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## The Goal of Habituation in Aristotle: A Neo-Mechanical Account

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Philosophy

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## Abstract

Standard interpretations of Aristotle’s ethics construe the habituation phase in his theory of moral education as markedly robust regarding the moral condition that must be achieved before the learner can attend lectures on the noble and political questions in general. These “intellectualists” argue that habituation engages the rational part of the soul so that the learner develops the capacity to identify *that* an action is noble, which involves taking pleasure in the nobility of the act. Practical reason will provide an understanding of *why* the action is noble. I argue against intellectualist readings of habituation and defend a neo-mechanical account which holds that habituation is a thoroughly non-rational process. By focusing on Aristotle’s treatment of courage, I maintain that the goal of habituation is the cognitive state of those who have civic courage: the habituated learner is required to develop to the point where he is motivated by a desire for honor and a fear of shame. This position is supported by the connection that Aristotle establishes between honor and the noble, and I argue that the goal of the habituated learner is the acquisition of a nominal account of “the noble”, the content of which is “honorable action”. This superficial understanding of the noble in terms of honorable action is then completed by the development of practical reason through teaching, which supplies *the why*. I establish this conception of moral development as a movement from *the that* to *the why* – which involves arriving at a complete conception of the noble based on a nominal conception of the noble – by drawing on the *Posterior Analytics*, and highlighting the parallels between Aristotle’s science and ethics. My interpretation is superior insofar as it fulfills two criteria that an adequate interpretation of habituation must meet: (1) it resolves the “continuity problem”; and (2) it affords sufficient weight to the teaching phase of moral education. The upshot of this view is that it provides motivation for shifting the focus of Aristotelian scholarship from habituation to the teaching phase of moral education, which concerns the development of specific intellectual virtues such as practical wisdom.

## **Keywords**

Aristotle, virtue ethics, habituation, character virtue, teaching, practical wisdom, honor, civic courage, moral psychology, philosophy of science, nominal definitions.

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## Introduction

A preoccupation with the acquisition of virtue (*aretê*) was a standing concern for ancient thinkers due to their quest for the ideal state consisting of good citizens, and this reflected a focus on education. The kind of education deemed essential in Athens (whether physical or intellectual) differed as the society developed, but the goal ultimately became the inculcation of a complete set of excellences that included physical, intellectual and moral development.<sup>1</sup> In the *Laches*, *Protagoras*, and *Meno*, Plato is concerned with the nature of virtue to assess if, and how, it can be instilled in others. In the *Meno*, the dialogue opens with Socrates being asked whether virtue arises from teaching, practice (or habit), or nature. Throughout these dialogues, Plato's overall treatment of moral education comes across as rather skeptical. He does not even manage to come to grips with what virtue is, let alone how it might be instilled in others. In the *Meno*, Socrates considers the hypothesis that virtue is a kind of knowledge (*episteme*), in which case it can be taught, but sets out difficulties with this position that encourage him to consider an alternative hypothesis – that virtue is god-granted right opinion which cannot be taught. In the *Protagoras*, Socrates engages with the famous sophist Protagoras, who claims to be able to teach virtue, even though he denies that all the virtues are a kind of knowledge. Socrates' opposing view that all the virtues consist in knowledge leads us to think that virtue must consequently be teachable, but Socrates abandons this claim based on the observation that those who are virtuous fail to cultivate virtue in others. Plato does, however, present a positive view of *paideia* in the *Republic*, for there we discover a detailed program that outlines how one would go about educating the different parts of the soul that cannot all be developed in the same way. What emerges from this view on education is the central idea that there are distinct parts of the soul, and that different methods of education are required for each part.

The body and the non-rational part of the soul, which consists in both the appetite and spirit (*Rep.* IV, 439d-441a), need to be trained by means of gymnastics, music and poetry (*Rep.* II, 376e). The rational part of the soul, which only develops later, is then to be trained by means of subjects such as arithmetic, geometry, harmonics, and dialectic (*Rep.* VII, 518b-d). The education of the non-rational part of the soul is distinctive because it is not simply a matter of

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<sup>1</sup> Frankena, W. K. 1965:15

verbal instruction, but rather depends on the young imitating good models, i.e. those who possess good character (*Rep.* III, 395c). Plato's radical vision for education, where the selected few who can advance through this rigorous program are deemed fit to rule, communicates his preoccupation with the ideal state where all citizens work towards a common good. His program is characterized by its commitment to an objective set of values that every citizen must be made to uphold, rather than competing views of the good that should be allowed to co-exist in the same state. This vision captures Plato's criticism of Athenian methods, where democracy and an egalitarian approach were the order of the day. In the minds of many Athenian intellectuals, this resulted in a failure to instill a commitment to civic duty and the responsibilities that befit a person's station based on his moral capacity. The aim, therefore, was a unified conception of "the good" where certain people were chosen to rule based on their particular moral abilities.<sup>2</sup> This was the context for Aristotle's views regarding moral education, and he went on to develop many of the ideas that Plato had already introduced. In particular, we see in the *Nicomachean Ethics* the same overarching thought that there is a definite distinction between the methods of cultivating the character virtues and the intellectual virtues: "Virtue, then, is of two sorts, virtue of thought and virtue of character. Virtue of thought arises and grows mostly from teaching; that is why it needs experience and time. Virtue of character results from habit; hence its name 'ethical', slightly varied from 'ethos'" (*NE* II. 1, 1103a14-19).<sup>3</sup> Aristotle evidently took moral education to have a two-part structure where the initial phase is concerned with habituation, while the second phase is preoccupied with teaching or verbal instruction (*NE* I.13, 1103b5-11).

In recent years, the notion of contemporary education as the development of the intellect by means of inculcating critical thinking skills has been challenged by highlighting the importance of developing character.<sup>4</sup> This criticism of current educational methodology is firmly grounded in ancient thought. As Kristjansson points out in his book, *Aristotle, Emotions, and Education*:

The dissemination of Aristotelian ideas within *education* has also created new waves and ripples. In fact, two of the most important recent trends in values education are anchored firmly in Aristotelian assumptions. The first, *character education*, is an influential if as yet philosophically undiscerning and underdeveloped movement, representing back-to-basics morality and pedagogy. It has swept across the

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<sup>2</sup> Ober, J. 2001: 175-176

<sup>3</sup> See *Republic* 521-522

<sup>4</sup> Kristjansson, K. 2007: 2-3



educational field, particularly in the USA, but has reverberations in Europe. The proponents of character education emphasize a need for the inculcation of a set of cosmopolitan basic virtues of action and reaction. They believe that those virtues must be transmitted through a plurality of methods, including, especially at the early stages, systematic modelling of worthy mentors and moral exemplars. They also believe that this transmission must occur partly via direct habituation, by which the relevant virtues seep into students' personalities like dye into wool. Values education must necessarily proceed through extrinsically activated osmosis, therefore, but not only through the development of the students' own skills of critical reasoning, as had long been the dominant orthodoxy.<sup>5</sup>

More specifically, one "new character education" program has taken the form of the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), which focuses on seven character strengths, namely, grit, zest, self-control, optimism, gratitude, social intelligence, and curiosity.<sup>6</sup> Programs such as these have been greeted with extensive criticism, where scholars such as Kristjansson aim to show that many contemporary approaches to character education are grounded in ostensibly Aristotelian claims, but in fact these approaches simply cherry-pick what they find appealing in Aristotle without genuinely understanding and incorporating his position.<sup>7</sup> Others scholars, such as Snyder, have critiqued particular formulations of character education like KIPP on the grounds that (1) we do not know how to teach character; (2) character-based education is untethered from any conception of morality, which means that teaching these "character strengths" will lead to the ability to accomplish one's goals without weighing in on the goals one *ought* to have; and (3) this form of education constricts the overall purpose of education as purely geared towards preparation for college and careers, rather than leading a flourishing life.<sup>8</sup>

This renewed interest in the potential value that ancient educational methodology has to offer regarding contemporary educational concerns has provided impetus for considering the theoretical frameworks that underpin these current approaches. Before departing from an Aristotelian approach in the way that new character education movements appear to be doing, it would behoove us to clarify Aristotle's position to assess the extent to which his framework can be applied to the challenges we currently face in education. The ultimate aim of my

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<sup>5</sup> Kristjansson, K. 2007: 2

<sup>6</sup> Snyder, J.A. 2014

<sup>7</sup> Kristjansson, K. 2007: 5-7

<sup>8</sup> Snyder, J.A. 2014

research is to work towards an application of Aristotle's theory of moral education to contemporary educational concerns. However, before I will be in a position to execute a project of this kind, I need to arrive at an understanding of the theoretical framework that he establishes and how he envisions moral education as a whole. As such, there will, broadly speaking, be two distinct phases that require clarification: (1) the habituation phase that is responsible for cultivating character virtue; and (2) the teaching phase that develops intellectual virtues like practical wisdom. Given the extensive nature of the process Aristotle has in mind, I have, for the purposes of this project, limited myself to ascertaining what Aristotle takes to be the goal of habituation. In other words, what kind of moral development does he think takes place during this component of moral education, and what is the moral condition that the learner must acquire if he is to proceed to the teaching phase of his education? As we will discover at the end of Chapter 1, I approach this question from the perspective of a potential problem in Aristotle's account, known as the "continuity problem", which points to the fact that a satisfactory account of habituation must yield an explanation of how the learner moves from performing acts that are merely in accordance with virtue towards actions that are done *virtuously*. Aristotle claims that a person becomes just by performing just actions, and he explains how this process can get off the ground if one is not just to begin with by maintaining that, at the beginning of his education, the learner will act in accordance with justice and eventually progress to acting *justly* (*NE* II. 4, 1105a17-b12). The continuity problem draws our attention to the fact that an adequate account of habituation must facilitate an explanation of this transition between acting in accordance with virtue and acting virtuously.

While this project concerns a detailed treatment of the moral condition that habituation aims to instill, my future research will be concerned with clarifying the nature of the second phase of moral education that Aristotle discusses, namely, the teaching phase. My treatment of habituation in this project is partly informed by my view of what the teaching phase consists in, but to plausibly flesh out my position regarding the development of intellectual virtue, I will need to conduct further research that would be aimed at identifying the specific content involved in this aspect of moral education. Once the theoretical project has been completed, I will finally turn towards an application of this framework to contemporary educational concerns, if I have established that this theory is supported by current empirical findings.

The central thesis of this project is that even though there has been a tendency in the literature to predominantly focus on the habituation phase of moral education, I maintain that we should rather turn our attention towards the teaching phase and clarify what this would involve. Approaches to Aristotle's conception of habituation can be divided into, what I have named, "intellectualist" readings and mechanical readings. The former view maintains that the rational part of the soul is engaged during habituation, and this enables the use of the learner's critical faculties, while the latter view holds that habituation is an entirely non-rational process that trains the learner's behavior and affective responses so that he copies virtuous action. Intellectualist readings have become the norm, yet I argue that the habituation phase does not yield the robust moral condition that intellectualists have suggested for two reasons: (1) intellectualist approaches of this kind do not adequately resolve the problem that these accounts are aimed at, namely, the continuity problem; and (2) these intellectualist accounts overlook the substantive role that the teaching phase of moral education serves to play because these interpretations of habituation are so morally robust as to leave little room for the contribution of practical wisdom through teaching. Based on these criticisms, I argue for a neo-mechanical account of habituation insofar as I deny that habituation involves the critical capacities that many scholars have ascribed to this phase of moral education, but maintain that there is still a form of ethical engagement that occurs during this process. I argue that habituation is a purely non-rational, though not "mindless", process that yields an entirely non-rational state, namely, character virtue.

On my view, habituation culminates in the capacity to act and feel appropriately, not because the learner has acquired the ability to identify noble actions for himself where he takes pleasure in the nobility of these actions that he performs, but rather due to the fact that the habituated learner has acquired a nominal conception of the noble (*to kalon*) insofar as he comes to desire honor and fear shame.<sup>9</sup> The habituated learner acts appropriately as a result of the guidance that he has received from his parents or the community, and his moral development consists in the fact that he no longer acts as he does for fear of pain or a desire for pleasure, but rather because he has come to conceive of the noble as "honorable action" and acts the way he does because he wants to be thought well of, which is why he acts honorably. The habituated learner

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<sup>9</sup> What I mean by "a nominal conception of the noble" will be spelled out in Chapter 3, where I draw on the method of inquiry from the *Posterior Analytics*, Book II.

is someone who has come to grasp “the that” (*to hoti*), which Aristotle describes as that which is “known to us”, and amounts to believing that particular actions are noble in that they are honorable (*NE* I.4, 1095a32-1095b13).

On my reading, honor functions as a transitional good that facilitates a grasp on a full-fledged conception of the noble, for I argue that honor bears a connection to the noble that other external goods lack. Once the learner has, through the process of habituation, grasped a nominal conception of the noble (which he conceives of as “honorable action”), he will be considered an appropriate learner for lectures on the noble and political questions in general (i.e. the teaching phase of moral education), because he is now susceptible to what this teaching offers. I argue that the teaching phase develops the agent’s practical wisdom, and that this grounds the preliminary conception of the noble that the learner has acquired through habituation by enabling the learner to identify the considerations that make specific actions choice worthy. To understand *why* an action is noble, and thus choice worthy for its own sake, amounts to grasping not only “the that” (*to hoti*) but also “the because” (*to dioti*), which Aristotle describes as “knowledge without qualification” (*NE* I.4, 1095a32-1095b13). This means that the learner has advanced in terms of his moral development insofar as he can *reliably* identify the noble for himself, rather than simply believing that certain actions are noble as a result of what he has been told by his superiors. Moreover, I argue that this ability to judge which action is noble in any given context also gives rise to a desire for the noble. Thus, I maintain a division between the pleasures and pains that constitute emotions, which are developed through habituation, and the pleasure taken in the nobility of a particular action, which is a function of the rational part of the soul because it stems from a rational judgment.

My interpretation is to be preferred because it succeeds in adequately meeting two conditions that I maintain are the hallmark of a satisfactory account of habituation in Aristotle:

1. It resolves the *continuity problem* because we can now understand how the repetition of acts that are not themselves virtuous, but merely accord with virtue, could result in a virtuous disposition. The habituated learner is someone who, through training, comes to act for the same end as the virtuous agent insofar as he, more often than not, acts for the sake of the noble. The only difference is that the habituated learner conceives of the noble as “honorable action” whereas the fully virtuous agent possesses a complete and grounded conception of the noble due to his ability to reason, which

means that he can identify noble actions for himself. The fully virtuous agent's conception of the noble will be grounded in the considerations which make that specific action choice worthy for its own sake. Thus, the habituated learner performs the acts he performs for the same reason as the virtuous agent even though he does not yet have the deep understanding of the noble that the virtuous agent possesses. This means that a repetition of these acts will serve to ground the proper internal motivations because they are being performed for the sake of the same end, as opposed to merely being in accordance with virtue. In this way, habituation becomes the transitional step towards achieving a full-fledged conception of the noble.

2. My interpretation of habituation in Aristotle is more modest in character, for on my reading the habituated learner does not achieve the substantive moral condition that intellectualists have argued for. This reading fits better with the text insofar as Aristotle explicitly maintains a division of labor whereby the character virtues are developed by means of habituation, while the intellectual virtues arise through teaching. While intellectualist readings focus almost exclusively on habituation, and predominately fail to afford a significant and substantive role to the *teaching phase*, my interpretation does justice to this division of labor by specifying what practical wisdom contributes to the moral development of the learner, where this contribution is both significant and robust in nature, which I maintain makes better sense of Aristotle's remarks about this aspect to moral education.

The structure of my argument in favor of the neo-mechanical account of habituation in Aristotle will run as follows: In Chapter 1, I establish the outline of Aristotle's ethical framework and psychological theory where I introduce his conception of the nature of the human soul and explain how this bears on his treatment of complete virtue in humans; in Chapter 2, I conduct a literature review and critique the most dominant positions of habituation in the current literature before considering a more modest account that I plan to develop; in Chapter 3, I present my own view regarding habituation which opposes the intellectualist views that have come to dominate the debate; and in Chapter 4, I consider three objections to my view and provide responses that undermine these concerns.

The aim of Chapter 1 is to lay the foundation for the debate in question, for without a synopsis of Aristotle's conception of the soul, which informs his position on the acquisition of virtue

and what complete virtue amounts to, one may neglect the complexity of his view. This initial discussion serves the purpose of alerting readers to some of the controversies regarding the meaning of the text, some of which will be pursued and developed throughout the course of this project based on its bearing to the subject matter at hand. I will not be taking a position on these issues at the outset, but will begin to develop my view through the critique that I conduct in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 is concerned with the presentation of current plausible views of habituation in Aristotle, which include the positions of Burnyeat, Hitz, and Jimenez. In this chapter, I aim to articulate my concerns with these approaches. Burnyeat and Hitz argue for intellectualist accounts of habituation, while Jimenez proposes a more moderate view that requires further development if it is to be a plausible alternative. The ultimate upshot of this discussion is to develop the two criteria that I take to be essential for assessing whether an account of habituation can be considered satisfactory in the sense that it honors the text. An adequate account of habituation must (1) resolve the continuity problem; and (2) accommodate the teaching phase of moral education. I conclude this discussion by endorsing Jimenez's general approach despite its weaknesses, but recommend the further development of some of her claims, which I propose to do in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 3, I develop the neo-mechanical account of habituation. My starting point is to argue that, on Aristotle's view, the virtuous agent is someone who possesses a full-fledged conception of the noble that has been shaped and informed by the development of his reason. I present arguments in support of the claim that habituation is a non-rational process, which means that the habituated learner is someone who lacks the full-fledged conception of the noble, because the learner's reason has not been developed, and does not serve to shape his conception of the noble. If this is right, then the habituated learner must be developing something other than a full-fledged conception of the noble, and I proceed to argue that what the learner latches onto through habituation is a nominal conception of the noble. I base this argument on the connections that can be drawn between Aristotle's ethics and science, and ultimately flesh out this position by maintaining that the content of this nominal conception of the noble is "honorable action", for the text indicates that Aristotle considers honor and the noble to be connected in a morally significant way. Once the outline of my position has been established, I proceed to an explanation of how this view fulfills the criteria I set out for an adequate account of habituation. This involves an argument for the role that practical

wisdom plays in moral development, where practical wisdom is developed through teaching and enables the learner to achieve a full-fledged conception of the noble in virtue of identifying the considerations that make an action choice worthy for itself, which grounds the preliminary account of the noble that the learner possesses already. This rational judgment gives rise to a desire for the noble because what completes the activity of practical reason is a pleasure in the nobility of the action. If this is convincing, then my account succeeds in resolving the continuity problem insofar as the habituated learner acquires the same end as the virtuous agent even though his conception of this end is less developed, and my account incorporates the teaching phase in such a way that its significance and contribution is adequately accounted for.

Chapter 4 focuses on the objections that may be raised to a position of this kind. First, I tackle the division of labor that Aristotle establishes where character virtue is said to make the goal right, while practical wisdom is said to make the means to the goal right. My account arguably violates this division by maintaining that practical wisdom enables us to grasp the goal insofar as we achieve a full-fledged conception of the noble through the development of reason. I accommodate this objection by clarifying the contribution that practical wisdom serves to make, and explain that this does not violate the division of labor Aristotle establishes because practical wisdom makes the goal concrete in a way that it wasn't before, rather than setting out the goal. The second concern is whether I am licensed to take the connections between Aristotle's ethics and science seriously in the way that I do, given the textual evidence which indicates that Aristotle conceives of these fields of inquiry as incomparable. Here I am forced to confront one of the central debates in the literature regarding Aristotle's position on ethics, namely, whether he is a *particularist* who takes ethics to be entirely divorced from scientific methodology, or whether he is a *generalist* who takes ethics and science to bear specific similarities. My strategy for addressing this question is to undermine the textual evidence that scholars have taken to conclusively show that Aristotle conceives of ethics as wholly distinct from science, which makes my view a plausible option. Finally, I consider whether my conception of practical wisdom is plausible insofar as I argue that practical wisdom makes both a significant and substantive moral difference that must be developed through teaching. Alternatively, practical wisdom may rather be a capacity that simply hones what habituation has already instilled. I argue that an approach of this kind fails to make sense of the text and,

specifically, the connections to be drawn between Aristotle's ethics and science, which indicates that practical wisdom is contributing something new in terms of content and capacity that makes a substantive difference, rather than simply honing what is in place already.

If my interpretation is correct, then it provides novel guidance regarding future research. If habituation is concerned with training the learner so that he takes an interest in what others think of him because he comes to desire honor and fear shame (which means that he has latched onto a nominal conception of the noble), then this will have bearing on the kind of training that is considered appropriate at this level of moral education. My interpretation proves instructive insofar as teachers will focus on activities and practices that are geared towards encouraging the child's interest in the assessment of others. For example, one strategy could be to implement a role-modelling program focused on pairing children with someone older they can admire and imitate, because the learner comes to care about the role model's assessment of him. Furthermore, if habituation is not the end of the story, or only partially develops the learner, then more research needs to be conducted to understand the precise nature of the other aspect of moral education, namely, teaching. The literature is littered with accounts of what habituation involves, but more emphasis needs to be placed on trying to come to grips with the teaching process and how this develops the learner's practical reasoning skills. In other words, the content of the lectures that Aristotle envisions needs to be articulated. And once the theoretical framework of moral education has been constructed, researchers will be in a position to consider its application to contemporary educational concerns to assess the contribution that these methods can make to the educational challenges we face today.



## Chapter 1

### 1 Aristotle's Psychological Theory and Ethical Framework

The goal of this chapter is to present the theoretical system that frames Aristotle's reasoning with regard to moral education. In order to understand why Aristotle thinks that moral education should proceed in a particular way, one must grasp his view on the soul and what it means for an agent to achieve a state of complete virtue. It is Aristotle's position on the nature of the soul that will determine what a state of virtue involves, and it is these facts about what a flourishing life for human beings entails that will recommend a specific manner of moral education. In this chapter, I am not aiming to defend a specific interpretation of Aristotle's account of the soul and the nature of virtue, but will rather be providing a general description of his position that includes points of contention which will facilitate discussion of specific issues concerning the process of moral education. In the first section, I will present his account of the soul from the *Nicomachean Ethics*, after which I will provide a general outline of how he conceives of complete virtue. I conclude the chapter by articulating the topic that will be the focus of this project: what habituation must involve and, more specifically, what the goal of habituation is for the learner to eventually arrive at a virtuous state.

#### 1.1 Aristotle's Psychological Theory in the *Nicomachean Ethics*

In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle considers what the best life for humans consists in. He states that the final good for humans is happiness, but that this is too vague to constitute an understanding of the nature of the good for humans. He suggests that a promising starting point would be to consider what the distinctive function of a human being is, and concludes by means of what has come to be known as the "function argument" (*NE* I.7, 1097b22-1098a8) that the function of a human being is rational activity, for this is the capacity that distinguishes humans from other animals. At this point, Aristotle articulates a division of the soul: one aspect of the soul "has" reason insofar as it is capable of obeying reason, while the other aspect of the soul "has" reason in virtue of engaging in rational activity itself (*NE* I.7,

1098a4-5). Now Aristotle has not yet clarified what this “having of reason” essentially comes down to in the case of the part of the soul that is only capable of obeying reason. But the basic division that serves as his starting point for thinking about the best good for humans is that there is both a non-rational and rational aspect to the soul. I will have more to say about the details of the function argument in the next section.

Aristotle goes on to say that there are three types of goods, namely, goods of the soul, goods of the body, as well as external goods (*NE* I.8, 1098b12-14). Actions and activities of the soul are considered to be goods of the soul, and according to Aristotle these are goods “most fully” (*NE* I.8, 1098b15)<sup>10</sup>. Examples of external goods include wealth and power, which serve as resources for doing noble actions and so, as we will find out, are also required for happiness (*NE* I.8, 1099a28-1099b1). Goods of the body presumably matter insofar as one can only achieve happiness if one is in good health<sup>11</sup>. It is Aristotle’s emphasis on the importance of goods of the soul that raises the question of precisely which actions and activities the soul needs to be engaged in if one is to live a happy life.

Aristotle considers this issue more carefully by noting that the politician puts more effort into virtue than the average citizen because he is the person who is responsible for making citizens good and law-abiding (*NE* I.13, 1102a7-10). And if human virtue consists in a particular activity of the soul, then the politician will need to know specific things about the soul, in the same way that someone who aims to heal a person’s eyes would need to have knowledge of the body as well (*NE* I.13, 1102a14-21; *Phys.* II.2, 194b10-15). Importantly, Aristotle emphasizes that while the politician may be considered a student of nature, he will only require

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<sup>10</sup> Aristotle argues that it is the activity of the soul, rather than simply the state of the soul that matters with regard to virtue: “For someone may be in a state that achieves no good – if, for instance, he is asleep or inactive in some other way – but this cannot be true of the activity; for it will necessarily act and act well. And just as Olympic prizes are not for the finest and the strongest, but for the contestants – since it is only these who win – the same is true in life among the fine and good people, only those who act correctly win the prize” (*NE* I.8, 1098b34-1099a7).

<sup>11</sup> In the *Eudemian Ethics* Aristotle comments on the difference between the indispensable conditions of the good life as opposed to the more general conditions of living a good life: “...without breathing or being awake or having the power of movement we could enjoy neither good nor evil” while “the eating of meat and walking after meals are more peculiarly the indispensable conditions of a good physical state than the more general conditions mentioned above” (*EE* I.2, 1214b15-26).

the knowledge that is specific to his purpose (i.e. his inquiry into the nature of virtue)<sup>12</sup>. To this end, Aristotle provides an outline of the nature of the soul:

We have said, for instance, that one [part] of the soul is non-rational, while one has reason. Are these distinguished as parts of a body and everything divisible into parts are? Or are they two [only] in definition, and inseparable by nature, as the convex and the concave are in a surface? It does not matter for present purposes... Another nature in the soul would also seem to be non-rational, though in a way it shares in reason. For in the continent and the incontinent person we praise their reason, that is to say, the [part] of the soul that has reason, because it exhorts them correctly and toward what is best; but they evidently also have in them some other [part] that is by nature something apart from reason, clashing and struggling with reason... However, this [part] as well [as the rational part] appears, as we said, to share in reason. At any rate, in the continent person it obeys reason; and in the temperate and the brave person it presumably listens still better to reason, since there it agrees with reason in everything. (*NE* I.13, 1102a29-1102b28)<sup>13</sup>

Here we are told again that the non-rational part of the soul is capable of “listening to” or obeying reason, but that it is responsible for the agent being distracted from what is correct and best. And it is made clear that in the case of virtuous agents (e.g. those who are brave and temperate), the non-rational part is in complete harmony with the rational part of the soul. In the case of the continent (*enkratic*) agent<sup>14</sup>, there is the suggestion that the non-rational part may obey reason, but is still not in *harmony* with it. Aristotle thus articulates one condition that the soul must be in for a person to be considered virtuous, and this indicates what at least the initial stage of moral education is concerned with: getting the non-rational part of the soul to become aligned with, and to fully endorse, the dictates of reason.

Aristotle then describes more precisely what the nature of the interaction is between the non-rational and the rational part of the soul:

The non-rational [part], then, as well [as the whole soul] apparently has two parts. For while the plantlike [part] shares in reason not at all, the [part] with appetites and in general desires shares in reason in a way, insofar as it both listens to reason and obeys it. This is the way in which we are said to ‘listen to reason’ from father or friends, as opposed to the way in which [we ‘give the reason’] in mathematics. The non-rational part also [obeys and] is persuaded in some way by reason, as is

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<sup>12</sup> See Leunissen, M. *Aristotle on Knowing Natural Science for the sake of Learning How to Live Well* (2015); and Shields, C. *The Science of Soul in Aristotle’s ‘Ethics’* (2015).

<sup>13</sup> Throughout this introductory chapter I make use of Irwin’s translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and indicate when another translation is being used.

<sup>14</sup> The continent agent is someone who possesses strong desires that oppose reason, but decides not to act on them. Despite these feelings, he acts in accordance with reason (*NE* VII. 7, 1150a12-16).

shown by correction, and by every sort of reproof and exhortation. If, then, we ought to say that this [part] also has reason, then the [part] that has reason as well [as the non-rational part], will have two parts. One will have reason fully, by having it within itself; the other will have reason by listening to reason as to a father. The division between virtues accords with this difference. For some virtues are called virtues of thought, others virtue of character; wisdom, comprehension, and prudence are called virtues of thought, generosity and temperance virtues of character. (*NE* I.13, 1102b28-1103a8)

The non-rational part of the soul is said to obey reason in the way that a child obeys a father, rather than the way in which a reason or account is given in mathematics. This means that the method of persuasion is not a matter of the rational part providing some sort of proof or demonstration that makes the non-rational part assent to the conclusion due to the way it follows by necessity from the premises. It rather seems to be a matter of the non-rational part accepting direction from reason based on the *authority* of the rational part. Scholars disagree on the precise nature of the interaction between the non-rational and the rational part of the soul. This is significant, because if virtue is a matter of harmonizing the non-rational and the rational part of the soul, then one would need to understand *how* it is that the non-rational part of the soul is to be influenced in the right ways: is it a matter of authority or some sort of rational persuasion?

Cooper maintains that reason exerts influence by engaging in a process of “persuasion”<sup>15</sup>. He argues that this is the case because non-rational desires are made up of elements that feature in reason as well. For example, when you get angry at a perceived slight, this anger will contain the thought that you have been insulted and that the person who has offended you deserves to be retaliated against. Now if your reason diverges at points where value-terms such as “good”, “right” and “ought” feature in this thought, you will psychologically be pulled in different directions. Essentially you are entertaining contradictory thoughts, where one features as part of your anger, while the other is expressive of your reason. Reason then persuades anger by managing to get its view of the good to obtain in the sense that the non-rational part takes it on as well. Cooper thinks that this is not simply a matter of reason exercising force through authority, but rather a matter of addressing one's anger in the sense that reason tries to direct attention to features of the situation that reveal why it is wrong to

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<sup>15</sup> Cooper, J.M. 1999

feel that way. This would involve attending to a wider set of facts rather than focusing on a narrow set of features that give rise to anger.

Grönroos disagrees with Cooper's understanding of the interaction between the rational and non-rational parts of the soul. We are told that the non-rational part follows reason's lead by understanding its commands (*NE* II.1, 1102b29-33, VII.6, 1149a25-32), and as a result it is natural to suppose that the non-rational part must possess *some* capacity for reason. To understand the commands of reason, the non-rational part must have a grasp of concepts and propositional thought. And once this is conceded it becomes difficult to understand the sense in which the non-rational part lacks the ability to do more than just comprehend commands. More specifically, this would lead us to think that the non-rational part is also capable of grasping the reasons in favor of the commands. Grönroos argues that such an understanding of non-rational desires misses something important about Aristotle's moral psychology, where he distinguishes between an acknowledgement of *what* one ought to do and *why* one ought to do it. Grönroos resists Cooper's suggestion that listening to the rational part implies a certain capacity for reasoning on the part of the non-rational desires. He argues that non-rational desires "following" reason is a matter of "directing the desires of the non-rational part towards values of reason itself by exposing them to those values through experience."<sup>16</sup>

Grönroos maintains that the non-rational part follows reason's lead, not by attending to any arguments or considerations, but by obeying reason in authority. The non-rational part follows reason without questioning its directives, for it does not grasp that which speaks in favor of such a course of action. Grönroos states that according to Cooper, the non-rational part can be persuaded by reason due to having access to the same conceptual framework, and furthermore, that this persuasion consists in the non-rational part coming to grasp the reasons in support of the proposed action. But this, according to Grönroos, distorts the distinction that Aristotle seems to want to establish. For how are we to understand the claim that only the rational part possesses reason by itself if the non-rational part is equally capable of apprehending the reasons that speak in favor of some action?

As we have seen, at *NE* I.13, 1102b31-3 Aristotle states that the non-rational part has reason in the same way that children have it from their father, rather than in the way that one would

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<sup>16</sup> Grönroos, G. 2007: 254

have it in mathematics. Grönroos argues that this should be understood in terms of how we take advice from others based on authority without having knowledge of the considerations that support the advice. In mathematics, on the other hand, we are presented with, not only the truths, but also the proofs in support of them. Grönroos thinks the interaction that Aristotle appears to have in mind is similar to the way in which children are raised, where the child accepts that something ought to be done based on authority alone. He maintains that Cooper has afforded the non-rational part too much, cognitively speaking, in virtue of attributing to this part the capacity to engage with concepts.

While Aristotle does not fully and explicitly articulate the manner in which the non-rational part is shaped by the rational part – whether by means of authority alone or some sort of rational persuasion – he does provide an answer concerning the mechanism for such development, namely, habituation. At the end of the passage above, he connects the division in the soul with virtue by claiming that the training and development of the two parts gives rise to distinct types of virtues: virtues of character, which are developed by training the non-rational part of the soul, and virtues of thought that stem from the development of the rational part. In the case of the non-rational part the training occurs by means of habituation, whereas the rational part is shaped through teaching: “Virtue, then, is of two sorts, virtue of thought and virtue of character. Virtue of thought arises and grows mostly from teaching; that is why it needs experience and time. Virtue of character results from habit...” (*NE* II.1, 1103a15-19). Thus, one way of arriving at a better understanding of how the non-rational part of the soul is developed such that it is in harmony with reason, would be to investigate the process that Aristotle explicitly points to. For if Aristotle has a particular educational process in mind, then grasping the nature of this process, and what it is aimed to achieve, may facilitate an understanding of how the different parts of the soul relate to each other, or, more specifically, how rationality serves to shape the non-rational part of the soul. I suspect that by beginning with a careful analysis of (1) the nature of habituation, one would be working towards an understanding of (2) the way in which the rational part of the soul moulds the non-rational part. The aim of this project will be to focus on the process of habituation given its central place in any account of moral education in Aristotle. As we will come to see in more detail, proper habituation is necessary if any further development is to take place, thus making it essential to complete virtue.

Aristotle develops his conception of the non-rational part of the soul by describing two aspects that it possesses. In his discussion of incontinence, he considers two different forms of incontinence and then argues which form he takes to be more shameful:

Moreover, let us observe that incontinence about spirit is less shameful than incontinence about appetites. For spirit would seem to hear reason a bit, but to mishear it. It is like overhasty servants who run out before they have heard all their instructions, and then carry them out wrongly, or dogs who bark at any noise at all, before looking to see if it is a friend. In the same way, since spirit is naturally hot and hasty, it hears, but does not hear the instruction, and rushes off to exact a penalty. For reason or appearance has shown that we are being slighted or wantonly insulted; and spirit, as though it had inferred that it is right to fight this sort of thing, is irritated at once. Appetite, however, only needs reason or perception to say that this is pleasant, and it rushes off for gratification. And so spirit follows reason in a way, but appetite does not. Therefore [incontinence about appetite] is more shameful. For if someone is incontinent about spirit, he is overcome by reason in a way; but if he is incontinent about appetite, he is overcome by appetite, not by reason. (*NE* VII.6, 1149a25-1149b4)

The non-rational part of the soul consists of appetite (*epithumia*) and spirit (*thumos*). Spirit, we are told, is susceptible to the dictates of reason, but is also unlikely to hear the full set of instructions that reason would offer because it is “hot and hasty” by nature. Spirit is inclined to jump to a particular conclusion (i.e. that retaliation should be sought) based on what reason or perception has shown (i.e. that one has been slighted), but has not in fact inferred that this is the right course of action. It is because spirit is naturally quick to draw conclusions and to respond to them, that it must be shaped by what reason has to say. Appetite, on the other hand, is not responsive to reason. When reason or perception discerns that something is pleasant, appetite immediately pursues the object in question. Thus, Aristotle claims that incontinence with regard to spirit is less shameful because being overcome by spirit, which is capable of “hearing” reason, means that the agent is overcome by reason in some sense. But if the agent is overwhelmed by appetite, there is no sense in which the agent’s action has been informed by reason. In Aristotle’s mind, this would make the action more shameful given that rational activity is a human being’s function and so constitutes moral action, while appetite is that which we share with animals that are incapable of reasoning.

Before concluding this section by taking stock of the picture of the soul that Aristotle has presented, it must be carefully noted that the division of the soul discussed thus far should not be understood in terms of desires versus reason. For Aristotle does not take there to *only* be

desires of the non-rational part of the soul. In book III, Aristotle specifies various psychological movements in the soul, including *boulesis* or wish:

Again, we wish for the end more [than for the things that promote it], but we decide on things that promote the end. We wish, for instance, to be healthy, but we decide to do things that will make us healthy; and we wish to be happy, and say so, but we could not appropriately say we decide to be happy, since in general the things we decide on would seem to be things that are up to us. (*NE* III.2, 1111b27-31)

For the excellent person, then, what is wished will be what is [wished] in reality, while for the base person what is wished is whatever it turns out to be [that appears good to him]. Similarly in the case of bodies, really healthy things are healthy to people in good condition, while other things are healthy to sickly people; and the same is true of what is bitter, sweet, hot, heavy, and so on. For the excellent person judges each sort of thing correctly, and in each case what is true appears to him. (*NE* III.4, 1113a25-32)

Aristotle aims to articulate what decision amounts to, and argues that it cannot be explained in terms of appetite, spirit, wish or belief. He claims that we wish for ends such as health and happiness, but decide on acting in ways that will achieve this end. Decision is something that is “up to us” in the fullest sense, which implies that wish is not something that is within our power in the same way. Wish is a particular sort of desire aimed at ends. Aristotle then follows this up by considering whether wish is a desire for the good or the apparent good. His answer is that the excellent person is someone who will wish for what is in fact good, while the base person wishes for what they take to be the good but which is not so in reality. Reason aims at the good (*NE* VI.5, 1140b21-22), and since we are told that wish is for the actual good in the case of the excellent person, it has been thought that wish is a *rational* desire. Furthermore, once Aristotle works through his thoughts regarding the nature of decision, he concludes “that what we decide to do is whatever action, among those up to us, we deliberate about and desire to do. Hence also decision will be deliberative desire to do an action that is up to us...” (*NE* III. 3, 1113a10-13). Thus, decision is a kind of desire, which means that both the rational and the non-rational parts of the soul engage in desire.

