Aristotle on Practical Rationality: Deliberation, Preference-Ranking, and the Imperfect Decision-Making of Women

by

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Dedication

To the memories of my great-grandparents, my first teachers.

Acknowledgements

In my birthplace half a planet away, most people, if they are like the ones I remember from childhood, would have a nebulous idea of philosophy and likely no recognition of the name "Plato" or "Aristotle". The life events that have led me to philosophy and, now, to the completion of a dissertation on ancient Greek philosophy under the guidance of my tremendous advisor, Victor Caston, were nothing short of the work of good fortune. I probably do not deserve such good fortune. At any rate, I am unable to give a coherent explanation for my good luck or a narrative of how I arrived at this unlikely but profoundly rewarding path. What I propose to do, instead, is to offer my gratitude to all the individuals who have aided in making this journey possible, in making this dissertation better—and those without whom this dissertation would probably be better, but life would be so much worse.

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List of Abbreviations

Aristotle

APo. = *Analytica Posteriora* (*Posterior Analytics*)

APr. = *Analytica Priora* (*Prior Analytics*)

DA = de Anima (On the Soul)

DI = de Interpretatione (On Interpretation)

EE = Ethica Eudemia (Eudemian Ethics)

EN = Ethica Nicomachea (Nicomachean Ethics)

GA = de Generatione Animalium (Generation of Animals)

HA = Historia Animalium (History of Animals)

MA = de Motu Animalium (On the Movement of Animals)

Mem. = de Memoria (On Memory)

MM = Magna Moralia (Great Ethics)

Met. = Metaphysica (Metaphysics)

PA = de Partibus Animalium (On the Parts of Animals)

Phys. = Physica (Physics)

Pol. = Politica (Politics)

Rhet. = Rhetorica (Rhetoric)

Sens. = de Sensu (On the Senses)

Top. = Topica (Topics)

Hume

T = *A Treatise of Human Nature*

Plato

Apol. = *Apologia* (*The Apology*)

Rep. = Res Publica (The Republic)

Abstract

We have it on the authority of Aristotle that “reason (*nous*) is the best thing in us” (*EN* X.7, 1177a20). This idealization of reason permeates his account of *eudaimonia*, a term commonly translated as ‘happiness’, which Aristotle identifies with living and doing well (*EN* I.4, 1095a18-20). In harmony with a certain intellectualism peculiar to the mainstream of ancient philosophical accounts of *eudaimonia*, Aristotle holds that living well requires the unique practical application of rationality of which only humans are capable (*EN* I.7, 1098a13-15/*EE* I.7, 1217a25-27). This dissertation investigates Aristotle’s substantive view on the practical application of reason by examining how, according to him, human agents use reason to decide what to do, what kind of person to be, and indeed how to live well.

A distinctively human way of making decisions is deliberation (*bouleusis*), an exercise of practical reason *par excellence*. The first chapter reconstructs Aristotle’s account of deliberation from a wide range of texts in the corpus. It argues that deliberation is a complex decision-making process that, for the most part, unfolds into four stages: (1) positing a provisional goal; (2) constructing a set of alternatives; (3) identifying the best alternative; (4) forming an intention to do the most proximate action as identified in the penultimate stage. This reading offers a comprehensive representation of Aristotle’s theory while rendering his theory more sophisticated—and indeed more modern—than the alternatives in recent years.

Deciding what to do often requires that we confront the question, “Which is preferable (*hairetōteron*) or better (*beltion*) between two or more options?” In *Topics* III, a text widely acknowledged as the inaugural treatment of the logic of preference, Aristotle articulates a set of principles to guide our preference-ranking. While scholars pay historical homage to Aristotle, there is little engagement with his treatment of preference logic. The second chapter addresses the need for a current study and reassessment of Aristotle’s preference-ranking principles. It argues that, despite differences in scope and methodology between the Aristotelian and modern systems, the description inaugural treatment of preference logic comfortably, and accurately, applies to *Topics* III.

When one looks at the role that Aristotle allows reason to play in the production and motivation of action, it is tempting to conclude that Aristotle endorses the Humean division of labor. For Aristotle claims that deliberation is about “the things towards the goal” (*EN* III.3, 1112b11-16) and that virtue (*aretē*) makes our goals right (*EN* VI.12, 1144a7-9). Chapter three seeks to show, against a recent influential quasi-Humean interpretation, that the primary function of practical reason is mapping the landscape of value corresponding to the agent’s reasoned conception of what *eudaimonia* consists in, as a rational being that she is.

Aristotle notoriously defends the political subordination of individuals he believes to have a defective deliberative capacity. In *Politics* I.13, he claims that the deliberative faculty is undeveloped in children and “ineffectual” (*akuron*) in women (1260a12). The concluding chapter considers a puzzle about the development of the female’s deliberative faculty: How do women become ineffective in their deliberation, but freemen do not, given that all children have deliberative faculties that are unperfected? Drawing from the theories defended in previous chapters, I argue that the female’s deliberative defect is primarily due to her lack of moral

education rather than inalterable sexual, biological differences—a thesis widely endorsed by scholars lately.

Introduction

How should an agent reason about what to do? The default answer to this question in contemporary philosophy,[1] economics,[2] and decision theory[3] would seem to instruct the agent to identify and select the most effective means to her ends. This theoretical approach to reasoning about action presupposes that the agent's ends are somehow already supplied to her[4] or that they fall outside the scope and regulation of her reason.[5] Aristotle, according to an interpretative trend originated in the beginning of the last century and systematically defended in recent years, would seem to agree with the contemporary consensus that there is no practical reasoning about ends.[6]

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[1] As Elijah Milgram observes, "Instrumentalism [the view that all practical reasoning is means-end reasoning, i.e., reasoning about what to do is entirely a matter of determining how to achieve one's goals or satisfy one's desires] is the default view in the field, and probably among philosophers in general" ("Practical Reasoning: The Current State of Play" in his *Varieties of Practical Reasoning* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 1-26, 4). See also, Christoph Fehige, "Instrumentalism" in *Varieties of Practical Reasoning* edited by Elijah Milgram, 49-76; James Dreier, "Humean Doubts about Categorical Imperatives," in Varieties of Practical Reasoning, 27–49; Bernard Williams, "Internal and External Reasons" in *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers* edited by B. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 103-111.
[2] Maurice Lagueux, *Rationality and Explanation in Economics* (United States: Taylor & Francis, 2010).
[3] See, for example, the leading textbook, Richard Jeffrey, *The Logic of Decision* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).
[4] Henry Richardson, *Practical Reasoning about Final Ends*" (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xii.
[5] Christine Korsgaard has argued that the instrumental model, whose norms consists of maximization and consistency, is incoherent. This is because these norms only tell the agent how to translate the reasons that she has into action. But they are silent how those reasons are to be assessed and why those reasons are reasons ("The normativity of instrumental reason," in *Ethics and Practical Reason* edited by G. Cullity and B. Gaut (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 215-44). Similarly, David Brink has pointed out that this conception of practical reasons renders moral reasons rationally arbitrary since it seeks to derive them from rationally ungrounded motivational states ("Kantian Rationalism: Inescapability, Authority, and Supremacy" in *Ethics and Practical Reason,* 255-92).
[6] Julius Walter is generally regarded as the first to expound this reading in his *Die Lehre von der praktischen Vernunft in der griechischen Philosophie* (Jena: Mauke, 1874), where he argues that according to Aristotle reason has nothing to do with the ends of action. Following Walter, Zeller explains in volume 2 of his *Aristotle and the Peripatetics,* "The ultimate aims of action are determined, according to Aristotle, not by deliberation, but by the character of the will." *Aristotle and the earlier Peripatetics* (London: Russell & Russell, 1897), 182. Norman Dahl reports that it is largely through the influence of Walter on Burnet's *The Ethics of Aristotle* (London: Methuen, 1900) that this became for the most part accepted by English scholars. Werner Jaeger also advocates the view that Aristotle allows reason to have no influence on the acquisition of ends (*Aristotle, Fundamentals of the History of his Development* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1948)). Dahl's helpful discussion which I've referenced can be found in his *Practical Reason, Aristotle, and Weakness of the Will* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 5. In more recent years, this reading can be found in the writings of William Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle's Conception of Moral Virtue and Its Perceptive Role," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* Vol. 95 (1964), 77-87; J. M. Rist, "An Early Dispute about Right Reason" *The Monist* Vol. 66, No. 1, Right Reason in Western Ethics (1983), 39-48; D. Achtenberg, *Cognition of Value in Aristotle's Ethics: Promise of Enrichment, Threat of Destruction* (Albany: The State University of New York Press, 2002); and, especially, Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

The twofold purpose of this dissertation is to reverse this interpretative trend and revive a conception of reason that is more wide-ranging and complex than the current received view: Aristotle's own.

My approach is to begin with close readings of the text in the original language in consultation with contemporary scholarly discussions in the major European languages. I combine this reading method with the tools of analytic philosophical analysis, contemporary works in rational choice theory, and empirical psychological research. In my interpretation and reconstruction of Aristotle's theories, I aim to incorporate all the available textual evidence rather than narrowly focusing on his more widely read works. Although my dissertation principally seeks to illuminate Aristotle's notion of practical reason, and the corresponding notion of practical rationality, I am also interested in whether and how much various aspects of Aristotle's concept of rationality are like or differ from our own. These aspects include, for instance, the level of complexity of his theory of deliberation, the connection of his notion of frequency to the degree of belief warranted by evidence, and the notion of probability, if any, in his account of rational decision-making.

To begin this study, we need to sketch an account in outline of its subject matter. I start with a prelude, narrating the birth of reason from the philosophical considerations of the ancient Greeks (§1).[7] Next, I discuss the details of Aristotle's conception of what it is for humans to possess reason (*logon echon*) and his bifurcation of reason into its theoretical and practical applications (§2). After noting the three distinctive features of practical reason—its subject matter, purpose, and outcome—I turn to Aristotle's analyses of the processes of practical reasoning themselves, which are the subject matters of the chapters that follow (§3). The first

[7] The content of Introduction §1 depends heavily on the classic account offered in Michael Frede and Gisela Striker's volume. *Rationality in Greek Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

three chapters examine Aristotle's views on the diverse roles reason plays in deliberation, the ranking of preferences, and the mapping out of the value landscape. The concluding chapter assess a deeply problematic application of Aristotle's theory of rationality: the political subjection of women on the basis of their purported ineffective decision-making.

1. What is This Thing Called Reason?

In its origins, the notion of reason is a theoretical construct, emerging under the influence of philosophical reflections and achieving "a full-blown developed form in Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle."[8] The concept of reason which we find in these philosophers is an integrated system of abilities which plays the role of explaining how we come to have beliefs about a wide range of phenomena and how these come to guide, or fail to guide, our actions.[9] Distinctive to the notion of reason according to these philosophers is the idea that reason has its own desiderative and voluntary aspect.[10] This feature of the ancients' conception of reason stands in stark contrast with the contemporary, often narrower, understanding of reason as a formal ability to process data

[8] As Frede convincingly argues, although Homeric characters think and act intelligently and Homer himself talks about the *nous* of his heroes or their sense (*phren*), in Homer these words refer to "a rather specific ability, namely the ability to, for instance, quickly get an overview and an understanding of a situation." He also points out further support for this claim by considering the wavering in terminology between *logos, to logikon, nous, hegemonikon, mens, ratio,* among others. It would be hardly intelligible for reason to have gone by so many names if it had been an ordinary notion since there would have been an ordinary standard term such as the word 'reason' that is common in the English language today ("Introduction" in *Rationality in Greek Thought*, 3-4).

[9] A cautionary note: I do not wish to make an over-simplification that the notions of reason that we find in Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle are one and the same. Their notions differ very substantially from each other, and each is complex it its own right and merits serious studies. Some of these differences are surveyed in Frede and Striker's volume. I discuss one of these differences below in §2 of the Introduction.

[10] This is one of two central claims Frede makes about the concept of reason found in Greek philosophy. For Socrates, he draws support for this claim from the view Socrates expounds in Plato's *Protagoras,* according to which all desires, in being beliefs, are desires of reason (358b7, c7, d1). Plato's argument for the tripartite soul in *Republic* IV is evidence for the view that there are desires of reason (437b ff.). Indeed, one cannot make sense of Plato's argument without supposing, along with him, that there may be a desire which conflicts with a desire of reason and thus must originate from a non-rational part of the soul. When it comes to Aristotle, there are more controversies. Frede discusses what he calls "the traditional view," which I call the "Humean" or "quasi-Humean view," according to which, for Aristotle, the motive force of our action has its source in some non-rational desire. However, Frede argues, as I will argue, that "Aristotle is better understood on the assumption that he attributes motive force to reason itself and distinguishes between desires of reason and desires of the irrational part of the soul" (*Rationality in Greek Thought,* 8). His argument differs significantly from the one I make in chapter three insofar as his relies on Aristotle's distinction between a rational part of the soul and an irrational part in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.13, 1102b21, where Aristotle cites our inclinations which go in opposite directions as evidence for his view ("Introduction," 6-9).

which is given from outside, to calculate what it is reasonable to assume given certain assumptions, or to determine what it is to opt for given certain prescribed preferences. The tendency to delimit reason in these ways is pervasive both in and outside of the discipline of philosophy, to wit:

> For the logician, the avoidance of inconsistency is seen as rationality's be-all and end-all. For the economist, it is efficiency in the pursuit of chosen objectives. For the decision theorist, it is correct cost-benefit calculation. Every specialty seems to opt for some narrow desideratum as the definitive feature of reason.[11]

An alternative to this over-narrow construal of reason, which we find in the philosophical considerations of the ancients, is the idea that the function of reason is both extensive and highly complex. Its preeminent functions include the determination of the course of action we take and, indeed, the course of our lives.

The preoccupation with reason that is characteristic of much of ancient philosophy appears, it has been suggested, to have been motivated by concerns about how human beings may secure what the Greek philosophers call *eudaimonia*.[12] '*Eudaimonia'* is commonly but inadequately translated as 'happiness' in studies of ancient Greek ethics.[13] Whereas 'happiness' and its equivalents tend to be understood as denoting some kind of subjective positive experience or feeling in contemporary happiness studies,[14] ancient philosophers identify *eudaimonia* with living and doing well (*EN* I.4, 1095a18–20) and with what makes a life valuable or worth living

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[11] Nicholas Rescher, *Rationality: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Nature and the Rationale of Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), vii. See also n. 2 and n.3.

[12] For further discussions both about the historical and philosophical origins of this Greek preoccupation, see Øyvind Rabbås, *The Quest for the Good Life: Ancient Philosophers on Happiness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[13] See Richard Kraut's classic discussion in his "Two Conceptions of Happiness," *Philosophical Review* 88 (1979): 167–97. Acknowledging the problems with the translation 'happiness,' some interpreters adopt the alternative translation 'human flourishing.' See this adaptation in Cooper, for instance. *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 89. Kraut, however, argues that, despite its defects, we should nonetheless retain the translation 'happiness' so as not to conceal that there is a genuine disagreement between the ancient and modern conceptions. In my dissertation, I will transliterate '*eudaimonia*' to avoid presupposing a particular interpretation.

[14] The kind of happiness studies I have in mind is interdisciplinary and originates partly in psychology and partly in the social sciences. These studies have an increasingly convergent tendency, which Daniel Haybron calls the "assumption of personal autonomy," that each individual is the sole expert on his or her own happiness (*The Pursuit of Unhappiness*: *The Elusive Psychology of Well-Being* (Oxford: Oxford University Press (2008), 11–14).

(*Rep*. IX 580a ff). To achieve *eudaimonia*, these Greek authors invariably recommend actively engaging in reflective reasoning about our lives, with the aim of arriving at an idea of how our lives should be lived that is well founded, and thereby capable of being justified and defended when subject to scrutiny. Such active reflective reasoning about how to live is undoubtedly a central concern in ancient Greek ethics.[15]

Socrates is generally regarded as the first philosopher to have introduced the idea that exercising and perfecting reason is a prerequisite for leading a good life. Although it is notoriously difficult to say anything reliable about the views of the historical Socrates, Socrates in the dialogues of Plato takes it as his "divine mission" to rouse the Athenians to use their reason to defend the true beliefs they hold and get rid of the false ones—particularly, beliefs about how they, as citizens and as individuals, should conduct their lives (*Apol.*, 23c, 30a, 38a). The tradition following Socrates, extending from Plato to the thinkers of late antiquity, is characterized by variations on this theme: a cultivated reason is the key to attaining *eudaimonia*. But talk of living rationally and following reason can be loose and metaphorical. The following cluster of questions emerge on closer inspection: How do we use reason to make decisions about what to do, what kind of person to be, and how to live well? A central aim of this dissertation is to answer this cluster of questions within the Aristotelian tradition by seeking to specify the role Aristotle assigns to reason in guiding human conduct. To achieve this objective, we will need to lay out a broad overview of Aristotle's conception of reason and its practical applications.

[15] Some scholars have gone as far as emphasizing the way in which ancient philosophy—not only its subfield, ethics—is a way of life. See, for example, Pierre Hadot, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995); Christoph Horn, *Antike Lebenskunst: Glück Und Moral von Sokrates Bis Zu Den Neuplatonikern* (München: Beck, 1998); John Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

2. An Aristotelian Subdivision of Reason

Aristotle identifies the differentia between humans and other members of the animal kingdom with the possession of reason: the rational principle of the soul (*EN* I.13, 1102a26-1103a3). Certainly, it is possible to read from this claim that what it is to be a human is to be essentially and exclusively rational; indeed, "reason is the best thing in us" (ὁ νοῦς τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν, *EN* X.7, 1177a20). Aristotle's writing, however, seems to suggest a weaker claim. He argues, for instance, that actions resulting from the passions are no less voluntary than actions resulting from deliberation since "the irrational passions seem no less human" (δοκεῖ δὲ οὐχ ἧττον ἀνθρωπικὰ εἶναι τὰ ἄλογα πάθη, *EN* III.2, 1111b1-2). Aristotle is also well aware of *akrasia*, a classic display of irrationality, and offers his own much-discussed analysis of the phenomenon.[16] What I take Aristotle's classification of humans as reason-endowed animals to mean is that we have a cognitive capacity that allows us to act in reflective, characteristically human ways, but we may, at times, fall short of this ideal.[17] Under ideal conditions, however, an agent would be able to

[16] Aristotle discusses akrasia most fully in *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.3, but further elucidations about the condition of the *akratēs* can be found in *De Anima* III.3, 429a8-9; 3.10, 433b8–10 and *Magna Moralia* 1202a1–7. There is no universal agreement with respect to how one should construe Aristotle's explanation of *akrasia*. There are two competing interpretations in the literature. The first is the view that the *akratēs* is cognitively deficient, and so the *akratēs'* failure is a kind of intellectual failure. A.W. Price, "Akrasia and Self-Control," in *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, edited by Richard Kraut (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 234-253, 237. The second holds that the *akratēs* does not make an error in her deliberation, but her mistake is of the desiderative sort. For instance, David Charles, argues that the characteristic feature of the weak *akratēs* is a failure in the distinctive form of rational sensitivity to value which leads to action. The weak *akratēs* is at fault because she is not properly attracted to doing what is best. Her practical syllogism does not conclude in an action, even though the reasoning itself is not faulty. Charles, "Aristotle's Weak Akrates: What Does Her Ignorance Consist In?" in *Akrasia in Greek Philosophy*: *From Socrates to Plotinus*, edited by Christopher Bobonich and Pierre Destrée (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 193-214, 205. See also Sarah Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), chapter 5; T. Irwin, *Aristotle's first principles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 15n22.

[17] Stephen Stich has criticized Aristotle's optimism and formulation of human as a rational animal by appealing to empirical studies which purport to show that people depart from normative standards of rationality in systematic ways. ("Could Man Be an Irrational Animal?: Some Notes on the Epistemology of Rationality" in his *Collected Papers, Volume 2: Knowledge, Rationality, and Morality*, 1978-2010 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 49-66). My own view is that, while Stich is criticizing what he calls a strand of "Aristotelian optimism" in contemporary philosophy, his criticism could hardly be directed at Aristotle himself since Aristotle never claims that people do not, and cannot, deviate from the course of action or the belief recommend by reason. His conceptual analysis of *akrasia* as a routine, rather than episodic, failure of rationality shows that he thinks it is possible for people to be systematically irrational. Frede, too, recognizes Aristotle's awareness of our irrationality, writing, "though both Plato and Aristotle think that it is a function of reason to determine the way we live, they assume that reason may fail to do so" ("Introduction," 13).

properly exercise her unique practical application of rationality that is necessary for securing *eudaimonia*.

