, practical wisdom [*phronesis*], will be given all the excellences [virtues]” (1144b37-8). Therefore, “being without qualification good”, provided by the presence of *phronesis*, means that you are genuinely virtuous in the complete sense.

As mentioned, the difference between natural and genuine virtue presents a puzzle that a proper and detailed understanding of *phronesis* should explain. The relevant puzzle seems threefold: We need to explain 1) why/how proper virtues require *phronesis*, 2) why/how

phronesis requires proper virtue of character, and 3) Why/how a single genuine virtue implies all others (reciprocity of virtue thesis).



CHAPTER 1

WHY DOES GENUINE VIRTUE REQUIRE *PHRONESIS*?

To clarify the first question, the essentiality of *phronesis* for virtue, and introduce a solution to the puzzle, first, we need to analyze the more general question of what *phronesis* is. According to Aristotle, *phronesis* is an intellectual virtue (1103a4-6).

Nevertheless, *phronesis* is related to ethical issues since it is related to deliberating well and associated with seeing “what is good for themselves and what is good for men in general” (1140b8-9). So, it seems plausible to argue that *phronesis* involves achieving the ultimate ethical good (*eudaimonia*) we are trying to accomplish in life.

However, if it was limited to this, how could we differentiate it from theoretical knowledge concerning moral issues or what virtue or *eudaimonia* is? While understanding the role of *phronesis* in identifying what is good, we should not overlook the passages in which Aristotle emphasizes its active role in forming our actions. For instance, *phronesis* is identified as the “true state of capacity to act with regard to human

goods” (1140b20-21)¹. Therefore, in addition to the general comprehension of what is good, *phronesis* provides the proper application of good in particular situations “firmly and flexibly” (Annas, 1995: 74). In other words, *phronesis* does not only include the general understanding of goodness but also a capacity to identify the goodness in particulars to decide the true course of action. As Irwin puts it, the “[practically] wise person has to know about particulars as well as universals because he has to get the right answer in particular cases” (1988: 65-66). Therefore, in addition to the general understanding of good and the capability of reasoning in particular situations, *phronesis* should also involve experience of particular cases and empirical knowledge (Irwin, 1988: 65).

The active and crucial role of *phronesis* in practice can also be understood by clarifying the necessity of deliberation and choice for virtue. As mentioned, virtuous action must be chosen for its own sake for an agent to be counted virtuous (1105a27-1105b4). Although objects of deliberation and choice are the same, choice is determined as a result of deliberation (1113a3-a5). Since virtues “are choices or involve choice” (1106a3-a4), deliberation is directly linked with virtues. *Phronesis*, the virtue of deliberating well (1140a24-26), is directly involved in the actions performed in particular situations. *Phronesis*, then, can be described as the rational disposition to make correct judgments (Annas, 1988: 74) by taking the general human good, particular conditions of the situation, and the agent into account.

¹ Concerning this, Annas points out that it might be misleadingly paradoxical to translate *phronesis* as practical wisdom since the word “wisdom” implies an “inactive contemplation”, which does not seem compatible with the word “practical”, of which reference is to practice and action (1988: 73).

In light of this, we can offer a model, which will be called the Technical Model, for the solution of the first puzzle. Annas appeals to skill (*technē*) analogy to explain why virtue requires *phronesis*². So, Annas suggests that, contrary to “mere experience” (*empeiria*), it is the mark of skill that you have an intellectual grasp of what you are doing (1988: 67):

For Aristotle what is important about a skill is that it is the point at which the agent has risen to intellectual grasp of the universal, of what particular cases share. Someone with mere ‘experience’ can muddle through from case to case, and can even be successful, but the person with skill knows what she is doing and why, and can explain this to others.

Therefore, since *technē* “is a state concerned with making, involving true course of reasoning”, the difference between the skillful builder and the one who has not yet developed the skill of building is that the latter does not know what the true account of building or the reasons is why some buildings are better than others (Annas, 1988: 67). The analogy seems to suggest that making something with mere experience (even though it can be made truly) resembles a natural virtue by which one can act correctly without the ability to give an account of why it is the correct way of acting. The analogy can suggest that having knowledge as a condition of virtuous action does not only mean being aware that one is acting virtuously, but also possessing the ability to provide a correct account of why the actions in question are virtuous. In other words, to be virtuous, one needs to have “an understanding that can be represented as a unified grasp of the principles that underlie his actions and decisions” (Annas, 1988: 67). Otherwise, there is

²Since Aristotle draws a parallelism between developing a skill (*technē*) and acquiring virtue in terms of the priority of exercise to the acquisition, comparing *technē* and virtue might explain the essentiality of *phronesis*. Indeed, Aristotle himself makes such comparison to reveal some features of virtue (1103a31-1103b2):

For the things we have to learn before we can do, we learn by doing, e.g. men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.

also a possibility of choosing the same action for the wrong reasons, which points out a lack of virtue in deliberation and the absence of *phronesis*. So, a person who knows that his current action is virtuous, as well as why it is virtuous, should be different from the one for whom it is unclear why the particular action she is performing is virtuous even though she knows (aware) that it is virtuous. Hence, *phronesis* contributes to the development of virtuous character by offering a comprehensive understanding of what is good and the guiding principles, forming the basis for one's overall decisions and actions (Annas, 1988: 68). In this sense, *phronesis* ensures the genuineness of virtue by making one's actions and decisions regarding that virtue consistent across particular situations while at the same time providing the flexibility that different situations require. For instance, one might have a natural disposition to act bravely, enabling one to perform brave actions in various situations. However, without a comprehensive and consistent understanding of what bravery requires, which is supposed to be given by *phronesis*, she would not be able to explain why she is exercising bravery. More importantly, she might try to exercise the virtue of bravery when it is unnecessary or disadvantageous; in that case, the relevant action would not be the exercise of bravery but might be aggressiveness or offensiveness. In other words, natural virtue may fail to be exercised due to the absence of *phronesis*.

Hence, in addition to a general intellectual grasp of ethical principles, the contribution of *phronesis* also provides reliability to success; therefore, it could also be counted as an additional difference between natural virtue and proper virtue, according to the Technical Model. However, Annas does not directly argue against the possibility of performing virtuous actions reliably without developing *phronesis*. In fact, she does not seem to

acknowledge a person who does the right thing in a stable and reliable way without the ability to give principles according to which she acts as virtuous. She claims that (1998: 67):

The virtuous person is not just the person who does in fact do the morally right thing, or even does it stably and reliably. She is the person who *understands* the principles on which she acts, and thus can explain and defend her actions.

Therefore, even though one never fails to exercise virtuous actions, she is not virtuous without knowing or grasping the ethical principles of her action. However, although reliability is not presented as the sufficient factor provided by *phronesis* to virtue, the Technical Model still suggests that the knowledge and ethical insights integrated into *phronesis* make virtuous action more reliable. Similarly, Annas argues that (1988: 70):

It [*phronesis*] is the state of the developed virtuous person, who not only makes the right judgement and decision on particular occasions, but does so from a developed intelligent disposition, which is the basis for doing so reliably and correctly.

Therefore, according to the Technical Model, *phronesis* distinguishes genuine virtue from natural virtue in two ways: 1) It provides general knowledge or intellectual grasp of ethical principles upon which one acts, and 2) It makes our pattern of actions more reliable.

In this model, *phronesis* operates like a (paper) map that includes information regarding the general layout of your neighborhood (like ethical principles and theoretical-philosophical aspects of *phronesis*)³. Therefore, the paper map does not tell you where you are exactly, nor directly say where to go; it is up to your navigating skills (the

³ However, this map should not be seen as a technical manual that exactly tells what to do (where to go) on every specific occasion, which was the view that Annas opposed in her paper, "Being Virtuous and Doing the Right Thing." To understand better, we can compare GPS and paper map; while the former precisely shows the way to the destination for anyone to follow, the latter only provides general directions requiring the user to have some experience or expertise to determine their location and which route to take.

practical aspect of *phronesis*) you identify where you are (your particular situation) to find the way back home (doing the right thing). Parallely, Aristotle suggests that (1104a5-9):

The general account being of this nature, the account of particular cases is yet more lacking in exactness; for they do not fall under any art or set of precepts, but the agents themselves must in each case consider what is appropriate to the occasion, as happens also in the art of medicine or of navigation.

Also, the presence of the map allows you to explain why you are following a particular (defending actions) and is supposed to make your decisions more reliable in the course of finding your way.

However, I want to raise two concerns or criticisms regarding the Technical Model: 1) *Phronesis* or knowledge integrated into *phronesis* may sound too theoretical or dependent upon a philosophical view, and 2) Reliability as the contribution of *phronesis* might not be compatible with skill analogy when we take textual evidence into account.

As mentioned, *phronesis* plays a crucial role in ensuring that virtues are genuine rather than merely natural, according to the Technical Model. It provides both a comprehensive understanding of virtue and the ability to exercise flexibly and effectively in specific situations. This claim, however, seems to rely on a theory of virtue to possess it in a proper way. Annas' depiction suggests more than just having the reasoned ability to act; it implies a need for demonstrative knowledge and deductive reasoning concerning virtue. This includes a general understanding of what virtue is, as well as its causal relations (why or how it is virtuous) in specific settings. The role of *phronesis*, then, is not limited to pursuing everyday reasoning to find out the appropriate way to act virtuously but is also merged with philosophical-theoretical background knowledge. For example, to be genuinely brave, one needs to know what bravery is, the principles it depends on, the

good of bravery, and how it relates to or derives from the highest good. etc., to “explain and defend her actions,” as Annas suggests (1988: 67). As far as the solution of the first part of BC is concerned, the theoretically high-powered understanding of *phronesis* seems sufficient; however, as I will discuss in the second section, it might be problematic to explain why *phronesis* requires proper virtue.