We are now in a position to sum up Aristotle’s account of the soul which will inform his position regarding the nature of virtue in the case of human beings. The soul is broadly divided into both a rational and a non-rational part. The rational part distinguishes us from other animals, and it is developed by means of teaching. This part also partakes of a particular sort of desire, namely, wish, which is a desire for the good, and decision, which is deliberative



desire. The non-rational part of the soul has two further aspects: (1) appetite, which seeks only pleasure and does not hear reason at all, as well as (2) spirit, which is capable of hearing reason's instructions but often responds too hastily without being properly guided by reason's prescriptions. The non-rational part of the soul is developed by means of habituation, and the soul will be able to engage in virtuous activity only once reason has shaped the non-rational part so that it is in harmony with reason's verdict. What needs to be clarified is what it means to act virtuously. What is the result of the non-rational and the rational part working together, and how does this serve to constitute a virtuous agent? If we are to understand the process of moral education, then we need to grasp what the ultimate goal of this education is.

### 1.2 The Nature of Virtue in the *Nicomachean Ethics*

Now we say that the function of a [kind of thing] – of a harpist, for instance – is the same in kind as the function of an excellent individual of the kind – of an excellent harpist, for instance. And the same is true without qualification in every case, if we add to the function the superior achievement in accord with the virtue; for the function of a harpist is to play the harp, and the function of a good harpist is to play it well. Moreover, we take the human function to be a certain kind of life, and take this life to be activity and actions of the soul that involve reason; hence the function of the excellent man is to do this well and finely. Now each function is completed well by being completed in accord with the virtue proper [to that kind of thing]. And so the human good proves to be activity of the soul in accord with virtue, and indeed with the best and most complete virtue, if there are more virtues than one. Moreover, in a complete life. (*NE* I.7, 1098a8-19)

Here Aristotle presents the “function argument”, which culminates in a claim about what it means to be an excellent human being. He begins by making it clear that when it comes to, for example, a harpist, the harpist and the excellent harpist would have the same function, but the excellent harpist would perform his function in a particular manner, viz. well. And this is the case with all things so that the function of a human being is to live life in a particular way if he is to live it well. Aristotle identifies the function in the case of human beings to be living a life that consists in “activity and actions of the soul that involve reason”. One lives this kind of life well by completing the function in accord with the virtue that is proper to it, and this is why developing the virtues that relate to each aspect of the soul is vital. However, in order to understand what this sort of life involves and to achieve a robust conception of it, we need to think more carefully about (1) how the non-rational part of the soul needs to respond when it has been shaped by reason, and (2) in what sense reason serves to guide the agent to virtuous action.

Aristotle claims that for someone to be a virtuous agent it is not enough that the person does that which a virtuous person would do:

Someone might be puzzled, however, about what we mean by saying that we become just by doing just actions and become temperate by doing temperate actions. For [one might suppose] if we do grammatical or musical actions, we are grammarians or musicians, and, similarly, if we do just or temperate actions, we are thereby just or temperate. But surely actions are not enough, even in the case of crafts, for it is possible to produce a grammatical result by chance, or by following someone else's instructions. To be grammarians, then, we must both produce a grammatical result and produce it grammatically – that is to say, produce it in accord with the grammatical knowledge in us. (*NE* II.4, 1105a17-26)

In this passage, Aristotle considers what has come to be known as the “priority problem” regarding his account of how one becomes virtuous: how can someone be expected to become virtuous by performing virtuous actions if you need to be virtuous already in order to know which actions to perform? It looks like being virtuous is *prior* to performing virtuous actions.<sup>17</sup> In response, Aristotle sets up a distinction between actions that accord with virtue and actions that are virtuous – i.e. actions that have been done *justly* or *temperately*. This means that the suggested method of becoming just by doing just actions – which is what the process of habituation is centrally concerned with – is possible because one does not need to be virtuous to perform actions that accord with virtue. The agent can make a start towards virtue by performing particular sorts of actions, where the practicing of these actions develops the agent in the relevant ways, viz. so that the agent eventually performs these actions in a particular manner. My project will focus on Aristotle's solution to the priority problem, for if acting in accordance with virtue is supposed to be the starting point for moving towards the virtuous life, then we need to come to grips with the educational method that facilitates the transition to acting virtuously, and come to understand what this transition consists in.

One might suppose that to perform an act justly or temperately (as opposed to in accordance with justice or temperance) consists in doing it for the right reasons, but Aristotle claims that even this is not sufficient for virtue:

[F]or actions in accord with the virtues to be done temperately or justly it does not suffice that they themselves have the right qualities. Rather, the agent must also be in the right state when he does them. First, he must know [that he is doing

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<sup>17</sup> Jimenez, M. 2016: 4

virtuous actions]; second, he must decide on them, and decide on them for themselves; and, third, he must also do them from a firm and unchanging state. (*NE* II.4, 1105a27-35)

The agent must grasp the nature of his action, and the action must issue from decision. For Aristotle, excellence stems from a particular sort of disposition – a state that is stable in nature. But what contributes to this firm state that Aristotle speaks of are not simply reasons that persist in an enduring way, but also the affective nature of the agent. Aristotle continues to specify the nature of a virtuous disposition:

Virtue, then, is a state that decides, consisting in a mean, the mean relative to us, which is defined by reference to reason, that is to say, to the reason by reference to which the prudent person would define it. It is a mean between two vices, one of excess and one of deficiency... [I]n feelings of fear and confidence the mean is bravery. (*NE* II.6-7, 1107a1-1107b3)

We pinpoint the virtuous action by identifying the mean that falls between two vices, and this mean is discerned through reason. But what matters is not simply identifying the action that falls within the mean, but experiencing the appropriate affective response. The example we are given in this passage is that when one performs the brave action, the mean would be achieved by feeling neither too much fear nor too much confidence. What is essentially involved in excellence, therefore, is a disposition which consists not only of beliefs but feelings as well. Our affective responses become central to Aristotle's understanding of the character virtues, which includes bravery and temperance amongst others (*NE* I.13, 1103a5-7). He maintains that one's emotions, which essentially involve pleasure and pain (*NE* II.5, 1105b21-27), exhibit one's character just as much as one's behavior does. For the virtuous person is someone who experiences the appropriate affections to the right degree:

But we must take someone's pleasure or pain following on his actions to be a sign of his state. For if someone who abstains from bodily pleasures enjoys the abstinence itself, he is temperate; if he is grieved by it, he is intemperate. Again, if he stands firm against terrifying situations and enjoys it, or at least does not find it painful, he is brave; if he finds it painful, he is cowardly. For virtue of character is about pleasures and pains. For pleasure causes us to do base actions, and pain causes us to abstain from fine ones. (*NE* II.3, 1104b5-10)

Developing the character virtues is, as we have seen, partly a matter of shaping the non-rational part of the soul via habituation. We have now come to understand that development of this kind is aimed at instilling the appropriate affective responses to particular actions, for this

contributes to one's moral disposition. We are also told that the virtuous agent is someone who takes pleasure in the noble<sup>18</sup>:

For besides the reasons already given, someone who does not enjoy noble actions is not good; for no one would call a person just, for instance, if he did not enjoy doing just actions, or generous if he did not enjoy doing generous actions, and similarly for the other virtues. If this is so, actions in accord with the virtues are pleasant in their own right. Moreover, these actions are good and noble as well as pleasant; indeed, they are good, noble, and pleasant more than anything else is, since on this question the excellent person judges rightly, and his judgment agrees with what we have said. (*NE* I.8, 1099a17-24)

For Aristotle, the virtuous disposition is one where, in the case of bravery for example, the agent experiences both the appropriate amount of fear and confidence, but also takes pleasure in acting bravely because he enjoys doing the noble thing. We now see that when it comes to the proper condition of the non-rational part of the soul the agent must experience emotions, such as fear and confidence, to the appropriate degree, but the agent must also experience a further pleasure, namely, pleasure in the nobility of his action. There is a question as to whether this particular pleasure is a function of the non-rational part of the soul. I will address this point throughout my argument.

Now that we have achieved some clarity regarding the ways in which the non-rational part of the soul ought to be disposed, we must consider how reason needs to be developed and what it contributes. I have already mentioned the role that reason plays regarding a virtuous disposition insofar as we discern the mean in action through right reason, and this is reason as the practically wise person would define it. So, to clarify reason's part in the virtuous life, we must consider the nature of practical wisdom and whether this is the only intellectual virtue that is engaged in ethics. Aristotle expands on practical wisdom or prudence in the following way:

Prudence, by contrast, is about human concerns, about things open to deliberation. For we say that deliberating well is the function of the prudent person more than anyone else; but no one deliberates about things that cannot be otherwise, or about things lacking any goal that is a good achievable in action. The unqualifiedly good deliberator is the one whose aim accords with rational

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<sup>18</sup> The Greek term is *to kalon* and receives various translations such as “the fine”, “the noble”, “the beautiful”. It has both a moral and aesthetic dimension (see Cooper, J.M. 1998: 271-271). I will continue to translate it as “the noble”.

calculation in pursuit of the best good for a human being that is achievable in action. (*NE* VI.7, 1141b10-14)

Prudence or practical wisdom (*phronesis*), as opposed to scientific knowledge, governs the realm of action. Scientific knowledge concerns that which “does not even admit of being otherwise”, while practical wisdom and craft knowledge concern “what admits of being otherwise” (*NE* VI.3, 1139b21, VI.4, 1140a1-2). Action is something that admits of being otherwise because it concerns particulars:

Nor is prudence about universals only. It must also acquire knowledge of particulars, since it is concerned with action and action is about particulars. That is why in other areas also some people who lack knowledge but have experience are better in action than others who have knowledge. For someone who knows that light meats are digestible and [hence] healthy, but not which sorts of meats are light, will not produce health; the one who knows that bird meats are light and healthy will be better at producing health. And since prudence is concerned with action, it must possess both [the universal and the particular knowledge] or [the particular] more [than the universal]. (*NE* VI.7, 1141b15-24).

What is highlighted in this passage is the importance of being acquainted with particulars if one is to work towards being practically wise. Experience is key to the moral development of the agent because it is through varied experience that the agent will come to grasp aspects of the world that will necessarily feature in deliberation regarding how to act. For example, in the case of the incontinent agent who is overcome by appetite and so does not act in accordance with reason, he may deliberate as follows: “Suppose, then, that someone has the universal belief hindering him from tasting; he has the second belief, that everything sweet is pleasant and *that this is sweet*, and this belief is active”, with the consequence that he follows appetite and eats something sweet (*NE* VII.3, 1147a33-34, my italics). The action of the incontinent agent flows from grasping something about an object in the world: that *this* is something that is sweet. The “experience requirement” is also why children cannot be students of political science:

...[F]or he [the child] lacks experience of the actions in life, which are the subject and premises of our arguments. Moreover, since he tends to follow his feelings, his study will be futile and useless; for the end is action, not knowledge. It does not matter whether he is young in years or immature in character, since the deficiency does not depend on age, but results from following his feelings in his life and in a given pursuit; for an immature person, like an incontinent person, gets no benefit from his knowledge. But for those who accord with reason in forming their desires and in their actions, knowledge of political science will be of great benefit. (*NE* I.3, 1095a2-11)

As we have already seen, the central deficiency that needs to be addressed in the young is not their age, but rather the fact that they follow their feelings, and the desires that they follow fail to accord with reason (which might also be the case in adults who are incontinent). But a further limitation is the fact that the young lack experience of actions, and this is precisely what is at issue – how one ought to act.

Commentators have generally fallen into two distinct camps regarding conceptions of what practical wisdom consists in. There are those who take practical wisdom to amount to knowledge of particulars alone so that the “experience requirement” in and of itself gives rise to moral knowledge. Proponents of this line of thinking, such as McDowell (1996) and Vasilou (1996), argue that practical wisdom is purely a perceptual capacity that enables the agent to identify the salient moral features in any context in order to grasp how one ought to act. Advocates of this understanding of practical wisdom in Aristotle are known as *particularists*, and maintain that moral knowledge is not a matter of following a system of rules precisely because morality is simply not reducible to such a system. The second camp considers practical wisdom to be a function of the intellect and to involve not only knowledge of particulars but also knowledge of universals. Scholars such as Irwin (1990) and Reeve (1992) maintain that Aristotle is a *generalist* insofar as he aims to identify general principles that will guide agents in choosing one course of action over another. So, while experience through our perceptive faculties is necessary to acquaint us with the particular features of any given situation that should feature in our deliberations, this acquaintance does not suffice for practical wisdom, because in order to choose the correct action one must bring specific generalizations to bear to the particular situation at hand. I refrain from expanding on the nature of this debate at this stage because I will return to this discussion in Chapter 4, and will ultimately argue that the textual evidence that appears to conclusively indicate that Aristotle is particularist faces significant challenges. This view flows from my interpretation of the goal of habituation in Aristotle, which includes the view that practical wisdom is not purely perceptual.

Practical wisdom is not the only intellectual virtue that Aristotle discusses regarding the realm of action. During one’s deliberations about how to act another intellectual virtue is engaged, namely, intuitive reason or understanding (*nous*)<sup>19</sup>:

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<sup>19</sup> Irwin translates *nous* as “understanding”, but Woods (1986) disagrees with this translation and opts for “intuition”, which I will adopt as well, given that this is the dominant translation in the literature and the

[These states are all concerned with particulars because] all the things achievable in action are particular and last things. For the prudent person also must recognize [things achievable in action]...[A] *Nous* is also concerned with the last things, and in both directions. For there is *nous*, not a rational account, both about the first terms and about the last. [B] In demonstrations *nous* is about the unchanging terms that are first. [C] In [premises] about action *nous* is about the last term, the one that admits of being otherwise, and [hence] about the minor premise. For these last terms are beginnings of the end to be aimed at, since universals are reached from particulars. We must, therefore, have perception of these particulars, and this perception is *nous*. That is why *nous* is both beginning and end; for demonstrations [begin] from these things and are about them. (*NE* VI.11, 1143a36-1143b10)

Here Aristotle considers the role of intuition (*nous*) in both theoretical and practical reason. Intuition is engaged regarding the “first terms” and the “last terms”. When we are in the process of acquiring scientific knowledge, intuition is responsible for grasping the first principles from which demonstrations follow. These are the unchanging first principles that ground scientific thought. In the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle spells out the process involved in acquiring cognitive access to first principles: (1) the perception of particulars, which in some animals (including humans) will give rise to, (2) the retention of these “percepts” in the soul. When enough percepts have been grasped and retained so as to form a memory, (3) the perceiver eventually comes to form “a single experience”. Experience finally leads to (4) the formation of a universal, which is a first principle of science (*Post. An.* II. 19, 99b35-100a9). Intuition is the capacity that enables us to apprehend these first principles that have arisen by means of a process of induction (*epagoge*) (*Post. An.* II. 19, 100b10-16).<sup>20</sup> [B] above refers to this process of induction in science.

[C] concerns the role of intuition in the practical case. When it comes to acting well, and reasoning about such action, intuition is engaged regarding “the last term”, which admits of being otherwise. At the beginning of the passage, Aristotle indicates that intuition is concerned with particulars (*kath’ hekasta*), and that these are the “last things”, since he claims that what is achievable in action are particular and last. Reeve adopts this interpretation of what Aristotle

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fact that “understanding” is most often a translation of *epistêmê* (See Ross, W.D. 1949 and Leshner, J.H. 1973).

<sup>20</sup> There are an array of interpretations regarding Aristotle’s process of induction, and what each step involves, but I will not examine them here. For my purposes, it is enough that we recognize the particular role that intuition is supposed to play in the theoretical case (viz. the apprehension of first principles in science) so that we may assess whether this will shed light on the role that intuition plays in the practical case.

means by “the last term”<sup>21</sup>, but Wood contends that Aristotle does not always use the term *kath’ hekaston* for what would be, in the strict sense, a particular.<sup>22</sup> While it is true that when we speak of an action we are speaking of a concrete event, which is a particular, it must also be noted that such actions are particulars in virtue of our having performed them. But in the context of practical wisdom, one is deliberating about *possible* actions. What the agent is entertaining in thought are *things-to-be-done* (*prakta*). According to Wood

[w]e can now understand ‘last’ quite simply as that which is simply recognized as a thing to be done, that is, if one decides to do it, there is no further deliberation needed about how to do so. If more deliberation were required, then it would not be true to say that there is no *logos* about the item. What is *prakton* is something one can simply see how to do if one has the capacity described in this passage both as perception and as intuition.<sup>23</sup>

If we follow Wood, then what we are being told in the passage above is that our manner of grasping what is to be done is perceptual in nature, and that this is what intuition as a capacity involves. Reeve turns to *De Anima* in order to tease out the precise nature of intuition. He states that

Aristotle allows that perception, which discerns (*krino*) a particular, may be either distinct from *nous*, which discerns the universal that is the essence of that particular, or it may be ‘the same capacity differently disposed’ (429b10-14; see 429b18-21). The perception of particulars is presumably *nous*, therefore, just in so far as it is an awareness of a particular as instantiating a relevant universal or of the universal in the particular.<sup>24</sup>

In other words, intuition seems to be something like perceptual reason insofar as it is a perceptual capacity that apprehends that which is universal in the particular. If nothing else, Aristotle indicates in this passage that intuition is a quasi-perceptual capacity.

The main disagreement regarding section [C] in the passage above is whether Aristotle envisions an inductive process that is similar to what occurs in the case of scientific inquiry. Reeve (1992), Sorabji (1973-194), and Charles (2015) maintain that there is some sort of inductive process at work during habituation (though their accounts vary regarding the details),

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<sup>21</sup> Reeve, C.D.C. 1992: 57

<sup>22</sup> Cooper, J.M. 1975

<sup>23</sup> Wood, M. 1986: 156

<sup>24</sup> Reeve, C.D.C. 1992: 58



while Wood (1986) disagrees and argues that intuition plays a unique role in the ethical case. I will briefly spell out Reeve and Sorabji's assessments before considering Wood's argument.

Reeve reconstructs [C] by using an example. By being told which kinds of actions to perform, a learner named John comes to grasp a general action-guiding principle that can be articulated as follows: "Always act well". Reeve thinks that by means of a process similar to induction, John comes to partially grasp a universal, namely, acting well. What this means is that he grasps that acting well in these circumstances is to do an act of type F2, while acting well in those circumstances is to do an act of type F3, etc. So, when he acts in a particular context, the major premise of the practical syllogism will be "Always act well", while the minor premise will be "Doing an action of type F3 here and now would be acting well". If nothing interferes he will proceed to perform an act of type F3. The minor premise is the one that concerns last things, namely, the particular actions that John will do. Reeve thinks that in practical reasoning, practical wisdom utilizes perception in order to apply a universal, which would be "type F3" in the example. But this universal has been supplied by intuition. So while demonstrations begin with universals that have been arrived at based on particulars, practical reasoning concludes with a universal being applied to a particular. According to Reeve, intuition plays two roles in ethics: (1) it is responsible for grasping *eudaimonia* based on the experience of particular actions; (2) it applies a universal to a particular during deliberations on how to act to achieve *eudaimonia*. While the grasping of first principles is achieved through induction in science, we are told that it is achieved through habituation in ethics. As such, Reeve maintains that habituation is a type of induction, for it is a process that leads to the grasping of first principles in ethics by means of intuition. He accordingly conceives of habituation as a cognitive process that is a kind of induction, albeit more than induction, because it is responsible not merely for correct belief (as in the theoretical case), but also correct desire.

Sorabji considers the line in the passage above (*NE* VI.11, 1143a36-1143b10) where Aristotle states that the "last terms are beginnings of the end to be aimed at, since universals are reached from particulars". Sorabji takes these "beginnings" to be the starting points that form the basis of arriving at the goals we ought to adopt. Because Aristotle goes on to say that universals come from particulars, Sorabji concludes that the goals at issue would be universals, while the judgments that we start off with are particular, and we come to the universals by means of a process of induction. Though we are not given examples of the judgments that would function

as our starting point, Sorabji suggests judgments of the following kind: “this is what virtue and *to kalon* require of us now”. He thinks that this fits the description we are given of our “beginnings” as *eschaton* (literally “last”), contingent, and a minor premise. The father’s final judgment about what he ought to do is “this is what courage requires of us now”, and is particular since it is the last thing you arrive at if you work your way down from the universal. Sorabji thinks that intuition is aimed at the perception of facts like “this is what courage requires now”, where this perception stems from experience rather than practical wisdom. He thinks this perception of facts can only be said to be a judgment of practical wisdom if it is influenced by knowledge of the good life (i.e. something more universal).

His account of moral development, and the role that intuition plays, would thus be articulated as follows: a child will start off without the ability to perceive for himself what ought to be done, which is why he must listen to experienced and wise men. With time, the child’s experience will enable him to make particular judgments for himself, and an inductive process will follow so that he arrives at a more general idea of what courage and virtue require. According to Sorabji, experience will allow us to make judgments of limited generality even if we haven’t acquired practical wisdom yet. We are given an example of this at *NE VI.7*, 1141b14-21, where Aristotle states that based on experience we can come to know that chicken is good for health, without knowing that all light meat is good for health. During habituation, the child is expected to start assessing the situation to see what is called for, which means that it cannot be a “mindless” process. The learner is being taught to like responding appropriately in accordance with what his intuitive perception tells him ought to be done. Thus, induction ensures that he gains a general conception of what is required, while habituation makes him *desire* the general idea.

Woods, on the other hand, thinks that there is no textual evidence to suggest that an inductive process is involved during habituation. He considers the judgements that experienced and wise men would make, and suggests central cases like “The magnanimous things to do would be to abandon your claim”, or “The courageous thing to do would be to resign”. So the propositions that the wise person with intuition grasp as true, are propositions that attribute a virtuous or evaluative character to a specific possible action. That is, the agent no longer needs to reason as to whether the possible action is of that kind. The “last term” that admits of being otherwise would consequently be something like “doing the magnanimous thing”, where one grasps that

acting in this specific manner would be an instantiation of that. Aristotle states at *NE* I.7, 1098b3-9 that “[s]ome principles are studied by means of induction, some by means of perception, some by means of some sort of habituation...” Here he explicitly acknowledges that certain principles are grasped by means of habituation, and, importantly, distinguishes this from induction. Clearly habituation involves some sort of cognitive component if it is responsible for latching on to the first principles of ethics, and this is supported by Aristotle’s assertion that “[r]eason does not teach the principles either in mathematics or in actions; [with actions] it is virtue, either natural or habituated, that teaches correct belief about the principle” (*NE* VII.8, 1151a17-20). But Woods denies that we have any grounds for supposing that this cognitive component to habituation is to be cashed out in terms of induction.

Woods consequently sets out the moral development of the learner in the following way: by attending to the words of wise and experienced men, the learner will aim to make new judgments of the same kind for himself. This is generalization in a sense, because it involves extrapolating from familiar cases to unfamiliar ones, but Woods does not think that this an inductive process like the one from the theoretical sphere. When one grasps what justice is, this is nothing over and above an ability to identify whether individual actions are just or not. Woods thinks that we ought to make sense of the line that the “last terms are beginnings of the end to be aimed at, since universals are reached from particulars”, without importing the idea of apprehension on the part of the learner. The end to be aimed at is the good for man, which consists in the practice of the virtues. Woods maintains that Aristotle’s point is that practicing the virtues involves making particular judgments about individual actions. And making these judgments is what it means to grasp the final end. So when Aristotle states that the last terms are the beginnings or origins of the end, the “of” indicates composition. These starting points are what the end consists in, and so when he claims that “universals are from particulars” he is making the point that the universals are composed of the various particulars. Woods states that

[t]here is nothing more to a grasp of what the good life is in general than the ability to produce correct identifications of the virtuous actions that go to constitute happiness. Intuition has no role to play analogous to its role in the theoretical sphere: it is involved in making judgments about individual cases, and if someone is able to do that, nothing more is needed, or indeed possible.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Woods, M. 1986: 160

In other words, the cognitive component in habituation is limited to the engagement of intuition to make particular ethical judgments, but there is no inductive process that ensues which allows the learner to apprehend universals. Whether one takes habituation to be some sort of inductive process or not, the general consensus seems to be that intuition is a form of perceptual reason that becomes engaged during the process of habituation, and which ultimately forms part of practical wisdom by enabling the agent to hit the mean in action.

Aristotle then makes one final addition to the picture of complete virtue that we have thus far encountered. When he sets out the function argument, Aristotle makes the following statement: “Now each function is completed well by being completed in accord with the virtue proper [to that kind of thing]. And so the human good proves to be activity of the soul in accord with virtue, and indeed with the best and most complete virtue, if there are more virtues than one” (*NE* I.7, 1098a15-19). The suggestion here seems to be that there may be more than one kind of virtue for humans, and that the human good will then turn out to be activity of the soul in accord with “the best” virtue, whatever this turns out to be. In book X, Aristotle then says:

If happiness is activity in accord with virtue, it is reasonable for it to accord with the supreme virtue, which will be the virtue of the best thing. The best is understanding, or whatever else seems to be the natural ruler and leader, and to understand what is fine and divine by being itself either divine or the most divine element in us. Hence complete happiness will be its activity in accord with proper virtue; and we have said that this activity is the activity of study. (*NE* X.7, 1177a12-18)

Aristotle proceeds to explain why the contemplative life is a life of “supreme virtue”, while the political life – or the life of action – fails to qualify as the best virtue because it is less pleasurable, isn’t self-sufficient, isn’t done for its own sake, and prevents the agent from being in a state of leisure (*NE* X.7, 1177a24-28).

Commentators have aimed to make sense of Aristotle’s position given that these remarks in book X give rise to particular inconsistencies.<sup>26</sup> For example, Aristotle claims that for a person to act virtuously he must decide on that action for its own sake. But in book X, Aristotle seems to be claiming that virtuous action is always for something beyond itself (*NE* X.7, 1177b3-4).

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<sup>26</sup> See Irwin, T.H. *Conceptions of Happiness in the ‘Nicomachean Ethics’* (2012) or Keyt, D. *Intellectualism in Aristotle* (1983).

It is not my aim to resolve this issue. What needs to be noted in order to have a complete outline of Aristotle's conception of the virtuous life, is the fact that he sees not only a place for virtuous action in the good life, but also contemplation, and, more specifically, contemplation of the noble and the divine. The virtuous life thus consists in the complete development of both the non-rational and rational parts of the soul.

### 1.3 The Starting Point of the Virtuous Life

We have now come to understand that the aim of moral education is a particular kind of development of the rational and non-rational part of the soul, which results in an agent who acts virtuously in the sense spelled out above, and engages in contemplation of the noble and the divine. So if this is the end-point at issue, then what is the *starting* point? It seems as if Aristotle envisions two distinct points that may be construed as "starting points" in the ethical realm: (1) natural virtue; (2) habituated virtue. At birth, we are endowed with a particular temperament (natural virtue), and if this is shaped in the appropriate way (habituated virtue), then, and only then, will we be in a position to be developed so that we achieve full virtue by attending lectures on the noble and the just (*NE* I.4, 1095b1-1095b13). Thus, the starting point of moral education as a whole is natural virtue, while the starting point of a particular aspect of moral education, namely, lectures on the noble and the just, is habituated virtue.

Our initial stage of development therefore consists in a movement from natural virtue to habituated virtue, and, as Aristotle points out, this transition is possible only because we are by nature able to acquire the virtues (*NE* II.1, 1103a19-26). We are told that people are born with "natural virtue" to varying degrees<sup>27</sup>:

For virtue is similar [in this way] to prudence; as prudence is related to cleverness, not the same but similar, so natural virtue is related to full virtue. For each of us

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<sup>27</sup>Leunissen explores the biological underpinnings of ethics by investigating natural virtue as the starting point for developing complete virtue. Aristotle discusses three main "character profiles" in the *Politics*: "Those who live in a cold climate and in Europe are full of spirit, but wanting in intelligence and skill; and therefore they retain comparative freedom, but have no political organization, and are incapable of ruling over others. Whereas the natives of Asia are intelligent and inventive, but they are wanting in spirit, and therefore they are always in a state of subjection and slavery. But the Hellenic race, which is situated between them, is likewise intermediate in character, being high-spirited and also intelligent. Hence it continues free, and is the best-governed of any nation, and, if it could be formed into one state, would be able to rule the world" (*Pol.* VII.7, 1327b24-34). These three types of character constitute the "raw materials" that the law-giver has at his disposal when selecting citizens for the ideal city. Here Aristotle is making the point that certain kinds of people will, as a result of nature, be more easily educated, while it will be more difficult or even impossible to educate others (Leunissen, M. 2012).

seems to possess his type of character to some extent by nature; for in fact we are just, brave, prone to temperance, or have another feature, immediately from birth. But still we look for some further condition to be full goodness, and we expect to possess these features in another way. For these natural states belong to children and to beasts, as well [as to adults], but without understanding they are evidently harmful. At any rate, this much would seem to be clear: Just as a heavy body moving around unable to see suffers a heavy fall because it has no sight, so it is with virtue. A naturally well-endowed person without understanding will harm himself. But if someone acquires understanding, he improves in his actions; and the state he now has, though still similar to the natural one, will be fully virtue. And so, just as there are two sorts of conditions, cleverness and prudence, in the part of the soul that has belief, so also there are two in the part that has character, natural virtue and full virtue. And of these full virtue cannot be acquired without prudence (*NE* VI.13, 1144b2-12)

To explain the relationship between natural virtue and strict/full virtue, Aristotle compares it to the relationship between cleverness, which is a capacity (*NE* VI. 12, 1144a29), and practical wisdom, which becomes a developed state when virtue (i.e. character virtue) is present (*NE* VI.12, 1144a30-31). Just as we are born with the capacity (cleverness), which may be developed into a state (practical wisdom), so we are born with the capacity (natural virtue) to develop the state of full virtue. But if the agent only possesses natural virtue without the understanding (*nous*) that forms part of practical wisdom, he would be like a heavy body that falls because “it has no sight”. Aristotle states that full virtue cannot be acquired without practical wisdom (*NE* VI.13, 1144b17), and the suggestion seems to be that without reason someone may occasionally perform the right actions, but will not understand the nature of his action so that he can perform such actions *reliably*. Moss comments on this passage as follows:

The clever person differs from the *phronimos* in that her ends may be either good or bad (1144a23-36). The naturally virtuous person differs from the genuinely virtuous one...in that her “things toward the goal” may be either good or bad. We saw above that practical *nous* is intellectual quasi-perception of particulars; this is what the person with merely natural virtue lacks. Just as a blind person may have the strength and will to walk somewhere but stumbles over obstacles because she cannot see her way, so someone with natural courage (for instance) may have the right goal in a given situation, but blunder because she cannot discern what the brave thing to do is in that situation – and thus wind up acting rashly rather than bravely.<sup>28</sup>

What has been gleaned from these remarks for the time being is that children are born with a particular capacity to develop full virtue, and that their desires need to be shaped to be in

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<sup>28</sup> Moss, J. 2011: 248

accordance with right reason if they are to develop this virtuous state. Aristotle has already commented on the fact that the proper development of a child's desires is crucial, because it is only then that he is capable of making use of any knowledge that he may gain. So while we may consider the capacity of natural virtue to be the place from which all moral education begins, we also come to understand that a particular step in the process of moral education can only commence if learners have already been shaped in the proper manner. At the end of book X, Aristotle elaborates on this point in the following way:

Now if arguments were sufficient by themselves to make people decent, the rewards they would command would justifiably have been many and large, as Theognis says, and rightly bestowed. In fact, however, arguments seem to have enough influence to stimulate and encourage the civilized ones among the young people, and perhaps to make virtue take possession of a well-born character that truly loves what is noble; but they seem unable to turn the many toward being noble and good. For the many naturally obey fear, not shame; they avoid what is base because of the penalties, not because it is disgraceful. For since they live by their feelings, they pursue their proper pleasures and the source of them, and avoid the opposed pains, and have not even a notion of what is noble and [hence] truly pleasant, since they have had no taste of it. What argument then, could reform people like these? For it is impossible, or not easy, to alter by argument what has long been absorbed as a result of one's habit. (*NE* X.9, 1179b5-19)

Here Aristotle makes the claim that learners who have not already been properly habituated cannot be guided towards the good with arguments. The many are those who follow their feelings and, more specifically, pleasure. These are people who do not care about what is noble, but rather exclusively act on desires aimed at pleasure. And learners such as these cannot then be persuaded to care about the good by means of rational argument. So, arguments concerning the good can only be received by those who have already been brought up in the right way. This line of thinking is reinforced by the methodology that Aristotle sets out at the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics*:

For we should certainly begin from things known, but things are known in two ways; for some are known to us, some known without qualification. Presumably, then, we ought to begin from things known to us. That is why we need to have been brought up in noble habits if we are to be adequate students of noble and just things, and of political questions generally. For we begin from the [belief] that [something is true]; if this is apparent enough to us, we can begin without also [knowing] why [it is true]. Someone who is well brought up has the beginnings, or can easily acquire them. (*NE* I.4, 1095a31-1095b13)

The starting point of the aspect of moral education conceived of as lectures on the noble, just, and political science is proper habituation, for without training of this kind the learner will lack knowledge of things “known to us” or “the that” (*to hoti*), which forms the basis for coming to acquire “the because” (*to dioti*). What requires clarification is the development of the learner from birth to the point where he is “properly habituated”, and what precisely this habituation entails, given that moral education in the form of lectures cannot proceed without this step. Once this has been articulated, one would be in a position to consider the education learners receive once they have acquired the “beginnings”. For the purposes of this project my aim will be to achieve an understanding of the initial stage of development and to leave the second stage of moral education for future research. How does Aristotle think we ought to go about the business of shaping a learner from birth so that he receives a proper upbringing, and what, precisely, does it mean to claim that a learner has been appropriately habituated?

Commentators have pondered these questions by focusing on a potential problem in Aristotle’s account. For if it is the case that one becomes virtuous by performing virtuous actions, it is also the case – as Aristotle has already argued – that one can perform actions that are in accordance with virtue but which have not been done *virtuously*. However, if this is true, then there seems to be a further problem. As Jimenez argues

[I]f we take the view to be that learners become virtuous by doing virtuous actions in a different way to how virtuous people do them – i.e. not virtuously – then it is hard to see how actions performed in that way can contribute to the formation of truly virtuous dispositions. Indeed, the more deflationary the characterization of how learners perform virtuous actions, the more difficult it is to find any significant continuity between those actions and the virtuous dispositions they are expected to yield.<sup>29</sup>

The worry here seems to be the fact that Aristotle is describing a movement from one *kind* of act (i.e. an act that is in accordance with virtue) to a different *kind* of act (i.e. an act that is done virtuously), without an explanation of how this shift is supposed to occur. For example, if one trains a child to perform generous acts by offering him some kind of external reward that has nothing to do with the nature of generous action, then he can be said to be acting in accordance with virtue. But what is motivating him to act is the promise of some reward, not the generosity of the act. What he takes pleasure in is not the fact that he is performing a noble act, but rather

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<sup>29</sup> Jimenez, M. 2016: 4



the reward that he is aiming at – getting to watch an extra hour of television, for example. The virtuous agent, on the other hand, is motivated to perform certain actions because they are noble, and what he takes pleasure in is the nobility of the act. So how can it be the case that performing actions that are in accordance with virtue, where the proper motivation and pleasure are lacking, would lead to an agent who performs actions with the proper motivation and pleasure intact?

Modern commentators have proposed various accounts of habituation that are aimed at establishing greater continuity between the habituation and the teaching phases of moral education to account for the transitions at issue. To this end, they have, for the most part, abandoned the “mechanical theory” of habituation according to which habituation is predominantly a non-rational process whereby the learner’s affective responses are moulded by means of repetition, punishment and reward<sup>30</sup>. Instead, scholars such as Burnyeat and Sherman have argued that habituation engages the learner’s perceptive and critical faculties from the start.<sup>31</sup> The “continuity problem”, as it has come to be called, has therefore served to motivate various accounts of habituation in the recent literature. There is a question as to whether Aristotle himself recognized the continuity problem as such. It would seem that scholars have taken to reasoning backwards from that which constitutes a virtuous state to make sense of what habituation must involve, and this has led them to assert that Aristotle envisioned habituation to be more intellectual than previously supposed, because it would explain why Aristotle does not himself acknowledge any sort of continuity problem, despite the threat that it poses to his account. Other scholars, like Jimenez, have argued that Aristotle accounts for the continuity between habituation and full-fledged virtue by discussing an intermediate state, namely, the state of the civic courage.