That there is a practical form of rationality is clear from Aristotle's sharp division between two varieties of reason in *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.[18] We can glean from his discussion there that practical reason differs from its theoretical counterpart in three ways: its subject matter, function, and consequences. Aristotle begins by reiterating the claims that the human soul consists of a part possessing reason (*to logon echon*) and one without reason (*alogon*, cf. *EN* I.13, 1102a26-8; *EE* II.1, 29-31).[19] With this outline of the soul in the background, he proceeds to introduce a subdivision within the rational part as follows:

> καὶ ὑποκείσθω δύο τὰ λόγον ἔχοντα, ἓν μὲν ᾧ θεωροῦμεν τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ὄντων ὅσων αἱ ἀρχαὶ μὴ ἐνδέχονται ἄλλως ἔχειν, ἓν δὲ ᾧ τὰ ἐνδεχόμενα: πρὸς γὰρ τὰ τῷ γένει ἕτερα καὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς μορίων ἕτερον τῷ γένει τὸ πρὸς ἑκάτερον πεφυκός, εἴπερ καθ᾽ ὁμοιότητά τινα καὶ οἰκειότητα ἡ γνῶσις ὑπάρχει αὐτοῖς. (*EN* VI.1, 1139a6-12)[20]
>
> And let it be assumed that reason has two parts—one by which we contemplate the sort of things whose originative causes are invariable, and one by which we contemplate [the sort of things whose originative causes are] variable; for where objects differ in kind the part of the soul answering to each of the two is different in kind, since it is in virtue of a certain likeness and kinship with their objects that they have the knowledge they have.

In this passage, we see Aristotle making use of the principle he attributes to Empedocles in his psychological work: that cognition requires likeness between the subject and object of cognition

[18] Dahl goes as far as suggesting that Aristotle's notion of *phronēsis*, the excellence of practical rationality, "seems to be the first recognition of a uniquely practical form of knowledge" (*Practical Reason, Aristotle, and Weakness of the Will*, 4). Frede also points out that the division of reason into its practical and theoretical applications distinguishes Aristotle (and Plato) from Socrates. Both Plato and Aristotle acknowledge the theoretical functions of reason and that "it was crucial not only for a good life, but also for an undersanding of how to live well, to have an adequate general understanding of the world," whereas Socrates holds that there is "no need to gain theoretical knowledge about the world or reality" ("Introduction, 13). In her discussion of Aristotle on practical truth, Christiana Olfert makes a similar observation to Frede insofar as she holds that for Aristotle, following Plato, "when we reason about what to do, we are equally and inseparably concerned with grasping the truth and gaining knowledge on the one hand, and with acting and acting well on the other" (*Aristotle on Practical Truth* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), xvii).

[19] In this dissertation, when I speak of parts of the soul in Aristotle, I do not intend to take a stand on the ontological status of these parts, or perhaps aspects, of the soul. At *Nicomachean Ethics* I. 13, 1102A28–32, Aristotle reminds us that in this context the ontological questions make little difference.

[20] With the exception of a few indicated alterations, I follow Bywater's Greek text; Ross' translation with modifications.

(Cf. *DA* 1.5, 410a27-29; *MM* 1.34 1196b15–34).[21] This move allows him to align different objects of contemplation with different branches of reason. According to the subdivision Aristotle pictures, one branch of the rational part is the "scientific" or "knowledgeable" (*to epistēmonikon*), which concerns things whose first principles cannot be other than they are. The objects of scientific knowledge (*epistēmē*) turn out to be necessary and eternal truths. By contrast, the practical branch is described as "calculative" (*to logistikon*), and it contemplates things whose principles are variable (*EN* VII.2, 1139a16-17).

Aristotle's broad demarcation of the objects of cognition in the *EN* VI.1 passage at issue leaves open the possibility that he excludes only eternal and necessary objects from the set of possible objects contemplated by the practical intellect. But a close examination of the textual evidence would reveal that the demarcation is more precise. Aristotle's fullest account of deliberation in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3, as we will see in chapter one, makes clear that there is no deliberation about things occurring as a result of luck or those inalterable by the agent's efforts, even if these things have variable originating causes (e.g., the finding of a treasure or weather patterns).[22] Aristotle also tells us that the excellence of practical rationality (*phronēsis*)[23] is concerned with "things human and things about which it is possible to deliberate" (τὰ ἀνθρώπινα καὶ περὶ ὧν ἔστι βουλεύσασθαι, *EN* VII.7, 1141b8-9). A piece of reasoning is

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[21] Aristotle explicitly attributes this principle to Empedocles in *de Anima* I.5, but it has been argued that Aristotle's interpretation of Empedocles is inaccurate (Rachana Kamtekar, "Knowing by likeness in Empedocles" *Phronesis* 54, no. 3 (2009): 215-238). Others have suggested that Aristotle's methodology of division here is Platonic; to wit, Gabriel Richardson Lear writes, "Aristotle uses a Platonic principle to argue for an un-Platonic conclusion (*Rep*. V 477c ff.)" (*Happy Lives and the Highest Good* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 95). In their commentary, Gauthier and Jolif notice that, not only does Aristotle use a Platonic principle of soul division, he also divides objects of thinking along Platonic lines. The result is that, in *EN* VI.1 at least, Aristotle's *logistikon* looks to be the same as Plato's *doxastikon*, although now endowed with genuine knowledge (*L'éthique à Nicomaque* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1970), 92).

[22] Briefly, in Aristotle's view, we deliberate about things that are up to us and in the sphere of action, which make up only a subset of things whose originative causes are of the variable variety (*EN* III.3, 1112a31). As Aristotle makes clear, the objects of deliberation, and practical reasoning broadly, must occur with a sufficient degree of regularity to allow for anticipatory planning, while their outcomes must be uncertain to permit reasoning about their causes (EN III.3, 1112b8-9).

[23] '*Phronēsis*' is usually translated as 'practical wisdom.' In my dissertation, I will either use the translation 'excellence of practical rationality', which I think better captures Aristotle's idea that *phronēsis* is the excellence of practical intellect or the transliteration form.

practical rather than theoretical not only because its object is contingent rather than necessary, but also because it is practical in its subject matter. Practical reasoning is about matters in the sphere of action (*praxis*) whose originating cause can be altered by the agent's effort.

In addition to their distinctive subject matters, theoretical and practical reason also differ with respect to their functions. From Aristotle's doctrine that "the good" (τἀγαθὸν) and "the well" (τὸ εὖ) of a thing reside in "the function" (τὸ ἔργον) of that thing (*EN* I.7, 1098a26-27), we can work out the functions of practical and theoretical reason by considering their excellences. On this topic, Aristotle tells us:

> τῆς δὲ θεωρητικῆς διανοίας καὶ μὴ πρακτικῆς μηδὲ ποιητικῆς τὸ εὖ καὶ κακῶς τἀληθές ἐστι καὶ ψεῦδος τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι παντὸς διανοητικοῦ ἔργον· τοῦ δὲ πρακτικοῦ καὶ διανοητικοῦ ἀλήθεια ὁμολόγως ἔχουσα τῇ ὀρέξει τῇ ὀρθῇ. (*EN* VI.2, 1139a27-31)
>
> Of the intellect which is theoretical but not practical nor productive, the good and the bad [states] are truth and falsity, respectively. For this is the work of everything intellectual. While of the part which is practical and intellectual, the good state is truth in agreement with right desire.

This passage makes clear that Aristotle connects rationality, in its ideal condition or good state, with the uncovering of truths. Insofar as any rational reflection involves thinking with the end of obtaining truths, practical rationality, like its theoretical counterpart, is a veridical disposition or capacity concerning thought about truth and falsity (*EN* VI.2, 1139b13).[24] But Aristotle adds a further qualification to the good state of practical reason: that it characteristically concerns truth in agreement with right desire (1139a31).

Aristotle's qualification, "in agreement with right desire," invites further clarification. The first thing to note is that, although Aristotle speaks of desire as being correct (*orthē*) in the passage under consideration, many scholars suggest that we should not read Aristotle to mean

[24] Kraut also notices this similarity in function of practical and theoretical reason (*Aristotle on the Human Good* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989, 58–59).

that desires can be the bearer of truth themselves since the ascription of being true (*alēthēs*) is a description he reserves for reason (*logos* or *nous*).[25] What, then, does it mean for a desire to be correct? Given that Aristotle thinks all desires aim at the good or the apparent good (e.g., *DA* 433a27-9; *MA* 700b23-29; *Met*. 1072a26-29), I take it that for a desire to be correct is for it to be a desire for what is good rather than merely appearing good.[26] Second, the "in agreement with" (*homologōs echousa*) relation does not require that practical truth (*alētheia praktikē*, *EN* VI.2, 1139a26)—the product of practical intellect in its good state—have correct desire as a constituent rather than converging with the correct desire in some way.[27] I take Aristotle's statement about the good state of practical reason to mean that its function consists in reaching a true conclusion about what is to be done, and that conclusion must be in, but that conclusion must be accompanied by the concordant correct desire.[28] As such, the kind of issues settled by practical intellect appears to be concerned, not simply with matters of fact, but also with matters of value.

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[25] Sarah Broadie, "Practical Truth in Aristotle," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 90, no. 2 (2016): 281–98; Christiana Olfert, *Aristotle on Practical Truth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 95; Michael Pakaluk, "The Great Question of Practical Truth—and a Diminutive Answer," *Acta Philosophica*, (2010): 145-59, 151 n.17.

[26] In making this claim, I am in broad agreement with defenders of the so-called intensionalist reading of the apparent good (*phainomenon agathon)*. On this view, some desires are for things genuinely good, and others for things merely apparently good, although every desire is for something that appears good to the one who desires it. The word 'apparent' (*phainomenon*) in this context thus carries the sense of subjective appearance, allowing for the possibility of error. Defenders of this view include Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good,* chapter 1; Olfert, *Aristotle on Practical Truth,* 107. The alternative, extensionalist reading has it that "'apparent good' need not refer to something's appearing as good, but may instead refer to the good that appears, even if it appears as something other than good–as pleasant, for instance" (Terrence Irwin, *Aristotle's First Principles,* 331-2). See also Klaus Corcilius "Aristotle's Definition of Non-rational Pleasure and Pain and Desire," in *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics: A Critical Guide* edited by J. Miller (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), 117–43.

[27] Sarah Broadie, "Practical Truth in Aristotle," 287; Olfert, *Aristotle on Practical Truth,* 105. Some scholars take a different stand on this issue. This point is connected with the ontological status of practical truth. Some scholars take practical truth to be propositions (Olfert, *Aristotle on Practical Truth;* Pakaluk, "The Great Question of Practical Truth—and a Diminutive Answer"), whereas others take it to be involving the truth of decisions. For instance, Broadie writes, "Practical truth is evinced in a sound *prohairesis*, combining a logos-factor and a desire-factor which are as they should be" ("Practical Truth in Aristotle," 285). Similarly, Richardson Lear holds that "grasping practical truth— really possessing it and not just being capable of having it—just is the activity of choosing and desiring and acting well" (*Happy Lives and the Highest Good*, 102).

[28] This view aligns with the interpretation Broadie labels "Proposal C*" ("Practical Truth in Aristotle," 294-295). Olfert seems to be making a similar point insofar as she thinks that we attain practical truth when we affirm the same things that correct desire pursues. But she goes further to claim that "practical truth agrees with desire in the sense that practical truths are made true (and practical falsehoods are made false) by the same thing that makes our desire correct (and incorrect)" (*Aristotle on Practical Truth*, 107). As I understand her, practical truths and desires have the same truth-makers, what she calls, "normative standard." My own view, which I cannot sufficiently defend here, is that practical truths and correct desires may have the same truth-makers, but these truth-makers must be truth-makers for them in different ways.

If practical intellect is practical, not only in its subject matter, but also in its function, then it is natural to think that it would, moreover, be practical in its consequences. Aristotle maintains that the result of a piece of practical reasoning must, at any rate, be different in kind from a theoretical one. We are told in the following passage that the completion of a theoretical inference yields a speculative proposition (*theōrēma*), but the termination of a practical syllogism is an action.

> Πῶς δὲ νοῶν ὁτὲ μὲν πράττει ὁτὲ δ' οὐ πράττει, καὶ κινεῖται, ὁτὲ δ' οὐ κινεῖται; ἔοικε παραπλησίως συμβαίνειν καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀκινήτων διανοουμένοις καὶ συλλογιζομένοις. ἀλλ' ἐκεῖ μὲν θεώρημα τὸ τέλος (ὅταν γὰρ τὰς δύο προτάσεις νοήσῃ, τὸ συμπέρασμα ἐνόησε καὶ συνέθηκεν), ἐνταῦθα δ' ἐκ τῶν δύο προτάσεων τὸ συμπέρασμα γίγνεται ἡ πρᾶξις.[29] (*MA* 7, 701a7-13. Cf. *EN* VII.*3,* 1147a26-28[30])
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> But how does it happen that thinking is sometimes accompanied by action and sometimes not, sometimes by motion, and sometimes not? It looks as if almost the same thing happens as in the case of reasoning and inferring about unchanging objects. But in that case, the end is a speculative proposition (for whenever one thinks the two premises, one thinks and puts together the conclusion), whereas here the conclusion which results from the two premises is the action.

While each instance of practical reasoning need not take the form of a syllogism (e.g., deliberation),[31] the parallelism between practical and theoretical reasoning is perhaps clearest when practical thinking has a syllogistic structure.[32] In the passage at issue, Aristotle goes as far

[29] I follow the Greek text of Martha Nussbaum and her translation.

[30] The *EN* VII.3 passage is subject to dispute since the text is imprecise about whether the contrast there is between speculative and practical reasoning or between practical syllogisms with positive and with negative conclusions. Most commentators defend the former position. See D. J. Allan, "The Practical Syllogism" *Autour D'Aristote* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1955), 327; Franz Dirlmeier, *Aristoteles Nikomachische Ethik* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960), 147; Jolif and Gauthier, *L'éthique à Nicomaque*, 92; M. T. Thornton, "Aristotelian Practical Reason" *Mind* 91, No. 361 (1982), 57-76. Anthony Kenny contests this interpretation on the ground that it fits poorly with the context. He favors the latter suggestion that the contrast is between practical syllogisms with positive and with negative conclusions. This reading has the merit of fitting the context since Aristotle follows the disputed passage with two examples of practical syllogisms—the first ends with a positive while the second with a negative conclusion. Kenny, "The Practical Syllogism and Incontinence" *Phronesis* 11, (1966): 163-184. For a reply to Kenny, see Broadie, "Aristotle on Rational Action" *Phronesis* 19, (1974): 70-80.

[31] Here, I am in agreement with Cooper and Corcilius that the practical syllogism is not a part of deliberation (Cooper, Reason and the Human Good in Aristotle, 46; Corcilius, "Two Jobs for Aristotle's Practical Syllogism?" *Logical Analysis and History of Philosophy* 11 (2008):163-184 at 165).

[32] Some specialists maintain that '*syllogismos'* could not, or could never, be correctly rendered as 'syllogism.' Jonathan Barnes, for instance, thinks that '*syllogismos'* as Aristotle uses the term is larger in scope than our word 'syllogism'; in his view, a syllogism is a deduction, which might have the form of a syllogism—an argument composed of a major and minor premise. Jonathan Barnes, "Proof and the Syllogism," in *Aristotle on Science: The Posterior Analytics*, edited by E. Berti (Padua:

as claiming that almost the same thing occurs when we infer syllogistically (*sullogizomai*) about practical matters as we do with speculative ones. The single difference he notes in the present passage is the difference in the kind of conclusion each form of reasoning produces.

Although Aristotle plainly asserts in the *de Motu Animalium* 7 passage above that the distinctive conclusion of a practical syllogism is an action, many commentators reject this literal reading. According to a non-literal reading of this passage, the differentiating factor is not the conclusion of the syllogism itself, but it is the distinctive mode of responding to that conclusion, which is always a proposition. In the speculative case, the agent accepts the proposition by forming a new belief, but in the practical case she adopts the appropriate motivation or desire.[33] Whether one favors reading the *de Motu Animalium* 7 passage in a literal way or not, the fact remains that the result of a practical syllogism must be distinctive in its character insofar as it is a rational reflection with a view to action, whereas speculative reflection about invariable objects is not.

My main purpose in this section was to show that, for Aristotle, practical reason differs from its theoretical counterpart in three ways: its subject matter, function, and outcomes. I want to turn next to the processes of practical reason themselves and offering, along the way, overviews of the four chapters to follow which investigate these processes in depth.

Antenore, 1981), 17–59, 23. See also Myles Burnyeat, "Enthymeme: The Logic of Persuasion," in *Aristotle's Rhetoric: Philosophical Essays*, edited by David J. Furley, and Alexander Nehamas (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 3-55 at 9-10; W. D. Ross, *Aristotelis Ars Rhetorica* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 291; Brunschwig also translates '*syllogismos logos'* as 'un raisonnement déductif' (*Topiques 1,* 1). However, in the *MA* 7 passage at issue, I take Aristotle to be discussing what scholars standardly refer to as "the practical syllogism" since he explicitly mentions the conclusion resulting from two premises in the concluding line of the passage. Outside of the *MA* 7 discussion, I opt for 'deduction' rather than the English cognate, 'syllogism' in rendering '*syllogismos*'.

[33] David Charles, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Action,* (London: Duckworth, 1984), 92-3. He argues that Aristotle's claims in this passage and the following lines are "radically confused…he [Aristotle] appears to hold both that the conclusion is a proposition and that it is an action." Aristotle could not have meant what he wrote, Charles explains, since "if he had intended the conclusion to be an action, he should not consistently have used a proposition to express it in 701a19." The proposition he has in mind is 'I ought to make a cloak,' which Aristotle claims is an action. See also Irwin, *Aristotle's First Principles,* 597, n.16.

3. Abstracts of the Chapters

Aristotle offers accounts of not one but multiple practical processes of thought contributing to action. His most extensive discussion of a practical process of thought is perhaps deliberation. Deliberation is an activity of practical reason *par excellence.*[34] Aristotle thinks, for instance, that deliberation is a kind of deduction (*sullogismos tis*) and only possible for human beings who possess the deliberative faculty (*to bouleutikon*, *Mem* II, 453a14). The first chapter of my dissertation offers a comprehensive theory of just how Aristotle conceives of this process of practical reasoning about what action to perform.

Due to its status as a building block of Aristotle's ethics and philosophy of action, his theory of deliberation has roused the interest of many commentators in recent years.[35] These studies have tended to be selective focusing on some particularly striking element of his theory rather than the widely distributed evidence.[36] Common to a number of these recent studies is the thesis that Aristotle's theory is fundamentally different from the now-standard understanding of deliberation as an evaluative process that characteristically involves the weighing of open alternatives.[37] Relying on a critical passage in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3, 1112b16-27, commentators have argued that what Aristotle calls deliberation should be understood simply as

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[34] The Aristotelian author of *Rhetoric to Alexander* goes as far as claiming that deliberation is "the most divine" of human activities (1420b19-20).

[35] See, for instance, recent treatments of Aristotle's theory of deliberation in Agnes Callard, "Aristotle on Deliberation," in *The Routledge Handbook of Practical Reason*, edited by R. Chang and K. Sylvan, forthcoming; J. Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good*; Nielsen, "Deliberation as Inquiry: Aristotle's Alternative to the Presumption of Open Alternatives"; A. Price, "Aristotle on the Ends of Deliberation," in *Moral Psychology and Human Action in Aristotle*, edited by M. Pakaluk and G. Pearson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 135-158; H. Segvić, "Deliberation and Choice in Aristotle," in *From Protagoras to Aristotle: Essays in Ancient Moral Philosophy*, edited by M. Burnyeat, 144-171 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[36] Although his "official" account of deliberation is located in *EN* III.3, we can find his writings on the subject matter outside of the ethical treatises in places such *de Memoria, de Anima*, and the *Metaphysics*. In any event, the wide distribution of his thoughts on the topic makes it quite easy for readers to be overly selective when considering the textual evidence and to focus their attention exclusively on a particularly striking element of his theory.