Furthermore, considering the reliability contribution, the skill analogy has some limitations. Suppose we are in a position to say that *phronesis* makes virtue more reliable by following the skill analogy. In that case, we need to explain why *techne* is more reliable than mere experience (*empeiria*) in the course of making or producing things. While mere experience provides knowledge of individuals or particulars, *techne* gives rise to knowledge of universals and causes so that artists can form a universal judgment about similar objects (*Metaphysics* A 1, 980b26-981a12). Therefore, Aristotle acknowledges that *techne* is superior to mere experience in terms of knowledge (or wisdom) and honor (981a13-981b9), which seems compatible with the first contribution of *phronesis* to the proper virtue, providing general knowledge and the intellectual grasp of the principles. In the case of providing reliability, however, Aristotle suggests that “With a view to action experience seems in no respect inferior to art, and we even see men of experience succeeding more than those who have theory without experience” (981a13-15). So, it does not seem clear whether a person of mere experience is less successful or reliable than a person of *techne* in practice. Indeed, it is implied that mere theoretical knowledge (of universal and causes) is inferior to mere experience in the course of action (981a13-15). Therefore, by following the skill analogy, we may not be in a good position to argue that *phronesis* is the basis of the reliability of genuine virtue. In

other words, if we use the skill analogy and draw a parallel between the distinction of natural-genuine virtue and the distinction of *empeiria-techne*, we must acknowledge that natural virtue is just as reliable as genuine virtue, in practice.

Because of these shortcomings, I want to introduce another model for thinking about *phronesis* -let us call it the Empirical Model-which does not rely on a theoretically high-powered view of *phronesis*; just like the person who has navigating skills can find their way by using her intuitions, past experience, and memory, *phronimos* may not need any theoretical account or general ethical principles to reach the right action.

The contrast between this model and the Technical Model can be illustrated by reference to two medicine schools of ancient Greece. They can be helpful in understanding the distinction between doxastic knowledge and theoretical knowledge with its application to the Aristotelian understanding of *techne* and *phronesis*⁴.

According to Lorenz and Morison, two medical schools of Ancient Greece, the Rationalist, and the Empiricist medical schools, dissent in three matters: 1) While Rationalists argue that it is both possible and necessary to know unobservable essences or

⁴ At this point, it should be noted that understanding *phronesis* by means of medical *techne* might be beyond an analogy, which is helpful to understand. As Jaeger mentions, “It [medical example] belongs to the very foundation of his ethical science, at least in the form it has taken in the *Nicomachean Ethics*” (1957: 57). Jaeger gives several reasons why Aristotle takes medicine as a model for virtue ethics; even though it is not within the scope of this paper, some of them are worth mentioning to understand the importance of the discussion below. Firstly, both medicine and ethics are not concerned with mere theory or knowledge without any application but “with things that are subject to change and require counsel and deliberation” (Jaeger, 1957: 59). Moreover, the deliberation going on in ethical issues and medicine does not include the end of actions but only means (how to achieve them) (Jaeger, 1957: 59). Most significantly, “what he [Aristotle] wants to demonstrate is that, besides pure theory, there is another kind of knowledge that aims at action (or production) and that reveals what a man 'knows' only by action (or production)” (Jaeger, 1957: 61). In light of this, medical *techne* presents a model that shows that there is another kind of knowledge (from theoretical, such as mathematical or physical) in terms of both its aim and nature, and it is the type of knowledge that also includes in ethics (Jaeger, 1957: p61). Therefore, before taking medicine as a model, we need to understand Aristotle’s view of medical *techne* to understand his view of *phronesis*.

natures for the art of medicine, Empiricists do not believe in the possibility and necessity of going beyond the observable facts; 2) According to Rationalists, medical practice and discoveries must rely on grasping logical relations between medical propositions, which the Empiricists deny; 3) The Empiricist does not accept the authoritative medical principles coming out of the reflection regarding the essences of things as a sign of medical truth; they only apply to those principles supported by observation and experience (2019: 435-436). Empiricists acknowledge the crucial role of sophisticated reasoning in medical practice; otherwise, we could not differentiate them from non-expert medical practitioners (Lorenz & Morison, 2019: 436).

We can think of three types of medical practitioners: non-expert medical practitioners, Empiricists, and Rationalists. If the skill analogy is applied, we must understand which kind of medical practices correspond to what kind of virtues (natural and proper). It seems plausible to argue that non-expert medical practitioners correspond to natural virtues since they do not utilize any sophisticated reasoning or reflection process in the course of medical practice. Just like non-expert practitioners, natural virtue does not require or rely on any experience or reflection based on those experiences. For in the case of natural virtue, one has not yet acquired *phronesis* or “thought that makes a difference in action” (1144b12). In this regard, Lorenz and Morison argue that Aristotle’s conception of *phronesis* and *techne* relies on *doxastic* knowledge, which does not rely on grasping unobservable essences or natures nor including the sufficient grasp of logical relations between propositions, unlike theoretical knowledge (2019: 432). Therefore, the type of knowledge that distinguishes natural virtue from genuine is *doxastic* knowledge, which does not provide an intellectual grasp of universals with its necessary causal

connections as Annas suggests; instead, it relies upon non-deductive explanatory structures concerning contingent truths (Lorenz & Morison, 2019: 442). In other words, the kind of reasoning involved in medical *techne* and *phronesis* does not aim at producing deductively valid arguments (Lorenz & Morison, 2019: 446); it is an everyday reasoning equipped with observation, memory, and experience. In this respect, the explanations and reasoning process of people with *phronesis* should refer to or be supported by experience, just like the Empiricist medical practitioner's treatments. On the other hand, the theoretical knowledge regarding ethical issues seems to resemble the Rationalist's understanding of the art of medicine, neither of which contributes to practice. For *techne*, or specifically the art of medicine, it is enough to "know *that* circular wounds help more slowly" by means of empirical support and experience, but you do not need to be able to give a geometrical account for circularity, which would not make you a better doctor (Lorenz & Morison, 2019: 461). Similarly, in the case of *phronesis*, Lorenz and Morison argue (2019: 463):

On this view, philosophico-scientific knowledge of ethically relevant truths is not only unnecessary for *phronēsis* and unqualified human virtue. As we argued before, such knowledge, incidentally possessed by a philosophically-minded *phronimos*, does not even place its possessor at an epistemic advantage over another *phronimos* who lacks such knowledge, as far as *phronēsis* goes.

From this point of view, when we accept that the *doxastic* knowledge based on experience is the mark of *phronesis* (and genuine virtue) and medical *techne*, we can think of a modified version of skill analogy with a new model. For the original analogy falls short in comparing natural virtue and mere experience. While natural virtues are less reliable than proper ones, Aristotle explicitly argues against the idea that mere experience is less reliable than *techne*, as mentioned above (981a13-15). In this sense, skill analogy misses the close connection between experience (*empeiria*) and *techne*. Furthermore,

different from *empeiria*, natural virtues are not dependent upon any experience, as

Aristotle suggests (1144b3-6):

For all men think that each type of character belongs to its possessors in some sense by nature; for from the very moment of birth we are just or fitted for self-control or brave or have the other moral qualities.

Therefore, the alternative model may account for the shortcomings of the skill analogy by rethinking *phronesis* and *techne* as *doxastic* knowledge since the empirical understanding of *techne* and *phronesis* seems not compatible with the theoretical aspect of the Technical Model. In this regard, the alternative *empeiria* model operates like a person's navigating skills, not equipped with a paper map including the general layout of the area but utilizing everyday reasoning, memory, and past experiences regarding the neighborhood.

Similarly, any explanation or defense of the (virtuous) actions is not given with reference to the philosophical view of ethical principles but to previous similar experiences.

However, it should be noted that the Empiricist account of *techne* and *phronesis* does not suggest that there is no universal propositional reasoning behind actions and productions; rather, *doxastic* knowledge utilizes propositions pointing out contingent truths inferred from experience, with account to action, *phronesis* uses ethically relevant propositions to consider how to act (Lorenz & Morison, 2019: 443).

In answer to why genuine virtue requires *phronesis*, the empirical understanding of *phronesis* provides 1) True apprehension of the end (1142b35) and 2) instrumental reasoning with ethical sensitivity. Aristotle claims, "We deliberate not about ends but about what contributes to ends" (1112b12). In other words, once our ends or goals of actions are set by virtue, *phronesis* engages in deliberation to identify what it means to have such a goal (1) and how to achieve it (2). For instance, suppose you have a

traumatized friend, and you aim to help her. In this case, *phronesis* needs to give the true apprehension of what it means to help your friend by utilizing your memory and past experience with her. Let us say the true apprehension of helping her is making her laugh. In this case, you need to find a way to make her laugh: find out the proper joke, time, and place so that you are not disrespectful to her traumatizing experience.

In this regard, according to both models, the role of *phronesis* concerning virtue is to guide toward the right action, providing answers for how to act. The Technical Model has a slight limitation due to its dependence on skill analogy, one part of which should not be followed due to Aristotle's passage (which suggests that *empeiria* is as reliable as *techné* with a view to action) that explicitly argues against it. Therefore, to decide which model gives a better account for *phronesis* and its mutual requirement with genuine virtue, we need to focus on the second part of BC with the possible explanations that both models may provide.

CHAPTER 2

WHY DOES *PHRONESIS* REQUIRE GENUINE VIRTUE?