This general treatment of Aristotle’s psychological theory and ethical framework lays the foundation for the discussion to come in Chapter 2. In Chapter 2, I will be considering intellectualist accounts of habituation that have been proposed by recent scholars, as well as the weaknesses of these interpretations. I will argue that even if these accounts appear to present a tolerable response to the continuity problem, they are mistaken insofar as they fail to explain the kind of moral development learners undergo during the teaching phase. As such,

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<sup>30</sup> See Curzer, H. 2012 for a moderate version of the “mechanical view”.

<sup>31</sup> Burnyeat, M. 1980: 69-92; Sherman, N. 1989

it will become apparent that a satisfactory account of habituation must accommodate (1) the continuity problem, and (2) the division of labor that Aristotle establishes where habituation instills the character virtues, while teaching develops the intellectual virtues. I will consider interpretations from Burnyeat, Hitz, and Jimenez. Burnyeat proposes a robust picture of habituation that is characterized by means of a transition from external incentives to the proper internal motivations. Hitz undermines his interpretation by presenting a view that is equally robust in terms of the intellectual engagement at issue, but which abandons his developmental story in favor of a description of habituation where the learner is trained in proper motivation right from the beginning, rather than progressing to this point from the basis of external incentives. Jimenez proposes a more moderate view where she accepts the model of development that Burnyeat proposes, but conceives of civic courage as an intermediate state that captures the goal of habituation. I see this account as a way forward because Jimenez does not embrace the intellectualism of other interpretations, but still maintains that there is ethical engagement during the habituation phase. Once I have shown that these distinct positions are problematic, I will defend a neo-mechanical interpretation of habituation in Chapter 3, which is a development of Jimenez's view.

## Chapter 2

### 2 A Critique of Intellectualist Accounts of Habituation and a Way Forward

In Chapter 1, I presented Aristotle's psychological theory and ethical framework with the aim of tracing his conception of the virtuous life, as well as the path to be followed if one is to lead such a life. At the end of the chapter, I highlighted a potential problem in Aristotle's account regarding the process of moral education which has come to be known as the continuity problem: if the acts performed as part of the process of habituation are acts that are merely in accordance with virtue, how does the learner make the transition to performing acts *virtuously*? There have been two distinct ways of conceiving of the habituation process: some scholars have adopted a "mechanical theory" of habituation, while others have proposed what I will call an "intellectualist theory" of habituation.

The mechanical theory takes habituation to be a process whereby it is only the non-rational part of the soul that is engaged and trained in particular ways so that the learner eventually acts the way that a virtuous person would act while lacking the intellectual motivations that characterize a virtuous person's actions. In other words, the person is trained to mechanically copy virtuous actions as opposed to acting based on the proper motivations. Scholars who have defended this view include Grant (1885), Stewart (1892), Joachim (1951), and more recently Curzer (2012,) who presents a moderate version of this view. The intellectualist theory maintains that such a lack of critical engagement during the habituation stage makes the transition from having been habituated to attaining full-fledged virtue completely mysterious, because acting in accordance with virtue and acting virtuously become essentially different kinds of acts with no indication of how to bridge this gap. This gives us reason to think that Aristotle conceived of proper habituation as more than "mindless" responses that have been cultivated over time, since rational engagement cannot arise out of a process that is inherently non-rational. It is plausible to suppose that habituation must in some way engage one's intellectual capacities. Proponents of the intellectualist theory of habituation include Burnyeat (1980), Sherman (1989), and more recently, Hitz (2015).

In this chapter, I will assess intellectualist theories of habituation, for this approach has become the dominant perspective from which to make sense of the initial phase in Aristotle's theory of moral education.<sup>32</sup> I will show that while different readings along these intellectualist lines appear to mitigate the continuity problem, they do not succeed in making sense of Aristotle's theory of moral education as a whole. What these interpretations fail to keep in sight is the fact that Aristotle envisions two distinct phases of moral education where each contributes something specific to the development of the learner. By aiming to address the continuity problem, these scholars fail to accommodate the teaching phase that Aristotle points to, and the knowledge that it instills. In other words, by incorporating robust intellectual engagement into the process of habituation, one robs the teaching stage of its contribution to moral development. Yet, as we saw in Chapter 1, Aristotle clearly thinks that acquiring the intellectual virtues through teaching is equally crucial for virtue. I will ultimately go on to defend a neo-mechanical interpretation of habituation which holds that habituation is non-rational while still involving ethical engagement of a sort, for such a reading is able to accommodate the problems that other interpretations fail to address.

I will focus my attention on the interpretations proposed by Burnyeat, Hitz, and Jimenez. Burnyeat and Hitz disagree on the psychological process that is at work when learners move from a state of natural virtue to one of habituated virtue. Burnyeat thinks that a process of internalizing the noble occurs during the habituation phase, and that learners come to be internally motivated by the noble by initially being presented with external incentives such as honor and other forms of praise and punishment. I have named this conception of moral development the "External-Internal Model". Hitz takes issue with this psychological model and argues that such a movement from external incentives to the appropriate internal motivations is precisely what Aristotle rejects as the proper means of habituation. She proposes an alternative approach that I have named the "Internal Model", whereby learners start off with the appropriate motivations from the beginning by means of a musical education. Hitz juxtaposes two forms of habituation: (1) a defective form of education that results in civic courage and other quasi-virtues that are motivated by external incentives; and (2) musical education that instills the proper motivations – i.e. acting for the sake of the noble – right

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<sup>32</sup> Jimenez states that due to the continuity problem "most commentators have abandoned the so-called 'mechanical theory'..." (Jimenez, M. 2016: 5).

from the beginning. She argues that scholars who view civic courage as a stepping stone to proper habituation are mistaken because this is a defective quasi-virtue that the Spartans possess.

Jimenez proposes an alternative interpretation that moves away from the robust moral development defended by Burnyeat and Hitz. She takes the state of civic courage to be an immature form of virtue and, furthermore, that it is the goal that habituation aims at. Her solution to the continuity problem is to claim that learners who are properly habituated are those who sometimes act for the sake of the noble, as we see in the case of civic courage. If learners are brought to a point where they sometimes act for the sake of the noble, then it makes sense that the repetition of certain actions would anchor those motivations and make them stable to the point where the agent eventually acquires a virtuous disposition. I will identify the weaknesses of these three positions before presenting my own neo-mechanical interpretation of habituation in Chapter 3, which is a development of Jimenez's proposal.

The lessons I will draw from this critique will be as follows:

1. A satisfactory account of habituation not only serves to resolve the continuity problem, but is also modest enough to clarify what the teaching phase of moral education serves to contribute.
2. Given the challenges that Hitz's account faces, it seems more plausible to suppose, as Burnyeat does, that Aristotle conceives of moral education as a movement from external incentives to the proper internal motivations.
3. Jimenez's general approach is promising, but to make it convincing the account needs to be fleshed out in more detail.

## 2.1 Burnyeat's View and the "External-Internal Model" of Moral Development

Standard interpretations of Aristotle's ethics have taken the habituation phase in his theory of moral education to be markedly robust in terms of the moral condition that must be achieved before one is in a position to attend lectures on the noble and the just. Burnyeat argues that habituation leaves the learner in a position to not only act and feel appropriately, but to do so because he sees such actions as noble. The learner has come to learn *that* certain actions are noble and just insofar as this judgment has become his own, which means that he comes to

take the right kind of pleasure in so acting. Practical reason will then provide an understanding of *why* those actions are noble which will serve towards the “final correcting and perfecting of your perception of ‘the that’”.<sup>33</sup>

In this chapter, I argue against intellectualist readings of the habituation phase by claiming, in opposition to Burnyeat, that, according to Aristotle, habituation does *not* result in the ability to judge that certain actions are noble. Aristotle makes it clear that through habituation the learner acquires a correct belief about the principle, i.e. the good for human beings (*NE* VII.8, 1151a15-20). The content of this belief would have to be the conclusion of the so-called function argument, for this argument clarifies what the good for humans consists in: the habituated learner will acquire the belief that the highest good is activity of the soul in accord with virtue (*NE* I.7, 1098a15-20). The habituated learner will consequently be motivated to perform acts that he has been told are noble – for this forms part of the end he has adopted – but, as I will argue, he has not yet developed his *own* judgment that certain actions are noble along with the conception of the noble that this would involve. In Chapter 3, I present my reasons for the claim that further development of this kind is a function of reason and only develops after habituation has occurred. The following discussion will reveal a tendency in Aristotelian scholarship to overstate the role of habituation as well as the non-rational part of the soul in moral development. I contend that our attention should rather be turned towards a more robust reading of the teaching phase of moral education which concerns the development of particular intellectual virtues.

At the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics* we are presented with a central passage where Aristotle considers the methodology of his project in terms of whether we are moving towards first principles (or starting points), or beginning from them:

For while one must begin from what is familiar, this may be taken in two ways: some things are familiar to us, others familiar without qualification. Presumably, then, what we should begin from is things familiar to us. This is the reason why one should have been well brought up in good habits if one is going to listen adequately to lectures about things noble and just, and in general about political affairs. For the beginning (starting point) is “the that”, and if this is sufficiently apparent to a person he will not in addition have a need for “the because”. Such a person has, or can easily get hold of, beginnings (starting points), whereas he who has neither, let him harken to the words of Hesiod: “The best man of all is

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<sup>33</sup> Burnyeat, M. 1980: 74

he who knows everything himself, Good also the man who accepts another's sound advice; But the man who neither knows himself nor takes to heart What another says, he is no good at all'. (*NE* I.4, 1095b1-13)<sup>34</sup>

Aristotle makes it clear that in order to be appropriate students for lectures on the noble, one must already have the appropriate beginning or starting point. This starting point is “the that”, and is to be distinguished from what one ultimately aims at which is “the because”, or that which explains and grounds the particular belief or fact that one has grasped, in order to arrive at moral knowledge. The question Burnyeat sets out to answer is what “the that” in ethics consists in. What is the starting point that is necessary if we are to move towards moral knowledge? His answer is that it is knowledge of actions in accordance with the virtues, and what we know about these actions is *that* they are noble or just. We come to this knowledge by means of habituation – that is, by being trained to perform noble or just actions over and over again (*NE* II.1, 1103b14-25). Burnyeat states that Aristotle's discussion of habituation is intended to show that practice has “cognitive powers” because it is by means of doing noble and just actions that we learn what is noble and just:

You need a good upbringing not simply in order that you may have someone around to tell you what is noble and just – you do need that (recall the Hesiodic verses) – but you need also to be guided in your conduct so that by doing the things you are told are noble and just you will discover that what you have been told is *true*. What you may begin by taking on trust you can come to know for yourself. This is not yet to know *why* it is true, but it is to have *learned that* it is true in the sense of having made the judgment your own, second nature to you – Hesiod's taking to heart.<sup>35</sup>

I accept Burnyeat's initial claim that the learner is being told by others that certain actions are noble, and that he comes to believe what he is being told, which means that he views particular actions as falling under the description of “the noble”. However, I will ultimately argue against Burnyeat's further claim that the learner has come to make this judgment his own and that he can see that it is true *for himself*.

Burnyeat develops his argument by drawing on a central passage regarding moral education to be found in book X, chapter 9 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1179b4-31):

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<sup>34</sup> Burnyeat's translation.

<sup>35</sup> Burnyeat, M. 1980: 74

Now if arguments were in themselves enough to make men good, they would justly, as Theognis says, have won very great rewards, and such rewards should have been provided; but as things are, while they seem to have power to encourage and stimulate the generous-minded among our youth, and to make a character which is well-bred, and a true lover of what is noble, ready to be possessed by virtue, they are not able to encourage the many to nobility and goodness. For these do not by nature obey the sense of shame, but only fear, and do not abstain from bad acts because of their baseness but through fear of punishment; living by passion they pursue the pleasures appropriate to their character and the means to them, and avoid the opposite pains, and have not even a conception of what is noble and truly pleasant, since they have never tasted it. What argument would remould such people? It is hard, if not impossible, to remove by argument the traits that have long been incorporated in the character; and perhaps we must be content if, when all the influences by which we are thought to become good are present, we get some tincture of virtue. Now some think that we are made good by nature, others by habituation, others by teaching, Nature's part evidently does not depend on us, but as a result, of some divine causes is present in those who are truly fortunate; while argument and teaching, we may suspect, are not powerful with all men, but the soul of the student must first have been cultivated, by means of habits, for noble joy and noble hatred, like earth which is to nourish the seed. For he who lives as passion directs will not hear argument that dissuades him, nor understand it if he does; and how can we persuade one in such a state to change his ways? And in general passion seems to yield not to argument but to force. The character, then, must somehow be there already with a kinship to virtue, loving what is noble and hating what is base.<sup>36</sup>

He interprets this passage as making the point that the learner who is appropriate for Aristotle's lectures (i.e. the teaching phase of moral education) is someone who takes pleasure in the noble: she has a conception of the noble and therefore knows what is truly pleasant, or pleasant by nature.<sup>37</sup> Burnyeat states that it is Aristotle's emphasis on pleasure which will explain how practice can lead to the knowledge that certain actions are noble and just, and thus a conception of the noble. When we learn to enjoy something, this is similar to learning that the activity in question is enjoyable. To learn to enjoy something properly, we must not simply take pleasure in it but do so in the right way. Virtuous activity is like this, for to learn to do what is virtuous so that it becomes second nature to one is to learn to enjoy doing it. What the virtuous man enjoys is the practice of the virtues undertaken for their own sake (*NE* II.3, 1104b3-13).

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<sup>36</sup> Burnyeat's translation.

<sup>37</sup> Burnyeat, M. 1980: 75-76



At this point it is worth setting out Burnyeat's subsequent argument in his own words:

...in cases such as the facing of danger...the actions which the practice of the virtues requires could only be enjoyed if they are seen as noble and virtuous and the agent delights in his achievement of something fine and noble. That is why his enjoyment or lack of it is the test of whether he really has the virtues. Next, recall once more the statement in 2.4 that virtue involves choosing virtuous actions for their own sake, for what they are. If we are asked what virtuous actions are, an important part of the answer must be that they are just, courageous, temperate, and so forth, and in all cases noble. (It is common to all virtuous actions that they are chosen because they are noble: 3.7. 1115b12-12; 4.1. 1120a23-24; 4.2. 1122b6-7; *EE* 1230a27-29). Accordingly, if learning to do and to take (proper) enjoyment in doing just actions is learning to do so and to enjoy them for their own sake, for what they are, namely, just, and this is not to be distinguished from learning that they are enjoyable for themselves and their intrinsic value, namely, their justice and nobility, then perhaps we can give intelligible sense to the thesis that practice leads to knowledge as follows. I may be told, and may believe, that such and such actions are just and noble, but I have not really learned for myself (taken to heart, made second nature to me) that they have this intrinsic value until I have learned to value (love) them for it, with the consequence that I take pleasure in doing them. To understand and appreciate the value that makes them enjoyable in themselves I must learn for myself to enjoy them, and that does take time and practice.<sup>38</sup>

As Burnyeat has set out the moral development of the learner, the learner must already love what is noble and take pleasure *in the nobility* of certain actions. This learner thus has a conception of the noble where he is able to judge of certain actions that they are noble or just, i.e. that they worth doing for their own sake in virtue of possessing the feature of "nobility", and it is this feature that he takes pleasure in. This is the proper pleasure associated with virtuous activity. Burnyeat therefore articulates two stages of development during habituation:

- (1) Being told, and believing that particular actions are noble and just.
- (2) Learning for *oneself* that particular actions are noble and just by coming to take pleasure in them for their own sake.

As we see, on Burnyeat's reading the properly habituated learner is someone who is morally developed in a robust sense because she has achieved the second stage of development. There are two criticisms of this position that I wish to raise. First, if the learner has acquired the moral abilities spelled out above, then it is unclear what practical wisdom and the development

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<sup>38</sup> Burnyeat, M. 1980: 77-78

of reason is supposed to contribute. Yet Aristotle claims that there is a teaching phase that develops the rational part of the soul, and that reason is a vital component of the virtuous state (*NE* I.13, 1103a5 - II.1, 1103a18). Burnyeat, therefore, owes us an explanation of what a grasp on “the because” would contribute to the moral condition of the habituated learner.

The reason why the proper habituation of the young was so important to begin with was precisely for the sake of lectures that we are told concern what is noble and just as well as political science more generally (*NE* I.4, 1095a31-1095b13). What is it, then, that we learn about noble and just actions in these lectures? Burnyeat states that the habituated learner has not yet learned *why* it is true that certain actions are just or noble, and has not yet “acquired any of the virtues for which practical wisdom is required, that understanding of ‘the because’ which alone can accomplish the final correcting and perfecting of your perception of ‘the that’.”<sup>39</sup> But if what he has argued is correct, then it would seem that the learner has a grounded grasp of what it is about certain actions that makes them worth doing, namely, that they are noble: he is able to identify the features that make them worth doing for their own sake. It is thus no longer evident that he lacks “the because”, or an account of why such actions ought to be done. If the learner is being trained to take pleasure in certain actions for their own sake *because* they are noble, then it would seem that in order to be convinced that such actions really are worth doing for their own sake, he must already have an understanding of why the feature of “nobility” confers such value onto the action. This would presumably involve having a full-fledged conception of the noble, given that one would only be able to do something as sophisticated as identifying the noble action for oneself (which Aristotle specifically holds is a very difficult thing to accomplish) if one has a good enough grasp on what nobility involves (*NE* II.9, 1109a25-30).

Aristotle claims that an understanding of the good will make us better able to hit the mark (*NE* I.2, 1094a23-26). Presumably the development of reason will contribute to the learner’s standing moral condition by making it stable and reliable in a way that it wasn’t before. Yet, on Burnyeat’s reading, it is not evident why the learner’s moral condition is not reliable and stable. The consequence, then, of such an intellectualist account is that there is very little for reason to contribute. Burnyeat appears to concede as much when he claims that practical

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<sup>39</sup> Burnyeat, M. 1980: 74

wisdom contributes a *final* correcting and perfecting of a particular kind of perception. Nothing new is added – there is simply a honing of what has already been developed. I would argue that the account of why certain actions ought to be done for themselves is supplied by reason and not habituation. Through the development of his reason the learner comes to acquire his own judgment that certain actions are noble, because he gains the capacity to identify the relevant features for himself, and he then takes pleasure *in the nobility* of the action. I will defend this claim in Chapter 3.

What this criticism brings to light is a further condition that a satisfactory account of habituation must satisfy, namely, that the teaching phase must be accommodated so that it is shown to be ethically significant. Aristotle explicitly introduces a division of labor whereby habituation cultivates the character virtues, while teaching develops the intellectual virtues (*NE* I.13, 1103a5 - II.1, 1103a18). Both the non-rational and rational components of virtue are crucial, which means that an interpretation of habituation needs to be modest enough to accommodate the role that teaching will play. Thus, a satisfactory account of habituation must (1) resolve the continuity problem, and (2) accommodate the teaching phase of moral education. How does Burnyeat’s account fare regarding the first condition?

I would argue that it still does not seem clear precisely how the learner is moving from their starting point, which is natural virtue, to acquiring the appropriate internal motivations that Burnyeat thinks occurs during habituation. Burnyeat tells us that in the habituation phase the learner comes to love, or take the proper pleasure in, particular actions and that this occurs by means of practicing those actions. The claim seems to be that repetitively engaging in particular kinds of actions because I have been told and believe them to be of a particular kind (i.e. noble), will, after a certain period of time, cause me to enjoy those actions, which will enable me to appreciate the fact that they are enjoyable for their own sake. Habituation has “cognitive powers” in that the practice of virtuous actions will engage our faculties of discernment. But such an account does not seem to make the transformation of the learner appear any less mysterious. For the question still remains as to why a learner who performs actions because he has been told to (which shows that the proper internal motivations are clearly lacking at this point) would eventually start enjoying these actions so that it leads to the acquisition of the appropriate motivations. The thought seems to be that if the learner is continually performing actions that are *in fact* pleasurable in the way that virtuous actions are, he must at

some point come to grasp this fact by starting to find the actions pleasurable for themselves. But to get learners to perform the relevant actions in the first place would involve punishment or reward of some kind, and the introduction of external incentives at the start presents the problem of how it is that the learner moves from finding actions enjoyable for the sake of something else (viz. rewards or praise) to finding them enjoyable for their own sake. Burnyeat conceives of moral development as a movement from external incentives to the proper internal motivations. A shortcoming of such a reading is the fact that it fails to clarify the transition in moral development enough to remove the explanatory gap that seems to be lurking in Aristotle's account.

One may object to this point by claiming that Aristotle may not have considered a satisfactory account of habituation to involve an exposure of the psychological underpinnings that are responsible for the precise moral transitions that I have argued are lacking on Burnyeat's reading. After all, Aristotle continuously compares the ethical case to that of crafts (*NE* II.1, 1103a32-1103b), and in the case of crafts it isn't clear that in order to, for example, teach someone to play the piano, we need to understand more about the process than the fact that practice makes perfect. However the transformation occurs, we know that it occurs by means of repetition, and perhaps that is all that needs to be said by way of explanation. That is, we can make sense of the ethical case by means of analogy with the crafts. Burnyeat's treatment of the ethical case may also seem plausible if we were to consider an everyday example: suppose that I'm sure my child will like ravioli with tomato sauce, but she refuses to try them. I try and persuade her by providing reasons why she would like it, and so why she should give them a try. Alas, she remains unconvinced. I finally motivate her by telling her that she can have ice cream for dessert if she tries them, and she tastes it. She discovers that she does, indeed, like them, and so keeps eating. An incident of this kind is common, and appears non-mysterious. But is it parallel to the ethical case?

I maintain that the ethical case is different in crucial respects. While it is true that noble actions are pleasant by nature, one's ability to take pleasure in these actions is a function of a particular judgement, i.e. that this is a noble action, and that nobility is a good. Recall that ethical pleasure is taking pleasure in the nobility of the act, which requires an ability to judge that the action is in fact noble. In the pasta case, one is born with the sense organ responsible for experiencing tastes and so one only needs to taste things that *are* tasty in order to have the relevant

experience. But in the ethical case children don't already have a "nobility sense organ", as it were. They must first develop the ability to discern nobility in order to take pleasure in it. There is no textual evidence which suggests that nobility is a phenomenological feature of actions that "sticks" to these actions, ready to be apprehended. What we *are* told is that determining which action is in accordance with right reason, and so noble, is challenging and needs to be worked out, and this requires the development of the individual with regard to their reasoning capabilities (*NE* II.9, 1109a25-30).

Regarding the analogy with crafts, Aristotle makes it clear that crafts and ethics, while similar, are distinct in crucial respects. In crafts, it is exclusively the quality of the product that matters (i.e. the musical piece that is produced), but in ethics it is the psychological state of the agent that matters in addition to the action performed (*NE* II.4, 1105a27-1105b6). The agent must be in the following condition to be virtuous:

1. He must know that he is doing virtuous actions.
2. He must decide on virtuous actions them for themselves.
3. He must perform actions from a firm and unchanging state (*NE* II.4, 1105a31-35).

Aristotle emphasizes the last two conditions, and these are the very conditions that do not come into play in the case of crafts. In the case of learning to play the piano, the agent's soul does not have to be in a particular condition. All the pianist has to do is acquire the ability to produce a particular kind of product, where the steps in the process are relatively clear given the aim at issue, and there is no demand on the psychological state that the agent must be in for it to count as having played well. But in the ethical case, the psychological underpinnings of the action that is produced make all the difference. As such, the ethical case is distinct from crafts, and we require an account of the appropriate psychological development so that we can be sure to produce a virtuous agent, rather than an agent who merely acts in accordance with virtue.

I think that we have reason to expect that there is an account of how the transition from acting in accordance with virtue to acting virtuously comes about. Aristotle discusses the psychological components that make up a virtuous state. As we see in Chapter 1, he elaborates in detail on what this condition involves. He then spends a great deal of time explaining and

assessing what has gone wrong in other cases – we have the vicious, the incontinent, and the continent agent to make it clear what other psychological states one could end up with, and why these states fail to be virtuous (*NE VII*). So, if it is possible to go wrong in all these ways, then our central interest in moral education is to avoid the psychological paths that have led to these less-than-virtuous states. But the only way that we can work towards true virtue is if we isolate the *appropriate* psychological path that must be followed. Based on all the ways things can go wrong, it must surely be possible to identify how things might go right. Bringing about a virtuous agent is challenging, since we may apply certain methods of education that only succeed in producing a continent agent – i.e. someone who acts in accordance with virtue while still lacking virtue (*NE VII.9*, 1151b35-1152a4).

Based on Aristotle's emphasis on the psychological underpinnings of a virtuous state, we would need to track the relevant transitions so that we are clear on what kind of psychological development we are aiming to produce. Once we are clear on what the right transitions in moral development look like, we will be able to construct a detailed educational methodology that secures an appropriate education. It is true that Aristotle does not explicitly spell out how the relevant psychological transitions come about in the case of virtue. So, either he did not think that such an account was necessary and simply argued by way of analogy (which is a strategy I think we have reason to be skeptical about), or he thought that he had provided the psychological tools to identify the correct psychological path, by highlighting what *wouldn't* count as virtue. If there is an interpretation of Aristotle that makes the path to virtue more perspicuous than other accounts, then surely this reading ought to be preferred, for it would provide an explanation that lends plausibility to the theory that Aristotle sets out. I will aim to provide a neo-mechanical account of this kind in Chapter 3.

## 2.2 Hitz's View and the "Internal Model" of Moral Development

In book 3 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle describes moral conditions that resemble courage, but which are lacking in some sense. The condition that he thinks appears to be most like genuine courage is civic courage:

The bravery of citizens comes first, since it looks most like bravery. For citizens seem to stand firm against dangers with the aim of avoiding reproaches and legal penalties and of winning honors; that is why the bravest seem to be those who hold cowards in dishonor and so honor brave people. That is how Homer also

describes them when he speaks of Diomedes and Hector: ‘Polydamas will be the first to heap disgrace on me’, and ‘For some time Hector speaking among the Trojans will say, “The son of Tydeus fled from me.”’ This is most like the genuine bravery described above, because it results from a virtue; for it is caused by shame and by desire for something noble, namely, honor and by aversion from reproach, which is shameful. In this class we might also place those who are compelled by their superiors. However, they are worse to the extent that they act because of fear, not because of shame, and to avoid pain, not disgrace. (*NE* III.8, 1116a19-29)<sup>40</sup>

Burnyeat considers this passage in a footnote and comments on it as follows:

The connection between shame and the desire to do what is noble is very clear in the Greek. Shame is felt for having done *αισχρά* (things disgraceful, ignoble, base), and *αισχρά* is the standard opposite of *καλά* (things noble, fine, honorable). Hence to do something from fear of disgrace is not incompatible with doing it for the nobility of the act itself. This is made clear at 3.8 1116a27-29, on “citizenly” courage: the only thing that is “second best” about this form of courage is that the citizen soldier takes his conception of what is noble from the laws and other people’s expectations (1116a17-21) rather than having his own internalized sense of the noble and the disgraceful (cf. 3.7 1116a11-12).<sup>41</sup>

According to Burnyeat, the condition of the citizen soldier approximates that of true virtue except for the fact that the soldier does not yet have an internalized sense of the noble, but rather depends on the laws and his superiors for guidance in this regard. He does possess a conception of the noble because he acts from fear of disgrace, which reflects some sort of grasp on the noble, but his understanding of the noble is not developed enough so that he can fully appreciate the nature of his act. Burnyeat, therefore, considers civic courage to be a stage of development tending towards the state of the habituated learner.

Hitz argues against the view that civic courage is an appropriate stage in the moral development of the learner. Her strategy will be to argue that acting for the sake of honor in the way that the civically brave do is not compatible with acting for the sake of the noble in action. And if acting for the sake of honor is not compatible with acting for the sake of the

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<sup>40</sup> Hitz’s translation: “Citizens seem to face dangers because of the penalties and reproaches imposed by laws and conventions, and because of honors; and therefore those people seem to be bravest among whom cowards are held in dishonor and brave men in honor... This kind of courage is most like that which we described earlier, because it is due to virtue; for it is due to shame and to desire for what is noble (since it is for honor) and avoidance of disgrace, which is ignoble. One might rank in the same class even those who are compelled by their rulers; but they are inferior, inasmuch as they act from shame but from fear, and to avoid not what is disgraceful but what is painful; for their masters compel them... (Hitz, Z. 2015: 9-10)

<sup>41</sup> Burnyeat, M. 1980: 89

noble, then acting for the sake of honor is also not compatible with choosing an action for its own sake. According to Hitz, the goal of habituation is to render a learner able to act for the sake of the noble which is to choose an action for its own sake. Her argument proceeds as follows.

True moral virtue involves acting for the sake of the noble (*NE* III.7, 1115b12-12, b21-4; 1116a11, 15), and, as Hitz points out, acting for the sake of the noble in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is intimately connected with two other aspects of virtuous action: (1) being for its own sake; (2) being pleasant. She thinks that the claim according to which virtuous actions are sought for the sake of the noble is equivalent to the notion of performing an action for its own sake. She admits that this is never stated in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, but evidence for this claim can be found in the *Eudemian Ethics* at VII. 15, 1248b34-6. In addition, we are repeatedly told that virtuous people take pleasure in noble action (*NE* I.8, 1099a1-20). What the virtuous person takes pleasure in is the nobility of the act, and this pleasure can be regarded as a sign of virtue – that is, a sign that one chooses the action for its own sake (*NE* II.2, 1104b5 - II.3, 1104b9). The truly virtuous person is someone who takes pleasure in things that are truly pleasant (or pleasant by nature), and the virtuous man is described as loving, or taking pleasure in, the noble. Now the habituated learner is equally described as a lover of the noble in book X (*NE* X.9, 1179b7-10). Hitz thinks that this gives us good reason to think that this pleasure in the noble, which is an outward sign of choosing actions for their own sake, points to the fact that the habituated learner is someone who acts for the sake of noble, which is to choose an action for its own sake. In Chapter 3, I will propose an alternative way of reading Aristotle’s description of the habituated learner as a “lover of the noble” which opposes Hitz’s understanding of the moral development that is required during habituation.

If Hitz is right to think that the habituated learner is someone who (1) acts for the sake of the noble, (2) chooses actions for their own sake, and (3) takes pleasure in the nobility of the act, then it follows that civic courage is not the state that habituation aims at. Hitz discusses several points to make this clear. First, in his discussion on civic courage, Aristotle does not state that the laws being followed by the civically brave are correct, or come from a legitimate lawgiver, which would reveal a deference to the reason of others. As such, it isn’t clear that civic courage even aims at correct action under the guidance of reason. Moreover, Aristotle often uses “political” as an adjective in the *Nicomachean Ethics* when he is describing relations among



citizens, i.e. any members of a political community governed by law. Political or “citizenly” courage thus seems to be that which someone in a conventional Greek city-state would possess, which undermines the thought that civic courage and genuine courage aim at the same end but differ only in degree of understanding. Aristotle explicitly criticizes the ends towards which virtues and quasi-virtues are directed in conventional cities given that true human excellence is the only proper end of political life (*Pol.* III.9; VII.1-3). Honor is, after all, a rejected candidate for *eudaimonia* (*NE* I.4-5), and the habituated student is someone who aims at the right end.

Hitz concedes that there are passages where the noble and honor are closely related, but argues that they are still importantly distinct. At times Aristotle characterizes the noble, or relates it closely, to that which is “worthy of praise” (*Rhet.* I.9, 1366a33-4; *EE* VII.15, 1248b19-20). He calls honor the “prize appointed for the noblest thing” (*NE* IV.3, 1123b18), and it is included among the goods that are valuable in themselves (*NE* I.6, 1096b16-18, 23-4, I.7, 1097b2, VII.4, 1147b29-31). Additionally, he speaks of the political life as being for honor in some sense (*NE* I.5, 1095b23), and honor is distinguished from gain because it is choice worthy while profitless, which makes it noble (*Rhet.* I.9, 1367a22-23). But the important distinction is that, unlike the noble, honor remains an external good (*NE* IV.3, 1123b17-21). According to Hitz, honor is the conventional end of political life that Aristotle wants to replace with genuine moral virtue, and real honor is only an outward sign of this. Honor may be awarded by others who lack good judgment which is why it shouldn’t be pursued as an end in itself (*NE* I.5, 1095b23-30). This means that the civically brave would be acting for a noble object given by the public, as opposed to the nobility of the act. In Chapter 3, I will take up a defense of the connection between honor and the noble by undermining the points that Hitz raises to suggest that honor and the noble are still importantly distinct. I will argue that honor is a good which plays a crucial role in terms of moral development precisely because of its connection to the noble.

Hitz also acknowledges the connection between the civically brave and habituated learners based on the fact that they share the motivation of shame. While it is true that shame is presented as a motivator in both cases, she thinks that the connection is too weak to support the thesis that civic courage is an immature form of virtue, and is the state that habituation aims at. She claims that Aristotle’s discussion of shame brings out the fact that he has both a deep and a shallow sense of shame in mind. He states that “a feeling of disgrace is not proper

to the decent person either, if it is caused by base actions; for these should not be done. If some actions are really disgraceful and others are base only in his belief, that does not matter, since neither should be done, and so he should not feel disgrace” (*NE* IV.9, 1128b22-25). Hitz’s interpretation of these lines is to claim that, in the best circumstances, Aristotle takes shame to be an internal cringing at having made a mistake rather than feeling publicly humiliated because one has failed to meet the expectations of others. She thinks that in book X, chapter 9 there are distinct notions of shame in play: at the beginning of the chapter we encounter shame as a natural condition as opposed to shame as a developed state.<sup>42</sup> Thus, it can be claimed that the shame which motivates the civically brave is natural shame rather than the developed and deep sense of shame to be found once education has taken place. I will ultimately undermine her interpretation of these lines and maintain that the civically brave and the habituated learner do share the same motivation, which is reason to think that civic bravery captures the state that habituation aim at.

Hitz continues to bolster her position that civic courage is in fact a defective state, rather than a stepping stone to virtue, by aligning the civic courage from the *Nicomachean Ethics* with the Spartan education which Aristotle criticizes in the *Politics*. In the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle draws a distinction between “nobility-and-goodness” and the “political condition” of the Spartans according to which virtues are sought for the sake of natural goods. Actions that are pursued for the sake of natural goods, which are goods without qualification or external goods (such as honor, bodily excellence, good fortune, power), are not done for the sake of the noble which means that such actions are not done for their own sake (*EE* VII.15, 1249a2-5). When virtues are sought for the sake of external goods the actions that ensue are noble *accidentally* (*EE* VII.15, 1249a14-16). Aristotle criticizes the end of the Spartan regime by arguing that it is only directed at one part of virtue, namely, virtue of war. In addition, it views virtue only as a means to other goods (*Pol.* II.9 1271a-b10). This opposes Aristotle’s ethical theory according to which virtue ought to be pursued for its own sake.

Aristotle does not explicitly spell out why he still considers civic courage or the state of the Spartans to be a kind of virtue. Hitz offers some suggestions. In a sense, the external goods that are aimed at are goods that are a common aim of the city or constitution. For the Spartans,

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<sup>42</sup> Hitz, Z. 2015: 283

insofar as they are good soldiers and citizens, are prepared to sacrifice their own gain for the sake of some common end of the city, which is military domination of other cities. Thus, the Spartans have been trained to exercise some sort of restraint in service of a greater goal. The virtue they achieve is what Aristotle calls “virtue in war” (*Pol.* II.9, 1269b19-23), and the achievement of the Spartan lawgiver is to instill a level of restraint or endurance aimed at fighting and winning in war, for this sort of restraint serves to prevent self-indulgence (*Pol.* VII.14, 1333b21). We can now see the connection between Spartan virtue and civic or political courage: both involve restraint and the sacrifice of certain goods for the sake of the common good which includes the acquisition of external goods such as honor. Both of them aim at noble things but these actions are noble accidentally.

Aristotle thinks that the Spartan education fails partly because it involves the brutalization of children which makes them like wild animals (*Pol.* VIII.4, 1338b11-32). This form of training impedes the development of understanding (*Pol.* VIII.4, 1339a9-10). Thus the Spartan education is insufficient both with respect to the aim of action, as well as the cultivation of rational capacities. For Aristotle, the proper development of the rational faculties is of paramount importance, since it is the use of these capacities while in a state of leisure that he considers to be the appropriate end of the city. Every other activity, including war and work, is for the sake of leisure (*Pol.* VII.14, 1333a30-b5; 1334a11-VII.15, 1334a40).

I will respond to Hitz’s criticism of the External-Internal Model of moral development in due course, but I would first like to sketch her positive proposal to clarify the difference between an External-Internal Model, and an Internal-Model of moral development. Hitz advocates a form of habituation where the learner takes pleasure in actions themselves, as opposed to their results, right from the beginning. Hitz thinks that such an education is possible by means of musical education, for this kind of education promotes high-level rational activity, and properly develops the learner such that virtue is something sought for its own sake rather than for the sake of external goods.