[37] See, especially, Agnes Callard, "Aristotle on Deliberation" and Nielsen, "Deliberation as Inquiry: Aristotle's Alternative to the Presumption of Open Alternatives."

a process of causal discovery in which the agent works backward by analysis (*analuein*) to uncover the most proximate action in her power. On these recent views, the evaluation of the options in a set of alternatives for action turns out to be "an occasional wrinkle"[38] rather than a mainstay of Aristotle's theory of deliberation. But this overly selective tendency in consideration of the textual evidence has the effect of generating interpretations of deliberation that are too simple[39] or too foreign[40] to our contemporary intuitions about what deliberation entails.

In the first chapter, I hope to provide an important corrective to the current received views by making some progress towards a more comprehensive Aristotelian model of deliberation. The central thesis of chapter one is that, for Aristotle, deliberation has a multilevel structure and requires the performance of a sequence of integrated mental actions. The activities clustered under deliberation include positing an end, calculating, analyzing, and ranking one option above another (*Mem*. II, 453a10; *DA* III.10, 434a5-10; *EE* II.10, 1226b9; *MM* 1.17, 1189a14). In a typical episode of deliberation, the agent begins by positing a provisional goal (θέμενοι τὸ τέλος, *EN* III.3, 1112b15). What occurs after a provisional goal is posited will vary since Aristotle recognizes that some cases of deliberation will be more complex, i.e., require more steps towards its completion. In the complex case, the agent must devise a multitude of causal pathways to reach the goal. This process of discovering and constructing the pathways is, in turn, followed by a comparative evaluation in order to determine the best path to pursue (1112b17). In the simple case, the deliberating agent will only need to work out one pathway leading up to the goal. On my view, both the construction and evaluation of the pathways are

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[38] Callard, "Aristotle on Deliberation" 2.

[39] I have in mind the view that deliberation essentially involves comparing alternatives on the ground of their pleasantness. This is the view that I take Moss to be defending insofar as she argues that deliberation uses visual representations (*phantasmata*) to envisage the possible options and to select the most pleasantly represented option (*Aristotle on the Apparent Good*, 144). I discuss her view, and my response to her view, more fully in chapter 1.

[40] I am referring to theories of deliberation that are essentially non-evaluative, which have been attributed to Aristotle by Nielsen and Callard independently (Nielsen, "Deliberation as Inquiry,", 402; Callard, "Aristotle on Deliberation," 7).

done in light of, and are governed by, the goal posited in the first stage. Whether an episode of deliberation is more or less complex has to do, not only with what decision problem is in play, but also on who is doing the deliberation. In both cases, the theory that I defend holds that deliberation terminates in something like an intention or a motivational state, as opposed to a physical action (1112b19-20). By attending to Aristotle's collective writings on the deliberation, I hope to reveal that his theory is more sophisticated—and indeed more modern—than current renditions of it in the secondary literature.

In the second chapter, I turn to examine another important aspect of decision-making that is possible in virtue of our application of practical reason. This feature is the fact that our preferences have coherent structural properties, and that these structural properties can be used to guide our choices. To this end, chapter two offers an examination of Aristotle's understudied theory of preference-ranking, which he expounds most extensively in *Topics* III.[41] Indeed, in comparison to the first two books of the *Topics*, Aristotle's discussion of preference structure in the third book of *Topics* has attracted significantly less attention.[42] This fact is rather surprising since *Topics* III contains the "inaugural treatment"[43] of the logic of preference.

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[41]Aristotle also discusses preferences in passing in *Prior Analytics* II 2.22 and *Rhetoric* I.7, but my attention will be primarily focused on *Topics* III.

[42] For some recent studies on the *Topics*, see Paul Slomkowski, *Aristotle's Topics* (Leiden: Brill, 1997); Robin Smith, *Aristotle, Topics I, VIII, and Selections* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Oliver Primavesi, *Die Aristotelische Topik. Ein Interpretationsmodell und seine Erprobung am Beispiel von Topik B* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1996); Michael Schram, *Die Prinzipien der Aristotelischen Topik* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2004); Vittorio Sainati and Mauro Mariani, *Storia dell'Organon aristotelico. 1, 1* (Pisa: ETS, 2011). In English, see Ínnocentius Bocheński, *Ancient formal logic* (Amsterdam, North-Holland Pub. Co., 1951). In French, see Brunschwig, *Topiques 1* (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 2002); Wilhelmus Antonius de Pater, *Les Topiques d'Aristote et la dialectique platonicienne: la méthodologie de la définition* (Suisse: Éditions St. Paul, 1965); Yvan Pelletier*, La dialectique aristotelicienne* (Montreal: Bellarmin, 1991). In German, see O. Gigon, "*Aristoteles, Topik iii. 1-3*," in *Aristotle on Dialectic: The Topics; Proceedings of the Third Symposium Aristotelicum*, ed. G. E. L. Owen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 233-25. In Italian, see Attilio Zadro, *Aristotele: I Topici—Traduzione, Introduzione e Commento* (Naples: Loffredo, 1974). As their titles suggest, the majority of these works aim to situate the *Topics* within Aristotle's Organon or are dedicated to one of the first two books, rather than the third book, of the *Topics*.

[43] N. Rescher, "Semantic Foundations for the Logic of Preference," in *The Logic of Decision and Action*, edited by Rescher (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1966), 37-79, 38.

While scholars pay historical homage to Aristotle, their evaluations of his pioneering treatment the logic of preference have not generally been positive.[44] Among the contemporary philosophers who have engaged with Aristotle's analysis of preference in *Topics* III, two have offered the most sustained, and critical, treatments: Nicholas Rescher and Richard Jeffrey. Rescher has concluded that, in Aristotle's treatment, "no adequate distinction is drawn between material and formal conditions. The bulk of the principles listed are of a strictly substantive, non-formal sort."[45] Echoing Rescher's concern while adding his own, Jeffrey reached the now common conclusion that though the logic of decision is "old as Pascal, the idea is surely not as old as Aristotle."[46] According to Jeffrey's assessment, Aristotle's discussion in *Topics* III fails to provide a rationale for preferential choice because some of the inference rules Aristotle catalogs in *Topics* III, viz. those in 118a18-20, appear to be valid only under the strict condition that the options being ranked are equiprobable.

The only attempt to vindicate Aristotle's theory of preference was made nearly four decades ago in a response to Rescher by N.J. Moutafakis.[47] The second chapter addresses the

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[44] For example, the authors of *The Port Royal Logic* "would not advise anyone to go looking in Aristotle's *Topics,* since these are strangely confused books" (A. Arnauld and P. Nicole, *Logic or the Art of Thinking,* trans. and ed. Buroker (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1996), 188). Brunschwig complains that in Aristotle's study of the predicate 'αἱρετόν' (choiceworthy), the majority of the instances discussed "make sense only to him" and that Aristotle's formulation is "exceptionally elliptical and quick" (*Topiques 1*, lviii).
[45] "Semantic Foundations for the Logic of Preference," 38.
[46] Jeffrey, "The Logic of Decision Defended" *Synthese* Vol. 48, No. 3 (1981) 474-492.
[47] N. J. Moutafakis, "Axiomatization of Preference Principles in Aristotle's *Topics*, Book III," *Philosophical Investigations* Vol. V (1983): 84-99. He argues that Aristotle's account displays technical rigorousness at a level that can be reasonably compared to that of Richard Martin's *Intension and Decision, A Philosophical Study* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1963). Moutafakis argues that the following axioms, as formulated by Martin, can be abstracted from Aristotle's discussion of the structure of preferences in *Top*. III.

1. If X prefers a to b, then a and b are distinct sentences of L.
2. If X prefers a to b at time t, then X prefers a to b at every momentary time span of time t.
3. Given three sentences of L, a, b, and c, if a is preferred to b, and b is preferred to c, then a is preferred to c, but if X is indifferent between a and b, and b and c, then X is indifferent between a and c.

(3) is supposed to capture a principle of rational preference ranking that is similar to transitivity.
Although Moutafakis gives a formidable defense of Aristotle against Rescher's criticism, there are two limitations with his attempt to axiomatize the principles that Aristotle articulates in *Top*. III. The first is that Moutafakis anchors Aristotle's theory of preference on Martin's framework in order to validate Aristotle's contribution. Martin's system, however, remains relatively obscure among philosophers and it assumes in its background an equally idiosyncratic theory of time. The second problem is that Moutafakis still does not take Aristotle's contribution far enough. He argues that Aristotle "simply presents a series of rules he

need for an up-to-date study and reassessment of Aristotle's analysis of preference in *Topics* III.1-5. Candidly confronting Jeffrey's worry, I believe, is a necessary step towards the goal of assessing whether or not, and to what extent, Aristotle develops a logic of preference. The chapter's central thesis will be that the technical challenges raised against Aristotle's theory by contemporary critics are explicable by design. For Aristotle's discussion of the logic of preference is situated within the *Topics*—a treatise on dialectical deduction (*dialectikos syllogismos*), which proceeds from reputable views (*ex endoxōn*) and yields probable knowledge (*Top*. III.1, 100a1-30). Nevertheless, the description "inaugural treatment" of preference logic comfortably, and accurately, applies to Aristotle's *Topics* III since the text reveals his awareness of many principles fundamental to theories of preference and decision today. The points of contact discussed in chapter two include the following: the desirability and probability of options should impact the agent's decision-making; preference is an inherently comparative concept; preferences are not tastes; the logical order of preference provides a rationale for preferential choice. The chapter is followed by an appendix, containing a survey of the preference principles that Aristotle enumerates in *Topics* III.1-5, their exceptions, and examples, where available.

In chapter three, I broaden perspective to examine Aristotle's theory of practical rationality more generally. While reason looms large in Aristotle's practical philosophy, as we will see, there is *prima facie* evidence that he confines its role to the identification of means to the realization of ends determined by non-rational motive forces. Aristotle holds, for instance, that "we deliberate, not about the goals, but about the things towards the goals" (βουλευόμεθα δ' οὐ περὶ τῶν τελῶν ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν πρὸς τὰ τέλη, *EN* III.3, 1112b12) and "virtue makes the goal

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feels will serve as guides for successful disputation" and that "he offers no philosophical view of his own" (Moutafakis, "Axiomatization of Preference Principles in Aristotle's *Topics*, Book III", 85).

right, and the excellence of practical rationality the things towards the goal" (ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀρετὴ τὸν σκοπὸν ποιεῖ ὀρθόν, ἡ δὲ φρόνησις τὰ πρὸς τοῦτον, *EN* VI.12, 1144a7-9/EE II.11, 1227b22-25). These puzzling remarks invite a deeper reflection on the following question about the scope of practical reason: What, exactly, is the work of practical reason in action, particularly with respect to the formulation and adoption of ends?

The answer to this question, according to a recent influential account, is that practical reason does not tell us what ends to pursue, but only how to pursue them since our ends themselves are set by our ethical characters.[48] The goal of chapter three is to revive and defend the alternative intellectualist line of interpretation, which holds that one of the most important features of Aristotelian practical reasoning is its directive role in guiding the choices we make and how we live our lives more broadly. For Aristotle assigns to the excellence of practical rationality, what he calls *phronēsis*, the task of mapping out of the landscape of value corresponding to the agent's conception of what the human good consists in, a conception which, I argue, requires both knowledge of what sort of being the human agent is and why such a being's life should be arranged and oriented in one way rather than another. My project thus provides a systematic alternative to the quasi-Humean interpretation of Aristotle lately.

This dissertation concludes with an attempt to solve an *aporia* in *Politics* I.13 by means of applying the theories of deliberation and rationality defended in the preceding chapters. The *aporia* has to do with Aristotle's belief that not every human agent is equally capable of exercising the rational capacity to deliberate. Aristotle plainly tells us in *Politics* I.1.3 that the deliberative faculty (*to bouleutikon*) is unperfected (*atelē*) in children, and "ineffective" (*akuron*)

[48] I have in mind Moss' careful study, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good,* on these issues.
[48] Although I will be developing, in the third chapter, an intellectualist reply to Moss, I do think that some of her intuitions are correct and will aim to preserve them while defending aspects of the various intellectualist readings that I also find compelling. The intellectualist readings I have in mind belong to the following authors: Wiggins, Charles, McDowell, and Nussbaum.

in women (1260a12). The closing chapter seeks to understand Aristotle's puzzling claim about the deliberative capacity of women by resolving the following exegetical questions. First, what does Aristotle have in mind in describing the female's deliberation as 'akuron'? Second, why does the deliberative capacity of female children become defective but that of male children does not, given that the deliberative faculty is unperfected (*atelē*) in all children (*Pol.* I.13, 1260a12-13)

I should say at the start that the chapter I had originally planned to write would also discuss the irrationality of individuals Aristotle calls "natural slaves," whom he believes to lack a deliberative faculty altogether (*Pol*. I.13, 1260a12). The choice to focus exclusively on the decisional capacity of women in this realized version of the chapter is motivated by two reasons. The first is that the case of "natural slaves" rightfully deserves a separate treatment of its own. The various complexities of the issue here make it impossible to sufficiently address in a single chapter in tandem with the treatment of Aristotle's view on the deliberation of women. The second is that the account of deliberation defended in the first chapter dovetails with my analysis of Aristotle's puzzling remark about the deliberative ability of women. In the future, I would like to return to work on the parallel issue regarding the slaves' purported lack of deliberative faculty; meanwhile, where thinking about Aristotle's conception of the slaves' reasoning ability may shed light on the analysis of his view about women's deliberation, I include such a discussion.

In brief, the view that I defend in chapter four takes the description '*akuron'* to be primarily about women's psychological condition (PSYCHOLOGICAL READING) rather than political influence (POLITICAL READING) According to the political reading, women's decisions are ineffectual because of a contingent social condition: they lack political authority in the *polis*. Since the political reading suggests that Aristotle's tendentious remark at *Pol*. I.13, 1260a12 is nothing

more than a sociological observation, I argue that line 1260a12 fails as a justification for Aristotle's view that male heads ought to rule over women, slaves, and children differently since the constitution of the soul differs in each (1260a9-15). Although the psychological reading renders Aristotle's argumentative strategy more intelligible, I believe we should reconsider the prospects of a particular brand of cognitive readings which hold that the female's defective deliberative ability is sufficiently explicable in virtue of biological, sexual differences. For the biological differences, prominently noted by Aristotle in *Generation of Animals*, do not straightforwardly entail any cognitive differences between the two sexes.

Suppose that biological differences, as I will argue, cannot ground the discrepancy in the deliberative ability of freemen and women. Should we then revert to saying (as in the political reading) that the intended meaning of Aristotle's claim is not about the psychological condition of women? Not necessarily. I argue we can acknowledge that Aristotle's argument at 1260a9-15 assumes psychological differences between men and women without committing to the textually tenuous thesis that inalterable sexual differences underwrite women's believed inability to deliberate well. On this reading, external conditions—most prominently, moral training—play a leading role in shaping the development of the female's deliberative capacity. This reading is confirmed, among other doctrines, by Aristotle's view that intellectual excellence, which includes the virtue of sound deliberation, "owes both its birth and growth to teaching" while the moral virtues are cultivated by habituation (*EN* II.1, 1103a14-18). Understood in this way, Aristotle's theory of practical rationality need not be yoked together with his misogynistic physiology, as the current received view would seem to imply.

Chapter One

Aristotle on the Structure of Deliberation

Aristotle's conceptual analysis of deliberation (*bouleusis*) is perhaps one of the most original parts of his ethics and philosophy of action.[49] In Aristotle's fullest analysis of deliberation, he characterizes deliberation as a search (*zētēsis*) or investigation (*skepsis*) which begins with a practical commitment to some goal and terminates when the agent "has brought the starting point of action back to the ruling part of himself" (*EN* III.3, 1113a5-6). While the account of deliberation in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3 has been extensively studied in recent years,[50] Aristotle's remarks concerning deliberation outside of this central chapter have not received equal attention. In passages outside of *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3, he names the following mental acts as components of deliberation: calculating, analyzing, inferring, measuring, "making one out of many," judging, and choosing one thing before another.[51] These texts establish that deliberation is an investigation involving many cognitive components, but they leave the structure of this investigation underspecified. In this paper, I offer a reconstruction of Aristotle's theory of deliberation by elucidating how the mental acts he identifies both in and outside of *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3 integrate into a unified process of practical reasoning.

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[49] Although Plato discusses *euboulia* in connection with the sophists (*Protagoras* 31835-319a2), he nowhere offers a substantive discussion of deliberation. There is also no evidence that Plato's predecessors articulate an account of deliberation of the sort found in Aristotle's works.
[50] See n.35.
[51] *Mem*. II, 453a10; *DA* III.10, 434a5-10; *EE* II.10, 1226b9; *MM* I.17, 1189a14.

The interpretation to be defended aims to satisfy two *desiderata*. First, a satisfying reconstruction of Aristotle's theory should state when and why the cognitive processes he mentions in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3 and beyond are, in fact, constituents of deliberation. Second, the interpretation must be sensitive to Aristotle's view that deliberation does not concern cases of routine actions, but rather decision problems that are difficult to resolve, bearing serious consequences. For Aristotle consistently uses complex decision problems as examples of deliberation; he even encourages us to solicit help from others in the deliberation of serious problems (*EN* III.3, 1112b10). [52] Any genuine Aristotelian model of deliberation must be sufficiently sophisticated to accommodate the decision problems he takes to be deliberation *par excellence.*

To meet these *desiderata*, I defend an interpretation that treats Aristotle's most extensive analysis of deliberation in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3 as a multi-stage process of investigation, unfolding into a complex and integrated series of mental actions. On this reading, deliberation generally (but not always) consists of four mental acts: (1) setting a provisional goal, (2) constructing a set of possible alternatives by, (3) identifying the best alternative in the set by evaluation, (4) forming an intention to do the first action in the series of actions towards the goal. I argue that this reading more accurately represents Aristotle's understanding of deliberation while rendering his theory more sophisticated—and indeed more modern—than the alternatives in recent years.[53]

[52] Elizabeth Anscombe, Agnes Callard, and John Cooper, among others, also make this observation. Anscombe, "Thought and Action in Aristotle," in *Aristotle's Ethics: Issues and Interpretations,* edited by J. J. Walsh and H.L. Shapiro (Belmont: Wadsworth Pub. Co, 1967), 56-69, 58; Callard, "Aristotle on Deliberation", 1; Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle*), 6.
[53] In particular, the view that it is sufficient for deliberation to only involve causal mapping by backward analysis from the goal in Callard and Nielsen. Alternatively, deliberation is imagined to be consisting in the act of comparing alternatives on the ground of their pleasantness, as presented to the agent by *phantasia* in Moss' *Aristotle on the Apparent Good*.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. I begin with a short prelude to introduce and contextualize the central text. *En passant*, I present the two dominant strands of interpretations in the literature by discussing an interpretive disagreement about how to render the prefix '*pro'* in '*prohairesis*,' which Aristotle discusses at the end of *Nicomachean Ethics* III.2 and *Eudemian Ethics* II.10 (§1). The structure of the rest of the chapter closely follows that of Aristotle's "official account" of deliberation in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3. The next section is thus devoted to the beginning of *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3 in which Aristotle considers the possible subjects of deliberation (1112a18-1112b15. Cf. *EE* II.10, 1226a20-1226b1). My goal is to elucidate what he takes to be the possible subjects of deliberation and to draw an implication for his theory: that deliberation minimally requires choosing between two options. This result gives us a compelling reason to reject a strand of interpretation which holds that deliberation does not require a comparative evaluation of the options as a necessary constituent (§2). The chapter continues to flesh out Aristotle's analysis of the possible subjects of deliberation by paying close attention to his choice of examples of decision problems that call for deliberation. On the basis of these examples, I argue that, for Aristotle, a person engages in deliberation about technical and significant issues, as opposed to quotidian actions. If my argument is sound, then we must also give up a certain deflationary model of deliberation as a model of Aristotelian deliberation (§3). The twofold goal of the next section is to explain the first step of deliberation and to clarify that Aristotle's thorny remark—that we only deliberate "about the things towards the ends" (1112b12)—does not commit him to the theory of instrumental rationality *à la* Hume (§4). Next, I discuss the second and (potential) third stages of deliberation, which have to do with causal discovery and evaluation of the alternative pathways. I argue that deliberators who possess the relevant knowledge acquired through experience can bring this experience to bear on their

deliberation and, therefore, will forgo step three. However, in both cases, there will be a comparison—an evaluation of at least two options—since this is a necessary component of deliberation (§5). I conclude by clarifying the final stage of deliberation and allaying the objections that desisting is not a genuine alternative and that the view to-be-defended threatens the virtuous person's single-minded commitments to her fine goal (§6).