Turning now to the question of why *phronesis* requires genuine virtue, we should begin by noting that the difference between cleverness and *phronesis* is not meant to be “merely terminological” (Moss, 2014: 229). In other words, *phronesis* is not a virtuous person’s cleverness under a different name. Aristotle suggests that “excellence in deliberation will be correctness with regard to what conduces to the end of which practical wisdom is the true apprehension” (1142b34-35). Even though the role of *phronesis* concerning the ends of actions will be discussed in another chapter, it can be said that *phronesis*, different than cleverness, is capable of knowing or identifying our ends’ moral correctness or wrongness. In other words, whether or not it has an active role in determining our ends, *phronesis* does not merely provide means-end sufficiency but -at least- it provides that sufficiency with considerable ethical significance.

The ethical thinking process requires some non-rational basis in character. For instance, habitual-emotional starting points are necessary for intellectual development regarding ethical or political issues. As Aristotle suggests (1095b1-6):

Hence any one who is to listen intelligently to lectures about what is noble and just and, generally, about the subjects of political science must have been brought up in good habits. For the facts are the starting-point, and if they are sufficiently plain to him, he will not need the reason as well; and the man who has been well brought up has or can easily get starting-points.

The starting points are our ends or aims for the sake of which we perform our actions; in other words, they are what we wish (*boulesis*). Indeed, Aristotle makes it clear that our wishes are for ends (1113a15). Furthermore, he claims that “the good is the object of wish, but for each person the apparent good” (1113a24). Therefore, it is the mark of a virtuous person to wish what is good; the apparent good of a virtuous person (what she wishes) is objectively good. The necessity of true wishes and ends, provided by character, for the development and the function of *phronesis*, can also be supported by Aristotle’s suggestion that(1113a30-33):

For each state of character has its own ideas of the noble and the pleasant, and perhaps the good man differs from others most by seeing the truth in each class of things, being as it were the norm and measure of them.

Since he refers to the ideas of states, we can claim that it is the ideas of genuine virtuous state that allow proper development and functioning of *phronesis*; in other words, as an intellectual virtue of deliberation, *phronesis* requires to operate with the true ideas (or true beliefs) of noble and good, which can only be provided by a genuine virtue of character. However, considering the first part of the BC, we should note that the correct starting points, acquired through good upbringing and habituation, are not sufficient for one to develop genuine virtue, though they are necessary. To function well in the

deliberation process, starting points must be intellectualized and incorporated into *phronesis*.

On the other hand, it is possible to wish the right thing without being genuinely virtuous, just like in the cases of incontinence and continence. If so, one might have the right starting points without being in an excellent habitual state; more importantly, once the good starting points are achieved, there remains no reason why one cannot develop *phronesis*. In the case of incontinence, Aristotle gives a direct explanation of why one cannot be both *phronimos* and incontinent (1146a5-10):

[...] the same man will be at once practically wise and incontinent, but no one would say that it is the part of a practically wise man to do willingly the basest acts. Besides, it has been shown before that the man of practical wisdom is one who will *act* (for he is a man concerned with the individual facts) and who has the other excellences.

Despite your ethically right beliefs, you cannot have *phronesis* if you fail to act accordingly since you are not in a position to exercise *phronesis* in your actions. On the other hand, it seems more difficult to explain why having genuine virtue is necessary to have *phronesis*, but not continence is enough. After all, despite one's emotional dispositional state, a continent person realizes what *phronesis* dictates (if we assume she has *phronesis*) and does the right thing⁵.

⁵ Indeed, Aristotle seems to attribute goodness to the state of continence when he suggests (1146a12-16):

But the continent man must [have excessive or bad appetites]; for if the appetites are good, the state that restrains us from following them is bad, so that not all continence will be good; while if they are weak and not bad, there is nothing admirable in resisting them, and if they are weak and bad, there is nothing great in resisting these either.

It might enable arguing the possibility of having *phronesis* without virtue; as Callard argues, since the defect of a continent person is in the non-rational dispositions, we need to attribute some goodness to the intellectual part of his soul (2017: 47). Therefore, there is room for arguing that "Because he must struggle against his appetitive imperfections, the *enkratēs* [continent] right actions make visible the work that *phronēsis* can do" (Callard, 2017: 48).

However, even though showing the similarity between the non-intellectual dispositions of the continent and incontinent people leads to the claim that they must differ with respect to the intellectual part, it does not automatically mean that the intellectual parts of the continent and virtuous people are the same. McDowell points out the difference in the deliberation processes of the continent and virtuous people by suggesting that while the former is fighting against bad desires in the deliberation process, the latter does not consider those desires since they are “silenced” (1979: 335). Therefore, the rational states, such as the deliberation processes, of the continent and the virtuous cannot be the same; since the virtuous one is *phronimos*, the continent's state should be another and an inferior kind of state despite the praise it deserves⁶.

The point suggested by McDowell (1979) can be understood better by means of an aesthetic analogy. We might have a work of art, like an art movie, for which we hold the correct belief about its aesthetic value because we know that aesthetic authorities have awarded it. However, we only enjoy watching it if we have a cultivated aesthetic taste. In this case, we might fail to watch the movie since we are too bored, just like the incontinent person. Just like an incontinent person's failure to act in the correct way is due to a lack of *phronesis*, our failure to watch the movie is due to our lack of aesthetic understanding. Another possibility is that we force ourselves to finish the movie as we believe it is the right thing to do. In this case, however, as we fail to get pleasure from the movie, we are fighting against our boredom (or desire to stop watching) throughout the

⁶ Alternatively, Coope argues that since the capacity to discern the goodness of the good action belongs to the rational part of the soul, the pleasure coming from doing good must also belong to the rational part so that the state of the rational part of the soul of the continent and virtuous are not alike (2012: 155). The latter enjoys good actions as a function of *phronesis*; therefore, it is a rational failing due to lack of *phronesis* that a continent person does not enjoy the proper action (Coope, 2012: 157).

movie. Therefore, our state of mind would be different from the one whose urge to stop watching is silenced by the enjoyment she gets from watching. In other words, if we do not enjoy the movie, we do not grasp its aesthetic value in the true sense even though we have the right belief regarding its value. In this regard, since we do not get pleasure from the movie, our belief regarding its goodness may not be genuine since it relies not on our first-hand experience but on the authorities' assessment. Our knowledge (or right belief) about the goodness of the movie may not be proper, just like a new learner “who have just begun to learn can string together words, but do not yet know; for it has to become part of themselves, and that takes time” (1147a19-21). Similarly, a continent and incontinent person's ethically right beliefs cannot be totally grasped (which points out lack of *phronesis*) due to their failure to get pleasure from virtuous actions (which points out the lack of virtue). In the case of the movie, it seems possible for us to habituate ourselves in a way to get pleasure from the movie as it should be; in this sense, we can say that we are in the process of developing a proper aesthetic understanding just like continent or incontinent people who can be candidates of future virtuous people and *phronimos*.

In light of this, *phronesis* requires virtue for two reasons: 1) Non-rational dispositions give the starting points of deliberation, and 2) Bad desires should not only be overcome but rather be silenced by virtue of character so that they do not interfere with the deliberation process. In other words, bad desires and *phronesis* cannot be present simultaneously since the demands of bad desires affect intellectual activities in a way that they cannot be characteristic of *phronesis* anymore.

From the Technical Model's perspective, the first reason may not be appropriately explained since it suggests that the general ethical principles underlie our actions, which are supposed to be rational to be intellectually grasped. In other words, explaining why we would need some non-rational starting points of deliberation is difficult if we already know the general ethical principles. A housebuilder is a person who can explain his making by appealing to the form of the house he is building (as a final cause). Similarly, If the *phronimos* is the person who can defend her actions by causally linking them with *eudaimonia* as the final cause, she does not need any non-rational starting points for her action; they can be provided by her *techne*-like *phronesis*. Why would one propose some general principles regarding what to do when non-rational starting points already provide the aim of her actions?

From this point of view, the Technical Model might provide a better explanation for the case of continence since it is the continent person who identifies the right aim (or starting point), not thanks to her non-rational dispositional state, but by intellectual capacities. That is to say, continent people need something like the technical conception of *phronesis* to do the right thing; however, since it is impossible to have *phronesis* without being virtuous, what we call the technical conception of *phronesis* must be another intellectual virtue that helps the continent to do the right thing.

So, when we understand *phronesis* by taking *techne* as a model by attributing it to an intellectual grasp of general ethical principles with a causal account, it becomes unclear why *phronesis* requires a virtue of character. Therefore, the Technical Model can be more beneficial in explaining the continent. Now, it should be explained why an alternative understanding of *phronesis*, closer to *empeiria*, requires the virtue of character. For this,

we can apply to passages where Aristotle compares mere *empeiria*, or experience regarding particulars, with true courage (1116b4-1116b23). Firstly, he identifies Socratic confusion of *empeiria* and courage: “Experience with regard to particular facts is also thought to be courage; this is indeed the reason why Socrates thought courage was knowledge” (1116b4-5). *Empeiria* allows soldiers to analyze particular facts and understand whether there is a real threat. Soldiers may seem brave when they examine the situation and decide to fight when there is no real threat. However, when they have not the upper hand, they are expected to run if they are not brave (1116b16-23):

Soldiers turn cowards, however, when the danger puts too great a strain on them and they are inferior in numbers and equipment; for they are the first to fly, while citizen-forces die at their posts, as in fact happened at the temple of Hermes. For to the latter flight is disgraceful and death is preferable to safety on those terms; while the former from the very beginning faced the danger on the assumption that they were stronger, and when they know the facts they fly, fearing death more than disgrace; but the brave man is not that sort of person.