The positive goal of musical education is generally thought to be pleasure in virtuous action for its own sake, i.e. pleasure in what is noble about the action. According to Hitz, the Spartan education seems to achieve the negative goal of moral education, which is to instill an ability to overcome appetitive pleasures because this acts as an obstacle to receiving rational argument. Virtue of character is required for practical wisdom because indulging in harmful

pleasures misleads and impedes one from acquiring the correct starting point of action (*NE* VI.12, 1144a35-36). That is, one develops an incorrect conception of the good. Hitz thinks that while a Spartan education will at least prevent one from having pleasure as one's starting point, it will not serve to train one in the proper pleasures. She claims that other conditions beyond repetition of actions enforced by honor and disgrace would need to be in place to teach learners to recognize the intrinsically valuable aspects of their actions. However, an account of what these further conditions are is not provided in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Consequently, Hitz thinks that we should rather look for an account of this kind in the *Politics*. Musical education, she claims, trains learners to take pleasure in the nobility of actions from the beginning. Her strategy, then, is to reject the "External-Internal Model" entirely and to opt for an understanding of education that is not developmental in this way.

Music provides the young with representations that they will imitate, for we initially learn by means of imitation (*Poetics* 1, 1448b6-8). What music represents are certain kinds of actions and characters to be imitated by the young (viz. noble ones), and since children are impressionable at a young age it is important that they should be exposed to music that is appropriate. They will also be brought to feel the right sorts of feelings in response to actions and characters, because music will represent affections through rhythm and melody which causes the audience to feel these affections as well (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1340a19-24)<sup>43</sup>. This serves to clarify which capacities are being developed at this stage – feeling the appropriate feelings in response to certain actions and characters. But Aristotle does not think that the young should simply view and listen to musical performances, but should rather learn to play musical instruments themselves because they will then become good "judges" (*Pol.* VIII.6, 1340b20-25). Hitz points out that the language used to describe the goal of musical education, namely, "enjoying, loving and hating in the right way", is the same language used to describe the condition of the well-habituated student in book X, chapter 9 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Hitz states that by performing musical representations of good characters and actions the young come to learn to enjoy, love, and hate them in the right way. And hearing these representations serves to affect our souls in a way that is similar to the truthful versions of these representations (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1340a18-28).

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<sup>43</sup> This view of the role that music plays in moral education stems from Plato's thought (see *Republic* 398-403).

By not only listening to music but performing it as well, the young are said to learn to judge and discriminate better (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1340b2-5). We later find out that the judgment one develops is that of “distinguishing things done rightly” (*Pol.* VIII.6, 1340b38-9). And this judgment is not merely aesthetic, but concerns correct moral judgment – one learns to distinguish good characters and deeds from bad ones. Hitz highlights the fact that correct moral judgment is an aspect of virtue discussed in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and is often closely related to proper pleasure in moral action. Hitz thinks that the noble and the pleasant serve to guide judgment (*NE* III.4, 1113a30; I.8, 1099a23-4). I will develop this connection between correct moral judgment and pleasure in my positive account, and will argue that since correct moral judgment is a function of reason it is developed by means of, not only music, but teaching as well, and there is a distinctive pleasure that results from this judgment, i.e. pleasure in the nobility of the act. This would oppose Hitz’s position that pleasure in the nobility of the act is cultivated through habituation.

Importantly, because musical representations of moral traits and actions are available and enjoyable to children from a young age, it is possible for them to take pleasure in moral characters and deeds early on. According to Hitz, the pleasure they experience is not due to gaining external goods, but is experienced internally as part of the learner’s own action right from the beginning. She concedes that Aristotle does call music a “sweetener” of the actions (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1340b13-17), “which suggests that in its own way it is an extrinsic incentive for action”<sup>44</sup>, but she claims that the fact that musical features and the features of moral actions are akin to each other in terms of the order they display means that music facilitates the proper internal motivations. Her understanding of *to kalon* (the noble) is that for Aristotle it is fundamentally aesthetic, and concerns the “orderly features of the action”<sup>45</sup>. There is both a beautiful order in music, and a beautiful order in action. The two are closely related, which makes the transition from the one to the other possible in the way that Aristotle seems to indicate. Hitz claims that a transition of this kind makes more sense than a transition from external goods to internal motivations.

As I understand Hitz’s position, she is arguing that it is misguided to suppose that Aristotle is proposing a shift from external incentives, where these are pleasures and pains that have

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<sup>44</sup> Hitz, Z. 2015: 34

<sup>45</sup> Hitz, Z. 2015: 299

nothing to do with the nobility of the action (such as honor), to the proper internal motivations that centrally involve taking pleasure in the nobility of the act.<sup>46</sup> Rather, Aristotle thinks that children must be brought to take pleasure in features of particular actions from the beginning, which is accomplished by allowing them to experience instances of moral action through music. Music serves to provide fictional cases or representations of moral action that share the relevant features of genuine moral action, namely, a particular kind of aesthetic order. According to Hitz, proper habituation in the noble trains the young in pleasure aimed at the correct end (or something closely resembling it), which is the noble, from the beginning. This picture would also explain why Aristotle thinks one becomes virtuous by performing virtuous actions. If the actions to be performed are musical in nature, and are representations of a virtuous act, then these actions can lead one to develop the right dispositions insofar as they are already orientated towards *to kalon*. Hitz, therefore, closes the explanatory gap by illustrating how musical education engages the proper motivations from the start so that the only transition at issue is a movement from musical representations to the truthful version that they are representations of, and this is easily done because music and ethics have the same end, namely, *to kalon*.

While Hitz raises important criticisms regarding the role that civic courage may play in the development of virtue, I will, nonetheless, argue that her position fails to fulfill the two conditions of a satisfactory account of habituation, namely, resolving the continuity problem, as well as the division of labor regarding the habituation and teaching phases. I will discuss the following objections to Hitz's view: (1) Musical education is itself an instance of the External-Internal Model of moral development, (2) It is not clear that Aristotle has only musical education in mind when he discusses habituation in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, (3) There are reasons to think that it is not the goal of habituation to value the action for its own sake and to take pleasure in the nobility of the act, (4) Hitz's interpretation of shame as having a shallow and a deep sense need not be gleaned from the text in the way that she suggests.

Hitz claims that musical education is the form of education that Aristotle has in mind because it fails to conform to the External-Internal Model of moral development which is a defective

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<sup>46</sup> Hitz does not provide a definition of what she takes an "external incentive" to be, but based on her examples, she appears to have pains and pleasures that have nothing to do with the nobility of the act in mind.

form of habituation. I will argue that this is not the case. If one considers Aristotle's remarks on music carefully it becomes evident that (1) music does offer an external incentive, and (2) musical education is a matter of being guided from the point of *not* taking pleasure in the right things to the point of taking pleasure in the right things, thus exposing a transition that needs to be explained. Consider the following passages:

The first question is whether music is or is not to be part of education. Of the three things mentioned in our discussion, which does it produce – education or amusement or intellectual enjoyment? – for it may be reckoned under all three, and seems to share in the nature of all of them. Amusement is for the sake of relaxation, and relaxation is of necessity sweet, for it is the remedy of pain caused by toil; and intellectual enjoyment is universally acknowledged to contain an element not only of the noble but of the pleasant, for happiness is made up of both. (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1339b11-19)

But music is pursued, not only as an alleviation of past toil, but also as providing recreation. And who can say whether, having this use, it may not also have a nobler one? In addition to this common pleasure, felt and shared in by all (for the pleasure given by music is natural, and therefore adapted to all ages and characters), may it not also have some influence over character and soul? It must have such an influence if characters are affected by it. (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1339b39-1340a7)

The study [of music] is suited to the stage of youth, for young persons will not, if they can help, endure anything which is not sweetened by pleasure, and music has a natural sweetness. (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1340b14)

In the first passage, we are told that music has multiple effects: it amuses (or is naturally sweet), educates, and gives rise to intellectual pleasure. Music, therefore, appears to engage both the spirited and the intellectual aspects of the soul by having a natural sweetness that amuses, producing character development, and resulting in intellectual pleasure. In the second passage we are specifically told that music is a suitable way of educating the young precisely because music is naturally pleasant even before one has learned to love and hate rightly. In other words, the activity of listening to music is always pleasurable, and this gives children an incentive to engage in it even if they are not interested in loving and hating rightly.

Throughout Hitz's description of musical education she acknowledges the fact that children do not start off taking pleasure in the right things, but learn to do this by means of guidance

in musical education.<sup>47</sup> But the instructor can only convince learners to engage with the right sorts of representations if he can bring them to listen to, and start performing, musical pieces. Children will only co-operate if there is some kind of incentive to motivate them, and since they lack the appropriate internal motivations, namely, taking pleasure in the nobility of the act, they must be motivated by pleasure that does not concern the nobility of the act, namely, the natural sweetness of music. Hitz's concession that music may be viewed as an external incentive due to its natural sweetness indicates that she regards pleasures that do not concern the nobility of the act (i.e. external to the noble nature of the action) to function as external incentives. It is a pleasure that fails to be connected to the moral nature of some action, but which can motivate the child to engage in that action. So, if one is only able to convince children to engage with music by exposing them to the natural pleasure it can offer, then this would function as a motivating pleasure that is not connected to the nobility of the act. This pathway to the proper pleasure, which is eventually taking pleasure in the nobility of the act (rather than the pleasure of amusement), now looks remarkably similar to the External-Internal Model of moral development that Hitz aims to reject. For the training children receive commences with an external incentive (i.e. the pleasure of amusement) through which the proper pleasures are eventually cultivated so that learners have the appropriate motivations. And if this is right, then the question of how children move from the external incentive of natural pleasure in the form of amusement to the internal motivation of taking pleasure in the right kinds of characters and deeds for their own sake is raised once again.

Hitz attempts to dismiss this worry by drawing our attention to the fact that music exhibits a degree of order that is also the mark of noble actions, which means that music is the right sort of thing to take pleasure in. And this may indeed be so, but it does not mean that a child is taking pleasure in music because she acknowledges this order and this is what she finds pleasurable. Noble actions may be pleasurable for several reasons, and what matters is *why* the agent finds that action pleasurable – because it is noble or because, for example, it leads to happy consequences for the agent. As we have seen, at the beginning a child takes pleasure in music because it is a source of amusement, and it is only by means of training that he will experience the right emotions in response to the appropriate musical representations. Eventually children will develop their judgment as well, and at this point they will presumably

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<sup>47</sup> Hitz, Z. 2015: 33 -35



take intellectual pleasure in music. Thus, when it comes to musical education there is still a movement from the external pleasures that music may offer to the proper pleasure in the nobility of the representation, and we are left wondering how one brings the child to develop an interest in the noble through training.

I would now like to turn to Hitz's claim that Aristotle must have had musical education in mind as the proper form of education, despite the fact that this is not explicitly stated in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Hitz fails to address the evidence in the *Nicomachean Ethics* which indicates that for Aristotle habituation involves both punishment and encouragement. In book I, chapter 13 Aristotle states:

The non-rational part, then, as well as the whole soul apparently has two parts. For while the plantlike part shares in reason not at all, the part with appetites and in general desires shares in reason in a way, insofar as it both listens to reason and obeys it. This is the way in which we are said to 'listen to reason' from father or friends, as opposed to the way in which we 'give the reason' in mathematics. The non-rational part also obeys and is persuaded in some way by reason, as is shown by correction, and by every sort of reproof and exhortation. (*NE* I.13, 1102b29-1103a).

Here Aristotle explains how the non-rational part of the soul is to be brought into harmony with the rational part – and this is precisely what becoming virtuous involves. An appeal to the mechanisms of “reproof and exhortation” is what should be expected given that children are not yet responsive to reason. What they do respond to is pain and pleasure, which is what chastisements and encouragements essentially involve. This is not to claim that such mechanisms are not being used within the context of musical education, but to comment on the fact that in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle does not indicate that he limits the use of these methods to musical education.

Aristotle's description of how virtue is acquired at the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is equally non-committal about how exactly habituation ought to proceed:

Further, the sources and means that develop each virtue also ruin it, just as they do in a craft. For playing the harp makes both good and bad harpists, and it is analogous in the case of builders and all the rest; for building well makes good builders, and building badly makes bad ones. Otherwise no teacher would be needed, but everyone would be born a good or a bad craftsman. It is the same, then, with the virtues. For what we do in our dealings with other people makes

some of us just, some unjust, what we do in terrifying situations, and the habits of fear or confidence that we acquire, make some of us brave and others cowardly. The same is true of situations involving appetites and anger; for one or another sort of conduct in these situations makes some temperate and mild, others intemperate and irascible. To sum it up in a single account: a state of character results from the repetition of similar activities. (*NE* II.1, 1103b14-22)

Here Aristotle compares the development of virtue to the development of a craft. Now if building a building, and playing a harp are supposed to be analogous cases in certain respects for learning how to be virtuous, then it seems reasonable to suppose that the thing that must be repeated are particular actions, since the well-built building is the result of the activity of building over and over again until one has acquired the skill. And the goal we are after in the moral context is virtuous action, so in the same way good action is the result of the repetition of actions until one acquires moral skill. The “activities” to be engaged in to become virtuous in no way seem limited to playing musical instruments, but rather seem to involve engagement with moral contexts to be encountered outside of the music class as well. As such, it seems presumptuous to suppose that the only proper form of habituation is musical education in particular.

As we have seen, Hitz defends a specific understanding of the state of the habituated learner. She argues that the goal of habituation is to shape the learner to the point where he takes pleasure in the nobility of the act which stems from a recognition that the action ought to be done for its own sake. It is because these requirements need to be met if a learner is to be considered appropriately habituated that she turns to musical education as the proper form of education. I disagree that being properly habituated entails a moral condition of this kind. I want to begin by pointing out a conflation that is frequently made in the literature, and which I flagged in Chapter 1, between (1) experiencing pleasures and pains in relation to actions in the form of emotions, and (2) taking pleasure in the nobility of the act. This distinction is mostly neglected, and it is assumed that whenever Aristotle speaks of experiencing proper pleasures he necessarily has in mind both the proper emotions as well as pleasure in the nobility of the act. However, by considering Aristotle’s discussion of music it seems evident that there are various sorts of pleasures that need to be distinguished. Aristotle speaks of the pleasure of amusement, pleasures and pains in the form of anger or love, as well intellectual pleasure.

Habituation is aimed at training the non-rational part of the soul, and the non-rational part of the soul is made up of an appetitive and spirited aspect. As we have seen, the appetitive part needs to be restrained, and the spirited part needs to be trained to respond appropriately, i.e. the right emotions need to be experienced to the right degree in relation to right action (*NE* II.9, 1109a24-30). In the passage above (*NE* II.1, 1103b14-22), the habits of fear and confidence need to be instilled to the appropriate degree in relation to brave acts. Then we are told that the just and temperate person takes pleasure in acting justly and temperately: “But we must take someone’s pleasure or pain following on his actions to be a sign of his state. For if someone who abstains from bodily pleasures *enjoys the abstinence itself*, he is temperate; if he is grieved by it, he is intemperate” (*NE* II.3, 1104b5-8, my italics). So not only must the temperate person *not* feel tempted to indulge his desires to excess, he must also take pleasure in the act of abstaining. The same goes for courage – not only must the agent feel the appropriate amount of fear and confidence when standing his ground, he must take pleasure in so doing (*NE* II.3, 1104b8-10). There are distinct pleasures and pains at issue: (1) feeling certain emotions in relation to right action; (2) taking pleasure in acting that way because it is noble.

Now consider Aristotle’s discussion of musical education:

Besides, when men hear imitations, even apart from the rhythms and tunes themselves, their feelings move in sympathy. Since then music is a pleasure, and excellence consists in rejoicing and loving and hating rightly, there is clearly nothing which we are so much concerned to acquire and to cultivate as the power of forming right judgments, and of taking delight in good dispositions and noble actions. Rhythm and melody supply imitations of anger and gentleness, and also of courage and temperance, and of all the qualities contrary to these, and of the other qualities of character, which hardly fall short of the actual affections, as we know from our experience, for in listening to such strains our souls undergo a change. (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1340a11-23)

In this passage, we are told that to be virtuous one must rejoice, love and hate in the right way. To do so one must develop the capacity of forming right judgment as well as taking pleasure in good characters and noble actions. The implication here seems to be that taking pleasure in the noble action will follow from the capacity to judge that it is in fact a noble action. What music will do is provide representations of good characters as well as emotions in relation to those good characters. We are explicitly told that rhythm and melody have the capacity to

imitate particular emotions such as anger and gentleness, as well as good characters that are courageous or temperate. So, music will train us to experience the right sorts of emotions in relation to actions that are being represented precisely because the emotions *themselves* are being represented, and this is what causes the learner to experience the emotion. But to then take pleasure in the nobility of the act one performs, one must first be able to recognize that it is in fact a noble action, which means that one needs to develop right judgment. And this requires the development of the rational part of the soul. Music is capable of contributing to the development of the rational part as well, given that Aristotle claims it eventually makes us good judges and results in intellectual enjoyment, but this intellectual development would go beyond the habituation stage since it is teaching that develops the intellectual virtues that are required for correct judgment (*NE* II.1, 1103a15-19).

What Hitz fails to account for is the role that teaching will play in moral development. The picture she presents takes the goal of habituation to amount to valuing noble actions for their own sake, and acting for the sake of what is noble in the action itself which one takes pleasure in. This means that the learner is capable of identifying that which makes particular actions noble, and thinks that such actions ought to be done for their own sake, which he finds pleasurable. But, as I have already pointed out, if this is the state that habituation yields, then one is left wondering what it is that teaching serves to contribute to the moral development of the learner. It now appears as if the learner is a full-fledged moral agent with the ability to identify noble actions and the desire to perform such actions. Yet this cannot be the case, since he has not yet received the sort of instruction that would develop his ability to hit the mean in action, namely, practical wisdom. An account of habituation must, therefore, be modest enough to make room for that which teaching will contribute. This is an issue which I hope to address with my neo-mechanical account of habituation in Chapter 3.

The final objection I would like to raise concerns Hitz's understanding of shame as having a deep and shallow sense. She takes the text to point to this distinction, but the passage that she cites need not be read in the way that she suggests (*NE* IV.9, 1128b22-25). All Aristotle seems to be pointing to is the fact that there will be times when an action is *in fact* disgraceful and times when the agent only believes that it is. But even if the action is not in fact disgraceful, it would still undermine the agent's decency if he performed the act since he believed it to be disgraceful. There is the same feeling that is operative in both cases, but in the one case the

act is in fact disgraceful. Aristotle provides a clear definition of shame as a fear of disrepute (*NE* IV.9, 1128b10-12), and I think this highlights how important the community, and a concern for what others think of one, is when it comes to moral development. Hitz is dismissive of this dimension to moral education. She states that a “method relying too heavily on external incentives would risk habituating improper pleasures: pleasures in prizes and *in looking good to others*”.<sup>48</sup> But the moral significance of caring about what others may think of one’s character, and a desire to be publicly recognized for having done well – which is what honor is – plays a more important role in Aristotle’s account of moral development than Hitz is willing to grant. I will defend this point in my positive account.

One issue that I need to address at this stage concerns the close connection that Hitz draws between the crafts and ethics. She develops the thought that musical education is the proper form of habituation given that music and ethical action instantiate the same feature, namely, *to kalon*, which she cashes out as “beautiful order”.<sup>49</sup> One of my criticisms of Burnyeat’s account was the fact that he seems to rely too heavily on the idea that the requisite development of the proper internal motivations will occur due to the fact that certain actions are pleasant by nature as a result of their nobility, and this means that the repetition of these acts will eventually instill the appropriate motivations. This thought may gain plausibility if we consider that Aristotle often compares ethics to crafts, and in the case of crafts Aristotle does not seem to think that we need to explain precisely how the relevant skills are acquired through practice. Our experience of these matters tells us that this is in fact what happens, and the ethical case may be the same in this way, which means that no further explanation is necessary. In section 2.1, I indicated why I think that we should expect more from an explanation in the ethical case given that Aristotle also distinguishes ethics and crafts with regard to the relevance

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<sup>48</sup> Hitz, Z. 2015: 283, my italics

<sup>49</sup> Hitz does not provide an argument for this interpretation of *to kalon*, which is a major weakness of her position given that there has been disagreement regarding this issue. The term *to kalon* has various translations which include the “fine”, “noble”, “beautiful”, and even “honorable” (see Burnyeat, M. 1980: 89, footnote 13). In the *Rhetoric* (I.9, 1366a33-34) the term signifies that which, being chosen for itself, is praised or praiseworthy, and also whatever is good and pleasant because it is good. The term thus has both a moral and aesthetic dimension. In the *Topics* (V.5, 135a13) Aristotle links *to kalon* with what is fitting, and in the *Metaphysics* (XIII.3, 1078a31-b36) he claims that goodness is only found in the sphere of action, while *to kalon* is found in action but also unchanging entities (such as mathematical objects) that exhibit the properties of order, symmetry, and determinateness. Cooper has argued that actions which are noble are those that exhibit these properties (See Cooper, J.M. 1998: 271-273). Hitz fails to engage with the complexity of this issue, and there may be reason to suppose that *to kalon* does not feature in music in the same way that it does in action.

of the psychological state of the agent. Yet if the practice of music and the practice of ethics are as similar as Hitz suggests, so that musical education is the *means* of ethical education, one might wonder whether Aristotle does indeed take a deeper psychological explanation of moral development to be necessary. Given that Aristotle continuously compares crafts and ethics it is evident that they are similar in terms of the method of attaining the relevant skill: in both cases one must repeat particular kinds of actions in order to attain competency.

However, this alone does not show that one can successfully explain ethics by analogy with crafts precisely because the condition that is aimed at is different from the crafts and vastly more complex, given all the ways that moral education may go wrong. Since it is the cultivation of the relevant internal motivations at issue in the ethical case, one must be able to spell out the appropriate psychological path for achieving virtue. One aspect of this involves the repetition of particular actions, but another aspect involves developing the learner's practical wisdom through teaching (*NE* I.13, 1103a5 – II.1, 1103a17). Music had a broader meaning in Ancient Greece, and did not simply involve the playing of musical instruments, but also included poetry.<sup>50</sup> Music, in particular, would be appropriate for ethical education because it was a story-telling mechanism that provided the model for children to imitate. By confronting ethical representations learners gain the relevant experiences that serve to shape their non-rational responses. Music is also able to represent the appropriate emotions that would cause the learner to feel this at the right time, which also serves to shape the learner's emotional reactions. Music is, therefore, isolated as one means of moral education due to its ability to yield a model to be imitated. But, importantly, this model is still a mere representation of moral action and is not exclusively responsible for moral development. For example, Aristotle argues that we should be guided by our community at large and that "we must attend to the undemonstrated remarks and beliefs of experienced and older people or of prudent people, no less than to demonstrations. For these people see correctly because experience has given them their eye" (*NE* VI.11, 1143b12-14). Thus, if musical education is simply one educational tool that can only take us so far in our moral development, then it would be a mistake to expect the explanation regarding the development of a craft to map onto the acquisition of a virtuous disposition.

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<sup>50</sup> Lord, C. 2001: 68-104

We thus see that Hitz's account is inadequate insofar as it fails to address the two issues that a satisfactory account of habituation must accommodate: it falls short of resolving the continuity problem because her account collapses into the External-Internal Model of moral development, and she offers no explanation for how learners develop an interest in the noble. In addition, her account does not incorporate the role that teaching will play. I finally turn to a position that departs from the previous intellectualist accounts which I think is the most promising even though it requires further development.

### 2.3 Jimenez's View and the "External-Internal Model" of Moral Development Revisited

Jimenez argues that proper habituation amounts to periodically doing virtuous actions with the right motives, which is to perform the action for the sake of the noble. Her claim is that habituated learners occasionally perform actions from the right motives, but they fail to do so consistently because they have not yet developed virtuous dispositions. This approach would solve the continuity problem by explaining in a non-mysterious way how one becomes virtuous by performing virtuous actions. The habituated learner is not someone who simply acts in accordance with virtue, but rather someone who possesses the right motive as well. And it is the fact that the habituated learner has the relevant internal motivations, as opposed to merely external incentives, that serves to explain how repeating virtuous actions yields a state of virtue. By repeating the relevant actions, the proper motives that are occasionally operative will take hold to the point that the agent is disposed to act from such motives.

Jimenez highlights the fact that many scholars read in the *Nicomachean Ethics* book II, chapter 4 "a deflationary account of the learners' actions in relation to motivation".<sup>51</sup> That is, the learners' actions can be characterized as virtuous "only in their external aspect like those that virtue produces"<sup>52</sup> and are not virtuous "in the same full sense as those which we do when our *hexis* is fully formed".<sup>53</sup> She claims that in these, and other, cases scholars view the actions of the learner as motivationally deprived because they are not done from virtuous motives, viz. for the sake of the noble. The assumption that she goes on to question is that *only* virtuous agents can perform virtuous actions based on their nobility. While it is true that virtuous

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<sup>51</sup> Jimenez, M. 2016: 6

<sup>52</sup> Ross, W.D. 1923: 194

<sup>53</sup> Joachim, H.H. 1951: 79

people have virtuous motives, there is still the possibility that non-virtuous people may also occasionally act from virtuous motives.

She begins by claiming that Aristotle continually mentions the similarity between the actions of the learners and those of virtuous agents. The actions of the learners possess features that are shared by the actions of virtuous agents. By looking at specific passages in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (II.1, 1103b21-3; II.3, 1103b29-31; 1104a27-9; II.3, 1104b19-21), Jimenez comes to the conclusion that the relevant dispositions only arise due the nature of the actions that must be repeated to cultivate such dispositions. It is the quality of the learners' actions – i.e. how they are performed – that will ensure that the proper dispositions are instilled. And Aristotle thinks that this is a fact that we are all aware of. He discusses every-day examples to reveal our acceptance of the kind of process that is at issue: when one trains for a contest one will engage in an activity *in a certain way* over and over again so that one performs that activity well (*NE* III.5, 1114a7-13).

What must be specified are the respects in which the activities before the presence of a disposition are similar to the activities that stem from a disposition. Aristotle makes the claim in the *Nicomachean Ethics* book II, chapter 1-3 that the activities will only give rise to the proper disposition if they are done *in a particular way*, as opposed to merely being done. To explain this point, he draws a parallel with technical skills that we have already encountered:

Further, the sources and means that develop each virtue also ruin it, just as they do in a craft. For playing the harp makes both good and bad harpists, and it is analogous in the case of builders and all the rest; for building well makes good builders, and building badly makes bad ones. Otherwise no teacher would be needed, but everyone would be born a good or a bad craftsman. (*NE* II.1, 1103b7-12)

Thus, in order to become good builders, learners need to practice building *well*. To learn a skill, the person must follow the instructions of teachers to make sure that he is performing the action in a particular way. He needs to pay attention to what he is doing so that he can be sure to perform the action well rather than poorly. The virtues are the same in this respect:

It is the same, then, with the virtues. For what we do in our dealings with other people makes some of us just, some unjust, what we do in terrifying situations, and the habits of fear or confidence that we acquire, make some of us brave and others cowardly. The same is true of situations involving appetites and anger; for one or another sort of conduct in these situations makes some temperate and



mild, others intemperate and irascible. To sum it up in a single account: a state of character results from the repetition of similar activities. (*NE* II.1, 1103b14-22)

To become courageous one must not only deal with dangerous situations but do it well. If you do not engage with these situations in the right way, you will become unjust. Jimenez concludes that, “[t]he relevance of the *how* implies, then, that learners have to be able to perform *well* the relevant actions *before* they have the relevant dispositions. And this priority condition generates a true puzzle for those who defend that only virtuous people are able to perform virtuous actions properly.”<sup>54</sup>

According to Jimenez, this also means that Aristotle’s response to the priority problem – where he draws a distinction between actions that accord with the virtues and those that are done virtuously in order to maintain that one becomes virtuous by performing virtuous actions – can’t possibly be the whole story. For the actions that are done in accordance with virtue are actions that are virtuous only *accidentally*<sup>55</sup>, which rules out the possibility that these are actions that have been done well and, in so doing, qualify as the right sorts of actions to engage in. Jimenez offers an example to illustrate the point: “if a learner of Spanish keeps copying random words from a list and putting them together in sentences, even if she were so lucky that she hit upon correct sentences on every occasion (thus producing grammatical outcomes), we would not say that she is really learning anything in that process”.<sup>56</sup> But when Aristotle describes someone who does something grammatically, he also mentions someone who does something grammatical because he has been instructed by someone else (*NE* II.4, 1105a21-6). Doing something grammatical while being guided by someone else would allow the learner to perform the action well because he is paying attention to details that are flagged by the teacher. Aristotle indicates that this is the method of learning that he has in mind when he highlights the need for a teacher (*NE* II. 1, 1103b12). In this way, the learner will be made to perform actions in a particular way to develop the right dispositions.

Jimenez reiterates the central difficulty for a view according to which learners lack the motivations of a virtuous agent: “if the actions of the learners lack virtuous motivation, then it is not clear how learners are supposed to become virtuous by doing such action”.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Jimenez, M. 2016: 11

<sup>55</sup> This reading is supported by Irwin, T. 1999: 195, and Vasiliou, I. 2007: 52.

<sup>56</sup> Jimenez, M. 2016: 15

<sup>57</sup> Jimenez, M. 2016: 23

Establishing the proper dispositions involves performing actions of the right kind, and one of the crucial elements that seem necessary if an action is to be of the right kind is that it is done from a particular motive, namely, for the sake of the noble (*NE* II.9, 1109a24-30). If one does not conceive of the process of habituation in this way, then one will be left with a “moral upbringing gap”, as Jimenez puts it.

Jimenez bridges this gap by arguing that while acting for the sake of the noble is a feature of the virtuous agent, it is not a motive that only the virtuous agent possesses. Agents that lack virtuous dispositions are capable of not only performing the right action under the right circumstances, but also for the right reason. And it is because this is possible that we arrive at an explanation of how performing right action can lead to the development of virtue: If agents periodically act for the right reason, then the repetition of such acts would eventually ground this motivation so that it becomes a disposition. Jimenez’s textual support for an agent that is not fully virtuous but is capable of acting from the right motive (that is, for the sake of the noble), is Aristotle’s description of the civically brave agent that we have already encountered in section 2.2 (*NE* III.8, 1116a19-29). She states that

[t]his passage shows that Aristotle thinks that those who have civic courage, which is an imperfect form of courage, perform actions on account of their ‘desire for something noble’. Desire for the noble is the characteristically virtuous motive, and although there might be differences between desire for the noble *simpliciter*, in the way that the fully virtuous person has it, and the qualified desire for the noble of the citizen soldiers, it is undeniable that the motivation of the citizen soldiers is at least partly virtuous – if only at least in the sense that they are able to attend to considerations different from pleasure or utility.<sup>58</sup>

According to Jimenez’s interpretation, the state of civic bravery would be the goal of habituation, because this would be someone who is sometimes motivated by a desire for honor which, according to her, is equivalent to a desire for the noble in the qualified sense. What is evident is that she conceives of the habituated learner as someone who is motivated by both external incentives and internal motivations upon occasion, which means that the External-Internal Model of moral development is once again on the table.

This account also has its weaknesses. While Jimenez’s proposal explains the development from being habituated to becoming fully virtuous, it does not serve to provide an explanation of

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<sup>58</sup> Jimenez, M. 2016: 27

what is really at issue. For even if we grant that this is how the properly habituated learner becomes fully virtuous, we would still seek an explanation of how a child is brought to the point of being properly habituated, i.e. to the point where he has latched onto the proper motivation of acting for the sake of the noble, even if he only does so sometimes. Jimenez's solution only pushes the problem back a step, and what one would need to address is how to guide a child such that he develops an interest in the noble in the first place. Jimenez has served to explain the movement from the point of being habituated to becoming a virtuous agent, but we still require an explanation of the movement from natural virtue to habituated virtue. In addition, Jimenez claims that the motivation of the civically brave is such that they act for the sake of the noble, but the text does not clearly reflect such a straightforward analysis. Jimenez includes among the "external motivations" that of honor<sup>59</sup>, but then interprets the civically brave passage as one where honor counts as an interest in the nobility of the act which would make it the proper *internal* motivation. If she wishes to adopt a reading of this kind, then more philosophical work would need to be done to explain why an interest in honor counts as an interest in the noble in a qualified sense.

What can be said in favor of this reading is the fact that such an understanding of the goal of habituation is modest enough so that reason will still have its part to play in a significant sense. The very fact that the habituated learner will not act for the right reason *reliably*, opens up space for reason to do its work of grounding the end that is occasionally operative. Jimenez, therefore, succeeds in avoiding the pitfalls of both Burnyeat and Hitz's interpretations. Her solution to the continuity problem is to argue for an intermediate step between acting in accordance with virtue to acting virtuously, namely, occasionally acting for the sake of the noble. This means that the actions of the habituated learner and the virtuous agent are similar in specific respects so that the proper motivations can take hold. In chapter 3, I will take up Jimenez's proposal and provide the explanations that I think are lacking in her account, thereby introducing a neo-mechanical view of habituation.

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<sup>59</sup> Jimenez, M. 2016: 26

## Chapter 3

### 3 The Neo-Mechanical Account of Habituation

In chapter 2, I considered two intellectualist accounts of habituation and raised objections that undermine these robust conceptions of the moral condition that habituation yields. I also considered a more modest account of habituation that, in my assessment, requires further development. In this chapter, I aim to resolve the concerns that were presented in chapter 2 by arguing for a neo-mechanical view of habituation. If the teaching phase of moral education is to have its place, then it must be the case that habituation is responsible for developing the learner in a more modest way than the intellectualists claim. The motivation for adopting an intellectualist account has been that it would arguably succeed in solving the continuity problem. But I think that the continuity problem can be resolved in a different and more convincing way, while at the same time affording the teaching phase the weight that is required. By focusing on the connection between honor and the noble, it will become apparent how habituated learners are primed for developing the appropriate motivations, even though they begin by developing an interest in external incentives. I argue that the goal of habituation is the condition of civic bravery, because being motivated by a desire for honor means that the learner has latched on to a nominal conception<sup>60</sup> of the noble that will become grounded by being developed further through teaching. That is, the learner is initially trained to perform noble actions so that he believes those actions are noble, and at this point he understands “the noble” in terms of “honorable action”. Once the learner has gone through the teaching phase of moral education, he will develop the capacity to identify noble actions for himself in virtue of grasping the considerations that make one action preferable over another. At this point, his initial conception of the noble will be fleshed out so that he acquires a full-fledged conception of the noble. When the learner attends lectures on the noble and the just he will develop his capacity to deliberate, and in so doing come to understand what it is that makes an action

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<sup>60</sup> In the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle considers nominal definitions to be an account of what the term signifies, i.e. what its ordinary meaning is: “Since a definition is said to be an account of what a thing is, it is evident that one type will be an account of what the name, or a different name-like account signifies – e.g. what triangle signifies.” (*Post. An.* II.10, 93b29-31)

noble for himself, thus acquiring complete moral knowledge. Habituation, therefore, brings the learner to the point where he develops an interest in being honored which, due to its connection to the noble, will serve as a stepping stone to acquiring a full-fledged conception of the noble.

In making my argument, I will begin by articulating what a full-fledged conception of the noble involves. Following this, I focus on articulating the connection between honor and the noble to make a case for thinking of honor as a springboard to this full-fledged conception of the noble, as well as the goal of habituation. In order to flesh out the process that learners undergo – where the first step in moral education is an acquisition of the nominal definition of the noble – I will draw on the *Posterior Analytics*, which sets out the steps of scientific inquiry. It will become apparent that there are particular connections to be drawn between the scientific and the ethical realms: the method of scientific inquiry is partly reflected in the ethical realm, even though these subjects remain distinct. Finally, I will articulate how my account succeeds in resolving the continuity problem while making room for the role that teaching plays.

### 3.1 A Full-Fledged Conception of the Noble

In recent years, scholars have focused their attention on what the condition of the civically brave reveals about moral education. As we saw in the previous chapter, civic bravery has been considered to be a stepping stone to virtue by some scholars, while others have completely rejected a view of this kind. I think that Aristotle's treatment of bravery in book III, chapter 8 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is instructive precisely because this discussion explicitly sets out the psychological profiles of various sorts of agents that, for one reason or another, fail to achieve *genuine* bravery. For example, the "bravery" of professional soldiers is based on superior skill rather than wanting to avoid what is shameful, and the "bravery" of animals stems from pain and spirit rather than a sense of what is noble (*NE* III.8, 1116b5-1117a). In this section Aristotle clearly articulates what he considers genuine bravery to involve, and this will allow us to understand which elements may be missing in other psychological cases. And if these other cases illustrate states that are like genuine bravery in some, but not all, respects, then it is reasonable to suppose that one of these cases must represent an agent that matches the state of the habituated learner, for those who are habituated are not genuinely brave yet either. My starting point is to set out Aristotle's description of the psychological components that constitute genuine bravery:

The brave person is unperturbed, as far as a human being can be. Hence, though he will fear even the sorts of things that are not irresistible, he will stand firm against them, in the right way, as reason prescribes, for the sake of the noble, since this is the end aimed at by virtue...Hence, whoever stands firm against the right things and fears the right things, for the right end, in the right way, at the right time, and is correspondingly confident, is the brave person...(NE III.7, 1115b12-20)

Here Aristotle sets out not simply what the fitting dispositions of the non-rational part of the soul would be (viz. experiencing fear and confidence to the appropriate degree in response to danger), but also tells us that the brave man's action is directed by reason, and he acts in the way that he does because the action is noble. What is being depicted is an agent who has an understanding of the nature of his action and why it ought to be done for its own sake. The brave person *decides* to act as he does because he understands that the action is noble, and this is why he performs the action (NE III.7, 1116a10-13). Here I agree with Hitz's analysis whereby acting for the sake of the noble in the way that the fully virtuous agent does is equivalent to performing an action for its own sake.<sup>61</sup> For Aristotle continually states that the virtuous agent acts for the sake of the noble (NE III.7, 1115b12-12, b21-4; 1116a11, 15), and then states at NE VI.12, 1144a12-21 that the just person is the person who performs acts "because of the actions themselves" rather than performing actions unwillingly because they are prescribed by law or because of ignorance "or because of some other end". The end to be aimed for is the noble, and here Aristotle articulates the nature of this end in terms of actions that are worth doing for their own sake.