1. On *prohairesis* and Competing Models of Deliberation

Aristotle's account of deliberation in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3 is preceded by an analysis of praise, blame, voluntariness in III.1 and *prohairesis* in III.2.[54] In both *Eudemian Ethics* II.10 and *Magna Moralia* I.17, the treatment of *prohairesis* is also integrated with his discussion of deliberation. There is no universal agreement among scholars concerning what Aristotle means by '*prohairesis',* but most would agree that *prohairesis* is the result of successful deliberation and grounded on rational desires (*boulēsis*, *EN* III.3, 1113a13-14, 1113b4-6; *EE* II.10, 1226b21).[55] The discussion of *prohairesis* follows the discussion of voluntariness and leads up to Aristotle's analysis of deliberation because, in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.2, he is interested in finding out what makes actions originated from *prohairesis* distinct from the general class of voluntary actions. Aristotle's initial suggestion is that *prohairesis* is what has been decided by earlier deliberation, but voluntary actions, as such, need not be (*EN* III.2, 1112a17; *EE* II.10,

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[54] See Susanne Bobzien's discussion for further details on the relation among chapters 1-5 of *EN* III. Bobzien, "Choice and Moral Responsibility (*NE* iii 1-5)," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, edited by R. Polansky (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 81-109.

[55] Anscombe, "Thought and Action in Aristotle,'' 56-69; Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle*, n48; Irwin, *Aristotle's First Principles*, 336-338; Kenny, *Aristotle's Theory of the Will* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 96-100; Lorenz, *The Brute Within: Appetitive Desire in Plato and Aristotle*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 176-179; Reeve, *Practices of Reason* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 87-88; Segvić, "Deliberation and Choice in Aristotle", 162-5; Sorabji, "Aristotle on the Role of Intellect in Virtue," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, edited by A. O. Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 201-219, 201. Jozef Müller has recently argued that this consensus is not wholly correct since *prohairesis* must occasionally include non-rational desires. Müller, "What Aristotelian Decisions Cannot Be," *Ancient Philosophy* Volume 36, Issue 1, (2016): 173-195. Martha Nussbaum also makes a similar suggestion, writing that *prohairesis* is "on the borderline between the intellectual and passional, partaking of both natures." Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 344.

1226b33-35; *MM* I.17, 1189a31-36). He concludes *Nicomachean Ethics* III.2 with the following remark about the etymology of '*prohairesis'*:

> ἡ γὰρ προαίρεσις μετὰ λόγου καὶ διανοίας. ὑποσημαίνειν δ' ἔοικε καὶ τοὔνομα ὡς ὂν *πρὸ* ἑτέρων αἱρετόν. (1112a15-17)
>
> At any rate, *prohairesis* occurs in virtue of reason and thought. Even the name seems to suggest that the chosen thing is chosen *pro* other things.

In *Eudemian Ethics* II.10, he uses the following formulation.

> δηλοῖ δέ πως καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτό. ἡ γὰρ προαίρεσις αἵρεσις μὲν ἐστίν, οὐχ ἁπλῶς δέ, ἀλλ' ἑτέρου *πρὸ* ἑτέρου· (1226b6-8)[56]
>
> In a way, the name itself makes this clear. For *prohairesis* is choosing, although not without qualification, but choosing one thing *pro* another.

I leave the preposition '*pro*' untranslated because there is an interpretive disagreement about its meaning. The construction *'pro'* plus a noun in the genitive, as seen in Aristotle's explanations, could signal a temporal or preferential relation.[57] Those in favor of rendering *'pro'* as a preferential relation think that the subject of *prohairesis*—the thing that is chosen (*haireton*)—is preferred over other things (*pro heterōn*). This reading of *'pro'* implies that deliberation requires the agent to have a set of options from which she evaluates and makes a selection. I call this the 'Evaluative Model' of deliberation.[58]

[56] I follow the Greek text of F. Susemihl's but also consulted the OCT Greek text of Walzer's. In book VII, however, I rely on Henry Jackson's emendations. The translation is my own in consultation with translations by Dirlmeier, Rackham, and Woods.
[57] Smyth, *Greek Grammar,* revised by G. Messing (Mansfield: Martino, 2013), 384. Smyth notes that the use of *'pro'*+genitive to mark a preferential relation is comparable to the use of the preposition *'anti,'* which we see the author of *MM* uses in his or her discussion of *prohairesis* in *MM* I.17, 1189a14.
[58] Alexander of Aphrodisias writes in *De Fato* 12 that in each episode of deliberation, the deliberator considers the question whether she ought to do (*prakteon*) one action or its contrary (*antikeimenon*). Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De Fato,* translated by P. Thillet (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1984), 181, 10-11. Thomas Aquinas writes about *prohairesis* in Lecture 6 of his commentary on *EN* 3.2: "This, however, pertains to deliberative reason, such as to prefer one thing to another (Hoc autem pertinet ad rationem conferentem, ut unum aliis praeferatur)" (457). Broadie understands deliberation as a matter of "considering alternative possible actions each of which presents itself as loaded with its own set of reasons" (*Ethics with Aristotle*, 227). David Charles translates '*prohairesis'* as 'what is preferred' and writes that deliberation is "concerned to discover what is better and worse." Charles, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Action*, 133. Dirlmeier translates *EE* 1226b8 as "by giving preference to one thing over another (sondern indem man dem einen vor dem anderen den Vorzug gibt)" (*Eudemische Ethik* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 1984), 40). Although W. F. R Hardie finds this reading a little strained, he nevertheless agrees that the expression at 1112a17 should be translated as "chosen in preference to other things." Hardie, *Aristotle's Ethical Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968) 168. Jessica Moss argues that deliberation uses visual representations (*phantasmata*) to envisage the possible options and to select the

Alternatively, authors who prefer the temporal meaning of '*pro*' read *'pro heterōn haireton*' as chosen before other things in the series of actions to be taken towards the goal. This view regards deliberation as "the unraveling of the series of steps," as H.H. Joachim puts it, "on the way to the goal."[59] What it means to choose the chosen thing is, not to prefer it over the other options, but to adopt it before the other steps leading to the goal. For Joachim and his followers, deliberation is a process of working backward by analysis from the goal to reveal the most immediate action that the agent could perform. I will use the name 'Causal Discovery Model' to label theories of deliberation following this general line of thought.[60]

One might rightly think that the selection between the preferential and temporal readings is a false dilemma. Indeed, a group of scholars points out that these two options are not mutually exclusive.[61] Rather, it is because deliberation is chronologically prior to acting that the resultant action might display a preference for one thing over another. In my view, Aristotle is indeed appealing to both meanings of this prefix to explain how deliberation unfolds, given the complexity of the process as he understands it. When one deliberates, one performs a series of actions in stages—including, among other things, the ranking of alternatives and anticipatory

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most pleasant (*Aristotle on the Apparent Good*, 144). David Ross translates '*pro heterōn haireton*' as 'chosen before other things' and justifies his translation in a footnote that "the etymological meaning is preferential choice." *The Works of Aristotle translated into English.* Translated by W.D. Ross. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925, footnote to 1111b5. J. A. Stewart thinks that the English word 'preference' exactly corresponds but cannot always be used. Stewart, *Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), 250.

[59] Joachim, *Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics*, 2nd (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 101. See also this reading in Aspasius, *In Ethica Nicomachea quae supersunt Commentaria* (Berlin: Reimer,1889), 71.10. Jolif and Gauthier follow Joachim's temporal reading; they argue that the prefix *'pro'* is equivalent to the prefix *'pre'* in premeditation (*préméditation*) and premeditated (*prémédité),* writing, "the object of decision, this is the thing that one decides to do before everything else (l'objet de la décision, c'est ce qu'on décide de faire avant tout le reste)" (*L'éthique à Nicomaque* (Louvain: Publications universitaires, 1970), 197).

[60] In recent years, I take Callard and Nielsen to be following Joachim's interpretation since they either reject the preferential reading of '*pro'* or the thesis that deliberation essentially involves an evaluation of the possible options. Callard argues for what she calls a geometrical interpretation, which is a variation of the Causal Discovery Model since it holds that "deliberation consists in the mental activity of deriving the action from the goal" ("Aristotle on Deliberation," 7). The theory of deliberation that Nielsen articulates and calls the "Heuristic Model" holds that deliberating agents simply attempt to trace back the causal pathway from the end to the most immediate action that is in their power ("Deliberation as Inquiry," 395).

[61] Tricot, *Éthique à Nicomaque: Nouv. Traduction, avec Introd., Notes et Index* (Paris: Vrin, 1959), 132 n.4; Pakaluk, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 136; Lesley Brown's notes to Ross' translation of the *EN*. *The Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by W.D. Ross and revised by L. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 220; Woods, Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics: Book I, II, and VIII* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 143-144.

planning by causal mapping. A close reading of *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3 will reveal that this multi-stage model best fits the model of inquiry Aristotle describes in the central chapter and his supplementary elucidations of deliberation elsewhere.

2. The *aporia* of *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3

Nicomachean Ethics III.3 begins with the following question: What, exactly, do we deliberate about? Aristotle ventures to answer this question by separating out the domain of things that *cannot* be the subject of deliberation, as follows:

> [1] Unchanging things—e.g., the incommensurability of the diagonal and the sides of a square.
> [2] Things that involve motion and always happen in the same way—e.g., the motion of heavenly bodies.
> [3] Things that do not happen always in the same way—e.g., weather patterns.
> [4] Things that come about as a result of luck—e.g., the finding of a treasure.
> [5] Human affairs that cannot be altered by our efforts—e.g., the political affairs of a foreign state.

The feature that is common to all these things, which excludes them from being the subjects of deliberation, is that they are not within the deliberating agent's power to bring about or to alter (*EN* III.3, 1112a30). Aristotle is now in a position to give his initial answer to the opening question by process of elimination. What remains after things of these five types are eliminated are [6], the possible subjects of deliberation. Aristotle makes the following observation about things of type [6].

> [6] βουλευόμεθα δὲ περὶ (i) τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν καὶ (ii) πρακτῶν· (1112a31)
>
> We deliberate about the things that are (i) up to us and (ii) in the sphere of action.

It is worth noting that the scope of (i) is narrower than (ii) since it picks out only a subset of items in (ii). To propose an idea for a bill to amend existing law in the United States, for instance, is something that can be done, but it is only "up to" citizens of the United States. But

we need to get a better grasp of what Aristotle means by "up to us" to understand these possible subjects of deliberation.[62]

In *Nicomachean Ethics* III.5, he tells us the following.

> ἐφ' ἡμῖν τὸ πράττειν, καὶ τὸ μὴ πράττειν, καὶ ἐν οἷς τὸ μή, καὶ τὸ ναί· (*EN* III.5, 1113b7-8 Cf. *EN* III.1, 1110a17-18; *EE* II.6, 1223a4-7)
>
> Where it is up to us to act, it is also up to us to not act, and where it is up to us to not act, it is up to us to act.

One strategy that we may adopt to explain this specification of things "up to us" is to read it in light of Aristotle's discussion of rational powers in *Metaphysics* IX.5, which goes as follows:

> αὗται μὲν γὰρ πᾶσαι μία ἑνὸς ποιητική, ἐκεῖναι δὲ τῶν ἐναντίων, ὥστε ἅμα ποιήσει τὰ ἐναντία· τοῦτο δὲ ἀδύνατον. ἀνάγκη ἄρα ἕτερόν τι εἶναι τὸ κύριον· λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὄρεξιν ἢ προαίρεσιν. (1048a8-11)[63]
>
> For these [the non-rational powers] are all productive of one effect each, but the others [the rational powers] are productive of contrary effects, such that they would produce contrary effects at the same time. However, this is impossible. The thing that is authoritative (i.e., the thing that decides) is thus something else; what I mean is desire or *prohairesis*.

In his exegesis of this passage, Anthony Kenny identifies rational powers with voluntary powers—those associated with desire and *prohairesis*. He suggests that rational powers "are two-way powers, powers which can be exercised at will: a rational agent, presented with all the necessary external conditions for exercising a power, may choose to do so."[64] If we borrow the

[62] Susan Meyer suggests that there are two ways to mark the scope of things "up to us." On the wide notion, actions that are "up to us" are those that *may* occur as the result of our thought and desire. In the narrow sense, actions that are "up to us" are ones that *are* the results of our thought and desire. It is more likely that Aristotle has in mind the wide notion of things "up to us" here since deliberation is forward-looking and is about things that are not yet (but may be) the result of our thought and desire (*Aristotle on Moral Responsibility*, 186).

[63] I follow the Greek text and the translation of Ross.

[64] But Kenny concludes that Aristotle "was surely wrong" since his identification of rational powers with two-way powers is both too narrow and too broad. It is too narrow because the rational ability to not understand English, for instance, is not up to the agent who knows English. It is too broad because non-rational animals also have two-way abilities. For example, a dog can come to its owner when called to or continue to chase after a moving animal. A. Kenny, *Will, Freedom, And Power* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975), 52-53. For a reply to Kenny on Aristotle's behalf, see A. Kern, *Sources of Knowledge: On the Concept of a Rational Capacity for Knowledge*, translated by D. Smyth (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017), 164-176.

notion of a two-way power from Kenny, then we can say that what it means to perform an act that is up to us is to exercise a two-way power. Since Kenny's interpretation of the passage at issue has been called into question, I want to clarify that my claim here—that when we perform an act that is "up to us" we are exercising a two-way power—does not rely on Kenny's thesis that rational powers are two-way powers since I am not committed to the claim that to perform an act "up to us" is to exercise a rational power. In fact, there might be a good reason to think that the two-way power to φ or not φ is not necessarily a rational power since Aristotle holds that it is possible to form an opinion (*doxasai*) about whether to act or not act without having the power to do so by process of reasoning (*dia logismou*, *EE* II.10, 1226b2523). [65] On this view, to say that φ-ing is up to *A* is to say that *A* determines, through *A*'s choice, whether to φ or not φ.[66]

Aristotle's elucidation of the possible subjects of deliberation in *EE* II.10 confirms this reading of things "up to us." He writes that the things people can deliberate about are "those which are within our power to do or to act otherwise (*praxai ē mē praxai*)" (1216b27-28). When Aristotle claims that φ-ing is up to A, he not only has in mind the fact that it is in A's power to φ but also the fact that it is in A's power to act otherwise. 'To act otherwise' is my characterization of '*mē praxai*' (*EE* II.10, 1216b28; *MM* 1.17, 1189b9). It could mean to refrain from acting, which is the contradictory of acting, but could also mean to do the contrary action, which would be narrower in scope than the contradictory. My view is that Aristotle has in mind the contradictory since not every action will have a contrary action. At present, it is not essential to

[65] This clarification is important because the thesis that two-way powers are rational powers is disputed, for instance, by Kern (*Sources of Knowledge*, 165).

[66] See a recent defense of this reading in M. Alvarez, "Agency and Two-Way Powers," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* CXIII, Part 1 (2017): 100-121. Javier Echeñique considers the issue regarding whether Aristotle's specification of the thing "up to us" should have the form of a conjunction or a disjunction and argues for the disjunctive reading. See his discussion in Echeñique, *Aristotle's Ethics and Moral Responsibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Appendix.

settle on a specific meaning of '*mē praxai.*' The germane point I want to make is that Aristotle talks about what is "up to us" in terms of pairs.

The fact that things "up to us"—the subjects of deliberation—come in pairs on the Aristotelian framework implies that Aristotle assumes deliberation requires that the agent has at least two options.[67] If things "up to us" are such that we have the power to perform or not to perform, then deliberation is concerned with, at least in part, choosing between these two options. Note that the alternatives need not be particularly robust, such as a choice between two contrary actions that a medical expert might make: whether to cure or to harm a patient. In some cases, such as the one Aristotle discusses at *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3, 1112a24-25, the choice might be simply between to act or refraining from acting. But the binary fashion which Aristotle uses to specify the subjects of deliberation already implies that the deliberating agent has the options to *φ* or not to *φ,* or minimally she believes that those options are open to her.

Outside of the ethical treatises, the assumption that deliberation requires at least these two alternatives also appears in the *Rhetoric* and *On Interpretation*. In his description of the art of rhetoric in *Rhetoric* I.2, Aristotle explains that it deals with matters we deliberate about but for which we lack expert knowledge (*technē*, 1357a1-2). His subsequent elaboration of deliberation there confirms the view that deliberation requires two alternatives or, minimally, the appearance of such alternatives, as follows:

> βουλευόμεθα δὲ περὶ τῶν φαινομένων ἐνδέχεσθαι ἀμφοτέρως ἔχειν· περὶ γὰρ τῶν ἀδυνάτων ἄλλως ἢ γενέσθαι ἢ ἔσεσθαι ἢ ἔχειν οὐδεὶς βουλεύεται οὕτως ὑπολαμβάνων· (1357a4-7)[68]

[67] This is one point, among several, that Bobzien makes in her chapter. She also notes that Aristotle also frequently uses "being a master of" (*kurios* + genitive) and expressions of possibility (*exēn*) in this binary fashion to express the same requirement for human agency (*NE* 3.5, 1113b32-33, 1114a2-3, 1114a16-17, 1114a19-20) ("Choice and Moral Responsibility (*NE* iii 1-5)," 92).
[68] I follow Ross' Greek text; the translation is mine.

> We deliberate about the things that appear to admit of alternatives; concerning things that could not be otherwise in the past, present, and future, nobody, taking them as such, deliberates about them.

In *On Interpretation* 9, Aristotle reiterates this position, while drawing out what he perceives to be the absurd consequence of unconditional necessity in the following passage.

> Ὥστε οὔτε βουλεύεσθαι δέοι ἂν οὔτε πραγματεύεσθαι, ὡς ἐὰν μὲν τοδὶ ποιήσωμεν, ἔσται τοδί, ἐὰν δὲ μὴ τοδί, οὐκ ἔσται. (18b31-32)[69]

> [If unconditional necessity were true] then there would be no need to deliberate or busy oneself with anything thinking that if we do this, this will happen, but if we do not, it will not.

Here, he depicts deliberation as a kind of reasoning about how one's action—and indeed inaction—might have an impact on what will happen. If there is only one thing that can come to be, as his dialectical opponent holds, then we could not do the kind of causal reasoning and evaluation that he thinks deliberation requires. But Aristotle maintains, "what will be has an origin both in deliberation and in action" (*DI* 9, 19a7-9). In his view, what will happen, at least on some occasions, will happen because of what we choose to do or refrain from doing as a result of our deliberation.

Aristotle's presupposition that deliberation requires alternative options appears to be in direct conflict with the Causal Discovery Model. The Causal Discovery Model holds that deliberation does not necessarily require selecting among alternative courses of actions—even if those alternatives are construed broadly as action and inaction.[70] However, this theory ignores the fact that the subjects of deliberation themselves are the things that we can act or refrain from acting on. In defining the subjects of deliberation in this twofold manner, Aristotle is already

[69] I follow the Greek text of Minio-Paluello's and J.L. Ackrill's translation.
[70] Nielsen contends, "Aristotle never suggests that to deliberate we must of necessity weigh action against inaction or action against action" ("Deliberation as Inquiry," 402). Callard agrees with Nielsen's contention, which she reiterates in the following. "The work of deliberation is to find the analytic path to a single option, rather than to select between given options" ("Aristotle on Deliberation," 7).

committed to a particular conception of deliberation—one which assumes that the deliberating agent has at least two alternative options. The evaluation of alternative options thus turns out to be a necessary component of deliberation since it is already built into Aristotle's characterization of the subjects of deliberation. A supporter of the Causal Discovery Model must ultimately explain why the subjects of deliberation are defined dualistically in terms of what we have the power to do or refrain from doing.