Therefore, *empeiria* is not enough to perform brave actions; you must also have a habituated brave character to face real dangers. In other words, *empeiria* is helpful in understanding whether there is a real danger or not (which is necessary to perform courage), yet “*empeiria* says nothing about what is worth risking one’s life for” (Jimenez, 2019: 377). It is habituated virtue or courage that is supposed to be the guide for the latter question. For courage tells us whether it is worth risking our lives in particular situations, *empeiria* helps us to understand whether there is a real risk or not, whether there is a real risk upon which the aim put by courage can actually be performed, and how. In light of this, the empirical conception of *phronesis* requires virtue since it does not start deliberating by itself, without the non-rational starting points; and it does not have any theoretical tool to overcome bad temptations; so, they need to be silenced. Furthermore, there are a variety of values that are considered by *phronesis* in the course of deliberation.

These values can be understood as the manifestation of character in the course of deliberation, so as making decisions. True values are required for *phronesis* to prioritize correct things before others. Even while making decisions that seem minor and ethically less significant, the values of our character are taken into consideration. For instance, suppose that you need to go to the dentist due to your toothache. Which dentist you will choose depends on how you prioritize different values involved in making your decision. Money, time, quality of service, the distance you should cover, the personality of the dentist, etc. are the things you have to take into consideration while choosing your dentist. Which of the values has priority depends on what kind of character you have; for instance, a stingy person may choose the cheapest dentist as money is more important than the quality of service for him. On the other hand, *phronimos* is expected to reach the intermediate decision since her virtuous character provides the correct evaluation of the values.

In addition to emphasizing the requirement of virtue (or particularly courage in this context), comparing *empeiria* with true courage might be beneficial when we think of another passage (than 1116b4-5) where Aristotle avoids a similar Socratic misidentification of virtue: “Socrates in one respect was on the right track while in another he went astray; in thinking that all the excellences were forms of practical wisdom he was wrong, but in saying they implied practical wisdom he was right” (1144b17-20). He mentions a confusion between “Experience with regard to particular facts” and courage in the first passage (1116b4-5)⁷ while he uses the terms “forms of

⁷ As Jimenez mentions, there is a legitimate worry that it may not be fair to claim that the knowledge of virtue that Socrates speaks of can be provided by *empeiria* (2019: 378). She adds, however, within this context, Aristotle’s interpretation can be justified (2019: p379):

practical wisdom” and “all the excellences” (one of which is courage) in the second passage (1144b17-20). As Jimenez puts it (2019: 380):

Thus, the error that Aristotle attributes to Socrates in EN III.8, where he accuses him of conflating *empeiria* and virtue, is in line with his criticism in EN VI.13/EE V.13 that Socrates fails to properly understand the distinction between virtue and *phronêsis* (1144b17–30).

In light of this, we can claim strong textual evidence regarding the closeness between *empeiria* and *phronesis* by thinking of both passages together.

Going back to the map analogy, just like a map that provides general directions (the general ethical principles), authorities may provide guidance regarding the aesthetic value of a movie. By obeying the judgment of authorities (or the general ethical principles), a continent person endures her boredom while watching the movie (doing the right action). On the other hand, the virtuous person does not need any guidance of the general ethical principles since she has true non-rational starting points. She needs to exercise her navigating skills; she already knows the aim or the destination due to her past experiences, just like non-rational starting points are given by her virtue of character. Similarly, she does not need the authorities' guidance to watch the art movie since she already enjoys it. Therefore, a virtuous person does not need a theoretical-philosophical view of general ethical principles (such as the doctrine of the mean) to have *phronesis* or to act virtuously, just like a medical doctor does not need to grasp the unobservable

For Socrates, at least in the definition from *Protagoras* (and in the one that *Nicias* presents in the *Laches*), courage is knowledge of future goods and evils, and all cases of cowardice are either cases of ignorance about what is truly dangerous, that is, what things count as future evils, or cases of lack of expertise about how to protect oneself from those evils (i.e. lack of ability to use the relevant knowledge properly).

Soldiers' *empeiria*, then, which may deceptively seem like true courage, actually resembles the Socratic understanding of courage. What is mainly important for us, however, is not whether Aristotle charitably interprets Socrates or not; instead, his choice of concepts while referring to the same Socratic misidentification.

essence of a disease to treat it. Hence, the Empirical Model seems in a better position to explain the mutual dependence of proper virtue and *phronesis* (BC).

Even though we have explained why *phronesis* and a genuine virtue cannot exist without the other (BC) from the perspectives of both models, it should also be explained why one genuine virtue implies all others (RV).



CHAPTER 3

WHY DOES HAVING ONE VIRTUE REQUIRE ALL OF THEM?

As mentioned, Aristotle not only claims the mutual requirement of virtue and *phronesis* but also suggests that genuine virtues cannot be acquired in isolation from others since even one proper virtue requires *phronesis*, and *phronesis* makes them all present (1145a1-2). So, it should be explained why Aristotle makes the claim of reciprocity of virtue (RV) as it sounds counter-intuitive to think that, for example, one cannot be properly generous without being properly temperate. Regardless of which model we apply to explain RV, from the passages quoted earlier (1144b30-1145a6), it seems evident that it is *phronesis* that provides RV. It also seems evident that *phronesis* is the virtue of deliberation (1140a29-32), so it should be the goodness of deliberation that leads to RV. Therefore, it can be argued that *phronesis* has the role of unifying or harmonizing different values or goods regarding different virtues in the process of deliberation.

From the perspective of the Technical Model, it can be argued that the theoretically high-powered knowledge component of *phronesis* is unified. In other words, it is one and the same comprehensive knowledge of ethical good that we need for every single virtue

(Cooper, 1998: 265). One needs to have a conception of the overall good in life so that we can evaluate or identify the value or contribution of a single virtue to good life in general (Annas, 1988: 71). So, once the knowledge of the general good is acquired, the different values, as the components of the ultimate good contributing to the overall good, will also be known. Therefore, once one achieves the knowledge of good that is shared by all individual virtues, he must act in a way that satisfies every single instance of the ultimate good (values of individual virtues) as well as the ultimate good itself.

As it is the same knowledge of good and/or *phronesis* that is involved in every individual virtue, demands of different virtues cannot compete; if there is a conflict, “it will not result from the claims of competing virtues, since virtues do not compete” (Irwin, 1988: 68). Irwin seems to argue that *phronesis* (and/or the unified knowledge of good) is the state from which every single virtue is derived as he argues, “Only [practical] wisdom takes the global point of view that is required for finding the appropriate mean that constitutes any of the virtues” (1988: 69). Similarly, Annas argues that the different goods provided by different virtues cannot be properly grasped in isolation, without their relation to each other and the overall good (1988: 76). All values of different virtues must be unified into the overall conception of good in the agent’s deliberations (Annas, 1988: 77). Individual virtues cannot be exercised properly without understanding their interrelated contribution to our overall good. For instance, our action cannot be called brave if it is, at the same time, an unjust one. Therefore, Irwin suggests, “we cannot assess an action as the right one for a brave person to do without appraising it from the point of view of the other virtues” (1988: 70). Hence, the role of *phronesis* is to grasp all interrelated perspectives of different individual virtues as well as overall goodness as a

whole, making it impossible to acquire a proper virtue individually, as Annas argues (1988: 76).

Similarly, considering the map analogy, we can suggest that knowing or understanding one direction (an individual virtue) given in the map requires knowing the whole map (overall conception of good). One cannot use a small piece of the map to find his way since all the roads or directions are related and intersected; consequently, one piece of the map does not provide proper guidance regarding where to go (right or virtuous action) without grasping the relation of a specific direction to the others (other virtues) and the whole map (overall good). A single piece may show the direction you need to go, but without knowing others, you cannot see the obstacles you will face while following that direction. Therefore, we need *phronesis* to take Irwin's "global point of view" (as mentioned above); our looking should compass the whole map so that we can find our way. That is to say, individual directions lack meaning or value without a reference to the whole map; similarly, our moral judgments or decisions lack value without a reference to the theoretical understanding of our overall good, so they cannot be virtuous in the proper sense. As Annas suggests (1988: 71):

The skill analogy brings out the important point that the virtuous person, just as much as the moral agent in most modern moral theories, must be an agent who has reflected on her initial moral judgements and achieved a unified understanding of her basis for making them, on a level which is more general and theoretical than those judgements themselves.

Therefore, the Technical Model seems to give a sufficient explanation of why virtues must complete each other rather than compete.

However, the Aristotelian picture of the *phronimos* seems like a person who -almost- intuitively sees what is good rather than having a comprehensive knowledge of what is the overall good with its relation to individual virtues as well as of the relation within individual virtues. For instance, the example he gives of a person with *phronesis* is Pericles (1140b6-10):

For while making has an end other than itself, action cannot; for good action itself is its end. It is for this reason that we think Pericles and men like him have practical wisdom, viz. because they can see what is good for themselves and what is good for men in general; we consider that those can do this who are good at managing households or states.

Is it reasonable to assume that Pericles had *phronesis* since he had a developed theoretical understanding regarding virtues or what to do? Or rather, is it because he was experienced at evaluating his or the city's current situation to make the most optimal decision by balancing or satisfying a variety of factors -vaguely, indemonstrably, or almost intuitively? People like Pericles, who have this capability of *seeing* human good, do not acquire this capability by contemplating virtues, their relation to each other, and overall good. This might be the reason why Aristotle claims that "we ought to attend to the undemonstrated sayings and opinions of experienced and older people or of people of practical wisdom not less than to demonstrations; for because *experience* has given them an eye they see aright" (1143b11-14, my emphasis).