For Aristotle, decision is a technical term that requires the development of reason, for it is the result of deliberation (NE III.3, 1113a9-12). The virtuous agent acts for the sake of the noble from decision, which suggests that his identification of which action ought to be done (and so which action is noble) is the result of a process of deliberation. Since the development of reason morally develops and distinguishes the agent, it stands to reason that part of what is being developed is his conception of the noble which has been shaped and informed by a process of reasoning. My proposal is that the fully virtuous agent has achieved a full-fledged conception of the noble due to his capacity to reason which allows him to understand what it

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<sup>61</sup> See Chapter 2, pg. 50.

is about certain actions that makes them worth doing for their own sake – it is this that motivates him to stand firm.<sup>62</sup>

This is not to say that less virtuous people (which includes the habituated learner) cannot act for the sake of the noble, but to comment on the fully formed conception of the noble that is operative in the case of the fully virtuous agent. In other words, the less virtuous can act for the sake of the noble, but their grasp on the noble is superficial in nature given the absence of good deliberation. Aristotle's characterization of the virtue of magnificence strongly suggests that acting because of the noble in the way the fully virtuous person does involves a kind of working out that requires reason: "In this sort of spending the magnificent person will aim at the noble for that is a common feature of the virtues. Moreover, he will spend gladly and readily, since it is stingy to count every penny. He will think more about the noblest and most fitting way to spend than about the cost or about the cheapest way to do it" (*NE* IV.2, 1122b6-10). In acting for the sake of the noble, the magnificent person works out what the fitting action would be, for in so doing he identifies what it is about the action that makes it worth doing for its own sake. His action is, therefore, an expression of the conception of the noble that he has acquired due to his ability to reason. The habituated learner may still be said to act for the sake of the noble, in some sense, but his conception of the noble is not yet fully formed. Throughout the course of this chapter I will specify the sense in which the habituated learner may be said to act for the sake of the noble by arguing that the habituated learner has acquired a nominal conception of the noble to be cashed out in terms of a desire for honor.

My background assumption is that habituation, and the condition it yields, precedes the teaching phase which develops specific intellectual virtues like practical wisdom. We see evidence of this in book X, chapter 9 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* where Aristotle claims that arguments and teaching will only be effective *after* habituation has occurred (*NE* X.9, 1179b4-31). And in the *Politics*, Aristotle makes it clear that the non-rational part develops prior to the rational part of the soul (*Pol.* VII.15, 1334b15-27). This is not to suggest that the young are not cognitively engaged during habituation whatsoever, but rather to make the more moderate claim that the young will not be capable of engaging in the kind of intellectual activity that requires the development of their reason, such as good deliberation. For one thing, there are

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<sup>62</sup> In the next chapter, we will see how Moss supports this line of thought by articulating what she thinks makes practical wisdom ethically important.

no explicit textual grounds for supposing that habituation engages the learner's deliberative faculties. On the contrary, as Moss points out, we have every reason to think that Aristotle conceives of habituation as a thoroughly non-rational (though not necessarily non-cognitive) form of training.<sup>63</sup>

When Aristotle expands upon his conception of habituation, he emphasizes the repetition of particular actions and the role played by pleasures and pains (*NE* II.1, 1103b14-22; II.3, 1104b15-18). Good deliberation, as we see in book VI, chapter 9, is classified as an intellectual virtue, which means that it is acquired through teaching (*NE* I.13, 1103a5 - II.1, 1103a18). Aristotle states that "good deliberation requires reason; hence the remaining possibility is that it belongs to thought". To deliberate *well* means that one deliberates not only correctly by following the right steps to some conclusion, but also that one acquires the good that is sought (*NE* VI.9, 1142b16-23).<sup>64</sup> For example, while the incontinent agent may be able to deliberate correctly, he nonetheless fails to deliberate *well* because he fails to secure the good that is the result of his deliberations. Thus, even if there is reason to suppose that some sort of deliberation is involved during habituation, this will not suffice to show that the habituated learner has acquired the conception of the noble that the fully virtuous agent possesses, precisely because he is not yet able to deliberate *well*. To deliberate well, the habituated learner must be taught, and this is precisely the training that he has not yet received. My argument can be captured as follows:

1. Acting for the sake of the noble in the way that the virtuous agent does (or possessing the conception of the noble that the virtuous agent has), requires the capacity for good deliberation which is achieved by developing the learner's deliberative faculties.
2. Habituation does not concern the development of the learner's deliberative faculties.
3. Therefore, the habituated learner cannot act for the sake of the noble in the way that the virtuous agent can (or does not possess the conception of the noble that the virtuous agent has).

But to claim that the habituated learner lacks the developed conception of the noble that the virtuous agent possesses (because habituation is a non-rational process), does not mean that it is also *non-cognitive*. Cognitive engagement must surely be involved in the habituation process

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<sup>63</sup> Moss, J. 2011

<sup>64</sup> I expand on this argument in Chapter 4.



given that Aristotle conceives of emotions as cognitive in nature<sup>65</sup>, and part of what is being developed at this point are the learner's emotional responses. Clearly Aristotle does not think that automatons could be habituated, given his emphasis on training with regard to actions and emotions. And while the young may not be capable of deliberating well, they are able to learn by short-cutting the deliberation process through imitation (*Poetics* 4, 1448b6-8).

Moss defends the view that habituation is a fully non-rational process (and so in this sense “mindless”), while nonetheless being a cognitive process. She establishes this position through her critique of scholars who maintain that practical wisdom must be responsible for setting our ends given that Aristotle claims that we desire our ends because we view them as good.<sup>66</sup> Our desire for ends is what Aristotle calls “wish”, and we wish for what we view as good (*NE* III.4, 1113a15-31). It thus seems as if the rational part of the soul is being engaged insofar as our desires are grounded in reasons for viewing something as good. Moss is not convinced that wish is grounded in the rational judgment that those ends are good. She thinks it is a mistake to equate the non-rational with the non-cognitive, for this would reduce the non-rational part of the soul to a purely conative force. Aristotle clearly thinks that there is more than one form of cognition. There is intellect, which is one form of discrimination (*krisis* or *gnosis*), or one way of receiving information about the world. But then there is also perception (*aisthesis*) and *phantasia* or imagination (which Moss describes as “appearance-reception”). These forms of cognition are non-rational and are shared by children and beasts. Aristotle

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<sup>65</sup> See, for example, Fortenbaugh's view of emotions in Aristotle: “In the second book of the *Rhetoric* Aristotle defines anger as a desire for revenge accompanied by pain on account of an apparent slight to oneself or to one's own, the slight being unjustified (*Rhet.* II.2, 1378a30-2). This definition involves a peculiarly Aristotelian answer to Academic debate. Making use of his own logical tools Aristotle construes the thought of outrage as the efficient cause mentioned in the essential definition. Anger is not a pain which happens to occur together with the thought of outrage. On the contrary, anger is necessarily caused by the thought of outrage, so that such a thought is mentioned in the essential definition of anger...By insisting on the essential involvement of cognition in emotional response Aristotle has rejected the view of James that emotion is properly a bodily sensation and aligned himself with Bedford in opposition to Pitcher, who thinks cognitions characteristic of but not essential to emotional response” (Fortenbaugh, W.W. 1975: 12). Or consider Achtenberg's view of emotions in Aristotle as perceptions of value so that emotions are evaluative states: “More precisely, we can hypothesize, the perception of value is positive emotion and the perception of disvalue is negative emotion. Since perception is of particulars, we can amend this to say: the perception of particulars as good is positive emotion and the perception of particulars as bad is negative emotion. On this view, the emotivists got things backward: evaluations are not disguised emotions; instead emotions are types of evaluation” (Achtenberg, D. 2002: 161).

<sup>66</sup> See Irwin, T. 1990: 570.

appears to have these quasi-perceptual appearances in mind when he discusses how we grasp our ends:

If, then, these views do not satisfy us, should we say that, without qualification and in reality, what is wished is the good, but for each person what is wished is the apparent good? For the excellent person, then, what is wished will be what is wished in reality, while for the base person what is wished is whatever it turns out to be that appears good to him. Similarly in the case of bodies, really healthy things are healthy to people in good condition, while other things are healthy to sickly people; and the same is true of what is bitter, sweet, hot, heavy, and so on. For the excellent person judges each sort of thing correctly, and in each case what is true appears to him. For each state of character has its own distinctive view of what is noble and pleasant. Presumably, then, the excellent person is far superior because he sees what is true in each case, being himself a sort of standard and measure. (*NE* III.4, 1113a23-33)

But someone may say that everyone aims at the apparent good and does not control how it appears, but, on the contrary, his character controls how the end appears to him. We reply that if each person is in some way responsible for his own state of character, he is also himself in some way responsible for how the end appears. Suppose, on the other hand, that no one is responsible for acting badly, but does so because one is ignorant of the end, and thinks this is the way to gain what is best for oneself. In that case, one's aiming at the end is not one's own choice; one needs a sort of natural, inborn sense of sight, to judge nobly and to choose what is really good...Let us suppose, then, that nature does not make the end appear however it appears to each person, but something also depends on him. Alternatively, let us suppose that how the end appears is natural, but virtue is voluntary because the virtuous person does the other things voluntarily. In either case, vice will be no less voluntary than virtue; for the bad person, no less than the good, is responsible for his own actions, even if not for how the end appears. (*NE* III.5, 1114a31-b20)

For inferences about actions have a principle, 'Since the end and the best good is this sort of thing' (whatever it actually is – let it be any old thing for the sake of argument). And this best good is apparent only to the good person; for vice perverts us and produces false views about the principles of actions. (*NE* VI.12, 1144a31-36)

These passages indicate that what we wish for appears good to us, and that our view of the end is an appearance. Since appearances are non-rational forms of cognition, this would indicate that Aristotle envisioned the engagement of these kinds of cognitions during habituation. Moss thinks we are justified in reading the passages this way because Aristotle makes it clear that for the virtuous person things appear as they in fact are because the virtuous person has his own "distinctive view of what is noble and pleasant". And if seeing things in the right way is a matter of being pleased and pained in the proper way, then it would seem

that this discernment on the part of the virtuous agent is a function of non-rational cognition.<sup>67</sup> Thus, desiring something as an end is based on what appears good according to perception.

Moss's view reveals how it is possible for the habituation phase, which we are told is responsible for furnishing our ends because it brings about the development of character virtue that yields these ends (*NE* VI.12, 1144a7-9), can be non-rational while still being cognitive. So, while the process of habituation is "mindless", in the sense that it does not engage the rational part of the soul, it would, nonetheless, be cognitive in nature and this would explain how children are able to develop ethically. This lends plausibility to the neo-mechanical view that I am proposing because an account of this kind offers an explanation of how one might maintain that habituation is "mindless" insofar as it does not engage the rational part of the soul, while still being cognitive so that it is possible for the child to develop in the relevant ways in order to become virtuous. The central claim of this section has been that a full-fledged conception of the noble is not something that the habituated learner can latch onto during habituation, for he has not yet developed the reasoning skills that are necessary for his ability to identify the noble for himself, which contributes to his understanding of the noble. When the learner is taught to deliberate well, he will be able to work out for himself which action is noble, and these considerations serve to explain what it is about some action that makes it noble, thus completing the agent's understanding of nobility through its instantiations.

### 3.2 Honor and its Connection to the Noble

In the previous section, I made a case for the claim that learners are incapable of acquiring a full-fledged conception of the noble during habituation due to the purely non-rational nature

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<sup>67</sup> In *De Anima* Aristotle states that to perceive is "like bare asserting or thinking; but when the object is pleasant or painful, the soul makes a sort of affirmation or negation, and pursues or avoids the object. To feel pleasure or pain is to act with the sensitive mean towards what is good or bad as such. Both avoidance and appetite when actual are identical with this: the faculty of appetite and avoidance are not different, either from one another or from the faculty of sense perception; but their being is different" (*De Anima* III.7, 431a7-14). Pleasure, pain, perception, and desire are all aspects of the same state. For example, perceiving the hot stove is to perceive it as painful and the feeling of pain is just the desire to recoil. So, to perceive something as good or bad is a matter of being pained or pleased by it, which is to avoid or seek it. The idea that the virtuous person's capacity to discern facts regarding value involves the appropriate pain/pleasure response (which makes it a function of non-rational cognition), is supported by the *EE* (III.5, 1232a35-38). Here Aristotle makes the point that the discrimination of virtue accords with the commands of practical wisdom, rather than being a function of practical wisdom. The discrimination at issue is distinctive to character and contrasted with intellect, which makes it non-rational in nature.

of this process. What requires clarification is the development that learners undergo during habituation. For if they are not acquiring a full-fledged conception of the noble at this point due to its non-rational nature, then what precisely are they acquiring? We are told that the character virtues are cultivated, for character virtue is a function of the development of the non-rational part of the soul (NE VII.6, 1149a25-1149b4; II.1, 1103b6-25). The goal of this phase is to get the young to perform the right actions, for we are told that this is the only way that they will come to develop the right virtues. But one is also trying to instill the appropriate feelings in relation to these actions, for this is part of what makes one brave or temperate (NE II.6, 1106b25-29). Insofar as the virtues are concerned with actions and feelings, they are about pleasures and pains, for this is what motivates us to perform base actions and avoid noble ones (NE II.3, 1104b5-18). It is thus by means of pleasure and pain, Aristotle says, that one is able to correct the behavior of the young (NE II.3, 1104b4-19). Training the young to take pleasure in certain activities is the way to get them to continue with that activity (NE X.5, 1175a30-38), and pain is the means of getting them to avoid it.

The character virtues thus consist in both right action and right feeling. As such, we ought to focus more carefully on the pains and pleasures that Aristotle explicitly mentions in order to understand what habituation serves to shape. In the case of magnificence, one must “spend gladly and readily”. The temperate person should only experience moderate pleasures in relation to the right things, and the generous person should give with pleasure, or at least not with pain (NE IV.2, 1122b7-8; III.11, 1119a17-19; IV.1, 1120a24-28). Burnyeat claims that virtuous actions can only be pleasurable to the agent if they are seen as noble.<sup>68</sup> But to take pleasure *in the nobility of an act* seems to be a higher-order pleasure based on an assessment of one’s action as exhibiting nobility. One of my criticisms of Hitz’s position in chapter 2 was the fact that there isn’t a clear distinction that is being drawn between pleasure related to action in the form of emotions, and pleasure taken in the nobility of an action. Burnyeat makes the same mistake by insisting that an essential part of taking pleasure in virtuous action is taking pleasure in the nobility of that action. But virtuous actions seem to be capable of eliciting an assortment of pleasures. For example, when I am habituated to give to others by being made to do it over and over again, I can come to take pleasure in this action because I start enjoying how happy it makes the person when I share what I have. Or when I don’t eat another piece

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<sup>68</sup> Burnyeat, M. 1987: 77

of candy I don't feel pain in so doing because I like not feeling sick. These are all features of the action that I can take pleasure in which may ultimately count towards its nobility, but I am not yet taking pleasure in the action because I can recognize that it is a certain kind of action, viz. a noble action, and this is what pleases me.

Aristotle's descriptions of the various character virtues reveal the fact that the non-rational part of the soul needs to co-operate with reason, and present no hindrance to the performance of virtuous actions (*NE* X.9, 1179b20-32). The non-rational part must be brought to feel the appropriate pleasures and pains, and these include emotions such as fear, confidence, love, hate, joy – all of which centrally involve pains and pleasures (*NE* II.5, 1105b22-27). If we pay attention to this distinction between taking pleasure in the nobility of an act, and experiencing pleasure in relation to particular acts in the form of emotions, then I think it is plausible to suppose that the proper pleasures of the character virtues would be to experience, in the case of bravery, the right amount of fear and confidence when acting. The pleasure that the agent takes in the nobility of the action that he has decided to perform is based on the judgment that it is noble action, and would consequently be a pleasure that stems from rational activity since it follows from a rational judgment. I will continue to defend this division of labor throughout the course of my positive proposal. Now that I have partially clarified what habituation develops, I need to consider how the habituated learner views the actions he performs if he lacks the full-fledged conception of the noble that the virtuous person possesses.

I return to Hitz's treatment of the connection between honor (*time*) and the noble in order to argue that honor is a special sort of external good that plays a central role in moral development for Aristotle. Hitz states that in the passage where Aristotle describes civic bravery it is not clear whether this is a state that aims at correct action guided by the reason of others. Let us consider the crucial passage again:

The bravery of citizens comes first, since it looks most like bravery. For citizens seem to stand firm against dangers with the aim of avoiding reproaches and legal penalties and of winning honors; that is why the bravest seem to be those who hold cowards in dishonor and so honor brave people. That is how Homer also describes them when he speaks of Diomedes and Hector: 'Polydamas will be the first to heap disgrace on me', and 'For some time Hector speaking among the Trojans will say, "The son of Tydeus fled from me."' This is most like the genuine

bravery described above, because it results from a virtue; for it is caused by shame and by desire for something noble, namely, honor and by aversion from reproach, which is shameful. In this class we might also place those who are compelled by their superiors. However, they are worse to the extent that they act because of fear, not because of shame, and to avoid pain, not disgrace. For their commanders compel them...Commanders who strike any troops who give ground, or who post them in front of ditches and suchlike, do the same thing, since they all compel them. The brave person, however, must be moved by the noble, not by compulsion. (*NE* III.8, 1116a19-29)

It is true that we are not told whether those who guide the civically brave aim at correct action through reason. But they are clearly being guided by others in the sense that they seek honors from them and want to avoid their reproaches. Even if those who are guiding the civically brave fail to issue commands from right reason, it may still be the case that those who are civically brave are in a morally developed state because they are motivated by shame and a desire for honor.

As Hitz has pointed out, we are told that honor is valuable in itself (*NE* I.6, 1096b16-18, 23-4, I.7, 1097b2-5, VII.4, 1147b29-31), and in the *Rhetoric* honor is called noble because it is choice worthy while profitless (*Rhet.* I.9, 1367a23). It may be thought that Aristotle's description of honor in the *Rhetoric* does not reflect his actual position on the status of honor, and its connection to the noble, because the *Rhetoric* is specifically concerned with presenting views that will persuade its audience of something. So, it may simply serve the purposes of the politician to present honor as inextricably bound up with the noble, which is why such a view is put forward. But, as I will argue, there are other textual grounds for supposing that there is an ethically significant connection between honor and the noble.

If we consider Aristotle's discussion of honor in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, three significant features of honor are brought to light. In book I, chapter 5, Aristotle discusses the nature of "the three lives" one may lead based upon the agent's conception of the good. The many conceive of the good in terms of pleasure, and those who are active in politics conceive of the good as honor: "This [honor], however, appears to be too superficial to be what we are seeking, for it seems to depend more on those who honor than on the one honored, whereas we intuitively believe that the good is something of our own and hard to take from us. Further, it would seem, they seek to be honored by prudent people, among people who know them, and for virtue" (*NE* I.5, 1095b23-30). Sokolowski discusses this passage, and points out that

Aristotle is providing two reasons why honor is not the ultimate human good: (1) Honor depends on other people granting it, in which case it is not truly the agent's own; (2) It appears that agents seek honor in order to be assured that they are good, rather than coming to this conclusion based on their own evidence.<sup>69</sup> What is important about this passage, is that it highlights particular features of *genuine* honor where the agent must be honored: (a) by those who are practically wise; (b) among people who know him/her; (c) and because of the agent's virtue.

Thus, even though honor does depend on others, genuine honor (as opposed to celebrity) involves acknowledgement from the right sorts of people (viz. those who possess moral intelligence). Honor is also a public affair, rather than a private acknowledgement of having done well. Finally, honor is only bestowed on those who act virtuously. Actions that are virtuous are regarded as noble, since the virtuous agent is someone who hits the mean by acting for the sake of the noble, which is to desire the action for its own sake.<sup>70</sup> As such, the nobility of the action is responsible for its being an honorable action. Sokolowski compares genuine honor with celebrity, where acknowledgement from anyone for any reason can suffice to make us famous, while honor must be granted to those who act virtuously by people who are in a position to judge such things, in the presence of those who know them.<sup>71</sup>

Aristotle provides a more precise definition of honor in the *Rhetoric*:

Fame means being respected by everybody, or having some quality that is desired by all men, or by most, or by the good, or by the wise. Honor is the token of a man's being famous for doing good. It is chiefly and most properly paid to those who have already done good; but also to the man who can do good in future. Doing good refers either to the preservation of life and the means of life, or to wealth, or to some other of the good things which it is hard to get either always or at that particular place or time – for many gain honor for things which seems small, but the place and the occasion account for it. The constituents of honor are: sacrifices; commemoration, in verse or prose; privileges, grants of land; front seats at civic celebrations; state burial; statues; public maintenance; among foreigners, obeisances and giving place; and such presents as are among various

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<sup>69</sup> Sokolowski, R. 2014: 225

<sup>70</sup> Also, see the *Rhetoric*, where Aristotle states that since the noble is that which is good and pleasant because good, it follows that excellence must be noble, for it is a good thing (*Rhet.* I.9, 1366b34-1366b1).

<sup>71</sup> Sokolowski, R. 2014: 226 (footnote 2)

bodies of men regarded as marks of honor. For a present is not only the bestowal of a piece of property, but also a token of honor...(*NE* I. 5, 1361a26-39)

Honoring someone, therefore, involves bestowing something as a sign or acknowledgment of great service in some respect. Honoring someone is to acknowledge his good deeds by means of a public awarding of something that acts as a symbol of his achievement. “Doing good” is somewhat vague in this passage, but it does seem to extend to all manner of virtuous actions. This passage is also consistent with Aristotle’s description of honor in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, for there honor is also bestowed based on virtue, and the honorability of the action stems from the fact that it is noble.

In the *Politics*, Aristotle states that honor is the goal to be aimed at, and one reason for this appears to be the fact that he considers honor to be a worthy goal insofar as its cause is nobility, given that we honor people for acting virtuously:

We maintain, and have said in the *Ethics*, if the arguments there adduced are of any value, that happiness is the realization and perfect exercise of excellence, and this is not conditional but absolute. And I use the term ‘conditional’ to express that which is indispensable, and ‘absolute’ to express that which is good in itself. Take the case of just actions; just punishments and chastisements do indeed spring from a good principle, but they are good only because we cannot do without them – it would be better that neither individuals nor states should need anything of the sort – but actions which aim at *honor* and advantage are absolutely the best. (*Pol.* VII.13, 1332a8-16, my italics)

The whole of life is further divided into two parts, business and leisure, war and peace, and of actions some aim at what is necessary and useful, and some at what is *honorable*. And the preference given to one or the other class of actions must necessarily be like the preference given to one or other part of the soul and its actions over the other; there must be war for the sake of peace, business for the sake of leisure, things useful and necessary for the sake of things *honorable*. All these points the statesman should keep in view when he frames his laws; he should consider the parts of the soul and their functions, and above all the better and the end; he should also remember the diversities of human lives and actions. (*Pol.* VII.14, 1333a31-38, my italics)

This connection between honor and nobility is significant insofar as taking an interest in honor would facilitate an interest in nobility in a way that taking an interest in wealth would not. Aristotle states that “[t]he moneymaker’s life is in a way forced on him; and clearly wealth is not the good we are seeking, since it is merely useful, choiceworthy only for some other end” (*NE* I. 5, 1096a7-9). As such, taking wealth to be one’s goal would never facilitate a grasp on the noble, because wealth bears no connection to the noble. By contrast, Aristotle claims in



the *Nicomachean Ethics* that honor, along with pleasure, is choiceworthy in itself (*NE* VII.4, 1147b29-31), as well as a good that we choose for the sake of something else, namely, *eudaimonia* (*NE* I.7, 1097b2-5). Since honor is bestowed based on the performance of noble actions (such that nobility is the cause of an action's honorability), we can say that the honorability of an action is a necessary, albeit accidental, feature of the noble. Consequently, taking an interest in honorable action facilitates a connection with the noble.

Even if the regime commends actions that are not *in fact* noble, in the way that Hitz proposes, it can still be said that honor in and of itself holds value. In the passage regarding civic bravery above, the civically brave person is someone who fears disgrace and desires honor, and to characterize this state as a *mere* desire to look good in front of others, as Hitz does, is to miss an important Aristotelian point regarding moral development. Aristotle states: "For fear of some bad things, such as bad reputation, is actually right and noble, and lack of fear is shameful; for if someone fears bad reputation, he is decent and properly prone to shame, and if he has no fear of it, he has no feeling of disgrace" (*NE* III.6, 1115a10-14). Here Aristotle explicitly connects fearing what others may think of one to being a decent person. As such, there must be something significant about no longer fearing punishment but fearing the poor assessment of others, and, conversely, desiring the good assessment of others. This means that even in cases where the direction that the civically brave receive is towards actions that are not in fact noble, they still demonstrate moral development insofar as they care about the assessment of others.

My suggestion, therefore, is that while honor is an external good, it is one that acts as a means of moral development given its connection to the noble. An orientation towards honor is the transitional step towards the noble, such that noble actions possesses two distinguishing features: (1) such actions are considered honorable; and (2) such actions are desirable for their own sake<sup>72</sup>. Given the status of honor, it seems reasonable to suppose that the learner would begin his moral education by latching onto one feature of the noble as his first step, which would be to understand the noble in terms of honorable action. Based on this understanding, the learner will eventually progress to the point where he grasps the second feature of noble

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<sup>72</sup> As I have already claimed, I endorse Hitz's claim that acting nobly in the way that the virtuous agent does involves desiring the action for its own sake. Not only is this mentioned in the *EE* (VII.15, 1248b34-6) and *NE* (VI.12, 1144a12-21), but Aristotle also claims in the *Rhetoric* that the noble is desirable for its own sake (I.9, 1366a33-34).

actions, which is that they are desirable for their own sake. At the superficial level, the learner would take the noble to be that which is honored, and at a deeper level he will come to learn that it is that which is desirable for its own sake in action. For example, in the case of civic bravery, the agent stands his ground even though he would rather run away, because he takes it to be the noble thing to do, and at this point he takes nobility to consist in “honorable action”. But once he comes to understand *why* standing his ground is the noble thing to do (i.e. the considerations that count in favor of that course of action), he will recognize that the action is desirable for its own sake, and should be done based on these considerations.

Hitz correctly points out that honor is rejected as a candidate for *eudaimonia*. But it must be kept in mind that the goal at issue in moral action is the noble, which is a distinct value that forms part of *eudaimonia*. Aristotle states that “there are three objects of choice – noble, expedient, and pleasant – and three objects of avoidance – their contraries, shameful, harmful, and painful. About all these, then, the good person is correct and the bad person is in error, and especially about pleasure” (*NE* II.3, 1104b31-35). Aristotle is right to argue that honor is not the correct end of action, for *eudaimonia* goes deeper and consists in choosing and desiring what is *in fact* noble, expedient, and pleasant. But to reject honor as a candidate for *eudaimonia* is not to reject it as valuable in terms of moral development. As I have already pointed out, at certain points in the *Politics* Aristotle speaks of honor as that which ought to be aimed at (*Pol.* VII.13, 1332a11-16, VII.14, 1333a1-33), and it becomes clear that he views honor in a positive light even though it is not the full picture of what *eudaimonia* consists in.

If I am right in taking this connection between honor and the noble seriously, then I think that the passage regarding civic bravery ought to be read in the following way. We are presented with two kinds of people: those who stand their ground because they want to avoid disgrace, and those who do so for fear of punishment. Agents of the former class have a sense of what is shameful and do not want to be reproached. The distinction, I would maintain, is significant because it is mirrored in book X, chapter 9 where Aristotle claims that it is the habituated learner who acts from shame as opposed to the many who act from fear of punishment (*NE* X.9, 1179b4-31). Burnyeat comments on civic bravery in the following way:

The connection between shame and the desire to do what is noble is very clear in the Greek. Shame is felt for having done *αισχρά* (things disgraceful, ignoble, base), and *αισχρά* is the standard opposite of *καλά* (things noble, fine, honorable). Hence

to do something from fear of disgrace is not incompatible with doing it for the nobility of the act itself. This is made clear at 3.8 1116a27-29, on “citizenly” courage: the only thing that is “second best” about this form of courage is that the citizen soldier takes his conception of what is noble from the laws and other people’s expectations (1116a17-21) rather than having his own internalized sense of the noble and the disgraceful (cf. 3.7 1116a11-12).<sup>73</sup>

My claim is that it is precisely this notion of the noble – as determined by other people’s expectations and the laws – which the learner is left with after habituation has taken place. Burnyeat points out at the beginning of his argument that the initial point of development for a learner is coming to believe that particular actions are noble (and so ought to be done) because this is what one has been told. The habituated learner is being instructed by the laws and his superiors that under particular circumstances one ought to stand firm, and he has come to believe what he has been told. That he has formed this belief is expressed by the cause of his action, namely, shame or a desire for honor (which is noble). If he stands his ground out of a fear of disrepute<sup>74</sup>, then he is performing a particular action because he does not want to be thought less of by his superiors, thus expressing confidence in their knowledge of what ought to be done.

The conception of the noble which the learner has come to grasp at this point of his moral development is what I have called a “nominal” conception of the noble: he is able to view particular actions as falling under the description of “the noble” which he understands as “honorable action”, and this is to grasp that a particular action is required of him as received from the laws and his superiors. To perform the particular action because of the belief that this is what ought to be done if one is not to be disgraced (or if one is to be commended) indicates that the learner has developed to the point where he recognizes that a particular action is demanded of him despite his fear of doing it. The learner has come to view a particular action as an instance of a certain kind of action, i.e. those that are noble, and he recognizes that such actions must be done despite his fear of doing them. The learner does not yet have an account of what makes the action noble which is why he has not yet learned *for himself* that a particular action is required. This further step would presumably constitute moral knowledge.

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<sup>73</sup> Burnyeat, M. 1980: 89

<sup>74</sup> Aristotle’s definition of shame which is the cause of action (along with a desire for honor) is as follows: “It [shame] is defined, at any rate, as a sort of fear of disrepute...For we think it right for young people to be prone to shame, since they live by their feelings, and hence often go astray, but are restrained by shame; and hence we praise young people who are prone to shame.” (NE IV.9, 1128b10-21)

What he does possess, however, is (as Aristotle puts it) a “notion of what is noble” (as opposed to “the many” who lack this) which, on my reading, is a *partial* conception of the noble as actions that are honorable, which is expressed by a desire for honor (*NE* X.9, 1179b11-16).

### 3.3 The Nominal Definition of the Noble

My view gains plausibility if we consider Aristotle’s epistemology and the connections to be drawn between the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Posterior Analytics*. In this section, I begin by articulating a plausible interpretation of nominal definitions based on Aristotle’s discussion of scientific inquiry in the *Posterior Analytics*. I will then offer a proposal for how the framework and process that Aristotle introduces in the *Posterior Analytics* can be mapped onto Aristotle’s approach to moral development in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. I ultimately argue that ethical inquiry also consists in a movement from “the that” (*to hoti*) to “the because” (*to dioti*), and that this process involves the acquisition of a nominal definition of the noble, the content of which is “honorable action”.

Recall that at the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle considers the appropriate methodology for achieving moral knowledge:

For while one must begin from what is familiar, this may be taken in two ways: some things are familiar to us, others familiar without qualification. Presumably, then, what we should begin from is things familiar to us. This is the reason why one should have been well brought up in good habits if one is going to listen adequately to lectures about things noble and just, and in general about political affairs. For the beginning (starting point) is “the that”, and if this is sufficiently apparent to a person he will not in addition have a need for “the because”. Such a person has, or can easily get hold of, beginnings (starting points), whereas he who has neither, let him harken to the words of Hesiod: ‘The best man of all is he who knows everything himself, Good also the man who accepts another’s sound advice; But the man who neither knows himself nor takes to heart What another says, he is no good at all’. (*NE* I.13, 1095b1-13)<sup>75</sup>

Aristotle clearly states that we begin our search for moral knowledge from the point of things that are “familiar to us” as opposed to that which is “familiar without qualification”. He then describes this starting point as a matter of grasping “the that”, from which one progresses to grasping “the because”. If we then turn to the *Posterior Analytics*, we come to understand that Aristotle’s distinction between that which is “familiar to us” and that which is “familiar without

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<sup>75</sup> Burnyeat’s interpretation.

qualification” is framed in terms of that thing’s proximity to perception. Phenomena that are “familiar to us” are closer to perception, while phenomena that are “familiar without qualification” are further from perception. Universals are the furthest away from perception while particulars are the closest to perception (*Post. An.* I.2, 72a1-6). This indicates that “the that”, which is the starting point of moral knowledge and based on what is “familiar to us”, concerns particulars that are grasped through perception.

The following passage in the *Posterior Analytics* reveals the connection between Aristotle’s methodology in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and his epistemology:

Since a definition is said to be an account of what a thing is, it is evident that one type will be an account of what the name, or a different name-like account signifies – e.g. what triangle signifies. And when we grasp that it is, we seek why it is; but it is difficult to grasp in this way why a thing is if we do not know that it is. (*Post. An.* II.9, 93b29-32)

We can only come to know something if we begin with a grasp on the fact that it is, so that we are in a position to investigate why it is. These two components to inquiry – viz. “the that” (*to hoti*) and “the why” (*to dioti*) – are elaborated on in the following way:

Thus one definition is the one stated; another definition is an account which makes clear why a thing is. Hence the former type of definition signifies but does not prove, whereas the latter evidently will be a sort of demonstration of what a thing is, differing in position from the demonstration. For there is a difference between saying why it thunders and what thunder is; for in the one case you will say: Because the fire is extinguished in the clouds. What is thunder? – A noise of fire being extinguished in the clouds. Hence the same account is put in a difference way, and in this way it is a continuous demonstration, in this way a definition. Again, a definition of thunder is noise in the clouds; and this is a conclusion of the demonstration of what it is. (*Post. An.* II.10, 93b37-94a7)

The definition that has already been stated is the nominal definition, which is an account of what a name signifies. In the passage above, Aristotle proceeds to expand on “the why” component of inquiry. We are told that the preliminary account of what people mean by the word “thunder” (viz. the nominal definition) is “noise in the clouds”, and that this will feature as the conclusion of the demonstration regarding what thunder is. As we have seen, we begin our inquiry by coming to grasp that there is such a thing as thunder, so this would be the phenomenon that requires explanation in order to know what it is. The demonstration will serve the purpose of bearing out this fact that we have grasped by specifying its cause. To understand the phenomenon in question, we must gain knowledge of an account of the cause

of the fact (or a causal definition), which in this case would be that fire is extinguished in the clouds. It is *because* fire is extinguished in the clouds that there is thunder, or a particular noise in the clouds. This would, therefore, address “the why” question. The full scientific definition would specify the cause *as* the cause, and thereby rearrange the demonstration into a definition: “Thunder is a noise in the clouds caused by the extinction of fire”.

If we begin our inquiry by grasping *that* there is some phenomenon, then we require some indication of how we might come to be aware of the existence of some fact. Aristotle states that

it is impossible to know what a thing is if we are ignorant of whether it is. But as to whether it is, sometimes we grasp this accidentally, and sometimes when grasping something of the object itself – e.g. of thunder, that it is a sort of noise of the clouds; and of eclipse, that it is a sort of privation of light; and of man, that he is a sort of animal; and of soul, that it is something moving itself. Now in cases in which we know accidentally that a thing is, necessarily we have no hold on what it is; for we do not even know that it is, and to seek what it is without grasping that it is, is to seek nothing. But in the cases in which we grasp something, it is easier. Hence in so far as we grasp that it is, to that extent we also have some hold on what it is. (*Post. An.* II.8, 93a16-29)

We can grasp whether something is either accidentally, or by grasping something of the object itself. Aristotle’s example of the second kind of case is grasping of thunder that it is a type of noise in the clouds. In cases where we only accidentally become aware that a thing is, it is not possible to be aware of *what* that object is because, according to Aristotle, one does not even have a grasp on the fact *that* it is. With this brief description of the nature of scientific inquiry in place, we are in a position to isolate particular steps in the process. The first step, we are told above, is acquiring a nominal account of the phenomenon in question. What precisely does this amount to?

The precise nature of nominal definitions, and their relation to scientific inquiry, is a highly controversial topic that I will not treat in excessive detail, for my interest is Aristotle’s moral psychology. I do, however, want to defend the idea that there are definite parallels to be drawn between scientific and ethical inquiry. In order to support my interpretation of habituation in Aristotle, I will draw on David Charles’ conception of nominal definitions and his discussion of how they feature in scientific inquiry. His account reveals the connections to be drawn between science and ethics, which informs my claim that ethical inquiry also incorporates

nominal definitions. Charles sets out to defend what he calls the “three-stage view of inquiry” whereby scientific inquiry can be broken down into three distinct phases:

*Stage 1:* This stage is achieved when one knows an account of what a name or another name-like expression signifies (*Post. An.* II.10, 93b30-2).

*Stage 2:* This stage is achieved when one knows that what is signified by a name or name-like expression exists (*Post. An.* II.10, 93b32).