3. Learning from Aristotle's Examples

Having introduced his initial definition of the possible subjects of deliberation as things "up to us," Aristotle proceeds to refine his definition. He tells us that these things also admit some degree of uncertainty regarding how they will be brought about. People, Aristotle observes, do not deliberate about how to write a particular letter or a proper name (*MM* I.17, 1189b20). Instead, we deliberate about "the things that come about in a certain way for the most part, but in which the outcome is unclear, and with things that are as yet undetermined" (*EN* III.3, 1112b8-9). There are separate challenges for how exactly one should understand the technical terms in Aristotle's definition, such as "for the most part" (*hōs epi to polu*) and "undetermined" (*adioriston*).[71] An attempt to settle this matter would carry us far afield. At present, I take Aristotle to mean that we deliberate about things that come about in a certain way with a fair degree of regularity, allowing for anticipatory planning. But at the same time, the outcomes of these things must be relatively uncertain to permit reasoning about their causes. Aristotle's

[71] In *Physics* II.5, Aristotle contrasts among three classes of things coming-to-be: (1) 'always in the same way,' (2) 'for the most part,' or (3) neither (196b10-11). Lindsay Judson takes these expressions to be expressing conditional frequency. Judson, "Chance and 'Always or For the Most Part'," in *Aristotle's Physics: A Collection of Essays*, 2nd, edited by L. Judson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 73-99. Others take it to be a taxonomy of propositions: (1) some propositions are true necessarily, (2) some are true for the most part, (3) others are neither. Anagnostopoulos, *Aristotle on the Goals and Exactness of Ethics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), chapters 5 and 6.

examples of such things are those concerning medical treatment, wealth management, military formation, and policymaking.[72]

An important upshot of Aristotle's examples of deliberation, which often goes unnoticed in the literature, is that deliberation concerns challenging decisions where it is not easy to settle by a simpler procedure which course of action one should pursue. The fact that he consistently employs complex and rather technical cases throughout the *corpus* confirms this observation. Outside of the ethical treatises, he devotes, for instance, the third book of *Topics* to the discussion of "things that are quite close to one another and concerning which we are not in complete agreement about which one we ought to prefer over the other" (III.1, 116a7-8). Aristotle's examples of decision problems, I argue, present a significant challenge to a recent version of the Evaluative Model, which I will refer to as the 'Representational Evaluative Model.'[73] This model is representational insofar as it allocates the bulk of the mental actions involved in deliberation to *phantasia,* the faculty that is responsible for generating representations in us.[74] On this view, *phantasia* underwrites our deliberation through its pleasurable or painful representations of the available options. These representations, in turn, motivate action by being themselves pleasurable or painful.[75] A common example in the literature goes as follows: When an agent decides whether to have a third martini or to call it a night, she uses *phantasmata*—the products of *phantasia*—as aids. In this deliberation, "one of the

[72] *EN* III.3, 1112b4, 1112b13; *EE* II.10, 1227a11; *Met.* VII.7, 1032b5-10; *Pol.* III.14, 1298a3-5
[73] This is the view that I take Jessica Moss to be advancing in her *Aristotle on the Apparent Good.*
[74] *'Phantasia'* is often translated as 'imagination' and the related term *'phantasma'* as 'image.' This translation is misleading because it already presupposes a particular understanding of the term: that *phantasia* is a capacity to generate visual images. To avoid this problem, I leave *'phantasia'* untranslated throughout the paper. I suggest that *phantasia* should be understood as the mechanism or faculty through which *phantasmata* are generated in us, which is how Aristotle intends for us to understand the term (*DA* III.7, 428a1-2). Commentators do not wholly agree on what Aristotle says about *phantasia*, but the features that everyone generally agrees on are the following: (1) Aristotle's definition of *phantasia* as 'that in virtue of which a *phantasma* is generated in us' (*DA* III.3, 428a1-2); (2) *phantasia* is a cognitive capacity distinct from both perception and thinking (428b7); (3) *phantasia* is necessary for both human and animal cognition (431a15).
[75] This is what Moss calls "affective similarity," which is the thesis that *"phantasiai* preserve the pleasure or pain of the perceptions from which they arise" (*Aristotle on the Apparent Good*, 57).

phantasmata representing future options represents an option as pleasant, and it is this option which thought selects, and rational desire pursues."[76] If the pleasant option here is to drink the third martini, then this is what the agent *rationally* decides to do.

Now consider a decision problem in the Aristotelian spirit. A doctor is deciding whether endocrine therapy or radiation therapy is the more appropriate cancer treatment, given her patient's preferences and medical conditions. Admittedly, there is a way in which this doctor's deliberation is analyzable strictly in terms of pleasurable and painful representations: she decides on the treatment that *phantasia* represents as less painful. However, there is something deeply troublesome about this doctor's deliberation if she makes her decision on the basis of how she is affected by the pain and pleasure transmitted through *phantasia*'s representations of the alternatives. For this kind of deliberative inquiry requires the intellectual activities that Aristotle describes as components of deliberation: e.g., calculating (*EN* VI.9, 1142b15), analyzing (*EN* III.3 1112b23-24), and inferring (*Mem.* II, 453a10). In determining the treatment that is more effective for the patient, the doctor will have to, among other things, calculate the comparative merits of each option and analyze what steps are to be taken.

To support my claim that deliberation is highly intellectual, consider Aristotle's illustrative remark that the deliberator "analyzes in the way described as though he were analyzing a *diagramma*" (*EN* III.3, 1112b20-12). '*Diagramma*' could mean a figure, a diagram, or a geometrical theorem. If one reads it like 'a figure' or 'a diagram,' then the analysis is concerned with a construction problem. On this reading, one assumes that the desired figure can be constructed from a simpler figure (or a combination of figures) and continues to work

[76] Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good*, 149.

backward until one reaches a simple figure that one is already familiar with.[77] Alternatively, if one reads '*diagramma'* as 'geometrical theorem,' then the analysis has to do with the transition from the theorem back to its grounding elements—the premises.[78] In either case, the decision problem is of a sort which requires the breaking up of a complex composite into its constituents.

In my view, it is because decision problems calling for deliberation are complex in this sense that analysis, or decomposition, is required. On some occasions, it may be a chief goal that requires decomposition into a plurality of subordinate goals.[79] At other times, one might engage in an analysis to unveil the possible causal pathways, which is to discover the series of steps leading from the goal to the most immediate action that one could do. But if the deliberator is engaging in anything like these decomposing reasoning processes, then deliberation is indeed highly intellectual. Deliberation, as such, cannot just be a kind of determination about what to do on the basis of painful and pleasant representations. Decision problems that can be settled by merely registering and responding to pain and pleasure do not call for analyses and, indeed, are not the ones Aristotle consistently regards as deliberation problems. I believe that this is a compelling reason to be skeptical, if not to reject outright, the Representational Evaluative Model.

4. Two Ways of Being Practically Committed to a Goal

Having discussed Aristotle's answer to the opening *aporia* of *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3 concerning the possible subjects of deliberation, we are now in a position to examine his analysis

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[77] Proponents of this reading include Callard, "Aristotle on Deliberation," 3-5; Hardie, *Aristotle's Ethical Theory,* 166; Joachim, *Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics,* 101-102; Ross, *The Works of Aristotle translated into English,* note to 1112b2; Taylor, *Nicomachean Ethics Books II-IV*, 157.

[78] See M. Malink, "Aristotle on Principles as Elements," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 53, (Winter 2017). This is a point also made by Ammonius of Alexandria, who maintains that any object of analysis must be a composite. A. Busse*, Ammonius in Porphyrii Isagogen sive quinque voces, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca 4.3* (Berlin: Reimer, 1891), 37. 7-10.

[79] I discuss more thoroughly how and why rational scrutiny of the goal is—and must be—possible on the Aristotelian framework in chapter 3.

of the process of deliberation. On the reading that I defend, 1112b11-12 marks the beginning of Aristotle's account of the process of deliberation, which he lays out in successive steps. This reading gives *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3 a natural progression. After specifying the features common to all *subjects* of deliberation (1112a18-1112b12), Aristotle proceeds to tell us about the *process* (1112b11-27), as follows:

> βουλευόμεθα δ' οὐ περὶ τῶν τελῶν ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν πρὸς τὰ τέλη. Οὔτε γὰρ ἰατρὸς βουλεύεται εἰ ὑγιάσει, οὔτε ῥήτωρ εἰ πείσει, οὔτε πολιτικὸς εἰ εὐνομίαν ποιήσει, οὐδὲ τῶν λοιπῶν οὐδεὶς περὶ τοῦ τέλους· ἀλλὰ θέμενοι τὸ τέλος τὸ πῶς καὶ διὰ τίνων ἔσται σκοποῦσι· (1112b11-16)
>
> We deliberate, not about the goals, but about the things towards the goals. The doctor does not deliberate about whether he shall heal; nor an orator whether he shall persuade; nor the politician whether he shall produce laws; nor does any of the rest [of the experts] deliberate about their goals. But having posited the goal, we investigate how and by what means it will be obtained.

To forestall potential concerns, I want to address straightaway why Aristotle begins his discussion of the process of deliberation with the claim that we do not deliberate about our goals. Some scholars read this remark as an indication that Aristotle shares the Humean[80] division of labor—that the role of reason is instrumental in deliberation and should be confined to that of "the slave of the passions."[81] In what follows, I aim to show that this division of labor need not follow from Aristotle's controversial remark, while elucidating what I take to be the first step of deliberation.

I start by visiting Aristotle's discussion of deliberation in *Eudemian Ethics* II.10. He explains, "those who have no goal posited by them are not in a position to deliberate" (1226b29-30). In my view, Aristotle's claim here is motivated by two reasons. First, he describes the

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[80] It is not universally agreed whether Hume endorses the instrumental rationality position that is widely attributed to him. See Millgram, "Was Hume a Humean?" Hume Studies 21, no.1 (1995): 75-94. I discuss this issue more fully in chapter 3.1.
[81] See n. 6.

deliberative faculty (*to bouleutikon*) as "the [faculty] of the soul that contemplates a kind of cause" (*EE* II.10, 1226b26-27). The cause that he has in mind is the final cause—the goal of a person's action—which explains why she acts in one way as opposed to another. Aristotle illustrates this point with the example of a person who walks to fetch something; the fetching of the thing in question is the cause of this person's walking (1226b28-30). His elucidations in *EE* 2.10 reveal that we must posit a goal to deliberate since deliberation presupposes that the resultant action has a cause, i.e., it is for the sake of some end. Second, Aristotle characterizes deliberation as a subset of inquiry in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3, writing:

> φαίνεται δ' ἡ μὲν ζήτησις οὐ πᾶσα εἶναι βούλευσις, οἷον αἱ μαθηματικαί, ἡ δὲ βούλευσις πᾶσα ζήτησις. (1112b21-23)
>
> Not all inquiry appears to be deliberation, for instance, mathematical inquiries, but all deliberation is some inquiry.

But if deliberation is a kind of inquiry, then the agent must assume a starting point to initiate the inquiry. We get a reiteration of this claim in *Eudemian Ethics* II.10. Here, Aristotle explains that there is no theoretical inquiry unless some starting points (*archai)*—e.g., the axioms and first principles—are assumed. Similarly, there is no deliberation without some goal having been identified as the starting point of action (1227a6-13).

In light of these reasons, the first step in deliberation is always to posit a goal. But what, exactly, does an agent do when she sets a goal? I suggest that having something as a goal is to be practically committed to bringing about some state of affairs in one's power. First, to posit a good as a practical end is to accept a set of guiding constraints which narrow our considerations about what to do by providing us with reasons for doing one thing rather than another. The suggestion that the goal plays this regulative role of imposing constraints in deliberation is confirmed by a related thesis that Aristotle expounds in *Parts of Animals* I.1—that final causes

always have explanatory priority over efficient causes.[82] Since both varieties of causes are involved in explanations concerning natural generation, Aristotle asks at the beginning of *Parts of Animals* I.1 which of these comes first in the order of explanation. His answer is decisively the final cause, as follows:

> Φαίνεται δὲ πρώτη, ἣν λέγομεν ἕνεκά τινος· λόγος γὰρ οὗτος, ἀρχὴ δ' ὁ λόγος ὁμοίως ἔν τε τοῖς κατὰ τέχνην καὶ ἐν τοῖς φύσει συνεστηκόσιν. Ἢ γὰρ τῇ διανοίᾳ ἢ τῇ αἰσθήσει ὁρισάμενος ὁ μὲν ἰατρὸς τὴν ὑγίειαν, ὁ δ' οἰκοδόμος τὴν οἰκίαν, ἀποδιδόασι τοὺς λόγους καὶ τὰς αἰτίας οὗ ποιοῦσιν ἑκάστου, καὶ διότι ποιητέον οὕτως. (639b14-19)[83]
>
> Plainly, however, that cause is the first which we call the final cause. For this is the account, and the account is the starting point, alike in the works of art and works of nature. For the physician and the builder define health and house respectively, either by thought or by perception, and then proceed to give the accounts and causes of each [subsequent thing] that they do, and of their acting in the way that they must.

Aristotle identifies the final cause, first, with the account and, second, with the starting point of things belonging to both the natural and artificial varieties. His elucidation makes clear that the final cause guides each step in the series of actions leading up to the goal by giving the agent a reason to act one way rather than another. If the doctor posits health as a goal, for instance, then she infers from this starting point that a healthy condition of the body is needed. She might reason further that such a bodily state presupposes that it be at a certain temperature until she arrives at the most immediate action that she could do to bring about such a result, e.g., by raising the heat in the patient's body (*Met*. VII.7, 1032a5-9).

This reading of the goal as a regulative starting point in deliberation also makes good sense of Aristotle's characterization of deliberation in *On Memory* II as "a kind of inferential process" (453a14). In this text, Aristotle studies the process of recollection (*anamnēsis*), which he understands, like deliberation, as a search or inquiry. Aristotle's analysis here confirms that in

[82] For an in-depth discussion of this thesis and its relation to *Physics* 2.3, see Code, "The Priority of Final Causes over Efficient Causes in Aristotle's *PA,*" in W. Kullmann and S. Föllinger, *Aristotelische Biologie*, (Stuttgart: 1997), 127–143.
[83] The Greek text quoted is edited by P. Louis; the translation is adapted from W. Ogle's translation.

this kind of search "one must secure a starting point" (452a12). It is from this starting point that one passes from one step to the next in the series and ultimately reaches the inference that one has heard or experienced something before (453a11-13). Deliberation, insofar as it is a search of the same sort, also requires a starting point from which one reasons to the inference that such and such is to be done towards the goal.

Our goal not only provides us with reasons to act in one way as opposed to another; it also limits the scope of our considerations about what to do. This brings me to the second commitment that a person makes when she posits something as a goal: she must hold this goal fixed for the entire duration of the deliberation at issue. For to abandon one's posited goal is effectively to end the piece of deliberation that has the stipulative goal as its starting point. What it means to hold the goal fixed is to postpone any considerations about whether one ought to have it as a starting point of the deliberation in play. If *A* assumes some goal, *G,* as her starting point in deliberation at *t,* then *G* is not open to revision at *t.* However, it does not follow from this temporary fixity of *G* that *A* can never deliberate about whether *A* should have *G* as a goal at a time before or after *t.*[84] For instance, the fact that the doctor posits health as a goal implies a narrowing of the range of possible alternatives that she can deliberate about. For, since she has health as her goal, the doctor can no longer consider the possibility of, say, poisoning her patient although doing so may be entirely up to her. In light of this result, it is not surprising for

[84] I take this to be an essential difference between practical and speculative reasoning. Gabriel Lear, for instance, argues that the objects of these types of reasoning are the same set of things, but each variety of reasoning studies these things under a different guise. The theoretical sciences study things *qua* unchanging aspects of nature, but practical inquiry studies them under the guise of what may affect our fortune (Lear, *Happy Lives and the Highest Good* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 95). However, it is because the theoretical sciences are interested in unchanging aspects of nature that their starting points are themselves eternal truths, which are not subject of further deliberations like the way the starting points of deliberation are. That is to say, we must hold the starting points of speculative reasoning unconditionally fixed, whereas the starting points of practical reasoning—and of deliberation—are only to be held fixed conditionally.

Aristotle to claim in the polemical remark at *EN* III.3, 1112b11-16 that the doctor does not deliberate about whether he will heal, and similarly with the other experts.[85]

5. Deliberation: Complex and Simple

After setting out a provisional goal, the agent proceeds to investigate how she will bring it about. In the course of this investigation, she will confront one of two possibilities: either (1) the choice set has at least two members or (2) it is a singleton set. The text goes as follows:

> (1) καὶ διὰ πλειόνων μὲν φαινομένου γίνεσθαι διὰ τίνος ῥᾷστα καὶ κάλλιστα ἐπισκοποῦσι, (2) δι' ἑνὸς δ' ἐπιτελουμένου πῶς διὰ τούτου ἔσται κἀκεῖνο διὰ τίνος, ἕως ἂν ἔλθωσιν ἐπὶ τὸ πρῶτον αἴτιον, ὃ ἐν τῇ εὑρέσει ἔσχατόν ἐστιν. ὁ γὰρ βουλευόμενος ἔοικε ζητεῖν καὶ ἀναλύειν τὸν εἰρημένον τρόπον ὥσπερ διάγραμμα. (1112b18-21)
>
> (1) And if it appears that it can be brought about by many ways, they examine by which it is most easily and best brought about. (2) But if it is brought about by one, they examine how it will be brought about by this and by what this [the previous item in the chain of discovery] will be brought about, until they come to the first cause, which is last in the order of discovery. For the deliberator appears to be searching and analyzing in the way described above as if [he were analyzing] a *diagramma*.

I want to begin unpacking Aristotle's rich analysis by considering how we are to understand the contrast between these two cases. There are two separate questions that I want to answer: First, *what*, exactly, are the mental activities in play in each type of deliberation? Second, *why* is it that some cases of deliberation are more complex, requiring a lengthy procedure, than others? I will attempt to answer the *'what'* question first.

5.1 Causal Discovery

I start with the feature that is common to both the complex case, (1), and the simple case, (2): In both scenarios, a person must uncover at least one causal pathway from the desired end to the most proximate action that she can perform. In *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.9, Aristotle makes clear

[85] As Reginald Jackson puts it, "If the physician does not deliberate whether to heal, this is because he has already deliberated and chosen" (Jackson, "Rationalism and Intellectualism in the Ethics of Aristotle" *Mind* Vol. 51 (1942): 343-360, 347).

that the deliberator, "whether he deliberates well or poorly, is searching" (1142b14-15). As I understand Aristotle, the deliberator is searching for the most efficient causal pathway to his end. More precisely, he is searching for the optimal action that he could perform here and now to secure his goal. To do this, the deliberator constructs the causal pathways by analysis. He starts from the assumed end as an ideal and reasons from this ideal to the series of events that are presupposed by this ideal. The analysis stops when the deliberating agent identifies the final event in the series, which Aristotle calls the first cause (*to prōton aition*) of the genesis of the goal (*EN* III.3, 1112b17-20). In this process of causal mapping, the deliberator ultimately looks for at least one chain of causes leading from the desired end to a state of affairs that he can be a cause (or a partial cause) of.

Consider, for instance, a military leader whose goal is a victory in a critical battle. Victory might be brought about in many ways. I want to keep the example quite general; let's suppose that victory might be brought about by the enemy's peaceful surrendering or it might result from the defeat of the enemy's fighting force in combat. Each of these scenarios, then, represents a causal pathway to be unraveled. The surrender of the enemy, for instance, might be brought about by a siege, which might presuppose a surrounding of the enemy's stronghold, which would require a strategic placement of the general's fighting force. The general analyzes in this way to uncover the potential causes of the desired end until he identifies the most proximate action that he could do to start the causal chain. In the abstract, the deliberator constructs causal pathways to the goal by decomposing the goal into simpler—and more proximate—goals. This example is what Aristotle has in mind in the deliberation of type (2). But there might be several causal pathways to reach a victory in a war, as Aristotle envisions in a scenario like (1). How is this military commander, then, to decide which causal pathway out of

several to pursue? According to Aristotle, he is to proceed by evaluating the set of constructed alternatives to determine which alternative in the set is "easiest" and "best" at promoting his goal (*EN* III.3, 1112b17). I now turn to the discussion of this evaluative process.