This point can be explained better by focusing on two distinctions: *techne* and *empeiria*, and *poiesis* (making) and *praxis* (acting). To emphasize the former distinction, in addition to the discussions in the second chapter, we can focus on *Gorgias*, where Socrates explains why oratory should not be counted as a craft (*techne*) but a knack (*empeiria*) (465a3-6):

I say that it isn't a craft, but a knack, because it has no account of the nature of whatever things it applies by which it applies them, so that it's unable to state the cause of each thing. And I refuse to call anything that lacks such an account a craft.

From this point of view, while *techne* seems to include concrete knowledge (of the essence) with causal connections, *empeiria* is presented as an ability acquired through experience. Then, we need to understand whether *phronesis* is closer or more analogous to *techne* or *empeiria* with reference to the deliberation process that *phronesis* leads.

When we consider what Aristotle says about *techne* and *empeiria* elsewhere, the following picture seems to emerge. In the case of *techne*, we need a sophisticated understanding or knowledge concerning our end, what we produce; we need a universal form of the thing we produce on our minds so that it leads to our deliberation process of how we can turn the individual material into the relevant form. In other words, in addition to the process by which an artist or craft produces something, the end or the intended product is also considered. More precisely, *techne* is responsible for setting the end or the final product as a form of knowledge, while *empeiria* is responsible for the process by which particulars come into being in the form of the universal, the knowledge of which is provided by *techne*. This might be the reason why Aristotle does not consider *empeiria* inferior to *techne* with reference to action or production process (as mentioned above, *M*, 981a13-15). As he puts it (*M*, 981a15-19):

The reason is that experience is knowledge of individuals, art of universals, and actions and productions are all concerned with the individual; for the physician does not cure a man, except in an incidental way, but Callias or Socrates or some other called by some such individual name, who happens to be a man.

So, the universal knowledge that distinguishes *techne* from *empeiria* is not the knowledge of particulars but universal, the causal account of why the produced thing is in the way it is; Aristotle compares it with knowledge coming from senses (981b10-981b13):

Again, we do not regard any of the senses as wisdom; yet surely these give the most authoritative knowledge of particulars. But they do not tell us the ‘why’ of anything—e.g. why fire is hot; they only say that it is hot.

In light of this, it can be claimed that the people of *empeiria* do not have a cognitively high-powered cognition of what they are producing as the final product; instead, their deliberation process merely focuses on the process by which they produce.

So, we can say that unlike *techne*-like *phronesis*, which can form a causal link between the imminent action and *eudaimonia* (like the final product, overall good), *empeiria*-like *phronesis* merely focuses on the imminent action. For instance, suppose there are two housebuilders, one of which is a person with *empeiria* while the other is a person with *techne*. Even though both of them follow a process X, which helps buildings to be more durable, they do not follow the process as a result of the same deliberation process. While the latter knows why process X makes buildings more durable, the former only knows that she needs to follow process X while building a house. In other words, the deliberation process of the latter goes beyond the very activity she is pursuing; her end or the starting point of her reasoning is not her activity itself but the result or the product of the activity. She can give an account of why she is pursuing process X with reference to the end of her making, the final product. The end of her making, or the starting point of her deliberation, is rationally given by the knowledge provided by *techne*. The former, however, does not deliberate about what happens as a result of his activity but only the activity itself. He is not able to give an account for why he is pursuing process X; the end of his making or the starting point of his deliberation is not given to him by knowledge or a high-cognitional state, but he merely recurs the particular way of building a house that

he recalls from his past experiences. So, it can be said that it is like a habit for him to follow process X while building a house.

Aristotle makes a similar point while comparing manual workers and master workers in terms of having wisdom or having an account of the cause or “why” of the process performed (981a27-b5):

Hence we think that the masterworkers in each craft are more honourable and know in a truer sense and are wiser than the manual workers, because they know the causes of the things that are done (we think the manual workers are like certain lifeless things which act indeed, but act without knowing what they do, as fire burns,—but while the lifeless things perform each of their functions by a natural tendency, the labourers perform them through habit).

Here, there might be an objection regarding the analogy between fire and manual workers that seems to imply that, just like lifeless things, manual workers do not deliberate at all, so their *empeiria* cannot be a good model for understanding *phronesis*, which is the virtue of deliberating well (1140a24-27).

The first part of the passage above is in parallel with the previously quoted fire passage by mentioning that manual workers (*empeiroi*) do not know the causes. It seems unreasonable to assume that Aristotle refers to material or efficient causes here since it would mean to argue that manual workers are not aware of themselves or the material they are working on. Therefore, it seems safe to assume that the cause(s) that is unknown by manual workers is the formal and/or final cause(s). This is in parallel to the *phronimos*, who is not the one who forms a causal relation between her action and the final aim (*eudaimonia*) but the one who merely focuses on her imminent action. Indeed, Aristotle himself uses an analogy between the domain of *praxis* (political and practical wisdom) and what manual laborers do when he claims (1141b23-1141b29):

Political wisdom and practical wisdom are the same state of mind, but to be them is not the same. Of the wisdom concerned with the city, the practical wisdom which plays a controlling part is legislative wisdom, while that which is related to this as particulars to their universal is known by the general name ‘political wisdom’; this has to do with action and deliberation, for a decree is a thing to be carried out in the form of an individual act. This is why the exponents of this art are alone said to take part in politics; for these alone do things as manual labourers do things.

In addition to supporting the resemblance between *empeiria* and *phronesis*, this passage may help eliminate worries by pointing out that manual workers or *empeiroi* do not deliberate at all. As political wisdom “has to do with action and deliberation”, we can assume the same for what manual laborers do. Therefore, Aristotle’s parallelism between fire and manual laborers in terms of acting “without knowing what they do” needs another interpretation. At this point, it should be remembered that deliberation is pursued in order to choose, and it is done when we choose something (1113a3-7):

The same thing is deliberated upon and is chosen, except that the object of choice is already determinate, since it is that which has been decided upon as a result of deliberation that is the object of choice. For every one ceases to inquire how he is to act when he has brought the moving principle back to himself and to the ruling part of himself; for this is what chooses.

Therefore, it can be claimed that what Aristotle means when he likens manual laborers to lifeless things is that once manual workers choose the activities they will perform and start to act, they no longer need to deliberate or pay attention to what they are doing unless some external factor intervenes the process.

Therefore, it can be claimed that the *phronimos* resembles a person with *empeiria* more than a *techne*. The reason is that even though a person with *empeiria* makes the production so that the activity of a person of *empeiria* is *poiesis*, his deliberation process is more suitable for making parallelism with *praxis* (comparing to a person with *techne*) on the basis that he does not utilize a sophisticated consideration of the end beyond the

activity, which is similar to ethical deliberation as Aristotle claims that “We deliberate not about ends but about what contributes to ends” (*NE*,1112b12). In parallel to this, the ends or the aim of our actions are not determined by *phronesis* but by virtue, as Aristotle argues that “excellence [virtue] makes the aim right, practical wisdom the things leading to it” (1144a8-9). The role that *phronesis* plays in our actions and decisions, then, is more similar to the role that *empeiria* plays in making. Similar to a manual laborer, *phronimos* is not the one who can causally link the current action with the final good (*eudaimonia*) but is the one who deliberates about the imminent action.

This is why we can understand *phronimos* better by likening to people with *empeiria*, who have no universal knowledge nor a causal account of “why” but are capable thanks to the *knack* (*empeiria*) they have acquired due to previous experience. Another similarity is that according to Aristotle, as mentioned above, both virtuous action and the production process conducted by manual workers, who are with *empeiria*, are performed through habit. Considering this interpretation of *phronimos*, we can understand better the reason why Aristotle considers Pericles or experienced old people as *phronimos* and says, “*experience* has given them an eye they see aright” (1143b13-14, my emphasis)⁸.

⁸ Nevertheless, Aristotle seems to favor the parallelism between *phronesis* and *techne*, rather than *empeiria*, in some passages, where he expresses the significance of universals for *phronesis* (1141b14-20):

Nor is practical wisdom [*phronesis*] concerned with universals only—it must also recognize the particulars; for it is practical, and practice is concerned with particulars. This is why some who do not know, and especially those who have experience, are more practical than others who know; for if a man knew that light meats are digestible and wholesome, but did not know which sorts of meat are light, he would not produce health, but the man who knows that chicken is wholesome is more likely to produce health.