*Stage 3:* This stage is achieved when one knows the essence of the object/kind signified by a name or name-like expression (*Post. An.* II.10, 93b32-3).<sup>76</sup>

Stage 1 represents the acquisition of an account of what a name signifies or, in other words, the nominal definition. In the case of a phenomenon like thunder, for example, the nominal definition would be “a type of noise in the clouds”. The main claim that Charles argues for is that the agent can achieve Stage 1 of scientific inquiry without Stage 2 or Stage 3. In other words, someone can come to grasp an account of what a name signifies without having knowledge of the existence of the kind or knowledge that the kind in question has an essence.<sup>77</sup> Thus, there can be an account of what “goatstag” signifies even though goatstags do not exist (*Post. An.* II.7, 92b5-7).<sup>78</sup>

As we have seen, Aristotle states that to determine what a thing is one must begin with non-accidental knowledge *that* the thing exists (*Post. An.* II.10, 93b33-4; II.9, 93a26-7). The question that concerns us, if we are to draw parallels between scientific and ethical inquiry, is how one

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<sup>76</sup> Charles, D. 2000: 24

<sup>77</sup> This has been disputed by Demoss and Devereux (1988) amongst others.

<sup>78</sup> One *prima facie* reason for questioning an interpretation of this kind is the fact that, for Aristotle, the term “definition” can only apply to that which exists, in which case there cannot be a type of definition associated with “goatstag” because there are no goatstags (*Post. An.* II.7, 92b26-8). Charles argues that Aristotle is in fact expanding the range of definition in order to include the type of definition that gives an account of what names signify. Thus, nominal definitions are genuine definitions, for such definitions can be taken as examples of answers to the “What is F?” question, even though they are still different types of definitions. Definitional accounts of what the kind is (rather than what the term signifies) will be of the form “Fs are essentially...” where F will specify the kind rather than its name, which will be followed by a description that refers to the essence of the kind. Charles points out that we don’t seem to need definitional accounts in order to teach children the signification of terms such as “gold”: “Why cannot that be done by telling her that gold is a metal which looks yellow in certain light (assuming that this is not part of the essence)?” (Charles, D. 2000: 32) The claim, then, is that the acquisition of nominal definitions constitutes a distinct phase in scientific inquiry that does not depend on knowledge of the existence of the phenomenon (*Post. An.* II.7, 92b26-8). In addition, these Stage 1 accounts do not share the same content as the definition of the kind.

gains this non-accidental knowledge that the phenomenon exists. First, Charles takes “non-accidental”, as Aristotle is using the term here, to include both essential and *necessary* features of the kind.<sup>79</sup> For example, by grasping that a triangle has two right angles, we grasp a necessary feature of triangles, because two right angles belong to triangles of necessity. But this feature does not constitute the essences of a triangle, for the essence of a triangle is that it is a plane figure bounded on all sides by three straight lines, and this causes the triangle to have the feature of two right angles. This will be an important consideration for my interpretation. One proposal of the process of gaining non-accidental knowledge of a phenomenon runs as follows: based on the Stage 1 account, the agent will know that the kind in question, if it exists, possesses a specified property. Stage 2 of the agent’s inquiry will involve discovering that the kind in fact possesses the specified property non-accidentally. Charles states that “[t]he initial grasp on an account of what ‘F’ signifies provides a *springboard* from which one can come to know non-accidentally that F exists, and, thus, for a successful investigation of what F is. According to the springboard reading, grasp of a Stage 1 account is a helpful first step towards coming to know of the existence and the essence of the relevant kind.”<sup>80</sup> I will ultimately argue that a nominal account of the noble functions as a “springboard” to ethical inquiry which culminates in the acquisition of a full-fledged conception of the noble.

According to Charles, nominal definitions function as the starting point of inquiry, and a general one at that. If one considers the Stage 1 account of the term “thunder”, which is “a type of noise in the clouds”, one will notice that this account does not specify the particular noise at issue but rather something more general – a type of noise. Stage 3 accounts, on the other hand, serve to uniquely specify the kind, which means that the content of the two types of accounts will differ so that the agent’s initial understanding of the nominal definition will provide him only with a partial account of the kind.<sup>81</sup> I will argue that, in the same way, ethical inquiry commences with a partial understanding of “the noble”, which involves content that differs from a complete understanding of “the noble”.

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<sup>79</sup> Charles, D. 2000: 35 (footnote 20)

<sup>80</sup> Charles favors this reading for two reasons: (1) it identifies a preliminary stage to knowing of the existence of the thing which is described at *Post. An.* II.8, 93a29; and (2) Aristotle’s discussion is focused on the search for something which includes knowing what something is (*Post. An.* II.8, 93a27) or that it exists (93a3), and in this context the agent requires something that would guide him, which is the role that Stage 1 accounts serve to play (Charles, D. 2000: 35-36).

<sup>81</sup> Charles, D. 2000: 104



To complete this view of the role that Stage 1 accounts play in scientific inquiry, Charles considers *how* we come to grasp such accounts. In the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle describes the relevant cognitive process in scientific inquiry as follows: we begin with the capacity for memory, which will yield a single “experience” that eventually gives rise to a universal (100a5-9). Charles probes the relevant steps in this cognitive process more carefully by considering a passage in the *Metaphysics*:

Skill comes to be when from many notions (*ennoēmata*) of experience one universal judgment about similar objects is formed. To have a judgment that when Kallias was ill of this disease this helped, and similarly for Socrates, and many others, is the task of experience. But to judge that something is beneficial for *all* people of a *certain type*, marked off into one class, when they are ill of this disease – e.g. to phlegmatic or bilious people when burning with fever – is the task of skill. (*Meta.* A.1, 981a5-12)

Here Aristotle draws a distinction between that which is noticed in experience (viz. “notions”), and genuine universals (*Meta.* A.1, 981a16-21) that feature in universal judgments about similar cases (*Meta.* A.1, 981a7). So, what precisely are these “notions of experience”, and in what way are they different from full-fledged universals? Charles asserts that the examples Aristotle uses take the following form: “This worked for Kallias and Socrates...when they suffered this disease”<sup>82</sup>, and this is different from judgments concerning what works for all people who are of a particular type, where they are, for example, phlegmatic, and have a certain disease such as a fever. These notions of experience are thus expressible by means of the following kinds of claims: “This worked for this man with this illness”. Aristotle often discusses experience in relation to artisans (*Meta.* A.1, 981a30) and doctors (*Meta.* A.1, 981a18-20), so Charles thinks it is safe to say that notions of experience must also be expressible by means of judgments such as “This works/ will work for this man with this illness.”

What Charles thinks these kinds of judgments have in common is the fact that they are “essentially particular-orientated”.<sup>83</sup> He states that

the person with experience can pick out particular people as the ones to be treated by this medicine, but will still lack the resources to say (or understand) what groups them together as a unit. Thus, she may be able to say correctly ‘This case is like that one’, but not yet grasp in general terms what the relevant likeness consists in. Her ability comes to no more than her being able to say: ‘This

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<sup>82</sup> Charles, D. 2000: 151

<sup>83</sup> Charles, D. 2000: 151

individual (Socrates) is like that one (Kallias) in (e.g.) that respect' (pointing to some demonstrated feature of Socrates)...In each case, the relevant person with experience has no more grasp on illness or medicine than is given by her ability to discriminate particular instances on the basis of their being like other particular cases. She will lack the conceptual sophistication required to understand the illness as (e.g.) fever of a general type, in terms which do not essentially involve reference to other particular cases. Thus, she will not grasp universals, if the latter are to be understood as wholly general and completely abstracted from particular cases.<sup>84</sup>

In other words, the person with experience alone will only be in a position to identify similarities between specific cases, while the person who has knowledge also possesses a fully conceptual grasp on the type of illness involved. Charles claims that, for Aristotle, the content of a knowledgeable person's thoughts is fully general in the form of universals, while the experienced person grasps content that is distinctive in virtue of its reference to specific cases. Charles thinks that Aristotle highlights these differences in the following passage:

We think that master craftsmen in each craft are more worthy of honor and know in a truer sense and are wiser than manual workers, because they know the causes of what is done, while the latter, like lifeless things, do what they do, as fire burns – but while lifeless things perform each of these by nature, manual workers perform them through habit. (*Meta.* A.1, 981a30-b5)

The manual worker lacks knowledge of the relevant causes, and so he does what he does as a result of habit, which is grounded in experience. Charles argues that this distinction between experience and thought<sup>85</sup> yields an explanation of how we can come to have thoughts about kinds in a non-mysterious way: we come to acquire rich thoughts about thunder, for example, by way of the successful operation of experience in “low-level” skill. Charles isolates what virtuous agents would need to understand to grasp the relevant universal, and claims that they will know “how to act and can explain why they act in that way, but need not know the fundamental principles concerning human well-being which makes their mode of actions

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<sup>84</sup> Charles thinks that this is precisely the understanding of universals that Aristotle has in mind based on the examples given in *Metaphysics* A.1 and the phrase “the universal...the one *over and above* the many” (as used in *Post. An.* II.19, 100a6f.). (Charles, D. 2000: 152)

<sup>85</sup> Charles takes *knowledge* (of the relevant type) to involve *thought* as the starting point, and he thinks that these are both distinct from, what he calls, “lower-level, particular-directed states (such as *experience*)”. (Charles, D. 2000: 152, footnote 15)

correct.”<sup>86</sup> In other words, the virtuous agent does not necessarily require the kind of explanation for why his action is virtuous that the ethical philosopher could provide.

One might now be seeking further clarification in terms of how this transition from experience to thought would come about. We are told that our grasp of universals comes about by means of induction (*Post. An.* II.19, 100b4) such that perception becomes the means by which universals are brought into being (*Post. An.* II.19, 100b5). Induction is a cognitive process where continued contact with particulars eventually yields a universal (*Post. An.* II.19, 100a10-100b5). What would be helpful is more detail regarding the nature of this process. Charles claims that Aristotle does provide us with enough information to understand how this process may work:

The first stage will involve experience, focusing on specific discriminations of particular cases. The relevant transition is from this to a grasp on a universal, which involves no essential reference to particulars. The end product will not simply be an abstraction from experience, since the universals must cohere among themselves in an organized way (100a11-b2). Consequently, one cannot justify the resulting universals solely by reference back to experience. For, there are additional, explanatory, constraints present at the level of thought which are not present in experience. This account does not make the transition mysterious. Reflection on what is common in the particular cases of illness one has confronted and treated, and how they differ from other somewhat similar cases, gives an initial impetus towards grasping the relevant universal and seeing its connections with, and distinctions from, other related universals. Initially, one may introduce a term (e.g. ‘dropsy’) as a way of labelling the instances one thinks of as example of one type of illness. One may grasp some of the symptoms which one has found in general terms (nausea and lethargy followed by fever), and also note which medicines work for which patients. For, one is concerned to see which types of treatment work for which patients and which do not, and to find some way of representing this knowledge at a general level (e.g. so as to communicate it to others). If one follows a route of this type, one has some reason to think that one is in touch with a genuine kind. This thought is underwritten by the similarities one sees in the cases with which one interacts. While it is a step beyond experience to grasp in general terms the illness with which one is dealing, it is one which arises naturally from experience.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Charles, D. 2000: 155

<sup>87</sup> Charles, D. 2000: 156-157

To illustrate this process, Charles uses the example of a doctor treating a disease: imagine that a doctor is treating a set of patients who have a set of symptoms that do not match any of the diseases that the doctor knows of. She notices that certain treatments work in some of these cases, and she begins to notice similarities between the cases that are treatable in this way. She may now start to suspect that what started off as set of disparate symptoms is in fact the manifestation of a unified condition. At this point it would be a hypothesis only, for she lacks the requisite evidence in support of the view that these symptoms are in fact connected, so as to constitute a unified condition. But, on the basis of her limited experience, she has at least developed a hunch that there is one condition present, with its own causal structure, and she calls this “dropsy”. Therefore, she could say

“Dropsy” signifies a unified medical condition with the following symptoms...

or (transferring to the level of use):

Dropsy is the unified medical condition, if there is one, with the following symptoms...<sup>88</sup>

To establish the existence of a unified condition would involve, for example, “repeated successful manipulation of symptoms (‘if I do this, that will happen...’), some understanding of how different aspects of the illness are interconnected, or a prognosis of how the illness develops in standard cases.”<sup>89</sup> In the absence of this, however, the doctor would still be able to come up with an account of what “dropsy” signifies, and this is what she would use in her hypothesis.

With this understanding of nominal definitions (or Stage 1 accounts) in place, I will now proceed to a proposal of how we might map the cognitive process of scientific inquiry onto ethical inquiry, specifically with regard to the nature of the *learner’s* cognitive process as he develops morally, rather than the ethical philosopher’s meta-inquiry which would involve a theoretical investigation of moral kinds.<sup>90</sup> My central claim is that in the case of ethical development toward moral knowledge there is also a nominal definition that is operative. I think it is plausible to suppose that Aristotle envisioned a process in ethical inquiry that is similar to that of scientific inquiry, since he equally appeals to knowing the fact and acquiring

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<sup>88</sup> Charles, D. 2000: 158

<sup>89</sup> Charles, D. 2000: 158

<sup>90</sup> An example of this would be what Aristotle investigates in the *NE*, book V where he engages in philosophical inquiry to arrive at a definition of justice.

the why. We have seen that a stepping stone to reaching the fact that something is the case would be to have a nominal definition of some sort. So, if the fact to be explained in ethics is that such-and-such actions are noble – i.e. these actions are of a particular type – then there must be an account of what “the noble” signifies. My suggestion has been that it signifies “honorable action”. This nominal definition facilitates a grasp on the fact, and once one knows of the existence of actions that fall under this type of action, one will seek out an explanation by identifying the essence of such actions which will be their cause.

As I argued in the previous section, (a) being worthy of honor appears to be a necessary feature of noble actions; and (b) the honorability of an action is grounded in, or caused by, its nobility. It isn't simply that noble actions happen to be honored, but rather that the action's nobility explains why it is honored, in the same way that the extinction of fire explains a type of noise in the clouds. Thus, the honorability of an action is not a causally basic feature of noble actions (so that it is included in the definition of what it is to be noble), but honorability does follow necessarily from the essence of nobility. Recall that, according to Charles, non-accidental knowledge in Aristotle includes both essential and necessary features of the kind, so that grasping the necessary features of a phenomenon will be sufficient to allow us to come to know that phenomenon, even if those necessary features are accidental. We find evidence of this in *De Anima* where Aristotle states that

It seems not only useful for the discovery of the causes of the incidental properties of substances to be acquainted with the essential nature of those substances (as in mathematics it is useful for the understanding of the property of equality of the interior angles of a triangle to two right angles to know the essential nature of the straight and the curved or of the line and the plane) but also conversely, for the knowledge of the essential nature of a substance is largely promoted by an acquaintance with its properties: for, when we are able to give an account conformable to experience of all or most of the properties of a substance, we shall be in the most favorable position to say something worth saying about the essential nature of that subject. (*De Anima* I. 1, 402b17-25)

Here Aristotle maintains that in the same way that grasping the essential nature of a substance allows us to discover the causes of accidental properties of that substance, so grasping a substance's accidental properties can facilitate knowledge of its essential nature. For example, if we come to grasp that a figure has two right angles, then we can infer that it is a plane figure bounded on all sides by three straight lines, since two right angles belong of necessity to

triangles *because* they are plane figures bounded on all sides by three straight lines. Thus, by coming to grasp the accidental but necessary feature of a phenomenon, we can come to know its essence. In the same way, I would argue, grasping an accidental but necessary feature of noble actions (i.e. the honorability of those actions) facilitates a grasp on the nature of nobility, which is the cause of the action's honorability.

As Charles has explained, latching onto the nominal definition is a function of experience, for the agent arrives at the thought that a term signifies something specific through contact with particular cases. Confronting instances of noble action (either through story-telling, music, or every-day encounters) and, importantly, witnessing the fact that those actions are honored, allows the learner to grasp the signification of "the noble" as "honorable action". He grasps which action must be performed in a situation because he can recognize that this context bears similarities to other cases he has come across where he was instructed or encouraged to act in a certain way. Based on this, he will perform the appropriate action, but this is not because he can identify the noble action in the sense that he understands why it is desirable for its own sake. This ability is brought about through the development of practical reason.

If I am right in thinking that the nominal definition (or Stage 1 account) of nobility is "honorable action", then I must also explain how the learner eventually comes to have knowledge of nobility by grasping the cause. In the ethical case, the agent who is armed with a preliminary account of the phenomenon at issue in virtue of possessing a nominal account, will move from Stage 1 to Stage 2 by discovering that noble actions exist and in fact necessarily possess the feature that is specified in the Stage 1 account. As we have seen, progression from Stage 2 to Stage 3 is a matter of identifying the cause or essence of the kind. In the ethical case, I believe this involves isolating the explanation for the nature of noble actions by coming to grasp the considerations that count in favor of that particular action.

In other words, what it would take for this nominal conception to become grounded or "internalized" (as Burnyeat puts it) so that the agent progresses from the position of civic bravery to genuine bravery is the development of practical reason. This will make the learner genuinely brave for he will then *reliably* act and feel a certain way due to his ability to identify what makes actions noble for himself. Of course, the ethical case differs from scientific inquiry because we are not concerning ourselves with natural kinds, which are beings whose principles hold without qualification, but rather actions that are governed by principles open to

qualification so that the choice worthiness of that action depends on the context (*NE* VI.1, 1139a5-10). Nonetheless, I would argue that practical reason supplies the considerations that explain why *that* action in *those* circumstances is choice worthy. This means that practical reason yields “the why” in that particular context, and this is what it means to have moral knowledge. If the learner has developed his capacity to reason practically so that he is able to weigh the particulars appropriately, then he has acquired the ability to pinpoint the noble action in any given context in a reliable way by grasping the considerations in favor of that action. As such, the basic framework of Aristotle’s epistemology as involving a movement from “the that” to “the why” is also applicable in the ethical case, even though ethics differs from science.

Practical wisdom, we are told, is “a state grasping the truth, involving reason, and concerned with action about human goods” (*NE* VI.5, 1140b21-22). Practical wisdom is about things open to deliberation, “for we say that deliberating well is the function of the prudent person more than anyone else” and so “[t]he unqualifiedly good deliberator is the one whose aim accords with rational calculation in pursuit of the best good for a human being that is achievable in action” (*NE* VI.7, 1141b10-14). We are told that practical wisdom “is the science of what is just and what is noble, and what is good for human beings” (*NE* VI.12, 1143b24-25). If one develops practical reason one has a correct conception of the goal, and one is able to deliberate well. This is what allows one to hit the mean in action, for Aristotle claims that virtue consists in a mean which is defined by reference to the reason of the practically wise person (*NE* II.6, 1107a1-3). This seems to suggest that reason contributes to our grasp of “the that” rather than “the why”, as I have claimed, for it is by means of deliberation that one is able to identify the actions that lead to one’s goal or conception of the good.

But, as Moss points out, Aristotle’s discussion of reason mostly emphasizes the purely intellectual function of providing explanations of certain phenomena (*EE* II.10, 1226b20-30, *NE* III.8, 1117a4-9). She suggests that perhaps Aristotle views reason’s role of providing information about what ought to be done as redundant, for he considers the objection regarding the relevance of practical wisdom given that character virtue alone seems to lead to right action (*NE* VI.12, 1143b21-4). Aristotle points out that practical wisdom is valuable because it provides an understanding of *why* we ought to perform certain actions:

To answer the claim that prudence will make us no better at achieving noble and just actions, we must begin from a little further back. We begin here: we say that

some people who do the actions prescribed by the laws either unwillingly or because of ignorance or because of some other end, not because of the actions themselves, even though they do the right actions, those that the excellent person ought to do. Equally, however, it would seem to be possible for someone to do each type of action in the state that makes him a good person, that is to say, because of decision and for the sake of the actions themselves (*NE* VI.12, 1144a12-21).

Moss thinks that reason might in fact make us better at knowing what to do precisely *because* we have a grasp of why certain actions ought to be done for themselves (*NE* I.2, 1094a22-4). The explanation of why certain acts ought to be done thus enhances our grasp on “the that”. By providing an understanding of why certain actions ought to be done for themselves, which will firmly ground our knowledge of what ought to be done, practical reason enables us to act virtuously in a reliable way.<sup>91</sup> Once the learner is able to grasp and appreciate the considerations in favour of some action, he will also understand what it is about that action that makes it noble. This is what it means to have moral knowledge.

### 3.4 Fulfilling the Requirements

In the previous section, I argued that training children to latch onto honor is a crucial step in moral development, due to the fact that it provides the content of the nominal definition of the noble because honor is connected to nobility in a causal fashion. The learner is being guided to specific actions through some external guidance (belonging to a parent or the community), so it seems perfectly natural that the initial sensitivity he would develop is an awareness of what *they* would and would not approve of, such that his nominal conception of the noble is provided by guidance from them. If the learner starts to care about being thought well of by others (honor) or, conversely, not being thought less of by others (shame), then this marks moral development insofar as the learner is no longer only interested in the carrot or afraid of the stick, as it were.

The learner’s desire for honor marks an interest in being held in high esteem, and performing actions because of a desire for honor is to have latched on to the “outward sign” (as Hitz puts it) of the noble. This, I argue, is to have grasped the nominal conception of the noble. Essentially, I am picking up and developing the claim that Jimenez makes when she states that

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<sup>91</sup> Though the laws may allow us to act reliably, this would only apply to those cases that the law encompasses. But Aristotle makes it clear that laws are limited and that only practical wisdom will enable us to act virtuously in all cases (*NE* V.10, 1137b12-32).



“there might be differences between desire for the noble *simpliciter*, in the way that the fully virtuous person has it, and the qualified desire for the noble of the citizen soldiers”.<sup>92</sup> My claim is that the desire for the noble is qualified in the case of civic bravery by the fact that it is a desire for honor which constitutes a nominal conception of the noble, rather than a full-fledged conception of the noble. A desire for honor constitutes a nominal conception of the noble because honor is a necessary feature of the noble. So, despite the fact that honor is, strictly speaking, an external good, it is unique by bearing this relationship to the noble. The possession of this nominal conception of the noble does not enable the learner to identify the noble for himself. At this point his actions are guided by the laws and the expectations of those from whom he seeks honor. It is only by coming to acquire a full-fledged conception of the noble that the learner will be able to identify the noble for himself.

What needs to be spelled out is how the picture that I have presented serves to resolve the continuity problem in a more persuasive way. Recall that the intellectualist camp argues that there is significant intellectual engagement during habituation in order to explain how the repetitive performance of these actions could instill the appropriate dispositions. They claim that if one were to adopt a mechanical view of habituation – according to which it is purely the non-rational part of the soul that is engaged – then this would result in “mindless” actions, and it isn’t clear how the repetitive performance of actions that fail to engage the rational part of the soul could yield actions that are done *virtuously*.<sup>93</sup> I have argued that the intellectualist view of habituation is mistaken on the grounds that it fails to account for the role of teaching in moral development. While taking an intellectual line of argument may serve to more ably explain how the appropriate dispositions arise, it fails to do justice to the division of labor that Aristotle explicitly endorses, viz. that habituation instills the character virtues while teaching develops practical wisdom. I think that my view succeeds in resolving the continuity problem, and in fact makes the development of the learner less mysterious, while also allowing for the teaching component to carry enough weight.

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<sup>92</sup> Jimenez, M. 2016:27

<sup>93</sup> Curzer presents his own mechanical view of habituation. This view differs from mine insofar as Curzer thinks that the central mechanism of habituation is pain exclusively, rather than pain and pleasure. In addition, habituated learners, or the “generous-minded” as he calls them, have only succeeded in making a commitment to living a life of virtue, rather than acquiring the habits of right action and right feeling. Curzer, H.J., 2002

I have argued that habituation does not culminate in taking pleasure in the nobility of the act because the learner is not able to judge for himself that an action is noble. There is less intellectual engagement than modern commentators have maintained. In the habituation stage one is aiming to develop the learner's interest in being honored, while instilling the ability to perform right actions and to feel the appropriate emotions in relation to particular actions. My claim is consistent with Burnyeat's insofar as I conceive of moral development as a movement from external incentives to the proper internal motivations. What will be responsible for establishing continuity between the habituation stage and the teaching stage is the transitional role that honor serves to play. While the actions in the habituation phase are not being done virtuously, they succeed in tending towards virtue if the learner can be brought to adopt an end that is connected to the noble. And, as we have seen, this end is a desire for honor (or a fear of shame) due to the connection that honor bears to the noble. My further claim, and that which renders my account "non-mysterious", is that the proper internal motivations will not solely arise by means of the repetition of acts of a certain kind, but also due to the development of a particular faculty through teaching, namely, practical reason. The development of practical reason is the mechanism that will turn a desire for honor into a grounded disposition to act for the sake of the noble *simpliciter* (to borrow Jimenez's terminology), because reason enables the learner to judge for himself that actions are noble by providing the considerations in favor of that act. This will ground and complete the learner's initial conception of the noble so that it is now a full-fledged conception of the noble.

Jimenez claims to have resolved the continuity problem by arguing that the end of the habituated learner and the virtuous learner are the same, even though the habituated learner only acts for the sake of that end occasionally, while the virtuous learner does so consistently. I think that this approach is generally correct, but I have developed and clarified this proposal by explaining the unique place that honor holds as a transitional good and how it serves the function of facilitating moral development. Jimenez alludes to this proposal when she introduces the passage about civic bravery as evidence for the thought that civic soldiers may not be acting for the noble *simpliciter*, but are still acting for that end in a qualified way. I have fleshed out the details of what this proposal would involve by: (1) developing arguments for the connection between honor and the noble to show that honor is tied to nobility in the relevant way; (2) and incorporating Aristotle's epistemology from the *Posterior Analytics* to

articulate the nature of this process. My further contribution has been to propose that the role reason plays in moral development is as the mechanism that enables the learner to arrive at a full-fledged conception of nobility. I will continue to develop this idea, and will argue that practical reason is responsible for our ability to judge that actions are noble by enabling us to grasp the considerations that speak in favor of that action. Taking pleasure in the nobility of the act arises out of this judgement.

To defend the idea that reason enables us to identify for ourselves which actions are noble, I appeal to Coope's interpretation where she argues that the ability to discern nobility in action is a rational capacity based on Aristotle's doctrine of the mean.<sup>94</sup> The ability to discern whether an action is in accordance with the mean is a rational capacity, because Aristotle states that this is precisely what the practically wise person is able to do, and practical wisdom is an intellectual virtue (NE VI.1, 1138b19-20, b29, I.13, 1103a5-6). This capacity, Coope thinks, is identical to the capacity which allows us to determine whether an action is noble. This is a challenging issue because Aristotle does not provide a definition of *to kalon*.<sup>95</sup> But we have established that *to kalon* is the value that character virtues aim at, and doing actions for the sake of this end (where one understands what it is about those actions that makes them noble) is what sets the virtuous agent apart. Given that Aristotle does not supply a technical understanding of this notion, it would seem that he has a pre-philosophical concept in mind. In ethical contexts he describes the noble as that which is "fitting" (*prepon*)<sup>96</sup> (EE VII.15, 1249a9, NE IV.2, 1122b6-10), and in action, what is fitting are those actions that accord with the mean. According to Coope, one therefore utilises a rational capacity in determining which action is noble. This gives us good reason to think that *part* of what one learns in the lectures on the noble and the just is what it is about actions that makes them noble in virtue of developing one's ability to deliberate.

On my reading, habituation culminates in the acquisition of the proper pleasures of the character virtues which involves feeling the right emotions in relation to particular actions.

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<sup>94</sup> Coope, U. 2012: 155

<sup>95</sup> Cooper has argued that for Aristotle "the noble" can be identified in virtue of three properties: determinateness, order, and symmetry (Cooper, J.M. 1998: 273). But his interpretation depends heavily on assembling bits of text to be found in the *Topics* and *Metaphysics*, so it isn't clear that Aristotle has such a technical definition in mind for "the noble" concerning action since he never supplies this definition in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

<sup>96</sup> In the *Hippias Major* Socrates uses the term *prepon* when he defines as *to kalon* (294dff).

The habituated learner does not, however, take pleasure in the nobility of particular actions precisely because he is not yet capable of grasping what it is about particular actions that makes them desirable for their own sake. What he has acquired is a desire for honor, and a fear of disgrace, and this is to possess a nominal conception of the noble that will become grounded by means of the development of his reason. One may now wonder how it is that the learner comes to *desire* the noble. After all, it is one thing to claim that the learner will come to understand why particular actions are noble by developing his capacity to reason, but another to claim that he then desires the noble once he is able to identify it, and so takes pleasure in the noble. Recall that desiring the noble forms part of the appropriate motivations that are expressive of a virtuous character (*NE* I.8, 1099a18-20).

Coope holds that if the capacity by which we discern whether an action is noble is a rational capacity, then the pleasure taken in such actions must be a rational pleasure. She thinks that a position of this kind is suggested by Aristotle's remarks concerning the relation between pleasure and perceptual or intellectual activity:

Why does everyone desire pleasure? We might think it is because everyone also aims at being alive. Living is type of activity, and each of us is active toward the objects he likes most and in the ways he likes most. The musician, for instance, activates his hearing in hearing melodies; the lover of learning activates his thought in thinking about objects of study; and so on for each of the others. Pleasure completes their activities, and hence completes life, which they desire. It is reasonable, then, that they also aim at pleasure, since it completes each person's life for him, and life is choiceworthy. (*NE* X.5, 1175a11-18)

Here Aristotle describes pleasure taken in some object as the completion of the activity of perceiving or grasping that object. And in book IX, chapter 9 Aristotle compares the pleasure that an excellent man takes in his actions to the pleasure that a musician takes in fine melodies: "The good man, *qua* good, rejoices in actions that are in accord with virtue, but is disgusted by those that are vicious, just as the musician is pleased by fine melodies and pained by bad ones" (*NE* IX.9, 1170a8-11). The musician's pleasure completes the activity of hearing, so the comparison suggests that the practically wise person's pleasure in the nobility of his action is a completion of the activity of practical thought. And this would make it a pleasure of the rational part of the soul.

In support of the notion of a rational kind of pleasure I would draw our attention once again to Aristotle's discussion of music where he mentions intellectual pleasure. If music is considered to be conducive to the pleasure of amusement, the education of the non-rational part of the soul which involves the appropriate pains and pleasures, and then also pleasure of the intellect, it seems reasonable to suppose that intellectual activity itself culminates in a particular kind of pleasure. And we must remember that Aristotle thinks active musical education is required precisely because of the intellectual development that it ultimately stimulates along with the development of character virtue: "Clearly there is a considerable difference made in the character by the actual practice of the art. It is difficult, if not impossible, for those who do not perform to be good judges of the performance of others" (*Pol.* VIII.6, 1340b22-25). Aristotle mentions both the goal of becoming good judges, as well as the acquisition of "right judgment" (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1340a14-19), and Lord thinks that the judgment he mentions in these passages must be the judgment that Aristotle elsewhere takes to be an essential part of practical wisdom.<sup>97</sup> For this would explain Aristotle's suggestion that the ultimate justification for an active music education in youth may lie in its contribution to the "pastime and prudence" of mature citizens (*Pol.* VIII.5, 1339a25-33).<sup>98</sup> It is, therefore, apparent that a particular sort of pleasure flows from intellectual activity, so that when the practically wise person makes the right judgment and identifies an action as noble, pleasure will complete this perfect activity of reason.

Coope draws our attention to book X, chapter 4 where pleasure is thought to be a kind of end that depends upon a perfect intellectual or perceptual activity (*NE* X.4, 1174b31-3). The activity can be considered "perfect" when the power underlying the activity is "in a good condition" and is active "in relation to the finest of its objects" (*NE* X.4, 1174b14-16, 1174b21-3). So if the practically wise person is discerning the noble in action, then this activity of discernment can be considered perfect. And if the activity is in fact perfect, then the activity will be pleasurable: "Hence as long as the objects of understanding or perception and the subject that judges or attends are in the right condition, there will be pleasure in the activity" (*NE* X.4, 1174b35-1175a1). We thus have reason to think that when the habituated learner's capacity to reason is developed such that he is able to identify which action is in fact fitting,

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<sup>97</sup> Lord, C. 1982

<sup>98</sup> Lord, C. 1982: 96-98

and, as such, noble, he will take pleasure in the nobility of the act and will consequently desire the noble.

As such, the continuity problem is resolved by taking seriously the division between what is acquired by means of habituation and what is acquired by means of teaching. On this neo-mechanical view, it is possible to view habituation as involving only so much cognitive engagement as is necessary to get the learner to the point where he develops an interest in the noble, by developing a nominal conception of the noble as honorable action. My claim is that the significant shift the learner is undergoing during habituation is orientating himself towards honor (and, thereby, caring what others think of him), rather than purely focusing on his own pleasure in the way “the many” do. It is during this process that the learner ought to develop the appropriate emotional responses to particular actions and be trained to perform the right actions. The goal of this phase is to get the learner to the point where he cares to behave in the right way because he cares what others (i.e. prudent people) think of him. This interest in honor functions as a “springboard” (drawing on Charles’ terminology) that will allow the learner to develop an understanding of, and desire for, the noble because honor is connected to the noble in the relevant way. The goal of habituation is not to get the learner to be able to judge that certain actions are noble for himself and to take pleasure in the nobility of the act. These aspects to moral education form part of the teaching phase, which is responsible for developing the learner’s capacity to reason. When the learner grasps the process of deliberation that speaks in favor of some action he will take pleasure in the nobility of the act, because this kind of intellectual pleasure completes the activity of practical reason.

My account has the virtue of rendering moral development non-mysterious by showing that the path to nobility involves an intermediate step, namely, latching onto the nominal definition of the noble, that provides the moral starting point for the learner’s continued education. The transition from this starting point to full-fledged virtue (and a full-fledged conception of the noble) is then explained by appealing to a psychological tool that Aristotle emphasizes, namely, practical reason. In this way, I have fulfilled the two conditions I assert must be met for an explanation of moral development to be satisfactory: (1) my account solves the continuity problem, and (2) my account affords an obvious and specific role to the teaching phase of moral education. In chapter 4, I consider objections to the neo-mechanical view of habituation and provide responses to these objections.

## Chapter 4

### 4 Objections to the Neo-Mechanical Account of Habituation with Responses

In chapter 3, I presented a view regarding the goal of habituation that is neo-mechanical in nature because it does not attribute the kind of intellectual engagement to this process that is the mark of intellectualist readings. Instead, I argue that habituation results in a learner who acts rightly and feels appropriately, not because he has advanced to the point of discerning noble actions and taking pleasure in the nobility of the act, but rather because he has latched on to a nominal conception of the noble insofar as he comes to desire honor and fear shame. This view is to be preferred because it succeeds in solving the continuity problem while also affording the teaching stage of moral education its proper place.

There are three sorts of actions in conformity with virtue: (1) Those that merely conform to virtue but are not orientated towards the proper end; (2) Those that conform to virtue and are performed for the sake of the proper end, even though a complete understanding of the end is absent; and (3) Those that conform to virtue and are performed for the sake of the proper end where a complete understanding of the end is present. For Aristotle, only actions of the third kind are virtuous. On my view, we can come to understand how the repetition of acts that are not themselves virtuous might yield a virtuous disposition by arguing that the habituated learner is someone who acts for the same end as the virtuous agent, viz. for the sake of the noble, where the habituated learner's conception of the noble is not yet fully formed. Thus, on my reading, the habituated learner's actions are of the second kind above. If the habituated learner performs acts, for the most part, with the noble as his aim in virtue of desiring honor – which I claim constitutes a nominal conception of the noble – it would mean that he is not simply performing acts that are merely accordance with virtue, but rather performing them for the same reason as the virtuous agent despite lacking the deep understanding of the noble that the virtuous agent possesses. Honor is, therefore, both an external and a transitional good that functions as a springboard for acquiring a full-fledged conception of the noble. In this way, the habituated learner will continue to repeat actions that

are being performed with the appropriate motivation in place, and he will eventually develop the proper internal motivations that constitute the virtuous agent, for he will acquire a full-fledged conception of the noble through the development of practical reason. My reading thus accommodates the continuity problem by explaining how it is that learners can progress to the proper internal motivations if they are initially motivated by external incentives.

By withholding the robust moral development that characterizes the habituated learner per intellectualist interpretations, my view also accommodates the division of labor that Aristotle explicitly endorses at the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, namely, that habituation instills the character virtues while teaching develops the intellectual virtues. If the habituated learner is morally mature in the way that the intellectualists would have us believe, then it is unclear precisely what teaching is supposed to contribute to the moral condition that has already been shaped. However, Aristotle has much to say regarding the ethical importance of practical wisdom, which is an intellectual virtue and so developed through teaching. On my view, these remarks are afforded due weight, for practical wisdom is cast as that which contributes something new and distinctive to the habituated learner's moral development, and explains how the training he has already received is shaped into a virtuous disposition. More specifically, the development of an agent's practical reason will enable him to identify the noble for himself, and this gives rise to a desire for the noble such that the learner acquires the appropriate internal motivations of the virtuous agent.