5.2 Comparative Evaluation

The present task requires me to engage closely with Jessica Moss' striking theory of the role of *phantasia* in deliberation, which I introduced in §3 as the Representational Evaluative Model. It holds that we rely almost exclusively on *phantasia* to make comparisons among our options. At present, I would like to raise the question: What, exactly, is the underlying process by which *phantasia* yields the judgment that one course of action is preferable? The most promising answer can be found in Aristotle's discussion of deliberative *phantasia* in *de Anima* III.11:

> ἡ μὲν οὖν αἰσθητικὴ φαντασία, ὥσπερ εἴρηται, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ζῴοις ὑπάρχει, ἡ δὲ βουλευτικὴ ἐν τοῖς λογιστικοῖς (πότερον γὰρ πράξει τόδε ἢ τόδε, λογισμοῦ ἤδη ἐστὶν ἔργον· καὶ ἀνάγκη ἑνὶ μετρεῖν· τὸ μεῖζον γὰρ διώκει· ὥστε δύναται ἓν ἐκ πλειόνων φαντασμάτων ποιεῖν). (434a5-10)[86]
>
> Sensitive *phantasia*, as we have said, is shared among the other animals; deliberative *phantasia* in those that are calculative. (For whether to do this or that, by that very fact, is a task of calculating and it is necessary to measure by one unit; for one pursues the greater. It follows that one must be able to make one out of many *phantasmata*).

Moss reads "make one out of many *phantasmata*" as the process by which *phantasia* synthesizes and declares one *phantasma* as overall best.[87] What, then, does it mean for *phantasia* to synthesize the options and to declare one *phantasma* as best? One option is to say that *phantasia* acts as synthesizer by exercising its capacity to generate a panoramic view of a whole situation.[88] However, the task of synthesizing in the context of our *DA* III.11 passage requires, not only

[86] I am using Ross' Greek text of *de Anima* and consulted Hett's translation.
[87] She writes, "The one *phantasma* synthesized through deliberation represents an option as best, which is to say that it represents it pleasurably; noticing this feature of the option, thought selects it" (*Aristotle on the Apparent Good,* 149).
[88] See Frede, "The Cognitive Role of Phantasia in Aristotle," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima,* edited by M. Nussbaum and A. Rorty (Oxford: 1991), 279-298.

piecing together various parts of one's visual field, but also the task of weighing and measuring (*metrein*) by using a single unit (*heni*). It would seem that the synthesizing role of *phantasia* on the Representational Evaluative Model needs to be more cognitively robust than what this proposal suggests. Moss herself argues that the language of appearing (*phainesthai*) in Aristotle takes on a technical meaning: it always signals the involvement of *phantasia* as an evaluative cognition. To say that something appears good is to say that one finds it good through *phantasia*. *Phantasia*'s ability to synthesize the options thus does not call for a more fundamental explanation since this function is, as it were, built into the notion of *phantasia* as an evaluative cognition.

There are two related issues to consider: the first is whether this is a fair interpretation of *phantasia* as a cognitive faculty and the other is whether it accurately describes what the *de Anima* III.11, 434a5-10 passage says. It is impractical to provide a decisive answer to the first question here, although I want to note that it has been argued that *phantasia* bears content in a non-evaluative way, given that Aristotle thinks *phantasia* is neither an affirmation nor a denial (*DA* III.2, 43a10-11).[89] Second, the *de Amima* III.11 passage is ambiguous between whether the 'one' in 'one out of many' is to be read as 'one *phantasma'* or something like 'one course of action.'[90] Moss reads 'one' as 'one *phantasma*' and thereby allocates the task of making one out of many to *phantasia.* But Aristotle does not say this. What he says is that creatures that can deliberate must be able to do what he describes as "making one out of many." He is silent, however, on the question of whether this synthesizing task is a function of *phantasia* or some other cognitive faculty. To the contrary, in an earlier passage in *de Anima* III.6, he tells us, "the

[89] Caston, "Why Aristotle needs imagination," *Phronesis* 51 (1996): 20-55; Watson, "*Φαντασία* in Aristotle, *De Anima* 3. 3," *The Classical Quarterly* Vol. 32, no. 1 (1982): 100-113.
[90] Christopher Shields, for instance, reads it in this way as 'one alternative' (C. Shields, *Aristotle's De Anima: Translated with an Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2016)*,* 366).

thing that unifies is in every case the intellect (*nous*)" (430b5-6). Note, too, that Aristotle uses the same verb in both the *de Anima* III.6 and 3.11 passages: to unify or, literally, to make one (*hen poiein*).

One might protest that the context of the *de Anima* III.6 remark is disanalogous to that of the III.11 passage since the former has to do with Aristotle's discussion of the impossibility of truth evaluation for indivisible objects, such as white or Cleon. On reflection, we can see that Aristotle's remark in *de Anima* III.6 is indeed relevant to our current discussion on deliberation since he is distinguishing between unsynthesized and synthesized objects of thought. Here, he gives the synthesizing task to the intellect. Alternatively, we can relate this contrast to the distinction between concepts and propositions.[91] Since the text assigns the task of generating propositional thoughts to the intellect, it also confirms the view this chapter defends. For deliberation requires thoughts with propositional content—e.g., if I do such and such, then I will cause such and such a result to come about.

Furthermore, Aristotle tells us in the *de Anima* III.11 passage that creatures who can deliberate must be able to "make one out of many" because they need to "measure by one unit" in order to pursue the greater course of action (434a10). I argue here that the task of measuring by one common unit is a task for the reasoning faculty. We get confirmation for this view in Aristotle's discussion of friendship not grounded on direct reciprocity. In *Eudemian Ethics* VII.10, he gives this suggestion for settling disputes among friends of this sort: "In these cases, there must be one [unit] of measurement, not in number, but in proportion" (1243b29).[92] We cannot settle on the precise difference between one "in number" (*arithmōi*) and one "in proportion" (*logōi*) presently. The relevant point is simply that to measure according to some

[91] Shields, *Aristotle's De Anima*, 332-333.
[92] Here, I follow Jackson's emendation in opting for 'ἀρίθμῳ' as opposed to 'ὅρῳ'.

fixed ratio or proportion, as Aristotle is suggesting, requires the agent to perform calculations (*logizomai,* 1234b20) and arithmetic operations, which are functions proper to the intellect.

If I am right that the reasoning faculty determines which course of action one should pursue, then how does it do so? Aristotle tells us that the deliberator will try to find the "easiest" and "best" path to his end (διὰ τίνος ῥᾷστα καὶ κάλλιστα ἐπισκοποῦσι, *EN* III.3, 1112b17). Based on the preceding discussion of the *de Anima* III.11 passage, I want to suggest that the deliberator will compare the alternatives against one another by using a common unit of measurement. I take Aristotle to mean that, for each decision problem, there is one common unit of measurement the actor can use to determine which course of action to pursue. The reason is that, in Aristotle's view, rational decision-making requires the agent to judge which alternative is better, a thesis he reiterates in the following passages.

> ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν συμβαινόντων, ὁποῖ' ἂν φαίνηται βελτίω εἶναι, ταῦτα προαιρεῖται καὶ διὰ ταῦτα.
> (*MM* II.17 1189b15-18)[93]
>
> It is from the consequences themselves, as they appear better, that one chooses, and these are the reason why.
>
> Δὴ προαιρεῖται μὲν μηθεὶς μὴ παρασκευασάμενος μηδὲ βουλευσάμενος, εἰ χεῖρον ἢ βέλτιον. (*EE* II.10 1226a15-17)
>
> No one chooses without some preparation, without some deliberation whether it is better or worse to do so and so.

If rational decision-making calls for a comparison, measuring, or weighing of the alternatives, then there must be some single unit of measurement which we use to measure the alternatives in

[93] I follow the Greek of Susemihl's and the translation of P. Simpson's. There is a problem with citing passages from the *MM* as evidence for Aristotle's view due to worries about its authenticity. My strategy is to ground my interpretation, not exclusively on the *MM* passages, but in conjunction with the undisputed Aristotelian texts—the *EE* and *EN*. I share Cooper's evaluation that, although there is a lack of scholarly consensus that *MM* is authored by Aristotle, this treatise is nonetheless Aristotelian. Cooper, "The *Magna Moralia* and Aristotle's Moral Philosophy," *American Journal of Philology* 94 (1973): 327-349. For an overall discussion of the authenticity of the *MM* see the Introduction of Simpson's translation (*The Great Ethics*, translated by P. Simpson (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2014), xii-xxviii).

every case.[94] But this view does not imply the stronger—and distinct—position that the one unit must be the same in every case.[95] Indeed, in Aristotle's discussion of preference-ranking in *Topics* III.1, he advises us to "orient the argument in those directions which will prove useful" and claims that what is better is determined by the science that is "appropriate for the inquiry in question" (116a20-22). I understand these remarks to mean that one should reason about the better and worse by using a standard that is suitable for one's purpose and the kind of decision problem in play.

Moreover, I take the fact that Aristotle employs the superlative *'kallista'* at *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3, 1112b17 as a confirmation of this hypothesis. The deliberator, Aristotle tells us, will need to determine which pathway out of many is *'kallista.'* The broad-ranging adjective *'kalos'* could be read in several ways as 'good,' 'noble,' 'honourable,' or 'fine'. The broad scope of this adjective, I argue, allows for the unit of measurement to vary from case to case. What makes a course of action *kallista* in one decision problem will depend on whether it has more or less of the common unit that is proper to the problem in question. To illustrate this point, reconsider the example with which we started this section: a general is considering whether he should engage in siege warfare or to engage the enemy in direct combat. On the theory that I am developing, when

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[94] This view is known as the Weak Commensurability Thesis. Commentators whose views I see myself as championing here are Charles and Wiggin (Charles, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Action*', 133-135; Wiggins, "Weakness of Will, Commensurability, and the Objects of Deliberation and Desire" in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, edited by A. Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 241-266, 256)). Against the Weak Commensurability thesis, see Richardson and Wedin. These commentators reject the commensurability reading because, first, they think that the act of measuring by one is a necessary, but not sufficient condition of rational deliberation. I agree that it is not a sufficient condition since, on the view that I defend, rational deliberation is made up of, not one, but a series of mental actions. Second, they read the act of measuring by one in a temporal way. That is to say, to measure by one is to assess without temporal bias the total pleasure yielded by each alternative. H. Richardson, "Desire and the Good in *De Anima*," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima,* edited by M. Nussbaum and A. Rorty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 367-386, 384-385; M. Wedin, *Mind and Imagination in Aristotle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 143-145.

[95] See, for instance, the position defended by H. A. Prichard that there is one single unit of measurement for every decision problem—pleasure. Prichard thus attributes to Aristotle the view that deliberation involves something like hedonistic calculation. Prichard, "The Meaning of *ἀγαθόν* in the Ethics of Aristotle," *Philosophy* 37 (1935): 27–39. For a famous refutation of Prichard's interpretation, see J.L Austin, "Αγαθόν and Εὐδαιμονία In the Ethics of Aristotle," in *Philosophical Papers,* edited by J. O. Urmson, and G. J. Warnock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 1-31.

deciding which option to pursue, the military commander will have to use a common unit to compare the options. A possible common unit of measurement might be time, say, the amount of time it would take from the first strategic move to reach victory. In this case, the general will evaluate the competing courses of actions by using this common unit to calculate which option, as it were, has a higher score on the appropriate scale.

5.3 The 'Why' Question

Having specified the mental processes involved in cases (1) and (2) of our *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3 passage, I want to turn to the *'why'* question, which asks about the cause of the disparity between these cases. Proponents of the Causal Discovery Model often cite scenario (2) as evidence for their view that deliberation is essentially non-evaluative. Here, I would like to challenge this contention by way of answering the '*why*' question.

In my view, what makes a given deliberation more or less complex is a function of, not only the decision problem in play, but also who the deliberating agent is.[96] For it matters whether this deliberating agent can rely on the relevant experience acquired from similar past deliberations to narrow down the range of open alternatives and thereby simplify his present deliberation.[97] Suppose that the military commander in our earlier example is Alexander the Great, who is deliberating about how to win the battle of Issus of 333 B.C.E. In the course of deliberating about how he should go about defeating the army of Darius II, Alexander could conjure up a multitude of possible action plans and evaluate which one is most suitable given his purpose and unique challenges. Alternatively, he might be able to make use of

[96] I am grateful to Jim Joyce for helping me to conceive this possibility in discussion of the passage with him.

[97] Although Cooper does not state the thought in just the same way and does not offer his theory as a particular reading of our *EN* 3.3 passage, I believe that he holds a similar view about the relevance of experience in deliberation. He suggests that the ability to rely on the previous information that the agent may have with regards to a type of decision problem will determine how much deliberation the agent needs to engage in when confronted with a problem of this type (*Reason and Human Good in Aristotle*, 26-27).

some experience in which he learned, for instance, that a particular tactic is more advantageous in a river-bank terrain similar to that of Issus' to guide his deliberation. To exhaust all of one's available options in a technical decision problem can be laborious—and indeed superfluous—if the agent has already performed equivalent searches in the past.[98]

I want to suggest that something like this phenomenon is in play in the contrast between cases (1) and (2). In the course of deliberation, we bring knowledge acquired through experience to bear on our consideration of what options to include in our choice set. Thus, the more experience one has, the better one is at homing in on the salient alternatives and narrow down one's choices. If we follow this reading to analyze the contrast cases, then a stark contrast difference between deliberation of types (1) and (2) is that the latter is highly selective and simpler to complete. For the deliberator can rely on the relevant experience acquired from past searches to narrow down the range of open alternatives at present.

We get confirmation for this reading in Aristotle's claim that experience is necessary for practical wisdom in *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.8, as follows:

> γεωμετρικοὶ μὲν νέοι καὶ μαθηματικοὶ γίνονται καὶ σοφοὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, φρόνιμος δ' οὐ δοκεῖ γίνεσθαι. αἴτιον δ' ὅτι καὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστά ἐστιν ἡ φρόνησις, ἃ γίνεται γνώριμα ἐξ ἐμπειρίας, νέος δ' ἔμπειρος οὐκ ἔστιν· πλῆθος γὰρ χρόνου ποιεῖ τὴν ἐμπειρίαν· (1142a11-15)
>
> While young people become geometricians, mathematicians, and wise in matters like these, it seems that there is no practically wise young person. The cause is that *that* wisdom is concerned with the particulars, which become familiar with experience, but a young man has no experience, for it is the length of time that gives experience.

[98] The literature on high-level chess players' decision-making process confirms that in episodes of technical deliberation like playing chess, the players do not make calculations about every possible move but rather, as Hubert Dreyfus emphasizes, they "zero in" on a limited number of possible moves (Dreyfus, "The myth of the pervasiveness of the mental," in *Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-World: The McDowell-Dreyfus Debate* Vol. 1, edited by J. K. Schear (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 15–40, 35).

Aristotle denies that a young person can be a *phronimos*, one whose work is to deliberate well (1141b10),[99] since such a youth lacks experience. His rationale is that to deliberate well one must know the patterns of particular facts—e.g., that this particular illness is a sign of such and such a disease—and such knowledge could only come from experience.

Moreover, the proposed reading is licensed by this elucidation of searches, viz. deliberation and recollection, in *On Memory* II:

> τοῦ δ' ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐνίοτε μὲν μνησθῆναι, ἐνίοτε δὲ μή, αἴτιον ὅτι ἐπὶ πλείω ἐνδέχεται κινηθῆναι ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς ἀρχῆς, οἷον ἀπὸ τοῦ Γ ἐπὶ τὸ Ζ ἢ τὸ Δ. (452a24-26)
>
> The reason why we sometimes recollect and sometimes do not, although starting from the same point, is that it is possible to travel from the same starting point to more than one destination; for instance, from *C* we may go to *F* or to *D*.

This passage makes the point that from one starting point of reasoning, a person can travel to two different places in the chain of thought. This possibility gives rise to an *aporia*: why is it that the agent travels to one point, *F*, rather than another, *D,* from the same starting point, *C*? To answer this question, we can look to Aristotle's subsequent remark: "If, then, one is moved on an old path, one is moved to what is more habitual, habit here takes the place of nature" (452a26-28). In light of this comment, commentators suggest that the movement from *C* to *F* is a possible habitual movement, whereas the movement from *C* to *D* is a natural movement.[100] Although we cannot fully delineate the contrast between nature and habits at present, it is clear that Aristotle thinks that the answer to our question has to do with what a person habitually does. If a person

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[99] *Phronēsis* is not just this ability to deliberate well, though. In *EN* 7.12, Aristotle points out that *phronesis* is different from mere cleverness (*deinoteta*), which he defines as being able to do the things that tend towards the mark we have set before ourselves and to hit it (1144a25). He reasons that the clever (but not practically wise) person can make calculations about what to do but still have not deliberated well because she might be deceived about the starting points of her actions and will have gotten for herself a great evil (1142b21). He holds that the end of actions does not appear as such (*phainestai*) except to the good person (*to agatho*). Concerning the *aporia* in this passage, it has been suggested by Modrak that wisdom and natural science require experience, while knowledge of mathematics is acquired by abstraction (Modrak, "Aristotle on the Difference between Mathematics and Physics and First Philosophy," *Apeiron* 22, no.4 (1989): 121-139).

[100] Bloch, D., *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection: Text, Translation, Interpretation, and Reception in Western Scholasticism,* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 43, n.31; Sorabji, *Aristotle On Memory* (London: Duckworth, 2004), 106-107.

frequently makes a move from *C* to *F* in her thought, then *F* becomes a natural terminus when she thinks about *C*. This is what I take Aristotle to mean when he reiterates in the same chapter that "frequency does the work of nature" (452a50).

In the context of deliberation, an agent likewise develops certain mental habits from practice by frequently considering one decision problem or token decision problems of the same type. The person who has experience with a particular decision problem might, for instance, form a habit to only pay attention to salient options and take shortcuts in the deliberation of similar future problems. The fact that an experienced deliberator can avoid the second step of devising possible action plans does not imply that there is no evaluation of the possible options. Rather, this fact indicates quite the opposite: that this agent is making use of the knowledge which she acquired from comparable searches in the past as an aid in her present deliberation to rule out the inferior alternatives. My point is that even when there *are*, in fact, multiple pathways to reach the end, it *appears* to the agent with the relevant experience that there is, effectively, just one causal pathway to the goal. The fact that Aristotle includes case (2) in his discussion of deliberation in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3 need not be interpreted as evidence against the Evaluative Model as some interpreters have claimed, and *a fortiori*, against the model of deliberation that this paper defends.

6. Termination of Deliberation

Having identified the best causal pathway to the desired end, the deliberator is in a position to uncover the first cause of the genesis of the goal, which is the first action in the series that he can perform here and now. Deliberation, however, need not terminate in the performance of this first act in the series. The fact that the termination of deliberation is something short of an action is

worth discussing because some contemporary philosophers complain that Aristotle's account of deliberation is puzzling. John Broome, for instance, relies on Aristotle's discussion of the origin of animal action in *de Motu Animalium* 7 to make just this point.[101] In his discussion of the practical syllogism, Aristotle seems to assert that a physical action, such as building a shelter, is the result of a piece of practical reasoning.

It is not universally agreed, however, how we are to interpret Aristotle's discussion of the practical syllogism in connection with his theory of deliberation. Regarding the discussion in *de Motu Animalium* 7, we should note that Aristotle's aim here—in conformity with the overarching aim of the *de Motu Animalium*, as stated at 698a4-5—is not to explicate his account of deliberation but rather the source or moving principle of action in animals.[102] The *aporia* of *de Motu Animalium* 7 is why thinking (*noōn*) sometimes is followed by action but sometimes refraining from action (701a6-7). To answer this question, Aristotle contrasts theoretical and practical reasoning. His claim is just that, in the practical case, the conclusion cannot just be a mere proposition with no motivational content. As Aristotle's example at 701a14 shows, deliberation cannot just terminate in the conclusion, 'I must take a walk,' without any accompanying desiderative mental state that can motivate the person to at least try to take a walk. However, Aristotle's position here does not imply that the conclusion of a practical

[101] J. Broome and C. Piller, "Normative Practical Reasoning," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* Vol. 75 (2001): 175-216, 175.