Even though Aristotle emphasizes the primary significance of particulars and experience, the expression stating that *phronesis* is not only concerned with universals implies that *phronesis* is concerned with universals, which seems incompatible with the parallelism between *empeiria* and *phronesis*. At this point, it should be mentioned that the parallelism is meant to show that *phronesis* is a state closer to *empeiria* rather than *techne* (and therefore, *empeiria* provides a better model for understanding *phronesis*) but not to claim that *empeiria* and *phronesis* are the same kinds of states; two main differences between them should be acknowledged: 1) While *phronesis* is a reasoned state, *empeiria* seems not. 2) While *phronesis* is concerned

Therefore, if the alternative model, the Empirical Model, can explain the RV without appealing to a theoretically high-powered view of *phronesis*, it should be preferred. It seems the case that the values that virtues represent are intertwined in very complex ways in real-life situations, so it is very unlikely that one would be involved in the situation without the others. During the deliberation process of a single action, which is supposed to be an exercise of one virtue, *phronimos* or not, one realizes that too many different demands (of different virtues) are involved in the decision we will make. In other words, with a view to action, it does not seem the case that one action can remain within the domain of only one virtue, but many -if not all- would be involved. So, to deliberate well, one needs to have all the values in order to take them into account. For example, if we suppose that courage demands us to face danger on the battlefield without fear, our action of fighting without fear may not be separable from the demands of justice, generosity, temperance, etc. While deliberating whether you should engage in the fight, you inevitably deliberate about whether you are fighting on the right side, if any (justice), about how much monetary and physical resources you should devote to the battle (generosity), about how far you should keep fighting when becomes too painful (temperance) and etc. A person without *phronesis* is expected to fail to harmonize or unify the different demands coming from different virtues due to her imperfect deliberation. If one satisfies the demands of courage without satisfying the others, his action would not be genuinely virtuous or brave since it is simultaneously vicious. In this

with acting (*praxis*), *empeiria* is concerned with making (*poesis*). Nevertheless, there might be room for claiming that being concerned with universals does not necessarily mean making *phronesis* closer to *techné*. Lorenz and Morison give an example of the proposition “humans are social animals”, which is a universal fact or necessary truth; however, the way of understanding this proposition is not the same for *phronimos* and human biologists (2019: 442-443).

regard, one's so-called brave but unjust action seems closer to aggressiveness than to genuine courage, as Annas also points out (1988: 75-76). If, on the other hand, one manages to find a course of action that satisfies the demands of all virtues involved, then her action can be called genuinely virtuous, as well as her deliberation can be called perfect, and she is *phronimos*. Hence, one cannot possess a single virtue without the others because the values of other virtues would be compromised, which good deliberation would prevent. Similarly, one cannot deliberate well (so one cannot have *phronesis*) without the whole set of values provided by all virtues.

Furthermore, considering the deliberation process in real-life situations, the Empirical Model seems to draw a more realistic picture. Even when we make a non-complex decision, it requires balancing or harmonizing different values. We do not deliberate with reference to some general principles but -almost intuitively-try to make different values reasonably compromise to reach the proper mean. Considering the dentist example in Chapter 2, while virtue attaches the right amount of importance to values, it is the task of *phronesis* to find an appropriate course of action to satisfy those virtues. As mentioned, each might have different expertise, skills, costs, busyness, and distance from your house. In that case, your deliberation does not operate with reference to some general principles like "time trumps money" but "health trumps time", which would be similar to the person in the Technical Model. Instead, you do make a vague -almost intuitive- calculation or deliberation by taking all of the values (such as time, money, quality of service, etc.) into account to decide which one to choose, just like the person in the Empirical Model.

CHAPTER 4

THREE CAMPS REGARDING THE ROLE OF INTELLECT

After explaining two alternative understandings of *phronesis*, I want to match two models of *phronesis* with the two camps regarding whether the virtue of character is partly intellectual states or not. By following Moss, we can call these camps the “Intellectualists” and “non-Intellectualists” camps, the difference of which resides in whether they attribute a role to intellect in setting our ends (2011: 207). The intellectualists can be separated into two subgroups: 1) The ones who argue that virtue is partly an intellectual state and 2) The ones who argue that even though virtue is a non-intellectual state, the intellect has a role in setting ends (Moss, 2011: 207). As I will show, the first intellectualist camp is coherent with the empirical conception of *phronesis*, while the second camp is committed to the technical conception of *phronesis*. Therefore, I will call the first intellectualist camp “E-intellectualists” and the second “T-intellectualists” henceforth. My plan in this chapter is first to show that the T-intellectualists camp is the wrong way of holding an intellectualist position. Then, I will try to show that the non-intellectualist point of view, or specifically Moss’s, is inconsistent in the sense that the empirical conception of *phronesis* that she holds is more compatible with the E-

intellectualist position rather than non-intellectualism, which fits better the technical conception of *phronesis*.

4.1 T-Intellectualism

As mentioned, Irwin, who is a representative of the T-intellectualist point of view, attributes the role of taking a “global point of view” to identifying the demands of different virtues (1988: 69). This global point of view is equipped with the unified knowledge of good from which individual virtues are derived. So, it seems obvious that the role of *phronesis* is not limited to identifying our means that lead to our ends set by virtue; the role of *phronesis* in the Aristotelian phrase that “excellence makes the aim right, and practical wisdom the things leading to it” (1144a8-9) is not interpreted as merely an instrumental reasoning. As Irwin puts it (1975: 570-571):

And so, if the [practically] wise man's task is to find the right activities, he must find the components of the final good, and not only the instrumental means to it; his deliberation forms the correct wish for a good end which is the origin of the virtuous man's decisions.

He also makes another point that the contribution of individual rationally wished ends to overall good should be understood with a profound causal account (1975: 575). In other words, rational action is not the one that has a single isolated end, but the agent must also explain the reason behind having that specific goal with reference to the overall good. Therefore, *phronesis* is not only responsible for providing specific components (particular wishes for particular ends) of the ultimate good or *eudaimonia*, but it should also give a causal account for their contribution to the ultimate end. Therefore, *phronesis*, as described here, can be said to require a universal and theoretically high-powered grasp of

eudaimonia and virtue to have such a goal, just like described in the Technical Model.

Since the general disadvantages of the *techne*-model of *phronesis* are mentioned in the previous sections, I will also mention some drawbacks of the T-intellectualist model.

According to Irwin himself, this understanding of *phronesis* and deliberation for ends may not be compatible with the Aristotelian allocation of virtues of character and intellect to different parts of the soul. (1975: 576). Even though there might be room for arguing that the idea that virtue of character can partly belong to the rational part of the soul, Irwin's position shows that it requires more than bending or interpreting what Aristotle claims to defend the T-intellectualist view. In other words, the T-intellectualist position argues that Aristotle makes some incompatible claims, some of which should be sacrificed to correct Aristotelian ethics. The dissociation from Aristotle seems also clear when Irwin argues (1975: 578):

The comparison of ethical first principles to the first principles of demonstrative science is easily understood if ethical first principles are reached by habituation rather than reasoning. But if the [practically] wise man's grasp of the end is the result of his deliberation, and not only the origin of further deliberation, then Aristotle is wrong to claim that there is no reasoning about ethical first principles (1151a15-19, *Eudemian Ethics* 1227b24-6). His own account of [practical] wisdom refutes him by showing that the virtuous man's principles rest on deliberation about the good.

Irwin assigns the role of reaching ethical first principles to *phronesis* and deliberation.

However, as he admits, this attribution is not compatible with the Aristotelian understanding of starting points of deliberation about which one cannot deliberate. In other words, while Aristotle argues that the first principles are acquired through habituation and foundation for (good) deliberation, Irwin seems to want to derive those principles by means of deliberation so that we can habituate ourselves accordingly.

However, for Aristotle, good habituation or upbringing seems prior and necessary for

developing further ethical understanding, just like perception is prior and necessary to develop an understanding regarding empirical surroundings⁹.

So, the very basic first principles, like we should love our parents, are not derived as a component of the ultimate good by means of deliberation about good. Rather, they are acquired through upbringing and are the conditions for developing an intellectual understanding of ethical or political good; that seems to be the reason why Aristotle argues that one needs to have a good upbringing if one wants to learn about noble and just (1095b1-6). Therefore, the T-intellectualist position, equipped with the technical conception of *phronesis*, attributes more role (of grasping the ultimate good and deriving first principles from it) to *phronesis* than Aristotle assigns.

4.2 Non-intellectualism and E-Intellectualism

Contrary to the T-intellectualist view, which is equipped with the *techne*-model of *phronesis*, we can analyze the non-intellectualist view, which, I believe, attributes a less significant role to virtue than Aristotle assigns. Jessica Moss defends the non-intellectualist view on the basis that Aristotle proposes a strict division of labor between virtue and *phronesis* in what she calls Goal Passages (*EN* 1144a7-9, 1145a5-7, 1151a15-19, and *EE* 1227b23-25). The main idea of these passages is that habituated virtue is responsible for setting ends, for which there is no *logos* and deliberation, so *phronesis*

⁹ See, for example, (*Topics*, 105a3-105a7).

comes into the picture once ends are given so that it can determine what contributes to those ends. The strict division of labor between virtue and *phronesis* entails that virtue is a state of the non-rational part of the soul that cannot produce reason but is only capable of obeying it (Moss, 2011: 207). In addition to the strict division of labor and belonging to the different parts of the soul between virtue and *phronesis*, their acquisition process also implies that virtue and *phronesis* are distinct states (the former is non-intellectual while the latter is intellectual). As Aristotle puts it (1103a14-18):

Excellence, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual excellence in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral excellence comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word for 'habit'.

There are two main points in support of the non-intellectualist view (that virtue and *phronesis* are distinct states) that should be accommodated when defending an intellectualist view: 1) Virtue is responsible for ends while *phronesis* is responsible for the things towards the ends 2) Virtue is acquired through habituation while *phronesis* should come by learning as it is an intellectual virtue.

For the first point, we can start by asking what the division of labor between virtue and *phronesis* means for the non-intellectualist camp. One way to answer this question is Humean, arguing that the role of *phronesis* is merely instrumental. However, Moss rejects this answer on the basis that *phronesis* is something different and ethically superior to cleverness, which is defined as efficacy in instrumental reasoning with ethical neutrality (1144a23-27). In other words, *phronesis* is not just another name for the cleverness of a virtuous person but has an intrinsic ethical significance. Moss points out two points that

reasoning comes from *phronesis* and cleverness may differ in the sense that the role of *phronesis* goes beyond instrumental reasoning (2017: 223):

First, it is reason's job to grasp what one's character has fixed as a goal, and also to recognize it as a goal. Second, the reasoning that goes into figuring out how to achieve the virtuous person's goal requires an ethical sensitivity totally lacking in mere instrumental efficiency.