My view does face some challenges. In this chapter, I consider the most perspicuous objections and hope to address these as convincingly as possible. The objections to be considered include:

1. **Virtue Makes the Goal Right:** At various points in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle states that virtue makes the goal right, while practical wisdom makes the means to the goal right. Yet, on my reading, it would seem that practical wisdom is responsible for coming to know the goal, since it is only by means of coming to grasp the considerations that make some action choice worthy that I can come to understand why it is noble. This then serves to complete my knowledge of the goal in the same way that coming to know the cause of thunder allows me to know what thunder is. This would, therefore, not be consistent with Aristotle's division of labor regarding our knowledge of the goal, and our knowledge of how to achieve the goal.



2. **The Science-Ethics Gap:** The idea of mapping the process of scientific inquiry onto ethical inquiry in the way that I have claimed is arguably mistaken because Aristotle clearly denies that science and ethics are to be treated in the same way. Particularists argue that practical wisdom is not a matter of arriving at general rules of conduct, but is rather a perception-based capacity which enables the agent to “see” what is required. If this is true, then we cannot understand the process of moral education in terms of the methodology that is applicable in the scientific realm, because the two forms of inquiry are wholly distinct.
3. **Does Practical Wisdom Contribute Something New?** My view of habituation is informed by the supposition that practical wisdom contributes something new and distinctive to the moral development of the learner, rather than honing what has already been shaped during habituation. But perhaps I am confusing robustness with importance. That is, while someone like Burnyeat holds that practical wisdom serves to hone that which is developed during habituation, this does not make practical wisdom unimportant. The “perfecting” that Burnyeat speaks of may still be crucial for complete virtue even though it does not require a robust process of teaching in the way that I have claimed.

#### 4.1 Virtue Makes the Goal Right

We have reason to think that Aristotle endorses a division of labor where character virtue is said to make the goal right, while practical wisdom makes the means to the goal right, for this is explicitly indicated in the text:

Further, we fulfill our function insofar as we have prudence and virtue of character; for virtue makes the goal correct, and prudence makes the things promoting the goal correct. (*NE VI.12, 1144a7-10*)

...the decision will not be correct without prudence or without virtue – for virtue makes us achieve the end, whereas prudence makes us achieve the things that promote the end. (*NE VI.13, 1145a5-7*)

For virtue preserves the principles, whereas vice corrupts it; and in actions the end we act for is the principle, as the assumptions are the principles in mathematics. Reason does not teach the principles either in mathematics or in actions; with actions it is virtue, either natural or habituated, that teaches correct belief about the principles. The sort of person with this virtue is temperate, and the contrary sort intemperate. (*NE VII. 8, 1151a15-20*)

These passages clearly state that character virtue is responsible for instilling the correct goal of action, while practical wisdom enables us to go about achieving that goal in the right way. Moss has argued that we need to take this division of labor seriously, for Aristotle means what he says. She disagrees with interpretations which claim that practical wisdom in some sense supplies our goals, and she labels such views “intellectualist” in nature. According to these intellectualists<sup>99</sup>, the intellect must play some part in identifying the goals of action.

At first glance, it would seem that my best strategy for addressing the “Virtue Makes the Goal Right” objection would be to side with the intellectualists and claim that practical wisdom does in fact supply our goals, which would mean that Aristotle does not maintain the strict division of labor as indicated. But this strategy would saddle me with a view that is inconsistent with the position I set out in chapter 3. The intellectualists argue that character virtue is not exclusively non-rational and engages the intellect. They recruit textual evidence which they think suggests that character virtue includes an excellent rational state as a component, for Aristotle claims that virtue cannot arise without practical wisdom and that virtue is a state which *involves* reason rather than merely according with it (*NE* VI.13, 1144b8-17, 26-27, 31-33). That is, virtue incorporates reason’s directives, rather than merely hitting upon what reason would endorse. In another passage, the intellectualists take Aristotle to be making the point that virtue is required so that practical reason can determine the end (*NE* VI.5, 1140b12-20). In other words, practical reason cannot do its job if the pain and pleasures of the agent have not been shaped in the right way, as these desires will interfere with the proper function of reason. Furthermore, the intellectualists appeal to “architectonic” practical wisdom (which they regard as the overarching science that includes both universal and particular knowledge), to argue that grasping universals is a way of coming to grasp ends (*NE* VI. 7, 1141b15-24). Thus, practical wisdom becomes ethically important because it provides the right end by allowing us to grasp the first principles of practical reasoning, which are the universal causes described in architectonic practical wisdom as well as the *that/because* passage where Aristotle sets out the methodology of acquiring ethical knowledge (*NE* VI. 7, 1141b15-24; VI. 8, 1141b25-27, I. 4, 1095a33-1095b13).

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<sup>99</sup> Cooper (1986), Hardie (1968), Broadie and Rowe (2002), McDowell (1998), Irwin (1975)

Adopting this intellectualist position would, however, violate the strict division of labor that I defend in chapter 3 whereby habituation (which is a thoroughly non-rational process), is responsible for giving rise to character virtue, while teaching (which engages the intellect), develops the intellectual virtues such as practical reason. I argue that the habituated learner cannot possess the sophisticated moral condition that other scholars have claimed precisely because habituation is aimed at developing that which is contrasted with the intellect, namely, character. Moreover, if the habituated learner did possess the advanced moral condition that scholars have claimed, it would be unclear how the development of practical wisdom through teaching would make a perspicuous ethical difference. But Aristotle makes it clear that practical wisdom does make a significant moral difference (*NE* I. 13, 1103a5-18, VI.12, 1144a12-21). If this is right, then it cannot be the case that character virtue itself involves a rational component which is responsible for setting the goals of the agent. Thus, in light of my views in chapter 3, I am forced to take Aristotle's division of labor seriously when it comes to that which is responsible for setting the agent's goals (*viz.* character), and that which is responsible for determining the correct means to the goal (*viz.* practical wisdom). On my view, practical wisdom allows us to achieve a deeper understanding of the nature of noble action insofar as being practically wise enables one to grasp the reasons in favor of some action that would allow one to understand why *that* action is the noble one. I, nonetheless, maintain that a view of this kind does not run afoul of Aristotle's division of labor.

On my reading, habituation and the condition it yields enables the learner to latch onto the noble insofar as he acquires a nominal conception of the noble. The conception of the noble as "honorable action" serves as a guidepost that motivates the learner to continue performing such actions until he develops the capacity to reason, which will make him understand for himself *why* that action is right. Moss aims to maintain the division of labor that Aristotle has in mind, while also affording practical wisdom an ethically significant role. She ultimately makes the point that practical wisdom makes the things towards the goal right in virtue of determining the mean, which is to ensure proper deliberation in working out what the mean may be. So, while the agent will start by wishing for some general goal, such as "doing as one ought", it is the deliberative faculty that will clarify what this involves by making the goal determinate in a way it wasn't before. This means that practical wisdom is ethically significant because it allows the agent to pinpoint the concrete aspects of realizing his goal. And, as Moss

claims, this is to discover what the nature of that action is, and thus to understand that action in a way that one did not prior to the deliberative process.

This understanding of the role of practical wisdom is precisely what I take myself to have argued for in chapter 3. On my account, it is not that practical wisdom sets the goal, but rather that practical wisdom fleshes out the goal by making it concrete in a way that it wasn't before (insofar as coming to grasp the considerations that single out some action makes it choice worthy), which serves to ground the category of "the noble". In this section, I will present Moss's view and indicate the extent to which there is an overlap between our positions, and the extent to which we disagree. While I agree that we need to take Aristotle's division of labor seriously, and that practical wisdom is ethically significant in the way she indicates, I, nonetheless, disagree with her assessment of the kind of knowledge she takes the virtuous individual to possess. On her reading, the individual only requires particular knowledge to be practically wise, but on my view the individual also requires universal knowledge. This is important for my interpretation since, on my reading, Aristotle's point in the *that/because* passage (*NE* I. 4, 1095a33-1095b13) is that habituated virtue (which gives you "the that") will be transformed into full virtue once practical wisdom is acquired (which is to add "the because"). And, as an intellectual virtue, practical wisdom is something that is taught, which means that practical wisdom is not a purely perceptual capacity that comes about through habituation alone (*NE* I.4, 1095b1-13). Practical wisdom also involves universal knowledge, and this knowledge is imparted in the context of teaching.<sup>100</sup>

Moss's central claim is that character virtue makes the goal right, and is an excellence of the non-rational part of the soul. In other words, contrary to what the intellectualists argue, character virtue does not engage the intellect. This is a standard reading of the ethical works and one which I have defended in my account. When Aristotle states that virtue cannot arise without practical wisdom, and that it is a state that involves reason, this cannot be taken to mean that character virtue includes a rational component, because Aristotle opens his discussion of the nature of character virtue and practical wisdom by clearly drawing a

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<sup>100</sup> My only other significant disagreement with Moss centers around the nature of habituation, for Moss maintains that correct habituation "makes one take pleasure in and value one's activity *qua* excellent and *qua* fine" (Moss, J. 2011: 259), whereas I maintain that the habituated learner does not yet take pleasure in the nobility of his action because he cannot identify the noble action for himself at this point. One need not be committed to – and ought not be committed to – such a robust conception of habituation to make good on Aristotle's division of labor. This I defended in Chapter 2.

distinction between character virtues and intellectual virtues. Practical wisdom is an excellence of the practical intellect which has belief, while “strict” virtue is an excellence of character (*NE* VI.13, 1144b16-27). Aristotle describes the “character” part of the soul as the seat of natural virtue which is something that children and beasts, lacking reason, partake in, so this part is evidently non-rational (*NE* VI.13, 1144b2-10). When Aristotle claims that virtue involves reason this must, according to Moss, be taken to mean that virtue is dependent for its realization on practical wisdom. Moss supplies a substantive reading of this point in the following way: “the passions and actions of a strictly virtuous person do not merely happen to coincide with what well-functioning practical intellect would prescribe, but they are such as to wait upon the right prescription before becoming active.”<sup>101</sup> If we utilize one of Aristotle’s own analogies, whereby the non-rational part of the soul is compared to a servant and the rational part compared to a master (*NE* VII. 6, 1149a25-36), the point may be expressed as follows: a servant may receive no good instructions from his master and nonetheless do the right thing most of the time, but this state is different from one where the servant is trained in obedience to his master’s excellent commands. In the latter case, the servant follows his superior’s lead.<sup>102</sup>

Moss’s strategy for combating the claim that practical wisdom sets our ends (since practical wisdom involves universal knowledge which intellectualists take to be a way of grasping ends), is to (1) argue that it is only architectonic practical wisdom, or the “ruling” science, that involves universal knowledge; and (2) argue that even if individual practical wisdom involves universal knowledge, this would not show that practical wisdom sets our ends because universal knowledge is not a way of grasping ends. According to Moss, there is a difference between architectonic practical wisdom, and the practical wisdom that individuals require to be fully virtuous and happy. The non-architectonic type of practical wisdom is the one that is concerned with particulars and is thus practical and deliberative. At VI. 7, 1141b15-24 in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle makes it clear that it is more important to have a grasp on the particulars, as opposed to the universals, precisely because practical wisdom is concerned with action. Moss emphasizes that in the final chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle also makes it clear that architectonic practical wisdom is only necessary to those who are responsible for

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<sup>101</sup> Moss, J. 2011: 212

<sup>102</sup> Moss, J. 2011: 212

making others virtuous, i.e. legislators and politicians (*NE* X.9, 1180a30-36; *Meta.* A. 1, 981a12-19). Furthermore, the universals Aristotle has in mind do not appear to concern ends. Architectonic practical wisdom is necessary to make laws, but, as Moss points out, laws play the role of achieving the goals set out by the state – the laws do not themselves determine what the goal is. It is true that Aristotle characterizes political science as being concerned with the highest human good, but this only means that political science aims at this good, or takes this good as its *telos*. Political science investigates how best to promote the ends that the state has taken as its goal, i.e. which laws and policies would be most effective. If one were to possess a grasp of universals in the case of achieving one's own happiness, these universals would not allow one to identify the end, but rather enable one to formulate policies that would best facilitate an achievement of the end. While I agree that having knowledge of universals does not mean that one comes to grasp ends, I, nonetheless, disagree with Moss's assessment that the practical wisdom of the individual only involves knowledge of particulars.

My own interpretation of the *that/because* passage (*NE* I.4, 1095a32-1095b13) has been that character virtue gives us the correct starting point by making "the that" apparent to us. Aristotle states that to acquire knowledge we must begin from things that are familiar to us. What is familiar to us is then described as "the that", which bears a close proximity to perception and is acquired by means of a good upbringing. The progression in knowledge that is expressed in this passage is one of moving from a starting point (things familiar to us) towards knowledge proper (things familiar without qualification), which involves generalizations or universals (*Post. An.* I.2, 72a1-6). Now if "the that" is what is familiar to us, and is grasped as the result of a decent upbringing, then we come to grasp things that are familiar without qualification as a result of lectures concerning the noble, the just, and political science. Aristotle explicitly states that since inquiry consists in a movement from things familiar to us to things familiar without qualification, we must receive the right sort of upbringing so that we can engage in moral enquiry. This must, therefore, mean that it is habituation which furnishes us with things familiar to us, and this is necessary if we are to progress in our inquiry, which we do by means of lectures. And if habituation (or a good upbringing) supplies "the that", then it can only be the other component of full virtue, namely, practical wisdom, that will supply knowledge proper by contributing "the because". This fits with Aristotle's depiction of practical wisdom as an intellectual virtue which is developed

through teaching, since here we are told that further progress regarding moral knowledge comes about by means of lectures concerning morality.

I agree with Moss's conclusion that "the because" would be a universal, and that these universals do not supply ends. But I question her claim that "the because" is not a requirement for full virtue in the case of the individual. It is true that Aristotle at various points seems to indicate that "the that" is sufficient for virtue, but I think these passages need to be read in a more nuanced way. Let us reconsider the passage in the *Metaphysics* (A. 1, 981a12-19), as well as the passage where Aristotle specifically discusses the nature of practical wisdom as involving both universals and particulars (*NE* VI.7, 1141b15-24). In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle seems to be making the point that those who have experience alone are *better* off than those who have a theory (*logos*)<sup>103</sup> but completely lack experience. This is not to say that those who have experience are, therefore, proficient in their craft, but simply that they are "better able to hit the mark", or stand a better chance of getting things right, than those who lack experience. This still leaves open whether Aristotle considers "the because" to be a necessary component for individual virtue.

If we then consider Aristotle's treatment of practical wisdom in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he seems to be making the same point as in the *Metaphysics*. The passage in question follows from Aristotle's description of practical wisdom as governing what is open to deliberation. He states that "the unqualifiedly good deliberator is the one whose aim accords with rational calculation in pursuit of the best good for a human being that is achievable in action" (*NE* VI.7, 1141b10-14). At this point Aristotle is discussing practical wisdom as it relates to the individual (as opposed to architectonic practical wisdom), since his remarks at this stage simply concern the abilities of a practically wise agent rather than the abilities of a politician. Aristotle then claims that practical wisdom is not only about universals, but also involves knowledge of particulars. This is followed by a claim that is mirrored in the *Metaphysics* passage: "[P]eople who lack knowledge but have experience are *better* in action than others who have knowledge" (*NE* VI.7, 1141b17-18, my italics). The view being expressed is that when it comes to action, particular knowledge is crucial given that action concerns particulars. This would mean that people who have experience of particulars would behave better than those who only "have

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<sup>103</sup> Here I follow W.D. Ross's translation.

knowledge”, i.e. grasp universals.<sup>104</sup> Again, this is not the same as claiming that grasping particulars is sufficient for complete virtue. The claim is merely that one will get closer to the mark if one has gained experience, as opposed to only having universal knowledge. At the end of the passage Aristotle states that “since prudence is concerned with action it must possess both the universal and the particular knowledge or the particular more than the universal” (*NE* VI.7-8, 1141b22-24). The practically wise person is thus someone who, first and foremost, grasps *both* the universal and the particular. He then suggests that if this cannot be had, it would be better to grasp the particular rather than the universal given the subject matter at hand. Aristotle completes his description of practical wisdom by making it clear that there is an overarching science in place in the same way that there is in medical science.

My suggestion, then, is that, contrary to Moss’s view, the individual must grasp the universal or “the because” in order to be practically wise. Just as the doctor knows that this meat is healthy *because* it is a light meat, so too the agent knows that this action is virtuous *because* it is a noble action.<sup>105</sup> My explanation of Aristotle’s claim that having “the that” means that one doesn’t need “the because” in the *that/because* passage above, is that given his statements elsewhere, he must be saying that as long as one has had the correct upbringing one will be doing better ethically than those who simply have “the because”. But the way that the passage continues clearly indicates that having “the because” makes a relevant contribution if one already possesses the necessary experience.

I agree with Moss’s position regarding the nature of habituation as a non-rational process, for I have also argued that habituation does not involve the kind of intellectual engagement that many have ascribed to it, though my strategy differs.<sup>106</sup> Moss’s further claim is to maintain

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<sup>104</sup> Aristotle discusses a case where someone has universal knowledge but not particular knowledge: “For someone who knows that light meats are digestible and hence healthy, but not which sorts of meats are light, will not produce health; the one who knows that bird meats are light and healthy will be better at producing health.” (*NE* VI. 7, 1141b19-22)

<sup>105</sup> If architectonic practical wisdom is not a matter of grasping the universal, then we could understand the nature of architectonic practical wisdom in the following way: Perhaps the architectonic practical wisdom that Aristotle mentions at the end of the passage is something which legislators and politicians possess, not because it amounts to grasping universals, but rather because it involves an understanding of the network of universals, and how they hang together in a system. The politician has knowledge of the system of ethical knowledge as a whole, and understands all forms of prudence (*viz.* household, legislative, deliberative, and judicial) and how these fit together (*NE* VI. 8, 1141b25-35).

<sup>106</sup> Recall that my argument also depends on the thought that if habituation is responsible for the advanced ethical condition that many scholars describe, then it would be unclear what the development of practical reason would be responsible for regarding ethical development. Since Aristotle clearly thinks that the



that, even though habituation is thoroughly non-rational, this does not mean that it is *non-cognitive*. As we see in chapter 3, I support Moss's view that habituation is a cognitive process, for this would provide an explanation of how the learner is properly shaped during habituation.<sup>107</sup> Her overarching claim is that while habituation is not "mindless", in the sense that it does not involve cognitions that are discriminatory in nature, it is also not "intellectual" by engaging intellectual discrimination. Rather, habituation involves perceptual and imaginative cognitions, which makes it a cognitive process, but still non-rational, for it does not engage the rational part of the soul.

Moss defends the thought that character virtue, as a non-rational state, is responsible for laying down our goals by (1) appealing to Aristotle's analogy between practical and theoretical reasoning where it becomes evident that in the theoretical case intuition is responsible for laying down the starting-points (which are statements of the end), while character virtue supplies the starting-point in action (*EE* II.10, 1227b28-32, 1227b23-26, *NE* VII.8, 1151a15-20); (2) Aristotle's examples of health, which is depicted as an end that is the undeliberated object of wish, when he discusses happiness as an end (*NE* III.2, 1111b26-29). She thinks that desire can set our ends precisely because the non-rational part of the soul is still cognitive, and this means that viewing the goal as good, in the way that Aristotle claims, makes sense (*NE* III.4, 1113a15-31). As such, Moss opposes the views we encounter in Chapter 1, where intuition is thought to be engaged during the habituation process. On her view, the intellect is not engaged during habituation even through intuition, for Aristotle explicitly states that in the practical realm it is character virtue, rather than intuition, that teaches correct belief about the principle. I think this is a plausible view that fits with other aspects of Aristotle's position. Aristotle states that there are different ways in which an agent can come to grasp a principle, namely, through induction, perception, and habituation (*NE* I. 7, 1098b4-9). This suggests that he views induction and habituation as distinct pathways to the acquisition of a principle, and given his other remarks regarding habituation, we have good reason to consider this process unique in virtue of being non-rational while cognitive.

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development of practical reason through teaching is ethically important, it must be the case that habituation yields a less advanced moral state than previously thought. More specifically, one that is non-rational because this process does not involve teaching which is precisely what serves to engage the intellect.

<sup>107</sup> I will not rehearse Moss's defense for this claim in this section, as these arguments are to be found in Chapter 3, pg. 75-76.

But if practical wisdom does not supply our ends, in what sense does it remain ethically significant? Moss develops a view regarding the ethical importance of practical wisdom that I take to be expressive of the view that I defend in chapter 3.<sup>108</sup> To be able to work out how to achieve a given end in the ethical realm is truly a complex and challenging task, and, according to Moss, the category that practical wisdom governs (viz. “things towards the end”) is broader than mere instrumental means. The importance of practical wisdom lies in the fact that it is responsible for the achievement of goals in an ethically correct way. What needs to be expanded upon is precisely what it means to “get things right” regarding the path to our ends. If we focus on practical wisdom’s function of determining the mean, then we may reach a better understanding of its ethical importance (*NE* II.6, 1106b36-1107a2). Virtue is a state in between excess and deficiency, and aims at the mean regarding actions and passions (*NE* II.7, 1106b27-28, II.9, 1109a20-23). The mean constitutes what one ought to do in a given situation, as well as the affective condition one ought to be in. But even if one wants to do the right thing, it can be very difficult to discern what the right thing is (*NE* II. 6, 1106b19-24).

We are told that this intermediate condition is determined by reference to reason. So, practical reason is responsible for working out when and how one ought to act and feel a certain way, which is no easy task. Aristotle comments on what a challenge this can be (*NE* II.9, 1109a26-30, 1109b14-16, IV.1, 1121b5-7). Moss links the description of practical wisdom as making the things towards the goal right with Aristotle’s description of practical wisdom as determining the mean, i.e. ensuring proper deliberation in order to ascertain what the mean may be. She considers the discussion of practical wisdom in book 6 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* which, she claims, opens with “a reminder that the mean at which one should aim is ‘as the right *logos* says’ and a promise to investigate the deferred question of what the right *logos* is (*NE* VI.1, 1138b18-25); it ends by identifying the right *logos* first as ‘the one in accord with *phronesis*’ and then (in what is presumably an overstatement) as *phronesis* itself (*NE* VI.13, 1144b23-27).”<sup>109</sup> Thus, by characterizing practical wisdom as a deliberative excellence that ensures the things towards the goal are right, Aristotle has in effect described practical wisdom as that which is responsible for determining what the mean is.

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<sup>108</sup> I developed my view regarding the role of practical wisdom prior to my consideration of Moss’s arguments, but I take the view I encountered in her paper to be consistent with my understanding of the role that practical wisdom plays in ethical development.

<sup>109</sup> Moss, J. 2011: 245. Moss doesn’t translate ‘*logos*’ or ‘*phronesis*’.

When the fully virtuous person begins his deliberations, he will always start by wishing for a goal.<sup>110</sup> The agent will then employ his ability to deliberate to determine what “the right *logos*”, as Moss puts it, would be, so that he may go about achieving his goal in the right way.<sup>111</sup> If the agent starts out with a general goal of “doing as one ought”, then his deliberative faculty will make concrete what this involves – make determinate the indeterminate. “For example, it is characteristic of the generous person to have the right goal: he ‘will not neglect his possessions, wishing to assist someone through them’ (*NE* IV.1, 1120b2-3). But in order really to achieve this goal he must deliberate about how much money he should give to whom, and in what way, and so on. And getting this right, as we have seen above, is hitting the mean.”<sup>112</sup> Thus, practical wisdom is ethically significant because it allows the agent to reliably identify what realizing his goal would involve. He can now reliably focus on the course of action that constitutes an attainment of his goal.<sup>113</sup>

I concur with Moss’s analysis of the role that practical wisdom plays. I would add to this proposal that the considerations which are operative when the agent is deliberating about how to achieve the right goal are precisely the reasons that spell out why some action is the noble action – the action that realizes the goal. These considerations constitute “the right *logos*”, and serve to explain the fact that some action falls under the category “the noble”, and then “the just”, for example. So, even if the learner is in a position to grasp *that* some action is noble, it is only the practically wise agent who understands the nature of that action in the complete or full-fledged sense, because he is able to grasp “right reason”. For example, my virtuous mentor may tell me that in circumstances like these the noble action is to donate \$20 to a specific

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<sup>110</sup> This can be described in any of the following ways: (i) the mean (*EE* II.11, 1227b36-38), (ii) the noble (*NE* III.7, 1115b13-14, IV.1, 1120a23-24), (iii) the major premise of a particular practical syllogism: “Avoid all unhealthy things” (if this is what Aristotle intends at 1147a32), (iv) “the end and the best” (*NE* VI.12, 1144a31-36) (Moss, J. 2011: 246).

<sup>111</sup> The “right *logos*” can then be described in different ways to correspond with how the goal has been articulated, which includes any of the following: (i) determining the mean, (ii) identifying what is noble in the circumstances, (iii) a minor premise or chain of premises of a particular syllogism: “This is unhealthy”, (iv) “this will lead to the end and the best”, i.e. identifying the things toward the end (Moss, J. 2011: 247).

<sup>112</sup> Moss, J. 2011: 247

<sup>113</sup> This view regarding deliberation conforms to the “constituent means” view as advocated by Wiggins, McDowell, and Irwin. One notion of “things toward the end” is instrumental means, but another is “that of something whose existence counts in itself as the partial or total realization of the end. This is constituent of the end ... [In the] *constituents-to-ends* case a man deliberates about what kind of life he wants to lead, or deliberates in a determinate context about which of several possible courses of action would conform most closely to some idea he holds before himself, or deliberates about what could constitute *eudaimonia* here and now, or ... about what could count as the achievement of the not yet completely specific goal which he has already set himself in the given situation (Wiggins, D. 1980: 224-5).

charity. At this point, I grasp *that* the particular action is noble, which in my mind signifies honorable action. But it is only by means of practical wisdom that I acquire the capacity to deliberate for myself so that I may identify what the appropriate action is under these circumstances. This process will involve considerations such as, for example, the kind of charity it is, how many people are in need in this specific respect by comparison to the needs of other people, how much money I have to spend on such a cause, etc. By appropriately weighing these considerations, I ultimately make the goal of doing what one ought to do concrete by identifying for myself how much I should give. The considerations that determine this outcome constitute the nobility of the action, for by coming to understand the relevant considerations and how to weigh them appropriately, I succeed in fleshing out my superficial grasp on nobility in terms of honorable action. My ability to grasp these considerations that point to the appropriate action to be performed means that I recognize that the action is desirable for its own sake. This means that I no longer rely on guidance from my mentors or the training from past experiences, but will be able to identify the noble action in circumstances I have never come across that may be very complex. I come to behave ethically in a consistent way.

Practical wisdom is, therefore, an ethically important component to full virtue since, as Moss states, it contributes the ability to *reliably* settle on some course of action. As such, practical wisdom (1) yields deliberations to explain why some act is in accordance with right reason, and (2) makes it the case that the agent reliably acts in accordance with right reason. Moss states that “[d]eliberation cannot teach us that *eduaimonia* consists of the life of virtuous activity – only character can do that – but it can work out the whole substance of that general goal, showing at every point what counts as an achievement of it.”<sup>114</sup> On my view, the considerations that make a particular action choice worthy constitute the “substance” of the general goal, and insofar as this is the case, practical wisdom completes our understanding of the goal.

According to my view, habituation is responsible for getting the agent to latch onto nobility as a goal through honor, and practical wisdom allows the agent to identify for himself what it is that makes some action noble, so that he can select to appropriate action. In so doing, practical wisdom pins down the specifics that serve to flesh out the more general goal. Thus,

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<sup>114</sup> Moss, J. 2011: 250

my interpretation does not violate Aristotle's division of labor because by identifying which action would be an attainment of the goal through the use of practical wisdom, the agent discovers for himself what the nature of that action is, which is to achieve a deep understanding of this moral category, "the noble". I maintain the division of labor that Aristotle establishes, for during habituation the learner adopts honor as a goal which is to be in possession of a nominal conception of the noble. Practical wisdom serves to ground and fill out this goal, but does not *set* the goal. Practical wisdom is ethically significant precisely because it is responsible for providing the rational considerations that would explain why performing some particular action is the correct realization of the goal.

#### 4.2 The Science-Ethics Gap

A further reason why my view may be objectionable is based on conceiving of Aristotle's ethics as fundamentally distinct from science. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, one of the main controversies that still rages amongst Aristotelian scholars is whether Aristotle is a *particularist* or a *generalist* regarding ethics.<sup>115</sup> The particularist holds that morality does not consist in a system of moral rules and theories. What takes priority is a sensitivity to moral situations which involves the ability to pick out the morally salient features of a situation. One trains one's ability to "see" the right sorts of things, and even though one may make use of general rules as summaries of one's considerations, these rules can be discarded at any time if one deems it appropriate in that specific context, for these rules do not serve to justify one's moral judgments. If this is Aristotle's view, then ethics would be fundamentally different from science in virtue of the fact that scientific knowledge involves universals or generalizations while ethics is solely concerned with particulars knowledge (*NE* VI. 3, 1139b19-32). Consequently, one would expect the methods of inquiry to be very different as well. The generalist, on the other hand, holds that there are generalizable rules that serve to ground our moral judgments, for there are always properties that count in favor of, or against, particular actions whenever they are instantiated. This is not to say that morality is straightforwardly a matter of memorizing the general rules, for one may still think that over and above these rules one ought to develop a sensitivity to particular features of a situation. The point is that these

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<sup>115</sup> Though the literature suggests that generalist interpretations have gained more traction in recent years. See *Bridging the Gap Between Aristotle Science and Ethics*, edited by Devin Henry and Karen Margrethe Nielsen, 2015.

perceptual judgments can ultimately be seen to conform to the general rules.<sup>116</sup> If this is Aristotle's view, then ethics incorporates universal knowledge, and in virtue of this fact, one may draw certain parallels between scientific and ethical inquiry.

In light of this debate, someone may object to my view by arguing that I am not entitled to draw parallels between ethics and science because, for Aristotle, ethics is fundamentally distinct from science insofar as ethics does not incorporate generalizations but is solely perception-based. This means that there cannot be a process of inquiry in the ethical realm that is similar, or analogous, to scientific inquiry insofar as learners first arrive at a nominal account (of the noble) before acquiring a full-fledged account (of the noble) by grasping ethical generalizations that they bring to bear. I will address this concern by arguing that, based on the textual evidence at hand, one cannot decisively determine that Aristotle is a particularist, because there are grounds for thinking that he is in fact a generalist. If this is right, then my view is still a plausible option.

As a particularist, McDowell, for example, argues that habituation in Aristotle yields an advanced moral condition and that practical wisdom is nothing over and above a perceptual capacity that allows one to discern salient moral features in particular contexts. McDowell's fundamental point is this: "If the content of a correct conception of doing well is fixed by proper upbringing, that renders it superfluous to credit that role to an autonomous operation of the practical intellect".<sup>117</sup> According to McDowell, the habituation phase involves coming to see the appropriate action or emotion as worthwhile by subsuming these under the concept of the noble. He thinks of practical wisdom as "situational appreciation" where it is a state of the non-rational part of the soul rather than a separate capacity that is developed independently of the habituation process. The only additional learning that occurs is the ability for the further categorization of moral concepts, where one is trained to see things even better, rather than coming to see anything new.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Dancy, J. 1993; Irwin, T. 2000

<sup>117</sup> McDowell, J. 1996: 19

<sup>118</sup> Vasiliou also argues that practical wisdom is developed by means of habituation, and holds that habituation exhausts moral development because in ethics acquiring "the that" is also to acquire "the because". He maintains that grasping "the that" consists in a perception that has significant ethical content, where the agent recognizes the particular action as belonging to a particular ethical kind (Vasiliou, I. 1996).

Particularist views gain support from the following considerations: (1) Aristotle's explicit claims at various points that ethics is different from science, and (2) Aristotle's continual emphasis on particulars in his discussion of practical wisdom. In book 1, chapter 7 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle cautions us that "[w]e must also remember our previous remarks, so that we do not look for the same degree of exactness in all areas, but the degree that accords with a given subject matter and is proper to a given line of inquiry" (*NE* I.7, 1098a27-29). The subject matter at issue is ethics, and we find out that we cannot expect exactness in ethics because it involves action:

But let us take it as agreed in advance that every account of the actions we must do has to be stated in outline, not exactly. As we also said at the beginning, the type of accounts we demand should accord with the subject matter; and questions about actions and expediency, like questions about health, have no fixed answers. While this is the character of our general account, the account of particular cases is still more inexact. For these fall under no craft or profession; the agents themselves must consider in each case what the opportune action is, as doctors and navigators do. The account we offer, then, in our present inquiry is of this inexact sort; still, we must try to offer help. (*NE* II.2, 1104a1-12)

An account of ethics can only ever be inexact. Aristotle maintains that when it comes to the noble, the just, and political science in general he will only be able to "indicate the truth roughly and in outline; since our subject and our premises are things that hold good usually" rather than without exception (*NE* I.2, 1094b20-22). Action-guiding principles that stem from the calculative part of the soul admit of qualification because these principles concern "beings whose principles admit of being otherwise". Aristotle gives us the example whereby wealth may be beneficial to someone who is virtuous but harmful to someone who is vicious. On the other hand, theoretical knowledge (which flows from the scientific part of the soul), concerns "beings whose principles do not admit of being otherwise", in which case these principles apply without exception (*NE* VI.1, 1139a7-9). Thus, if a general account of the human good proves to be inexact, then an account of the actions of particular individuals will be even more inexact.

These remarks seem to suggest that there is a gap between ethics and science. For ethics clearly does not display the kind of exactness that science does given the nature of its subject matter. And if ethics is not precise in the way that science is, based on Aristotle's description of it in the *Posterior Analytics* II. 1-2 and 8-10, then a science of ethics seems impossible. Moreover, since the particularist argues that ethical knowledge does not involve universal knowledge in

the way that science does, it would mean that one cannot even maintain parallels between scientific and ethical inquiry. In scientific inquiry, there will be a preoccupation with universals, and in ethics there will be a focus on particulars, where the particularist specifically maintains that ethical knowledge is purely a matter of particular knowledge. Nielson articulates the difference between universals and particulars in the following way: “[u]niversals pick out the essences of the substances with which a science is concerned, and these essences belong to the kind-members of necessity. Particulars have no such connection to essences. Therefore, there cannot be a science of the particular, and hence no science of ethics”.<sup>119</sup>

Aristotle’s emphasis on particulars throughout his discussion of practical wisdom reinforces the thought that ethics is different from science, and cannot be analogous to science regarding the method of inquiry. He states that

[w]e ascribe consideration, comprehension, prudence, and understanding to the same people, and say that these have consideration, and thereby understanding, and that they are prudent and comprehending. For all these capacities are about the last things, i.e., particulars... These states are all concerned with particulars because all the things achievable in action are particular and last things. (*NE* VI.11, 1143a25-32)

When it comes to deciding how to act, we concern ourselves with particulars, and our grasp on these particulars is achieved by means of intuition: “We must, therefore, have perception of these particulars, and this perception is intuition” (*NE* VI.11, 1143b8-9). In other words, intuition is a quasi-perceptual capacity, which supports the thought that practical wisdom is in fact a matter of perceiving things in a particular way. Aristotle emphasizes the importance of experiencing particulars, for this is crucial for moral development, and he states that “we must attend to the undemonstrated remarks and beliefs of experienced and older people or of prudent people, no less than to demonstrations. For these people see correctly because experience has given them their eye” (*NE* VI.11, 1143b12-14). Again, Aristotle appears to construe practical wisdom as an exclusive preoccupation with the particulars of the situation where the agent is able to “see” things correctly. This conception of practical wisdom as correct sight appears again when Aristotle compares having sight with having practical wisdom:

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<sup>119</sup> Nielson, K.M. 2015: 30



But still we look for some further condition to be full goodness, and we expect to possess these features in another way. For these natural states belong to children and to beasts as well as to adults, but without understanding they are evidently harmful. At any rate, this much would seem to be clear: Just as a heavy body moving around unable to see suffers a heavy fall because it has no sight, so it is with virtue. A naturally well-endowed person without understanding will harm himself. (*NE* VI.13, 1144b7-13)

Natural virtue is not sufficient for having full virtue, because this would be equivalent to someone who cannot see: what is required is intuition (or understanding).<sup>120</sup>

To think of practical wisdom as a perceptual capacity that is developed through habituation and only concerned with particular knowledge, would be to reject the conception of practical wisdom that I have been advocating. On my reading, practical wisdom (as an intellectual virtue) must be taught, and by developing a capacity to reason the learner is finally able to discern the reasons or considerations that count in favor of one action over another. That is, the teaching process renders ethical generalizations that form part of the agent's deliberations regarding action. This conception of practical wisdom makes it possible to draw a parallel between ethics and science regarding the method of inquiry, for in both cases the agent arrives at generalizations or universal knowledge, though of a different kind. Thus, by maintaining that practical wisdom is acquired through teaching, I am arguing that practical wisdom is not purely a perceptual capacity that comes about through habituation alone, for teaching develops the rational part of the soul rather than the non-rational part (*NE* I.13, 1103a5 - II.1, 1103a18). If this is right, then Aristotle is *not* a particularist, and I am entitled to draw the parallels that I do between science and ethics.