[102] See Charles, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Action*, 84-96; Corcilius, "Two Jobs for Aristotle's Practical Syllogism?"; Nussbaum, *Aristotle's de Motu Animalium*, Essay 4; Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle,* 46.

syllogism is an action.[103] Kenny points out, for instance, that a practical syllogism with a negative conclusion cannot terminate in any action.[104]

As far as Aristotle's "official account" of deliberation is concerned, deliberation ends in an *attempt* to do that first action in the chosen series as revealed in the penultimate stage. Indeed, Aristotle concludes his analysis of the process of deliberation as follows:

> τὸ ἔσχατον ἐν τῇ ἀναλύσει πρῶτον εἶναι ἐν τῇ γενέσει. κἂν μὲν ἀδυνάτῳ ἐντύχωσιν, ἀφίστανται, οἷον εἰ χρημάτων δεῖ, ταῦτα δὲ μὴ οἷόν τε πορισθῆναι· ἐὰν δὲ δυνατὸν φαίνηται, ἐγχειροῦσι πράττειν. (1112b23-27)
>
> What is last in the order of analysis seems to be the first order of becoming. And if we come to impossibility, we give up, e.g., if money is necessary, but this cannot be accomplished. But if it appears possible, then we will try to do it.

In this passage, we have a contrast between an agent who successfully uncovers the first cause of the goal but realizes that what she must do is not up to her, and another who will attempt to do the required action. I take Aristotle's characterization of the agent in the success case as an indication that deliberation need not terminate in action. For it is conceivable that the agent attempts, but her effort does not generate the appropriate action due to no fault of her own. Are we then to say, on the interpretation that deliberation must terminate in some physical action, that this agent never deliberated or did not complete deliberation? What the text does allow us to say is that deliberation concludes when the agent has figured out how she, by relying on her

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[103] See Anscombe, G. E. M. *Intention* (Oxford: Blackwell 1957), 60-61; Charles, "Aristotle's Weak *Akrates*," 205; Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle*, Kenny, "The Practical Syllogism and Incontinence," *Phronesis* 11, no.2 (1966): 163-184,166-167; Nussbaum, *Aristotle's de Motu Animalium,* 191-195, 342-343; Santas, "Aristotle on Practical Inference, the Explanation of Action, and Akrasia," *Phronesis* 14 (1959): 162-89, 175-177; Wright, *Explanation and Understanding* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), 1971, 107.

[104] Kenny thinks that the initial question of the chapter has to do with the distinction between a practical syllogism with a positive conclusion versus one that has a negative conclusion, which he cites as evidence for the view that the conclusion of a practical syllogism need not always be an action ("The Practical Syllogism and Incontinence," 166-167). Whether one finds Kenny's view compelling has to do with whether one also regards refraining from acting as an act. This is the view that Nussbaum takes in her critique of Kenny's reading (*Aristotle's de Motu Animalium*, 342-343).

effort, can take the initial step towards achieving her goal.[105] As far as Aristotle's "official account" is concerned, he does not require that a complete episode of deliberation be terminated in action.

6.1 Desisting as an Alternative

Finally, it remains to discuss the contrast case where deliberation terminates in desisting. Defenders of the Causal Discovery Model maintain that a piece of practical thought which concludes in desisting is still a complete piece of deliberation. Further, they argue, "in these cases, the agent desist because she is forced to, not because she thinks that there are reasons counting in its favor."[106] We should note that the case Aristotle is using as his example here is not detailed enough to be decisive. Indeed, he is silent on the issue of whether the agent who encounters an impossible path completed deliberation. Aristotle simply states that in this scenario, the agent "gives up" but does not specify what the agent is giving up (*EN* III.3, 1112b23). One possibility is that the agent gives up on his provisional goal since he thinks that the means to this goal is not in his power to bring about, both now and in the near future. However, it is consistent with Aristotle's description here that the agent gives up the inquiry by suspending his deliberation until he reaches a point where it would be possible to resume deliberation about the production of his goal. In the latter case, the agent is not quite finished with this episode of deliberation.

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[105] For Aristotle, things that can be done through agent *A*'s effort is not limited to only what *A* himself can do. Rather, he thinks that things achievable through *A*'s effort also include things that can be brought about by A's friends (*NE* 3.3 1112b, 27-28). In Aristotle's view, if A and B were true friends, then A would regard B's interests as his. He writes in *EN* 9.9, 1169b7, "a friend, being another self, provides the things that a person cannot provide by his own effort." For a discussion of friendship in Aristotle that explores on the notion that a friend is 'another self,' see J. Whiting, "Impersonal Friends," *The Monist* Volume 74, Issue 1 (1991): 3–29.

[106] Nielsen, "Deliberation as Inquiry," 400. Callard writes, "He says that sometimes what deliberation reveals there is no option you can take (1112b25). Then you give up. The work of deliberation is to find the analytic path to a single option, rather than to select between given options" ("Aristotle on Deliberation," 7).

At any rate, we need not speculate and rely on an argument from silence since Aristotle writes in *Topics* III.1 that "the possible thing [is preferable to] the impossible thing" (τὸ δυνατὸν τοῦ ἀδυνάτου, 116b26). Although Aristotle does not articulate the reason counting against preferring unattainable items in that discussion, Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on the *Topics* does provide us with some hints. He writes:

> τὰ γοῦν ἡμῖν ἀδύνατα, εἰ καὶ βελτίω εἴη τῶν δυνατῶν, ἀλλ' οὐχ αἱρετώτερα. (258, 4)
>
> The things that are impossible for us, even if they are better than the things that are possible, are not the preferable things.

Alexander's remark suggests that whether an agent should choose something depends, not only on its axiological value, but also on whether it is possible.[107] This reading implies that whether a line of action is possible should have an impact on the agent's evaluation of that line of action.[108] If this is right, then we can supply a natural explanation for the agent's decision to desist, or refrain from acting, rather than to pursue what is impossible at *EN* III.3, 1112b23: she desists because she is persuaded by the reason(s) counting in its favor.[109] Since deliberation concerns a subset of practical matters that might be the result of our action or inaction, I want to emphasize that the option to refrain from acting is an alternative that is always present at the start of every deliberation. Refraining from acting as the result of deliberation does not imply inaction *simpliciter*, but it means to do nothing to contribute to the provisional goal. And, as the *Topics* III.1 text suggests, the agent does nothing because there are reasons counting it its favor.

[107] The Greek text is Wallies'*;* the translation is mine.
[108] I articulate this preference-ranking rule more fully in chapter two. In brief, the rule that I take Aristotle to be identifying here is the following. If A > B, but p (A)= 0, p (B) > 0, then (d (A) > d (B)), where 'd (x)' indicates the desirability of x and 'p (x)' the probability of x.
[109] I do not mean to preclude other reasons that agents may have to abandon their goals, but in the *EN* III.3 passage at issue, Aristotle explicitly cites the inability to procure the necessary means, money, as the reason to desist.

Proponents of the Causal Discovery model are likely to resort to the idea that refraining, or inaction, is not always a deliberative option on Aristotle's model.[110] They may concede that Aristotle certainly recognizes that there are cases where inaction could figure as an alternative in deliberation but insist that inaction is an alternative only in trivial decision problems. Yet, whenever the end "reflects a commitment she considers irrevocable, 'I could do nothing' is not an alternative in her deliberation."[111] I want to point out two features of Aristotle's analysis of deliberation, and practical reasoning generally, that are at odds with this line of reasoning.

First, the process of practical reasoning that Aristotle calls deliberation is never about trivial decision problems. If my argument is correct, or even partially correct, then deliberation demands tremendous time, attention, and mental effort on the part of the agent. It would be rather odd to suppose, along with critics of the evaluative model, that some episodes of deliberation are of a trivial sort. Given the cognitively demanding nature of deliberation, any decision problem that calls for deliberation is *ipso facto* nontrivial. Second, Aristotle evidently recognizes refraining from acting as a genuine option and even classifies it as an action (*praxis*) in his discussion of practical reasoning in *de Motu Animalium* 7. As we saw, the *aporia* of *de Motu Animalium* 7 is why thinking sometimes is followed by action but sometimes refraining from action (701a6-7). To answer this question, Aristotle draws a contrast between theoretical and practical reasoning, writing that the result of practical reasoning in the form of a practical syllogism is distinctively an action, as follows:

> ἐνταῦθα δ' ἐκ τῶν δύο προτάσεων τὸ συμπέρασμα γίνεται ἡ πρᾶξις, οἷον ὅταν νοήσῃ ὅτι παντὶ βαδιστέον ἀνθρώπῳ, αὐτὸς δ' ἄνθρωπος, βαδίζει εὐθέως, ἂν δ' ὅτι οὐδενὶ βαδιστέον νῦν ἀνθρώπῳ, αὐτὸς δ' ἄνθρωπος, εὐθὺς ἠρεμεῖ· καὶ ταῦτα ἄμφω πράττει, ἂν μή τι κωλύῃ ἢ ἀναγκάζῃ. (701a11-16)

[110] Callard suggests this line in conversation. Nielsen claims, "While the agent may always think, 'perhaps I will end up desisting,' she may not always think, 'perhaps I could desist' or 'perhaps I should desist'" ("Deliberation as Inquiry," 402).
[111] Nielsen, "Deliberation as Inquiry," 400.

> In the present case [practical reasoning], from two premises generate a conclusion—an action—e.g., when a person thinks that every person should walk and that he is a person, straightaway he walks. Or if he thinks that no man should take a walk now, and that he is a man, at once he remains at rest. And he does both of these things, if nothing prevents or compels him.

Although I am convinced that we should not include the practical syllogism as a component of deliberation,[112] this passage is instructive for our understanding of what Aristotle counts as a *praxis*. The germane point is that Aristotle understands '*praxis*' broadly to mean whatever the agent chooses as a result of her practical reasoning, even if she chooses to refrain from acting. For the agent who remains at rest is acting (*prattei*) no less than the one who takes a walk as a result of her practical reasoning.[113] Aristotle nowhere precludes the possibility of refraining from acting, or inaction, from being a real deliberative option. Nor does he regard inaction as a pseudo-option; it is an option that is just as real and live as acting.

6.2. The Singlemindedness of Virtuous Agents

I want to allay yet another common criticism of the evaluative model as an interpretation of Aristotle's theory of deliberation. It has been suggested by its critics that the evaluative model is in tension with Aristotle's characterization of the virtuous person, who seems to act single-mindedly towards her goal.[114] It seems possible that weighing alternative courses of action towards one's end could undermine the goodness of the agent. The critic asks us to imagine, for instance, a courageous agent who weighs the advantages and disadvantages of brave action against cowardly action. This particular instance of weighing the available options would indeed

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[112] See n. 31.

[113] I am in broad agreement with Martha Nussbaum, who writes, "Apparently Aristotle means for us to understand that once the state of rest is chosen as a result of the agent's deliberation (although he may have been at rest before) it is then an action, and, *qua* action, follows directly from the two premises" (*Aristotle's de Motu Animalium: Text with Translation, Commentary, And Interpretive Essays*, 343).

[114] Nielsen presents this point as a difficulty for the evaluative model in her "Deliberation as Inquiry," but I'd like to thank Patricia Marechal, my commentator at the 2019 central APA meeting, for pressing this objection in her written comments.

reveal a flawed character, but it is not reasonable to suppose that these are the alternatives that a courageous agent would consider as viable alternatives in her choice set. As I have argued, alternatives need not be contraries, but merely contradictories since it is not true that for every action, there is a contrary action (§2). This broad understanding of alternatives has the following implication for the scenario imagined by critics of the evaluative model. While the brave person will not weigh courageous actions against their contraries, viz., cowardly actions, she will weigh multiple courageous actions against each other, and even inaction, to determine which is the best (*kallista*) expression of courage. The objection is only forceful if we accept the assumption that there is one single expression of courage and that refraining from acting may not be among the set of courageous actions. But this assumption is not obviously true. Sometimes, doing nothing is just the bravest action of all, especially if acting would manifest in a value judgment that the agent neither believes in nor understands. We tend to think, for example, that children who refrain from bullying despite being pressured to do so by their peers deserve praise for their courage.

Perhaps the objection is more refined, especially when coupled with intuitionist interpretations of virtue.[115] The intuitionist interpretation says that the virtuous agent simply and immediately perceives what is the right thing to do, in each of the circumstances that confront her. Virtue, the refined objection would go, involves a perceptual sensitivity to the morally salient features of situations. If this psychological description is true, then it would seem that the courageous agent in our example need not pause to evaluate her options, even courageous ones. The problem is that, on the intuitionist interpretation just sketched, the virtuous agent's

[115] Examples of interpretations of virtue along these lines include those defended by John McDowell, Julia Annas, and Rosalind Hursthouse: that moral knowledge issues from a distinctive sensibility which allows a virtuous person to see what to do, in part through his properly trained emotional responses.

deliberation occurs altogether too swiftly, if it occurs at all. For if the courageous agent straightforwardly perceives which is the courageous act or perhaps most courageous act to do, then her decision rests with perception rather than deliberation. The fact that the courageous agent, on intuitionist models, simply *sees* what to do by coming to feel the demands of courage is not a challenge for the evaluative model. That virtuous agents have their distinctive way of seeing the situations they encounter in fact says nothing about the process of deliberation in realistic conditions. Moreover, I want to suggest that the virtuous person's perceptual sensitivity should not be construed as a constitutively rational capacity for unerring insight into the right or the good. Nor should the possession of this perceptual sensitivity be taken to preclude the provision of reasons or justifications for the virtuous agent's individual decisions about what to do. For we reasonably expect people—especially virtuous ones— to have something to say in defense of their beliefs about the moral correctness of acting in certain ways. When virtuous agents offer rational support or justification for their intuitive judgments, they will be able to tell us why, exactly, they acted in certain ways, or acted rather than not acted at all. Their reasoned explanations will inevitably appeal to the evaluative fact that their chosen acts have more points on the relevant scale, viz., that these acts are the best expression of courageous, kindness, and the like.

7. Conclusion

Although empirical evidence is generally regarded as irrelevant in exegetical scholarship, the Aristotelian model of deliberation defended in this paper is credible given what the contemporary experts know about how people make decisions. For instance, Herbert Simon maintains that deliberation in realistic (rather than idealized) conditions has a multi-level

structure and that deliberation calls for devising courses of actions as a component.[116] Studies in cognitive psychology have also revealed that careful deliberation, conceived of as the complex process of reasoning that I take Aristotle to be articulating in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3 and elsewhere, requires tremendous time, attention, and effort.[117] Although it would be an exaggeration to say that Aristotle himself recognizes this fact about deliberation, his writings on deliberation make clear that he confines deliberation to that of non-routine, momentous cases of decision-making. If my interpretation is correct, then Aristotle conceives of deliberation as a rigorous, complex investigation which unfolds into multiple stages. This feature of Aristotle's theory is indeed modern or, at any rate, is in harmony with our modern understanding of deliberation. At the same time, Aristotle's theory is teleological—and distinctively ancient—in its recognition of the primacy of the goal in dictating how we deliberate.

[116] This is a central point of contention between Simon's view and the standard expected utility model, which he articulates as follows: "The decision models of classical economics do not recognize the need either to identify the occasions of action or to devise courses of action. These models presuppose there is a well-defined criterion for choosing among possible states of the world (a utility function), and that the actual state of the world is a function of two mutually exclusive and exhaustive sets of variables." Simon, "The Logic of Heuristic Decision Making," in *The Logic of Decision and Action* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1966), 1-36, 3.

[117] See, for instance, Kahneman, *Thinking, fast and slow* (New York: 2011); Payne, J. W., Bettman, J. R. & Johnson, E. J. "Adaptive strategy selection in decision making," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition, 14*, (1988) 534–552. It is worth noting that the kinds of decision-making activities that these researchers study are not on all fours with the kinds of deliberative inquiries that Aristotle consistently discusses since these activities are often simpler, such as performing some arithmetic calculation or comparing two appliances to identify the one with the overall better value. Still, if simpler problems like these already require tremendous concentration, time, and effort on the part of the agent, then Aristotelian decision problems do *a fortiori*.

Chapter Two

Aristotle's (for the Most Part) Theory of Preference: *Topics* III.1-5

Aristotle not only offers the first conceptual analysis of deliberation,[118] but also the first systematic study of the logical structure of preference.[119] In *Topics* III, he provides a series of inferential rules aiming to settle the question, "Which is preferable (*hairetōteron*) or better (*beltion*) between two or more options?" (*Top*. III.1, 116a1). It would be two millennia later before a better—a formal and complete—system of preference logic could make its appearance.[120] While scholars pay historical homage to Aristotle, they generally find his "inaugural treatment"[121] of the logic of preference wanting due either to its stylistic obscurity or technical limitations.[122] Among the technical challenges, none has been so damaging as the

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[118] See n. 49. Šegvić also makes a similar observation ("Deliberation and Choice in Aristotle," 164 n.25).

[119] See, for instance, S.O. Hansson "Preference Logic," in *Handbook of Philosophical Logic*, vol. 4, edited by Gabbay and Guenthner (Dordrecht: Springer, 2001); Hansson and Till Grüne-Yanoff, "Preferences," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta. See also n. 119.

[120] Hanson and Grüne-Yanoff identify Halden and von Wright as those offering the first complete systems of prefernce logic. See Sören Halden, *On the Logic of Better* (Lund: Library of Theoria, 1957); G. von Wright, *The Logic of Preference* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963).

[121] Nicholas Rescher, "Semantic Foundations for the Logic of Preference," in *The Logic of Decision and Action,* edited by Rescher (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1966), 37-79, 38.

[122] Though they admit to be borrowing from Aristotle's *Analytics,* the authors of *The Port Royal Logic* "would not advise anyone to go looking in Aristotle's *Topics,* since these are strangely confused books" (*Logic or the Art of Thinking*, 188). Jacques Brunschwig complains that Aristotle's formulation is "exceptionally elliptical and quick" (Brunschwig, *Topiques 1*, lviii). These remark about *Topics* 3 are not surprising in light of what seems to be the received opinion that the *Topics* is "a transitional work, placed in an unstable equilibrium between two stages of Aristotle's logical research" (*Topiques 1*, liv). Indeed, the *Topics* is generally regarded as the early and the *Prior Analytics* the mature work. Asides from Brunschwig, see, for instance, this view in J. Allen, "The Development of Aristotle's Logic: Part of an Account in Outline," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 11 (1995), 177-205; J. Barnes, "Proof and the Syllogism" in *Aristotle on Science: The Posterior Analytics,* edited by E. Berti (Padua: 1981), 17-59; J. Corcoran, "Aristotle's Natural Deduction System" in his *Ancient Logic and its Modern Interpretations* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1974), 85-131, 88; Oliver Primavesi, *Die Aristotelische Topik,* 60; D. Ross, "The Discovery of the Syllogism," *Philosophical Review* 48 (1939): 251-72, 251-2; *Aristotle's Prior Analytics: Book 1*, trans. G. Striker (Oxford: 2009), xii. More recently, Marko Malink has offered a defense and explanation for the standard view that Aristotle developed his formal logic in the *Prior Analytics* rather than the *Topics*. He argues that it is in the *Prior Analytics*, rather

criticisms raised by Nicholas Rescher and Richard Jeffrey. Rescher observes that in Aristotle's treatment, "no adequate distinction is drawn between material and formal conditions. The bulk of the principles listed are of a strictly substantive, non-formal sort." [123] Having formulated a counterexample to an inference about preference-ranking in *Topics* III.2, Jeffrey goes as far as concluding that though the logic of decision is "old as Pascal, the idea is surely not as old as Aristotle."[124]

While there has been a revival of interest in Aristotle's *Topics* in recent years,[125] the last attempt to vindicate Aristotle's theory of preference was made nearly four decades ago by Nicholas Moutafakis in a response to Rescher.[126] To date, no response to Jeffrey's assessment has been made. The twin goals of this chapter are to develop one such response and to make some progress towards a comprehensive study of Aristotle's central views about the formal properties of preference. To these ends, I propose to study Aristotle's treatment of the logical structure of preference within the dialectical framework to which Aristotle commits himself in the *Topics*. This approach has the advantage of showing that, by design, Aristotelian preference logic only holds "for the most part" (*hōs epi to polu*) and why Aristotle believes it is appropriate for his logic of preference to have a lower standard of validity, i.e., yielding probable conclusions rather than certain knowledge (*Top*. I.1, 100a1-30). Despite this difference in scope and vision, the description "inaugural treatment" of preference logic comfortably, and accurately,

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than the *Topics*, that Aristotle's treatment meets the four criteria for a formal logic which "are aimed at making fully explicit all premises that are necessary for a given argument to count as a deduction" (Malink, "The Beginnings of Formal Logic: Deduction in Aristotle's *Topics* vs. *Prior Analytics*," *Phronesis* 60 (2015): 267-309 at 303).