The first duty of reasoning, grasping a goal as a goal, might mean conceptualizing the goal and values behind it so that deliberation can start. While virtue causes an urge to act in a certain way, *phronesis* identifies the goal and values carried by virtue as if *phronesis* gives utterance to what virtue demands. Furthermore, Moss argues that the right goal or characteristic aim of virtue is the fine and the intermediate; so, aiming at the fine and the intermediate is what virtue ensures (2017: 236). Therefore, the first duty of reasoning is to understand that we are aimed at the fine and the intermediate. However, it is not easy to identify what is right or intermediate in particular circumstances, which brings us to the second task of reasoning or *phronesis*. The main idea of the second point is that virtue sets us some goals that are not yet determined; the only thing demanded by virtue is that we should hit the mean relative to us, but "Nothing counts as the intermediate unless it is determinate" (Moss, 2017: 236). In other words, the goal virtue sets for us is described as "the mean" (*EE* 1227b36-38), "the fine" (1115b13-14), "I must make something good" (1147a32), "the end and the best" (1144a31-36) (as cited in Moss, 2011: 246).

Correspondingly, the role of *phronesis* is "determining the mean" and "identifying what is fine in the circumstances" (Moss, 2011: 247).

Even though the formulation regarding the division of labor between virtue and *phronesis* seems to secure the ethical significance of *phronesis*, it has a danger of minimizing the ethical significance of virtue. For all virtue does is to demand the fine or the best and the

mean, which may be too vague to have any ethical significance. It is, at least, difficult to accept that it takes years of habitation to build a character that aims at good, which does not have any specification; moreover, does aiming at the intermediate mean anything if “nothing counts as the intermediate unless it is determinate”? In other words, the aim of virtue is too general and abstract according to this picture, so it can be reduced to a kind of good intention or will that desires to do good without knowing or identifying what it is. Even people who are not virtuous but well-intended may believe or think that they aim at the fine; and if they misidentify what the fine and the intermediate in given circumstances, the moral failure should be attributed to the lack of *phronesis* but not virtue. The mere difference between people with good desires and virtuous is the absence or presence of *phronesis*. Despite good intentions and desires, a non-virtuous person may fail to determine or identify the fine and intermediate; consequently, her specified goal would not be right. If so, instead of the claim that “virtue makes the goal right”, we can say “*phronesis* makes the goal right”.

On the other hand, despite the formulation given here, Moss argues that the content of our ends is not given by *phronesis* but by virtue (2011: 233). For instance, before *phronesis* determines or identifies the fine or the mean, we are aware of the fact that we should save a drowning baby (Moss, 2011: 233). Another example she mentions is that the virtue of generosity provides the right goal for a person so that he “will not neglect his possessions, wishing (βουλόμενος) to assist someone through them” (*EN* 1120b2-3, as cited in Moss, 2011: 247). However, it is the task of *phronesis* to determine how much amount he will give to whom in what conditions; in other words, it is *phronesis* that hits the mean (Moss, 2011: 247). What I argue is that these examples point out different

understandings of the tasks of *phronesis* and virtue (both of which are problematic). In the first case, virtue puts a goal for us to save the drowning baby; in this case, the task of *phronesis* would not be different from cleverness; there is no need for any ethical significance in the course of reasoning but only for instrumental efficiency. Moreover, there would be a gap between virtue and virtuous action, as Lorenz points out (2009: 203):

It seems to remove, say, courage from the courageous person's thoughtful and intelligent activity in the course of which they implement a suitable way of achieving the goal of, say, rescuing the children left behind in the burning building. That activity itself turns out to be, it seems, not an exercise of courage, but of cleverness or *phronesis*.

In the second case, on the other hand, virtue does not give any content for the end; what is to neglect one's possessions or assist someone through them tells nothing until *phronesis* determines what the mean between them; in other words, it is *phronesis* that tells what our aim is in the given situation.

Furthermore, if it is true that virtue gives a vague task of being generous to *phronesis*, even the ultimate decision of sharing your wealth with someone in need in a particular situation is taken by *phronesis* in addition to the amount you give to her. For it can be the case that your particular situation does not allow you to share anything, or you can decide that the person in need is not worthy of helping. In this case, the role of *phronesis* is not limited to determining what is the right amount or channel to share, but it is *phronesis* that determines the final goal of your action by determining or identifying what is the generous action in this particular situation (whether I should share rather than how much I should share). In other words, in the second case, there occurs a gap between virtue and

a virtuous person's aim. The task set by virtue for *phronesis* (identifying the mean) turns out to be nothing but "identify the aim correctly".

Hence, the strict division of labor between virtue and *phronesis* leads to two different conceptions of the task of *phronesis*. On the one hand, it can lead to an understanding of *phronesis*, which can hardly be differentiated from instrumental reasoning or cleverness (which also creates a gap between virtue and virtuous action as Lorenz mentions, 2009: 203); on the other hand, contrary to Moss's claims, it can lead to an understanding of *phronesis* that is responsible for providing contents for a too general and vague conception of the end, that was put by virtue (which creates a gap between virtue and virtuous end). The twofold problem is caused by the strict division of labor between virtue and *phronesis*, which better fits either the technical conception of *phronesis* or an understanding of *phronesis* without ethical significance but not the empirical conception. Firstly, if we accept that *phronesis* is responsible for providing content for the vague end stated by virtue, our position would be closer to the technical conception of *phronesis* in the sense that *phronesis* would require a sophisticated account of what virtue is to provide content. For instance, in the case of generosity, if the end stated by virtue is "to be generous" or "decide whether/how/how much/with whom you should share your wealth" in a particular situation, *phronesis* needs to have a universal account of generosity to apply it in particular decisions and actions. On the other hand, if virtue puts a very specific end to our actions (like saving the drowning baby), *phronesis* loses all the ethical significance by resembling cleverness.

One might object that the examples presented here are either too abstract or too specific; therefore, *phronesis* either becomes closer to cleverness or becomes responsible for the

end. However, there can be some semi-specific, intermediate goals given by virtue that enable *phronesis* to avoid both problems. For instance, virtue can set a goal of helping a traumatized friend; in this case, I need to conduct ethical reasoning and deliberation to identify what sort of things can help my friend (the things towards the goal). In this case, it is the virtue that makes the goal right since virtue tells me to help my friend. Moreover, by appealing to *phronesis* and good deliberation, thanks to which we can identify what it means to help my friend, we can decide to make her laugh. In this case, *phronesis* can be clearly differentiated from cleverness since the situation requires ethical sensitivity to figure out the appropriate ways of helping my friend without being rude or offensive to her traumatized experience. In other words, *phronesis* must identify or determine the fine and the intermediate way of helping my friend, such as making her laugh. Now, the goal of helping my friend is set by virtue, while the way of achieving it is the responsibility of *phronesis*. If this is true, as far as we try to understand whether one is virtuous or not, we need to look at the goal that one is trying to achieve.

However, this does not seem to fit with what Aristotle says. In III,2 Aristotle says that “[...] we must next discuss choice; for it is thought to be most closely bound up with excellence and to discriminate characters better than actions do.” (1111b5-6). This suggests different from the picture above, that it is not the goal but the choice or decision that discriminates character. In saying this, Aristotle seems to imply that it is partly our rational dispositions that discriminate our character since choice or decision does not only imply the action being voluntary but also being rational or deliberated (111b10-13). Furthermore, Aristotle argues that contrary to wish, which relates to the end, choice relates to what contributes to the end (111b26-27). Therefore, in addition to goals, the

things we (rationally) choose to achieve goals also say something about our character. This fits nicely with the intellectualist position. Lorenz, for example, emphasizes the connection between virtue of character and decision, in arguing that Aristotle's definition of virtue as a *hexis prohairetike* should be understood to mean that virtue is a state that issues in decision¹⁰. This is why Aristotle does not only say that virtue makes the goal right but also argues that "Now excellence makes the choice right, but the question of the things which should naturally be done to carry out our choice belongs not to excellence but to another faculty" (1144a20-22). Here, Aristotle makes virtue responsible for making the choice right, which seems different from finding our instrumental ways to carry out those choices, which is the task of another faculty (probably cleverness).

In accordance with the strict division of labor, Aristotle should have said that choice discriminates *phronesis* (but not virtue) better than actions do. Moss does, of course, have an explanation for this passage. According to Moss, Aristotle is speaking somewhat imprecisely. From the non-intellectualist perspective, one way to avoid the difficulty is to argue that virtue makes the choice right by making the goal right (Moss, 2011: 210) because "the task of identifying suitable means is a relatively minor one, much less challenging than identifying the correct goal in the circumstances in question" (Lorenz, 2009: 192). So, virtue is responsible for the major component of choice, which is the goal, while providing means or ways of achieving ends is the responsibility of *phronesis*. Therefore, if my goal, helping my friend, was wrong, it would mean that I am not

¹⁰ "In a way it is easy to see why Aristotle holds decision to be most proper to virtue (by which I take it he here means character-virtue): after all, he defines virtue of character as a certain kind of *hexis prohairetikē* (2. 6, 1106b36–1107a2), a Greek expression that I shall argue should be translated as 'state that issues in decision'." (Lorenz, 2009: 184).

virtuous. If my goal was wrong, it means that my choices regarding how to achieve it would automatically be wrong as the choice is regarding the wrong aim.

I do not, however, find this explanation persuasive. Suppose, for example, that I have the right goal but I chose to wrong ways of achieving it. According to the strict division of labor, failure belongs to *phronesis* but not to virtue. However, Aristotle's claim that choice discriminates against character better than actions do and virtue makes the choice right implies that failure should belong to virtue.