I think that particularists have been too quick to dismiss the role of universals in practical wisdom. Practical wisdom may engage a quasi-perceptual capacity, namely, intuition, for it is correct to suppose that it is concerned with particulars. But to deny the relevance of universals entirely – i.e. general principles that serve to guide one in the particular circumstances at hand – is to ignore crucial passages in the Aristotelian corpus. It is true that ethics will never be exactly the same as science, given that it concerns actions and so deals with principles that admit of qualification (which is why Aristotle draws parallels between science and ethics at

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<sup>120</sup> Intuition forms part of the process of practical reasoning, for Aristotle states that when it comes to premises about action (i.e. practical reasoning), intuition will come into play regarding the “last term” (*NE* VI. 13, 1143a36-1143b5).

particular points without claiming that they are the same in every respect), but there is evidence which suggests that practical wisdom, nonetheless, involves general principles that serve to capture what the good for humans is. I am not able to develop and defend a full account of Aristotle's ethical position at this stage, but rather than aiming to provide a complete defense of the idea that he is generalist<sup>121</sup>, I would like to present three general reasons why conceiving of him as a particularist is mistaken.

First, it is undeniable that practical wisdom is an intellectual virtue which is developed by means of teaching, rather than habituation, in the way that particularists maintain:

[S]ome virtues are called virtues of thought, others virtues of character; wisdom, comprehension, and prudence are called virtues of thought, generosity and temperance virtues of character. For when we speak of someone's character we do not say that he is wise or has good comprehension, but that he is gentle or temperate. And yet, we also praise the wise person for his state, and the states that are praiseworthy are the ones we call virtue. Virtue, then, is of two sorts, virtue of thought and virtue of character. Virtue of thought arises and grows mostly from teaching; that is why it needs experience and time. Virtue of character results from habit...(*NE* I.13, 1103a5 - II.1, 1103a18)

Here Aristotle explicitly states how character virtue and practical wisdom are developed in different ways owing to their nature. It is true that Aristotle also states that "prudence is about the last thing, an object of perception", but I am not convinced that this indicates that practical wisdom is itself perceptual in nature (*NE* VI.8, 1142a27). Aristotle's claim is that practical wisdom is directed at an object of perception, but this still accommodates the thought that practical wisdom is itself a rational capacity that is applied to objects of perception. Thus, in order to go about the business of rational deliberation, one requires the appropriate content about which to deliberate, and here Aristotle is indicating that we deliberate about things we come to grasp through experience, which is why experience is so crucial to moral development. Given that practical wisdom guides action, it may seem counter-intuitive to suppose that practical wisdom is something that can be instilled by means of teaching, where learners are given lectures in a classroom setting, but I think we can make sense of this proposal in light of Aristotle's other claims.

It is not my aim to spell out the content of the lectures Aristotle envisions, for that would require a detailed consideration and discussion of various aspects of the Aristotelian corpus,

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<sup>121</sup> For recent accounts see Irwin, T. 2000 and Nielsen, K.M. 2015.

which I am not in a position to provide at the moment. For my current purposes, I will merely present a brief proposal of what these lectures may involve, which is consistent with Aristotle's other remarks and my position. What we are told is that those who have been properly brought up, i.e. have developed the character virtues, will be suitable for lectures that concern the noble and political science (*NE* I.4, 1095b5-9). In the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle states that

[a]ll teaching and all intellectual learning come about from already existing knowledge. This is evident if we consider it in every case; for the mathematical sciences are acquired in this fashion, and so is each of the other arts. And similarly too with arguments – both deductive and inductive arguments proceed in this way; for both produce their teaching through what we are already aware of, the former getting their premisses as from men who grasp them, the latter proving the universal through the particular's being clear. (And rhetorical arguments too persuade in the same way; for they do so either through examples, which is induction, or through enthymemes, which is deduction.) (*Post. An.* I. 1, 71a1-11)

Here Aristotle states that teaching is based on knowledge we already have. Inductive arguments, for example, teach insofar as the universal is proved based on an initial grasp of particulars. In other words, teaching concerns itself with something other than that which we initially grasp, and in ethics this is universal knowledge because what we are initially exposed to are particulars through habituation. If I am correct in thinking that the teaching phase is the point at which learners will develop their reason (which gives rise to practical wisdom), then we can reconcile this with practical wisdom's preoccupation with particulars (which become familiar to us through experience) in the following way: while the process of habituation gives learners the experience they need in order to become familiar with an array of particulars, this knowledge will only form part of the state of practical wisdom once they have been taught principles of reasoning that govern these particulars. So while experience furnishes the learner with that which they will be reasoning about – the content of their deliberations – it is only teaching that can give these learners the ability to structure a process of deliberation that will allow them to achieve their goal. For example, this structuring could be based on normative generalizations for how various moral features of the situation should be weighed. Aristotle discusses cases of moral conflict, and provides some guidance regarding resolutions to these scenarios (*NE* IX.2, 1165a5-12).

Another reason to doubt that Aristotle is a particularist is the fact that he continually mentions the role of the laws at the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics* where he specifically discusses moral education. In book X, chapter 9 he states that

[i]t is difficult, however, for someone to be trained correctly for virtue from his youth if he has not been brought up under correct laws; for the many, especially the young, do not find it pleasant to live in a temperate and resistant way. That is why laws must prescribe their upbringing and practices; for they will not find these things painful when they get used to them. (*NE X.9*, 1179b33-37)

The claim is that the young are raised correctly under the guidance of excellent laws. The young do not start off finding the virtuous life pleasant, which is why they must be instructed according to excellent laws. As such, law becomes the tool of education:

Now a father's instructions lack this power to prevail and compel; and so in general do the instructions of an individual man, unless he is a king or someone like that. Law, however, has the power that compels; and law is reason that proceeds from a sort of prudence and understanding. (*NE X.9*, 1180a19-22)

Aristotle tells us that children are to be educated through laws because laws have the power to compel. We are then given a definition of law as “reason that proceeds from a sort of prudence and understanding”. In other words, the proper instruction of children stems from excellent law, which is reason that flows from prudence and understanding (or intuition). Laws are generalizations, or general truths regarding how one ought to act, and Aristotle's explicit definition of law as reason which captures what practical wisdom and intuition recommend, clearly indicates that practical wisdom is not simply a perceptual capacity. If practical wisdom is not purely a function of the non-rational part of the soul (through the use of the learner's perceptual capacities alone), but also involves generalizations that are arrived at through the use of the calculative part of the soul, then Aristotle cannot be a particularist, because particularists do not invoke universal knowledge.

Moss's response to this point would be to say that all it shows is that those who teach need to grasp universals. That is, only politicians require knowledge of universals, but individuals only require knowledge of particulars to be happy. In opposition to Moss's understanding of practical wisdom, I would argue that there is evidence that we cannot draw a clear division between her version of architectonic practical wisdom and individual practical wisdom in light of Aristotle's emphasis on education through the community. Consider the following passage:

It is best, then, if the community attends to upbringing, and attends correctly. But if the community neglects it, it seems fitting for each individual to promote the virtue of his children and his friends – to be able to do it, or at least to decide to do it. From what we have said, however, it seems he will be better able to do it if he acquires legislative science. For, clearly, attention by the community works through laws, and decent attention works through excellent laws; and whether the laws are written or unwritten, for the education of one or of the many, seems unimportant, as it is in music, gymnastics, and other practices. For just as in a city the provisions of law and the types of character found in that city have influence, similarly a father’s words and habits have influence, and all the more because of kinship and because of the benefits he does; for his children are already fond of him and naturally ready to obey. (*NE* X.9, 1180a30-1180b7)

Clearly there is no sharp division between the “teachers” and the “citizens” in a society. Every citizen is liable to become a teacher – even if it is only to teach his own children – which means that all citizens require a grasp on excellent laws because this is how children are to be educated. And this is to understand general principles that stem from practical wisdom, where these rules succeed in capturing what reason would recommend. Each man must be prepared to guide his children and his friends, something which requires knowledge of excellent law.

It may also be argued that Aristotle’s references to laws does not suffice to show that universal knowledge is involved in practical wisdom, because these laws serve to hone our particularist moral sensitivities rather than grounding our moral judgments. In other words, laws play a functional rather than a justificatory role in ethics. However, I think the text reveals the fact that, according to Aristotle, these generalizations justify our moral judgments even in cases where they may be defeated by further considerations. We see these generalizations being employed when Aristotle specifically discusses cases of moral conflict. In book IX, chapter 2 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he states that “we should, generally speaking, return what we owe. But if making a gift to B outweighs returning the money to A by being nobler or more necessary, we should incline to making the gift to B instead” (*NE* IX.2, 1165a2-5). In other words, there is a generalizable rule at play, even though there may be times when other considerations outweigh this principle due to the complexity of moral scenarios. The rules are open to qualification in light of contextual considerations, but the further considerations presumably themselves capture another generalizable principle. Aristotle articulates the further considerations that might outweigh the principle that we should return what we owe as follows:

For sometimes even a return of a previous favor is not fair but an excessive demand, whenever the original giver knows he is benefiting an excellent person, but the recipient would be returning the benefit to someone he thinks is vicious. For sometimes you should not even lend in return to someone who has lent to you. For he expected repayment when he lent to a decent person, whereas you have no hope of it from a bad person. If that is really so, then, the demand for reciprocity is not fair... (*NE IX.2*, 1165a5-12).

Here the consideration can also be captured as a general principle that you do not bear an obligation to another party if you have good reason to believe that there is no genuine reciprocity between you and that party owing to his character. In other words, the first principle according to which you should return what you owe is defeated if you have reason to believe that the other person is vicious and will not honor the principle of reciprocity. To maintain that generalizations do not hold in *all* cases is not equivalent to claiming that these rules are then entirely discarded, and do not serve to ground our moral judgments. Developing a sensitivity to the context of the moral situation is crucial, even if one knows these general rules, because this sensitivity is the mechanism that alerts one to the fact that *this* general rule may be defeated in *this* case by other considerations that are captured by other general rules. This all serves to undermine the thought that Aristotle is a particularist, and opens up space for my interpretation of practical wisdom and how we acquire it.

Finally, as I argued in the previous section, there are persuasive textual grounds for supposing that Aristotle views universal knowledge as part of practical wisdom in the case of the individual. The passages that Moss cites as evidence for the thought that Aristotle considers particular knowledge to be all that is required for individual practical wisdom receive a different interpretation if they are read in a more nuanced way. The agent who is truly wise is someone who has both practical and universal knowledge, but if this cannot be achieved, then it would be better to grasp the particular rather than the universal because action is concerned with particulars (*NE VI.7*, 1141b17-24). Grasping the particular makes the agent *better* at hitting the mark, but he can't reliably do so until he has acquired the universal. The passage at *NE I.4*, 1095a32-1095b13, which indicates that Aristotle does not entirely abandon the methodology he employs in the *Posterior Analytics* when he investigates ethics, also supports my treatment of the ethical development of the learner.

### 4.3 Does Practical Wisdom Contribute Something New?

Even if one agrees that practical wisdom involves universal knowledge, one might still question the ethical role that it plays. As we have seen, McDowell does not think that practical wisdom serves to contribute new and distinct knowledge precisely because he thinks that practical wisdom is instilled by means of habituation and is purely perceptual in nature. If there is any further learning that occurs, it only amounts to “seeing things better” rather than coming to grasp something new about a moral scenario. Burnyeat also appears to downplay the contribution of practical wisdom, but in his case this does not seem to be because he views practical wisdom as purely perceptual in nature. He regards practical wisdom as that which is responsible for “the final correcting and perfecting of your perception of ‘the that’”, because he views habituation as a process whereby you have already come to know for yourself which actions are noble so that you are able to identify these actions on your own, and you take pleasure in the nobility of the action.<sup>122</sup> Given this substantive view of habituation, Burnyeat leaves little room for practical wisdom to contribute to the moral development of the learner. Nonetheless, one may argue that even though the addition of practical wisdom is not particularly robust insofar as it contributes something new and substantive in the way that I have claimed, it is still a crucial component for complete virtue and is thus just as important as the habituation phase. Why should we think that acquiring practical wisdom involves new and distinctive knowledge?

Burnyeat appears to subscribe to the thought that practical wisdom is contributing “an understanding of ‘the because’”, where (at the beginning of his paper) he takes “the because” to explain and justify “the that”.<sup>123</sup> But once he explicates his understanding of the kind of robust moral development which “the that” entails, the contribution that practical wisdom makes appears diminished. He maintains that possession of “the that” does not involve an understanding of “the because”, but I argue in chapter 2 that his characterization of “the that” makes it difficult to grasp the sense in which the agent does not have complete moral knowledge, for the agent can identify the noble for himself and takes pleasure in the nobility of the action. Nonetheless, perhaps it is Burnyeat’s intention to maintain that practical wisdom is contributing a kind of explanation or justification that allows the learner to be even better

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<sup>122</sup> Burnyeat, M. 1980: 74

<sup>123</sup> Burnyeat, M. 1980: 71

at identifying the noble, and that this is the only role such explanations serve to play in the realm of ethics. The most we are offered by way of an account of what practical wisdom contributes is articulated as follows:

This casts some light on what Aristotle takes himself to be doing in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and on why he asks for a good upbringing as a condition for intelligent study of the subject. If he is setting out “the *because*” of virtuous actions, he is explaining what makes them noble, just, courageous, and so on, and how they fit into a scheme of the good life, not why they should be pursued at all. He is addressing someone who already wants and enjoys virtuous action and needs to see this aspect of his life in deeper perspective. He is not attempting the task so many moralists have undertaken of recommending virtue even to those who despise it: his lectures are not sermons, not even protreptic argument, urging the wicked to mend their ways. From 10.9 it is clear that he did not think that sort of thing to be of much use; some, perhaps most, people’s basic desires are already so corrupted that no amount of argument will bring them to see that virtue is desirable in and of itself (cf. 3.5. 1114a19-21). Rather, he is giving a course in practical thinking to enable someone who already wants to be virtuous to understand better what he should do and why. Such understanding, as Aristotle conceives it, is more than merely cognitive. Since it is the articulation of a mature scheme of values under the heading of the good, it will itself provide new and more reflective motivation of virtuous conduct.<sup>124</sup>

On Burnyeat’s reading, the habituated learner is someone who “already wants and enjoys virtuous action”, and this learner is able to identify noble actions for himself. He then claims that “the *because*” will explain what makes actions noble and how they “fit into a scheme of the good life”. Yet, since the agent can already identify noble actions for himself, and even takes pleasure in the nobility of these actions, Burnyeat is forced to characterize the contribution of practical wisdom as a matter of coming to see one’s life in “deeper perspective”, rather than enabling the learner to do something he could not do before, namely, identify noble actions for himself so that he can act reliably. Burnyeat goes on to claim that practical wisdom allows the learner to “understand better what he should do and why”, which indicates that the learner already grasps what he should do, given that he can identify noble actions for himself, and that practical wisdom will simply make this understanding more reflective than it was before.

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<sup>124</sup> Burnyeat, M. 1980: 81



The reason why I think that this ability to identify the noble must in some sense amount to grasping why the action ought to be done (which is what Burnyeat aims to deny), is because Burnyeat specifically claims that the habituated learner does not simply perform the noble action because he has been told to perform it, and he believes that he is being told to perform a noble action. Rather, Burnyeat takes the learner to have grasped the intrinsic value of the action, and it is unclear to me how one could genuinely grasp the intrinsic value of something, such that one can identify its value for oneself rather than merely being told that it has this value, unless one understands the sense in which it possesses this value rather than mere instrumental value, for example. In other words, I take it that one must understand something about the nature of that thing to be able to judge *for oneself* that it holds one kind of value rather than another. Burnyeat explicitly characterizes the habituated learner as someone who understands and appreciates the value that noble actions possess, which is precisely what makes them enjoyable, and it is unclear to me how the learner can come to appreciate these actions in this way without grasping the considerations that explain the nobility of that particular action.<sup>125</sup> In fact, Burnyeat appears to concede that “the because” features during habituation when he states that “moral advice will come to him [young man] in fairly general terms; a spot of dialectic may be needed to bring home to the young man the limitations and imprecision of what he has learned.”<sup>126</sup> In light of this concern, it now becomes unclear what Burnyeat has in mind regarding the contribution that practical wisdom is supposed to make to moral development. He states that the understanding at issue is an “articulation of a mature scheme of values under the heading of the good”, and that this will then provide new and more reflective motivation for the agent’s actions. This appears to cast practical wisdom as the ability to articulate with the rational part of the soul that which is in place already through the process of habituation, and without examples or an elaboration of this point in more detail, it remains vague in what sense practical wisdom does genuinely contribute new and distinctive moral knowledge.

I think an interpretation of this kind fails to do justice to the parallels to be drawn between Aristotle’s science and ethics. Aristotle compares ethics to science both when he considers the methodology to be adopted regarding knowledge acquisition in the *that/because* passage –

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<sup>125</sup> Burnyeat, M. 1980: 77-78

<sup>126</sup> Burnyeat, M. 1980: 72

which Burnyeat uses as a guiding passage for his paper as a whole – and when he discusses how intuition features in both scientific and practical reasoning (*NE* VI.11, 1143a37-1143b10; I.4, 1095a31-1095b13). If we take these comparisons seriously in the way that I have done in chapter 3 – by coming to grips with what “the because” contributes – then I think there is good reason to believe that practical wisdom’s contribution is both robust and distinctive by enabling the learner to do something he was not capable of before, namely, identifying noble actions for himself in virtue of “working out” why that action is choice worthy (*NE* III. 3, 1112b1-8).

If we consider the *that/because* passage in terms of its connections to the *Posterior Analytics*, which we ought to, given that Aristotle appeals to the same terminology by referring to “the that” which is linked to that which is familiar to us, and “the because” which is linked to that which is familiar without qualification, then it is evident that acquiring “the because” amounts to grasping new knowledge. In the case of the phenomenon of thunder, for example, one comes to grasp the cause of this phenomenon, which is fire being extinguished in the clouds. Armed with this knowledge, the scientist will now be able to identify genuine cases of thunder rather than being deceived by phenomenologically similar cases. For example, if the scientist discovers that what makes gold the thing that it is, is the fact that it is made of “stuff” that has atomic number 79, this scientist will no longer be deceived by fool’s gold (i.e. gold that is phenomenologically identical but which is not atomic number 79), because he knows how to identify genuine gold. In the same way, the habituated learner will stop making mistakes in action because if he encounters a moral scenario that is complex he will no longer need to rely on what he has been told and been trained to do through habituation, but will (through the development of his practical reason) be in a position to work out what the noble action is by grasping the considerations in favor of that action via deliberation. The plausibility of this picture does depend on finding the connections between Aristotle’s ethics and science convincing, but these connections have been explored in ever more detail in recent years, such that many scholars have found definite parallels that have proved illuminating.<sup>127</sup> My interpretation has the virtue of clearly identifying the roles that both habituation and teaching play in moral development, while the accounts that I have considered throughout the course

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<sup>127</sup> See, for example, *Bridging the Gap Between Aristotle’s Science and Ethics*, edited by Nielson, K.M. and Henry, D.M. (2015).

of this thesis have predominantly failed to make the role and nature of the teaching component of moral education both apparent and convincing.

In this chapter I have aimed to respond to three central objections to my view. In response to the “Virtue Makes the Goal Right” objection, I maintain that my reading does not violate the division of labor that Aristotle establishes, for character virtue allows the learner to grasp the right goal insofar as he acquires a nominal conception of the noble. Practical wisdom then makes the means to the goal right by identifying why certain actions count as noble through reason, which serves to deepen the learner’s understanding of this category of action by making it concrete in a way that it wasn’t before. In response to the “Science-Ethics Gap” objection, which casts doubt on my conception of practical wisdom (on the grounds that it is not purely a perceptual capacity that is developed through habituation but involves universal knowledge by engaging the intellect), I maintain that particularism is undermined by (1) the fact that practical wisdom is developed through teaching; (2) Aristotle’s remarks regarding moral education and the law; (3) other passages throughout the Aristotelian corpus where he clearly makes room for universals as part of individual ethical knowledge. Finally, in response to the objection that practical wisdom does not contribute anything new, I consider the possibility that practical wisdom’s contribution is more minimal, but no less important, than I have claimed. Given Aristotle’s methodological approach in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which is comparable to his approach in the *Posterior Analytics* based on the text, I argue that practical wisdom’s contribution is both robust and distinctive, and this approach clearly explains the specific role that teaching serves to play in moral development while other interpretations have failed to do so.

## Conclusion

The central concern of this project has been to arrive at an understanding of the moral development that Aristotle thinks occurs during the process of habituation. My approach to this question has been guided by the literature on this topic, where scholars have considered the issue from the perspective of resolving the continuity problem. That is, how can a learner progress from acting in accordance with virtue to acting virtuously, if these appear to be acts that differ in kind? One way of resolving this concern is to maintain that even though habituation is concerned with training the learner to perform acts that are in accordance with virtue, the learner nonetheless engages his perceptive and critical abilities so that he can eventually progress towards acting virtuously. Those who have argued according to this “intellectualist” approach claim that habituation develops critical and discriminatory capacities through the engagement of the rational part of the soul, and maintain that a reading of this kind better explains how the learner is able to progress from habituation towards complete virtue. Another approach, however, is to make a case for the thought that there is a transitional step between lacking virtue and acquiring complete virtue that habituation is responsible for, where this intermediate moral condition does not involve the discriminatory capacities that engage the rational part of the soul. This view falls under mechanical theories of habituation where training is aimed at inculcating a set of appropriate responses in the absence of the intellectual motivations that characterize a virtuous agent’s actions. I have ultimately argued that a neo-mechanical account of habituation is more plausible in light of textual evidence that has often been treated too briefly and lightly.

The starting point of my path towards the neo-mechanical account of habituation was to set out the ethical framework and psychological theory that Aristotle argues for in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle envisions a specific understanding of what virtue involves based on his conception of the nature of the soul. In brief, given that the soul consists in both a rational and non-rational component (where the non-rational part is further divided into the appetitive and spirited part), complete virtue will involve the training and development of both these aspects of the soul. Aristotle argues that each part of the soul is developed differently, for the non-rational part that concerns itself with pleasures and pains of a specific sort can only be

moulded by means of habituation which consists in the repetition of specific activities. The rational part of the soul, on the other hand, and more specifically, the calculative aspect of reason which governs action, can only be developed through teaching which involves verbal instruction in a classroom setting. Given this broad division of labor, there remain a myriad of details regarding the nature of these processes of development, the moral development that they instill, as well as the interaction between the rational and non-rational part of the soul that constitutes complete virtue. In Chapter 1, I provided an outline of specific debates regarding these issues that continue to rage on, and throughout the course of my project I presented a treatment of some of these debates to the extent that they relate to the nature of habituation.

Once I introduced the perspective from which most current accounts of habituation have viewed this topic, namely, the resolution of the continuity problem, I turned to a presentation and assessment of the most prominent interpretations that have come to dominate the literature. Burnyeat's account is intellectualist in nature, and ultimately makes the point that habituation involves a shift from external incentives towards the proper internal motivations. He argues that the habituated learner achieves a robust moral condition where the learner is able to identify noble actions for himself, and also takes pleasure in the nobility of his actions. If the first condition of an adequate account of habituation is that it must resolve the continuity problem, which I accept, then my objections to Burnyeat's position lead me to articulate a second condition that I think a satisfactory account of habituation must meet. The robust moral development that Burnyeat points to establishes greater continuity between the stage of acting in accordance with virtue to acting virtuously, but an account of this kind, I argued, fails to articulate the moral development that teaching contributes. Aristotle considers the development of practical wisdom through teaching to be integral to the completion of moral development, but if Burnyeat's account is right, then it no longer remains clear precisely what teaching enables the learner to do, morally speaking, that he can't do already.

My criticism of Burnyeat's account led me to Hitz's intellectualist approach, which differs insofar as she rejects the overarching model that moral development consists in a movement from taking an interest in external incentives towards developing the proper internal motivations, so that the agent values particular actions for their own sake rather than doing them for the sake of some external reward that has nothing to do with the nobility of that action. Hitz argues that Aristotle considers this sort of education to be deficient, and rather

envisions a form of education that instills the proper internal motivations right from the beginning, not via external incentives. Her evidence for this interpretation stems from Aristotle's comments about the appropriate form education should take in the *Politics* where he focuses on musical education. In her mind, musical education succeeds in cultivating the proper internal motivations from the moment education begins. Her account agrees with Burnyeat's insofar as she also considers habituation to be responsible for enabling the learner to identify noble actions for himself and to take pleasure in the nobility of those actions. She simply thinks that this training should not occur via the process of external incentives. My criticism of Hitz focused on her claim that musical education instills the proper motivations right from the start, as well as her treatment of musical education as exhaustive of what Aristotle has in mind for the process of habituation and moral education in general. I ultimately argued that Hitz's account does not fulfill either of the criteria that I establish at the end of my discussion of Burnyeat's account, namely, (1) resolving the continuity problem; and (2) accommodating the teaching phase of moral education.

The final account I assessed is offered by Jimenez, and she proposes an alternative interpretation where habituation is responsible for a certain amount of moral development but not the robust development suggested by intellectualist accounts. Instead, she maintains that the continuity problem can be resolved if habituation succeeds in instilling the appropriate end of action, namely, the noble, so that habituated learners often, but not always, act for the sake of this end. For if the habituated learner has at least latched onto the appropriate end of action, even if he does not consistently act for the sake of this end, then the repetition of actions where he does act for the sake of the noble will ultimately succeed in cultivating the proper internal motivations. That is, if the habituated learner can be shown to take the noble as his end more often than not, then he is no longer performing a different kind of act, but one that involves the motivations of acting virtuously, and these motivations will eventually become grounded through repetition, as well as, I ultimately suggest, teaching. Jimenez argues that there is evidence which indicates that habituation serves to instill this interest in the noble as an end by considering Aristotle's description of civic bravery where the civic soldier is said to act due to a desire for honor and a fear of shame. She claims that while this would not classify as acting for the noble *simpliciter*, it does convey acting for the noble in a qualified sense.

Jimenez's account is plausible insofar as she resolves the continuity problem by casting the habituated learner as someone who has achieved an intermediate step in moral development by taking the noble as his end for the most part. While she does not explain the role that teaching serves to play in moral development, this is not the central aim of her paper, which focuses on an account of habituation that resolves the continuity problem. I concluded that her overarching approach is persuasive and promising, but lacking in detail. Why, for example, should we take an interest in honor to be the same as taking an interest in the noble albeit in a qualified sense? Surely such an argument is only convincing once one has established a connection between honor and the noble? Based on Jimenez's strategy, I proceeded to a development my own account of habituation in Chapter 3.

My argument initially aimed at establishing the fact that the virtuous agent has acquired a full-fledged conception of the noble through the agent's capacity to reason. Since acting virtuously involves decision, which is the culmination of a process of deliberation, the agent can only identify which action is in accordance with the mean, and so noble, through the guidance of reason. As such, reason contributes to the virtuous agent's conception of the noble. Furthermore, the habituated learner is someone who cannot reason well yet, precisely because it is teaching which develops the agent's reason, and this means that habituation does not serve to complete the agent's conception of the noble. So, if the habituated learner lacks a full-fledged conception of the noble, then what is the moral development that occurs during this process? My answer was that habituation focuses on cultivating appropriate behavior and feeling, where the pleasures and pains at issue at this stage are those related to emotions such as fear and anger. The habituated learner acts as he does because he is guided by his parents and the community, and he comes to believe what he is being told: that certain actions under particular circumstances, are noble. But, since his understanding of the noble is limited insofar as he cannot reason well at this stage, he comes to have a conception of the noble with different content that is more superficial. My evidence for this claim stemmed from the connections I drew between Aristotle's ethics and science, where Aristotle claims in the *Posterior Analytics* that during scientific inquiry the agent will initially develop a nominal account of the natural kind in question, which, following Charles' interpretation, is a preliminary account of the phenomenon that involves different content. In the case of ethics, I maintained

that there is equally a nominal account of the noble at work, and I provided the content of this account by arguing for a connection between honor and the noble.

I argued for the claim that the content of the nominal conception of the noble which the habituated learner initially latches onto is “honorable action” based on the connection that Aristotle establishes between honor and the noble. Honor is (1) only sought from those with ethical knowledge, (2) must be granted publicly in front of those who know the person, and (3) is granted based on the agent’s virtuous conduct. As such, what makes an action honorable is that action’s noble nature, which means that honor is a necessary feature of the noble. In this way, taking an interest in honor serves as a springboard to the noble, because by latching onto honor one has in effect latched onto noble actions, the repetition of which (along with teaching) facilitates the acquisition of a full-fledged conception of the noble. The habituated learner therefore comes to view particular actions under the description of “the noble” which he understands, at this point, as “honorable action”. In order to arrive at a full-fledged conception of the noble, which requires knowledge of the considerations that count in favor of that specific action over others, the habituated learner will need to develop further, and this is brought about through teaching which cultivates practical wisdom. On my reading, identifying the noble action is achieved through reason because it is by means of deliberating well that the agent is able to identify the mean in action, which is the way in which he isolates the noble action. And once the agent grasps the considerations that make one action preferable over another, he will have an explanation of why that action is worthy for its own sake, which is to understand what makes it an honorable action. In this way, the learner progresses from grasping “the that” (*to hoti*), insofar as he knows which actions to perform through guidance, towards grasping “the because” (*to dioti*), which explains why those actions ought to be performed. This further development endows the agent with a new capacity that enables him to identify noble actions for himself. Furthermore, since Aristotle thinks that a perfect intellectual or perceptive activity is completed by pleasure, and, in this case, the perfect activity is that of practical reason, a pleasure in the noble will arise so that the agent comes to desire the noble.

I defended the superiority of my account by explaining how it maintains Aristotle’s division of labor whereby character virtue is cultivated through habituation, while intellectual virtues like practical wisdom are developed through teaching. Just because habituation does not



engage the rational part of the soul in the way that intellectualists have claimed, does not mean that this phase of education needs to be viewed as non-cognitive. As Moss point out, the learner is able to develop during this phase precisely because he is able to exercise his perceptive and imaginative capacities (rather than his intellectual judgement), which facilitates moral development up to a particular point. In order to progress further, the learner will have to develop his intellect through teaching, and this will endow him with further moral capacities. I claimed that my approach ought to be preferred because it fulfills both the criteria I established in Chapter 2 regarding an adequate account of habituation. First, if the habituated learner comes to take an interest in the noble by developing a nominal conception of the noble (to be understood in terms of “honorable action”), then he has been trained to act for the sake of the noble most of the time. An orientation towards the proper end through the development of a desire for honor serves the purpose of enabling the learner to latch onto right action, and if the learner repeatedly perform these actions and is taught, he will eventually come to appreciate why these actions ought to be desired for their own sake once his practical reason has been developed. Thus, one can now explain how the learner is able to move from acting in accordance with virtue to acting virtuously insofar as there is an intermediate point of development that consists in coming to taking an interest in honor, which is to grasp a nominal conception of the noble. In this way, the continuity problem is resolved in a non-mysterious way.

Secondly, with this picture in place, I have succeeded in clarifying the role that teaching plays in moral development, where it is both substantive and significant. On my reading, lectures that develop principles of reasoning and clarify normative considerations, enable the learner to identify noble actions for himself in virtue of his capacity to grasp the considerations that count in favor of one action over another. Once the learner understands why some action is noble, he will come to value that action for its own sake, as opposed to valuing it insofar as he takes it to be an honorable action. This serves to ground the nominal conception of the noble that he possesses already, so that he acquires a full-fledged conception of the noble. This is morally significant, since the completion of the agent’s moral motivations will cause him to reliably act in accordance with the mean. Furthermore, the completion of the perfect activity of practical reasoning will give rise to a pleasure in the nobility of the act, which means that

the agent not only acts in accordance with the mean, but *wants* to act in accordance with the mean.

In Chapter 4, I considered possible objections to this neo-mechanical view of habituation in Aristotle. First, my account may be thought to violate Aristotle's division of labor because he states that virtue makes the goal right, while practical wisdom makes the means to the goal right. So, if my claim is that practical wisdom is responsible for providing the means of understanding the noble, then it may seem as if I am committed to the thought that practical wisdom is supplying the end, rather than the means to the end. However, this would be to neglect an important aspect of my account. On my reading, virtue does set the goal insofar as habituation is responsible for the learner's orientation towards the noble, which is the appropriate goal of action. The one qualification I make is to argue that the habituated learner's conception of this end is only partially developed because he only grasps "the that" at this point and not "the because". In other words, the habituated learner has only acquired a superficial conception of the noble that is cashed out in terms of "honorable action", but once his reason is developed, this conception will be completed so that his understanding of the noble is fully grounded. His capacity to identify noble actions for himself by grasping the considerations that count in favor of one action over another serve to make the goal concrete and tangible in a way that it wasn't before he had acquired practical wisdom. Thus, practical wisdom does not *set* the end, but rather makes the end "determinate", as Moss puts it, in a way that it wasn't before.

The second objection concerns the debate regarding Aristotle's overarching approach to ethics, where scholars disagree about whether he should be viewed as a *particularist* or a *generalist*. Particularists maintain that Aristotle does not think that ethics can be captured by a set of rules, but rather that ethical ability comes down to the agent's capacity to identify the salient moral features in any context, where this capacity is perceptual in nature. That is, the agent is never beholden to some rule that cannot be violated, since different contexts may demand actions that have not been spelled out by any rule. By contrast, the generalist argues that Aristotle envisions a set of generalizations that ultimately serve to justify our moral judgements. So, even though context makes a difference regarding what one should do, it is not the case that what one does is not ultimately grounded in moral generalizations or rules of conduct. If Aristotle is a particularist, then it isn't plausible to draw connections between

scientific inquiry and ethical inquiry in the way that I have done, because practical wisdom does not come down to discovering and articulating generalizations in the way that scientific inquiry does. That is, ethical inquiry is wholly different from scientific inquiry, so these methodologies cannot be compared. To meet this objection, I undermined the textual evidence that appears to conclusively indicate that Aristotle is a particularist, for without this evidence the particularist lacks a firm basis from which to argue his case. If this criticism is warranted, then my reading once again becomes plausible, especially in light of the passages that indicate a connection between Aristotle's science and ethics.

Finally, my conception of practical wisdom may also be questioned on the grounds that significance may not amount to robustness. That is, just because Aristotle takes practical wisdom to be a significant moral component, does not mean that he entertains a robust process of developing it, like teaching. I address this concern by clarifying why an intellectualist account like Burnyeat's obscures the role of practical wisdom precisely because he does not take it to involve anything robust insofar as practical wisdom contributes something new, but rather claims that it hones what has been instilled already. My depiction of practical wisdom is also supported by the text if we take the connections between science and ethics seriously, as we should, because this serves to clarify the nature and role of practical wisdom in a way that other accounts do not.

The upshot of this interpretation going forward is two-fold: (1) it provides justification for a shift in research, where scholars ought to turn their attention towards a thorough treatment of how practical wisdom is developed, which has largely been neglected up to this point due to a preoccupation with intellectualist readings of habituation; and (2) with this understanding of habituation in place, we now grasp the nature of the moral condition to be aimed at during habituation, which offers guidance regarding this process of education. Now that we can see that practical wisdom is developed through teaching, and that what it contributes is the ability to grasp the considerations that count in favor of one action over another, researchers need to consider what the content of the lectures that Aristotle mentions will be. What are the principles of reasoning and general laws that learners must be versed in so that they can act ethically? Might we discover an indication of what this could involve in the *Politics*, or elsewhere in the Aristotelian corpus? If my interpretation is right, then there is important work to be done regarding the intellectual aspect of moral education.

The second contribution of my project is to direct scholars towards the relevant processes required for instilling a particular moral condition, where the learner is trained in such a way that he comes to care about what others think of him, rather than simply having an interest in pursuing pleasure for himself. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle states that children initially learn through imitation, and Hitz's discussion in Chapter 2 also reveals that Aristotle considers musical education to be essential for character development. Thus, if we consider how this theory of moral education can be applied to contemporary educational concerns, we already have an idea of what to emphasize. To begin with, in the Aristotelian context, a development of the learner's desire for honor can be explained by considering the relationship that is created between a learner and his tutor, parent, mentor, and/or community (i.e. the people he is likely to imitate). I suspect that the learner needs to develop a caring, trusting relationship with the specific person educating him to start caring about the opinion that his educator has of him. In addition, the learner must come to admire this role model so that he begins to take an interest in the role model's opinion of his actions and his person precisely because he himself thinks well of the role model. If the learner begins to take an interest in being praised by the role model for doing well, then an interest in praise will eventually be extended so that the learner starts caring what the community and the state at large thinks of him. That is, the people who honor the role model. This can be applied to the contemporary educational setting by integrating a "role model program" that facilitates contact with models to be imitated by learners. In addition, musical education can be integrated by focusing more on story-telling, literature, and musical tales at the nursery and primary school level, so that learners are consistently exposed to representations of proper character.

Further research needs to be pursued to consider the details and complexities of both an exploration of the intellectual component of moral development, as well as the ways in which this theory of moral education can then be applied to current educational challenges. The contribution of my project has been to provide plausible grounds for shifting the focus of research to these areas so that ultimately Aristotle's contribution can be transformed into a practical program aimed at addressing the challenges faced by educators today.

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Abbreviations:

*NE* – *Nicomachean Ethics*

*EE* – *Eudemian Ethics*

*Rhet.* – *Rhetoric*

*Pol.* – *Politics*

*Post. An.* – *Posterior Analytics*

*De. An.* – *De Anima*

*Met.* – *Metaphysics*

*Phys.* – *Physics*

*Rep.* – *Republic*

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**University of the Witwatersrand (2010-2011): M.A. in Philosophy**

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