There might be two ways of accommodating the difficulty: Firstly, since it is a relatively minor task to identify what leads to the aim, identifying the correct aim guarantees or secures that you will find the correct way of promoting it. However, if it is the task of *phronesis* to determine the intermediate, as mentioned above, as things towards the ends, it is not an easy task to fulfill; it might even be more difficult than having the right aim.

For instance, it seems easier to determine the goal of helping my friend than to determine the way of doing it. Aristotle mentions the difficulty of finding the mean (1109a23-28):

Hence also it is no easy task to be good. For in everything it is no easy task to find the middle, e.g. to find the middle of a circle is not for every one but for him who knows; so, too, any one can get angry—that is easy—or give or spend money; but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right aim, and in the right way, that is not for every one, nor is it easy; that is why goodness is both rare and laudable and noble.

Therefore, the right goal of finding the intermediate (or helping your friend) can hardly guarantee that you will hit the mean (or find the appropriate way of doing it).

Another way of accommodating Aristotle's passages that directly relate to virtue and choice is appealing to the biconditional requirement between *phronesis* and virtue. The presence of virtue implies the presence of *phronesis*. Right choice implies virtue of

character because first virtue directly provides the right aims, as the first component of choice; also, if you are virtuous, it means that you have already developed *phronesis* that provides the right ways of achieving the goal, which is the second component of the choice. However, according to this explanation, Aristotle's claims become too indirect; it is like claiming that *phronesis* makes the goal right since it makes sure that you are already virtuous. Therefore, it seems less challenging to rely on a loose division of labor, and argue that virtue and *phronesis* form a unified dispositional state (virtue of character) that is responsible for both ends and the things toward them even though it is mostly the non-rational part that sets ends (as starting points of deliberation) while the deliberative part makes the choice. In other words, what Aristotle expresses in Goal Passages is not something that necessitates considering virtue and *phronesis* as distinct states; rather, it is emphasized that the starting points of deliberation are set by the habituated non-rational part of the unified dispositional character state, virtue of character.

Relying on a weak division of labor between *phronesis* and virtue seems also compatible with the empirical conception of *phronesis*. As explained in Chapter 2, one reason why *phronesis* requires virtue is that the virtue of character manifests itself in the course of deliberation by providing different values that should be prioritized and satisfied in accordance with one's character. Thus, although the non-intellectualist perspective equipped with the strict division of labor can explain how virtue makes the choice right, the E-intellectualist perspective seems more plausible. It is more plausible because it is more straightforward in explaining the relation between choice and virtue, and it is more compatible with the empirical conception of *phronesis*.

Another piece of evidence used by the non-intellectualist account is the claim that virtue is acquired through habituation while *phronesis* (as an intellectual virtue) is through teaching. As Moss puts it: “if Aristotle in fact thinks character virtue in part intellectual then the ethical works’ whole project of contrasting intellectual virtues, acquired through teaching, with ethical ones, acquired through habituation, is awkward, misleading, and incomplete” (2011: 208). If, then, the processes through which we acquire *phronesis* and virtue are different, we have a good reason to consider virtue and *phronesis* as distinct states. This non-intellectualist interpretation, however, subtly relies on the technical conception of *phronesis* and can be accommodated if we embrace the empirical conception of *phronesis*.

When Aristotle introduces the distinction between character virtues and the intellectual ones, he claims that (1103a14-18):

Excellence, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual excellence in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral excellence comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word for ‘habit’.

The first thing that should be mentioned is that Aristotle does not say all intellectual virtues are always acquired by means of teaching; he says it is generally the case. So, we cannot automatically conclude that *phronesis* and virtue of character must be developed in distinct ways. Moreover, as he emphasizes the requirement for experience (*empeiria*) and time, rather than an abstract theoretical learning process, for the development of intellectual virtues, we may argue that the development of virtue and *phronesis* does not come about as a result of totally distinct processes. For it seems safe to assume that habituation also

requires experience and time; therefore, acquisition processes of virtue and *phronesis* have the same or overlapping requirements.

One advantage of considering habituation and teaching as overlapping processes is that it makes it easier to explain two of our main questions: "Why does genuine virtue require *phronesis*?" and "Why does *phronesis* require genuine virtue?". As Jimenez puts it: "That teaching and habituation are not sharply separated is also supported by Aristotle's explicit assertions that *phronêsis* and character virtue are intimately intertwined, and that one cannot be *phronimos* without being virtuous or virtuous without being *phronimos*" (2019: 368). Otherwise, if we consider teaching and habituation as independent ways of acquisition of two distinct things (virtue and *phronesis*), we may not have a good reason to defend the Aristotelian biconditional requirement of *phronesis* and virtue. The confusion arises when we think of *phronesis* within the technical conception, the teaching of which would require a universal grasp of virtue with proper causal account.

In other words, in addition to gaining particular experience in the actions that occur in life, which is also practicing habituation if the young one is appropriately guided, the technical conception of *phronesis* requires an abstract, lecture-like teaching process, which cannot overlap with the habituation process. When we look at the passage where Aristotle talks about lectures on political science, we can see that the learner of the lectures should have already taken some steps that lead to developing the virtue of character (1095b1-6):

Hence any one who is to listen intelligently to lectures about what is noble and just and, generally, about the subjects of political science must have been brought up in good habits. For the facts are the starting-point, and if they are sufficiently plain to him, he will not need the reason as well; and the man who has been well brought up has or can easily get starting-points.

You have to be brought up with good habits before listening to lectures; that is also a prerequisite for developing a virtue of character. So, developing some intellectual virtues with regard to ethics and moral ones, at least in part, follows the same stage, which is good habituation. Starting points of political science are not something that you need to learn by abstract thinking or argumentation; rather, they must be self-sufficient facts that provide common ground for political science. Moreover, as we think of *phronesis* in an empirical understanding, the parallelism between the acquisition processes of virtue and *phronesis* becomes even more significant as Aristotle seems to consider those starting points as subjects of experience (1094b30- 1095a7):

Hence a young man is not a proper hearer of lectures on political science; for he is inexperienced in the actions that occur in life, but its discussions start from these and are about these; and, further, since he tends to follow his passions, his study will be vain and unprofitable, because the end aimed at is not knowledge but action. And it makes no difference whether he is young in years or youthful in character; the defect does not depend on time, but on his living and pursuing each successive object as passion directs. For to such persons, as to the incontinent, knowledge brings no profit; but to those who desire and act in accordance with a rational principle knowledge about such matters will be of great benefit.

According to Jimenez (2019: 370), Aristotle here introduces:

a “double requirement” for the receptivity to arguments in ethics: (a) *empeiria* of the actions in life, which I will call the ‘*empeiria* requirement’ and (b) a proclivity to desire and act as reason directs (as opposed to living as passion directs), which I will call the ‘good-habits requirement.’

Hence, the way to developing *phronesis*, or another intellectual virtue with regard to ethics or politics, must start with gaining experience and being habituated well about relevant subjects. As this way seems also to be the same way that leads to being virtuous, the non-intellectualist argument based on the difference between the acquisition processes of virtue and *phronesis* (or intellectual virtues in general) loses its strength.

CONCLUSION

I have argued that the empirical conception of *phronesis*, which takes *empeiria* as a model, is a better alternative than the technical conception of *phronesis*, which forms a parallelism between *techne* and *phronesis*, for giving a detailed account of *phronesis*. The most significant drawback of the technical conception is its weakness in explaining why *phronesis* requires genuine virtue. When we combine the strength of the empirical conception in the same issue with the textual support, the question of whether virtue and *phronesis* form a unified dispositional state or not should be answered with reference to the empirical understanding of *phronesis*, which suggests that *phronesis* is an ethically significant intellectual virtue not based on cognitively high-powered (theoretical-like) reasoning but on everyday reasoning equipped with experience, memory, and observation.

In light of this, I have argued that the empirical conception of *phronesis* is incompatible with the T-intellectualist and the non-intellectualist views. For the former relies on the technical conception of *phronesis*. On the other hand, one of the strongest arguments in favor of the latter becomes weak once we embrace the empirical conception. For instance, once the development processes of *phronesis* and virtue coincide, the argument based on the way of acquiring intellectual and moral virtues becomes mostly undermined. Moreover, the non-intellectualist camp cannot properly explain the task of the empirical

conception of *phronesis* without creating a gap between either virtue and (virtuous) aim or virtue and (virtuous) action. Therefore, in Chapter 4, I argued that the existence of a weak division of labor between virtue and *phronesis* is not incompatible with E-intellectualism, even though *phronesis* does not directly contribute to making the goal right.

Furthermore, as it seems possible for different virtues to command competing demands or values in particular situations, *phronesis* should actively balance or harmonize the conflicting ends supplied by different virtues. For instance, when a gambler friend of yours loses what she has, justice and generosity would have conflicting demands. While justice suggests she gets what she deserves, generosity orders you to help your friend. In this case, it is the task of *phronesis* to find the middle end that satisfies the demands of all virtues involved. Therefore, again, *phronesis*, in an extended sense, has a role in determining the end of the action.

Hence, the empirical conception of *phronesis* seems to at least weakens the strict division of labor between *phronesis* and virtue. Also, it requires an acquisition process that overlaps with the acquisition process of virtue. Therefore, the most significant concerns against proposing an integrated understanding of *phronesis* and virtue become undermined. On the other hand, since tasks and the acquisition processes of virtue and *phronesis* become intertwined, it seems more plausible to identify them as integrated parts of one dispositional state rather than two distinct cooperating states.

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