[123] "Semantic Foundations for the Logic of Preference," 38.

[124] "The Logic of Decision Defended," 473-4. He draws a similar contrast in "Ethics and the Logic of Decision," *The Journal of Philosophy* 62, no. 19 (1965): 528-39, 528.

[125] See n.42

[126] See his "Axiomatization of Preference Principles in Aristotle's Topics, Book III," which I discussed in n. 47.

applies to Aristotle's *Topics* in light of the points of contact his theory shares with the current received views.

In the first half of the chapter (§§1-4), I discuss three distinctive aspects of Aristotle's theorizing about preference structure that would appear to be peculiar from the modern point of view. First, as a close examination of the opening chapter of *Topics* III will reveal, Aristotle confines his study of preference structure to the preferences for things that are closely related, often subsuming them under a single category (§1). Second, turning to some of the rules of preference Aristotle enumerates, we see that his notion of consequence (*to parepomenon*), especially as a consideration for the ranking of preferences, does not neatly align with ours (§2). The third and perhaps most striking peculiar aspect of Aristotle's system of preference logic, to the extent he could be said to have such a logic, is its overt susceptibility to counterexamples. One such counterexample was formulated by Jeffrey. This counterexample attests, Jeffrey thinks, to Aristotle's ignorance of the most fundamental principle of decision theory: that there are two elements—desirability and probability—which every decision calculation needs to weigh in geometrical proportion. Indeed, this deficit of Aristotle's theory leads Jeffrey to issue the verdict that the logic of decision is not as old as Aristotle (§3).

In the second half of the chapter (§§4-8), I argue that Jeffrey's verdict contains true elements, but it is not wholly so. Certainty, Aristotle nowhere offers a formal language to analyze the concept of preference or a deductive system of preference logic. However, it would be premature to conclude that Aristotle does not, or could not, consider both the desirability and probability of options in his analysis of decision-making, thus rendering his "inaugural treatment" of preference in *Topics* III utterly disconnected from its contemporary offspring. For the considerations on both sides of probability and desirability, I argue, crucially underwrites

Aristotle's recommendation against the life of the mind in a curious passage in *Topics* III.2 (§4). To forestall potential concerns about whether or not the probability of events could play such a role in Aristotle's reasoning about life choices, I will show that Aristotle recognizes a range of possibility space between necessity and impossibility, while lacking the precise mathematical notations common to discussions about probability today (§5). Moreover, his study of the logic of preference must be approached from the background of the *Topics*—a treatise on dialectical deduction (*dialectikos syllogismos*), which proceeds from reputable views (*ex endoxōn*) and yields probable knowledge (*Top*. III.1, 100a1-30)—to make sense of its purpose and limitations (§6). Having noted the peculiarities of Aristotle's study of preference structure, at the end of the chapter I highlight three general features of Aristotle's view, showing that it merits the label "inaugural treatment" of preference logic (§7).

1. Purpose and Subject Matter of *Topics* III

Aristotle opens *Topics* III by stating his official mission statement, as follows:

> Πότερον δ' αἱρετώτερον ἢ βέλτιον δυεῖν ἢ πλειόνων, ἐκ τῶνδε σκεπτέον. πρῶτον δὲ διωρίσθω ὅτι τὴν σκέψιν ποιούμεθα οὐχ ὑπὲρ τῶν πολὺ διεστώτων καὶ μεγάλην πρὸς ἄλληλα διαφορὰν ἐχόντων (οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀπορεῖ πότερον ἡ εὐδαιμονία ἢ ὁ πλοῦτος αἱρετώτερον), ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῶν σύνεγγυς, καὶ περὶ ὧν ἀμφισβητοῦμεν ποτέρῳ δεῖ προσθέσθαι μᾶλλον, διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν ὁρᾶν τοῦ ἑτέρου πρὸς τὸ ἕτερον ὑπεροχήν. (116a3-24)[127]
>
> (1) We must investigate in the following lines which one is preferable or better between two or more things. First, we must clarify that the investigation that we are making does not concern things that are far too distanced from one another—things that have a significant difference between them—(for no one puzzles about whether *eudaimonia* or wealth is more desirable), but about things that are close to one another and about things which we do not agree whether we ought to gravitate toward one or the other, because we do not perceive a single superiority between the two.

[127] I followed the Greek text of Jacques Brunschwig. The translation offered here is my own, in consultation with Brunschwig's translation in French and those of E. S. Forster and W. A. Pickard-Cambridge in English.

The aim of *Topics* III, Aristotle tells us, is to set out a procedure to determine, within a set of comparable items, which is to-be-preferred or better. The very first line of *Topics* III thus invites the question of whether or not the preferable item (*hairetōteron*) and the better item (*beltion*) are one and the same. While it is natural to think that one should always prefer the better of two options, or best of three or more options, and Aristotle initially treats '*hairetōteron'* as a synonym for *'beltion'* in *Topics* III, he later clarifies his position that '*hairetōteron'* need not be identified with *'beltion*' by necessity (III.2, 118a9-10).[128]

Having made clear the objective of *Topics* III, Aristotle proceeds to specify the scope of his investigation. He limits the present study into the logical structure of preference to the domain of things that are "close to one another" (*suneggus*, *Top*. III.1, 116a7). In doing so, he takes it to be generally less difficult to discern which item is preferable and better among items that are sufficiently heterogeneous, i.e., those possessing some significant difference among them (*megalēn diaphoran echontōn*). When considering the choice between wealth and *eudaimonia*, for example, Aristotle thinks that no one would ponder which one to choose since these options are at great variance (*Top*. III.1, 118a6-7). Instead, Aristotle thinks that we need guidance when considering what to choose from a group of items whose dissimilarities do not sufficiently allow us to distinguish by a perceptible means (*oran*)[129] which one is to be preferred (*Top*. III.1, 116a9).

A question naturally arises here: Does Aristotle have nothing to say about the ranking of preferences for items that are sufficiently heterogeneous, such as wealth and *eudaimonia?* In my view, Aristotle leaves aside cases of this sort in *Topics* III, not because he has no rules to give

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[128] See a discussion in Brunschwig, *Topiques* 1, 154. I discuss Aristotle's argument for this peculiar remark in §3, where such a discussion would fit more appropriately.
[129] Olaf Gigon notes that this approach corresponds to Aristotle's general methodology of leaving aside "cases of evidence" (die Fälle der Evidenz), which is how he interprets 'ὁρᾶν' at 116a9 (Aristoteles, *Topik* iii. 1-3, 237).

regarding the preference-ranking of widely diverse alternatives, but because he gives such guidance elsewhere. Consider *Nicomachean Ethics* I.5, for instance, where Aristotle points out that we undertake the life of money-making under compulsion since wealth is not something a person pursues for its own sake (1096a5-7). It is also not wholly accurate, despite his opening remarks, that Aristotle says nothing about the choice between wealth and *eudaimonia* in the *Topics* since several rules that he articulates there indeed provide a rationale for preferring *eudaimonia* to wealth. Consider, for instance, the following principles from *Topics* III.

> R5[130]: τὸ δι’ αὑτὸ αἱρετὸν τοῦ δι’ ἕτερον αἱρετοῦ αἱρετώτερον. (III.1, 116a29-30)
>
> That which is desirable because of itself is preferable to what is desirable because of something else.
>
> R5a: τὸ καθ’ αὑτὸ τοῦ κατὰ συμβεβηκός. (III.1, 116a31-32)
>
> That which is [desirable] for its own sake is preferable to what is so accidentally.
>
> R7: τὸ ἁπλῶς ἀγαθὸν τοῦ τινὶ αἱρετώτερον. (III.1, 116b7)
>
> That which is good absolutely [or without qualification] is preferable to what is good relative to someone or something.

On the basis of these recommendations, *eudaimonia* is to be preferred over wealth since the former is desirable because of itself, for its own sake, and is good without qualification.

I take it that when Aristotle delimits the scope of his project in *Topics* III to the comparison of items that are closely related, he does not intend to qualify that the rules offered there are unhelpful to us in determining the preferability of goods as different as *eudaimonia* and wealth. He holds, at any rate, that the applicability of at least some of his rules is wide ranging. “It is possible to generalize some of the aforementioned rules,” Aristotle claims, “by a slight alteration of the expression” (ἔστι δ’ αὐτῶν τῶν εἰρημένων ἐνίους καθόλου μᾶλλον ποιεῖν

[130] The number assigned to the text here corresponds to the numbering system used in the Appendix.

μικρὸν παραλλάσσοντα τῇ προσηγορίᾳ, *Top*. III.5, 119a14-16).[131] The example he gives to buttress this claim goes as follows: that which exhibits such and such a feature by nature exhibits it more than that which exhibits it not by nature (τὸ φύσει τοιοῦτο τοῦ μὴ φύσει τοιούτου μᾶλλον τοιοῦτο, 119a16-17). We may generalize this rule, Brunschwig suggests, by treating 'such and such' (τοιοῦτο) as a variable, which can be substituted with any adjective.[132]

While Aristotle takes himself to be offering rules with wide-ranging applications, his primary concerns in *Topics* III, however, are with hard cases involving the ranking of preferences for items that are similar enough in their goodness so as to cause disputes among individuals on the question of their comparative preferability.[133] Indeed, Aristotle clarifies that no one would puzzle over whether they are to prefer *eudaimonia* over wealth, but people may puzzle over, as Aristotle's examples indicate, whether to prefer health over beauty (*Top*. III.1, 116b17-18, R9c) or friendship over richness (116b37-38, R13). The preferability of goods like these are especially challenging, or at least more difficult, to adjudicate in most scenarios. In some of these difficult scenarios, where the relative goodness of the *comparanda* is, by themselves, insufficient to settle the issue, Aristotle offers further recommendations—for one, that we examine the preferability of the goods in question in light of their consequences.

[131] The fact that Aristotle does not make this generalization until chapter 5 of *Topics* III leads Brunschwig to the criticism that the framework of *Topics* III does not follow the official program of the *Topics*, which Aristotle sketches out in the first book. Brunschwig points out that we would normally expect to find in the *Topics* a general study of "predicative comparison" (la comparaison prédicative) in abstraction, which is wholly independent of the particular nature of the predicate involved. If Aristotle were to follow this official program consistently, then in *Topics* III we would expect him to state the conditions for a predication of the form *S* is more *P* than *S'* in conformity with the earlier and later *topoi* dealing with the conditions for the form *S* is *P*. On the contrary, Brunschwig observes, Aristotle exclusively studies comparisons of the predicate 'αἱρετόν' (choice-worthy), and the majority of the instances discussed "make sense only to him" (*Topiques 1*, lix).

[132] *Topiques 1*, 161.

[133] As Gigon observes, much of the contents of *Topics* III.1-3 get reiterated in *Rhetoric* I.6-7. This similarity leads Gigon, and others, to conclude that Aristotle composes this material to settle practical disputes. Gigon also claims that *Topics* III contains ethical content insofar as it addresses dialectical dialogues concerned ethical questions, which links it directly with the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristoteles, *Topik* iii. 1-3, 234). Writing about the first two chapters of Book III, Brunschwig suggests that Aristotle's concern is, in effect, with identity and that Aristotle is intending to supply the dialectician with means to resolve disputes concerning whether two things are identical or different (*Topiques* 1, lxii).

2. Two Kinds of Consequences

At the beginning of *Topics* III.2, we find an instruction of how to rank the considered options from the vantage point of their consequences, as follows:

> Ἔτι ὅταν δύο τινὰ ᾖ σφόδρα αὐτοῖς παραπλήσια καὶ μὴ δυνώμεθα ὑπεροχὴν μηδεμίαν συνιδεῖν τοῦ ἑτέρου πρὸς τὸ ἕτερον, ὁρᾶν ἀπὸ τῶν παρεπομένων. ᾧ γὰρ ἕπεται μεῖζον ἀγαθόν, τοῦθ’ αἱρετώτερον… διχῶς δ’ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἕπεσθαι ἡ σκέψις· καὶ γὰρ πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον ἕπεται, οἷον τῷ μανθάνοντι τὸ μὲν ἀγνοεῖν πρότερον, τὸ δ’ ἐπίστασθαι ὕστερον. βέλτιον δ’ ὡς ἐπὶ πολὺ τὸ ὕστερον ἑπόμενον. λαμβάνειν οὖν τῶν ἑπομένων ὁπότερον ἂν ᾖ χρήσιμον. (117a5-15)
>
> Moreover, whenever two things are exceedingly like one another, and we cannot see any superiority in the one over the other, we should examine them from the standpoint of their logical consequences. For the one which is followed by the greater good is preferable…There are two ways to conduct an investigation from the standpoint of logical consequences; for there are prior consequences and later consequences, e.g., if a person learns, it follows that he was ignorant before and knows afterward. For the most part, the later logical consequence is the better to consider. One should take whichever of the two suits one’s purpose.

This passage displays yet another peculiarity worth mentioning in Aristotle’s analyses of preference structure: his distinction between two kinds of consequences. Aristotle’s distinction is striking since contemporary theorists tend to focus exclusively on the mode of assessment by which we evaluate the consequences, or outcomes, following our actions. Consider the standard model of decision-making under certainty, where each action has only one possible outcome.[134] Decision problems of this type may have the following form, where there are at least two incompatible alternative actions and two conditions, or ways which the world could turn out.

	$Condition_1$	$Condition_2$
Act_1	Outcome (C_1, A_1)	Outcome (C_2, A_1)
Act_2	Outcome (C_1, A_2)	Outcome (C_2, A_2)

[134] What I am calling the “standard model” is what I take to the uncontroversial basic principles of decision theory. The details can be found in a well-known textbook, such as Jeffrey’s *The Logic of Decision.*

According to the standard model, the decision-maker would proceed by assigning a probability to each state of the world, a utility score to each outcome, and finally select the act that maximizes expected utility, i.e., leads to the better outcome.[135]

Aristotle, too, recommends that the option which is followed by a greater good is preferable. However, as we saw, he thinks of consequences in terms of pairs. In the passage under consideration, Aristotle informs us of a distinction between two kinds of consequences—the one is logically prior and the other posterior.[136] The example Aristotle discusses has to do with learning. If a person undergoes a learning process, say, of learning Greek, then there are two distinct consequences, or rather implications, following from the fact that she is learning Greek. These implications are that she was ignorant of Greek prior to receiving Greek lessons, and that she now possesses knowledge of Greek. Aristotle sensibly instructs us to generally consider the posterior logical consequence but, in harmony with his previous recommendation,[137] advises one to "take whichever consequence suits one's purpose" (λαμβάνειν οὖν τῶν ἑπομένων ὁπότερον ἂν ᾖ χρήσιμον, 117a14-15).

The fact that Aristotle only turns to the consideration from the standpoint of consequences in the second chapter of *Topics III* reveals yet another distinctive feature of Aristotle's understanding of preference structure. What I have in mind is the fact that he thinks that, in some cases, the evaluation or ranking of options can be made independently of their outcomes. In fact, Aristotle takes himself to be exclusively articulating rules about preference-ranking which are not grounded on considerations about consequences in the first chapter of

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[135] Agents calculate expected utility by multiplying the utility of an outcome by the probability assigned to the condition of the world in which it will come about and then summing up the values thus obtained for each of the possible outcomes of a given action.
[136] Brunschwig notes that the verbs 'ἕπεσθαι' and 'ἀκολουθέω' Aristotle uses in the passage do not have a chronological signification. He suggests that these verbs signal logical rather than temporal consequences (*Topiques* 1, 149).
[137] See for example *Top*. III.1, 116a20-22 and the relevant discussion in chapter 1.5.2.

Topics III. This is the natural reading of the text since Aristotle begins chapter two with the connective 'moreover' (*eti*, 117a15), indicating that he is introducing a new consideration into the discussion. Evidence for this claim can also be found in the survey of the rules he offers in the first chapter of *Topics* III. We have looked at three of these rules above (R5, R5a, and R7). The bulk of the remaining rules in *Topics* III.1, which can be found in the Appendix, appeal primarily to the classification of goods into on genus and species—one of Aristotle's thematic interests—rather than their consequences. For example, he offers a striking rule of inference according to which justice is preferable to the just person because the former is "just simply this" (*tode ti*), while the latter does not fall within the genus (*mē en genei*, *Top*. III.1, 116a23-24).[138]

To summarize, Aristotle appears to think that, in considering how to rank a fixed number of goods, the decision-maker need not consider their consequences. He might consider, instead, whether these goods are desirable for their own sake (116a29-30, R5) more durable (116a13-14, R1) or would be chosen by knowledgeable experts (116a14-17, R2). If consequences are to be taken into account, the decision-maker has the option of selecting between either the temporally prior (logical) consequence or posterior one in his preferability ranking. These features of Aristotle's theory place it at a far distance from the modern way of thinking about outcomes and their role in the ranking of preferences. However, that Aristotle employs two different notions of outcome and conceives of a multitude of non-consequential modes of evaluation neither confirm nor disprove the plausibility of his theory *vis-à-vis* the modern conception. But counterexamples to the rules of preference-ranking he constructs would seem to diminish the credibility of his system of preference logic. In an illuminating engagement of *Topics* III, Jeffrey lays out one such counterexample, which I discuss next.

[138] I discuss this puzzling example in R4 and nn.190-1.

3. As Old as the Port Royal Logic, but Not as Old as Aristotle

Jeffrey identifies the aim of the logic of decision with providing a rationale for preferential choice and finds its beginnings in *The Port Royal Logic.*[139] In a passage noted by Jeffrey, the authors of *The Port Royal Logic* advise against a fallacious form of reasoning which leads some to take extreme precautions for the protection of their safety[140] and others to be attracted to lotteries. The passage goes as follows:

> The flaw in this reasoning is that in order to decide what we ought to do to obtain some good or avoid some harm, it is necessary to consider not only the good or harm in itself, but also the probability that it will or will not occur, and to view geometrically the proportion all these things have when taken together.[141]

There are two elements, we are told by the Port Royal logicians, that every decision calculation needs to weigh in geometrical proportion: the degree of desirability of the good and probability that *that* good can be obtained. Consider a simple game in which there are ten participants, each contributing one dollar to the pot but only one may win the whole pot. A person might believe that they have an excellent reason to play if they consider exclusively the profit and loss since the prospect of gaining nine dollars outweighs losing one on the desirability scale. But this reasoning is flawed: this person ignores the fact that the probability of winning is much slimmer than losing. For if each participant has an equal chance of winning nine dollars and risks losing only one, then it is nine times more probable for each of them not to win the nine dollars but to lose the one dollar.

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[139] "The Logic of Decision Defended," 473.

[140] The example that Arnauld and Nicole give is of individuals who have an irrational fear of thunder due to the danger of dying by lightning, despite the exceedingly low probability of such an event (*Logic or the Art of Thinking,* 274).

[141] *Logic or the Art of Thinking,* 273-4.

Aristotle makes a similar mistake, it seems to Jeffrey, since the inference rules regarding the raking of preferences he offers do not take into account both sides of the duality—probability and desirability—and weigh them proportionately. As Jeffrey acknowledges, Aristotle composes the *Topics* at a time long before the celebrated emergence of probability in the17th century.[142] One might reasonably think that Aristotle would have to either ignore any considerations about probability altogether or treat the available options as if they were consistently equiprobable. Although Jeffrey charitably attributes the latter possibility to Aristotle, he proceeds to point out that if we entertain the possibility that the probabilities of the options are unequal, as it is often the case in realistic conditions, then at least some of the Aristotelian inferences in *Topics* III turn out to be invalid.

To show this limitation of Aristotle's theory, Jeffrey constructs a counterexample to the following rule in *Topics* III.2.

> R38: καὶ εἰ τόδε μὲν ἄνευ τοῦδε αἱρετόν, τόδε δὲ ἄνευ τοῦδε μή· οἷον δύναμις ἄνευ φρονήσεως οὐχ αἱρετόν, φρόνησις δ' ἄνευ δυνάμεως αἱρετόν. (118a18-20)
>
> And if *A* without *B* is choice-worthy but *B* without *A* is not choice-worthy, [then *A* is preferable to *B*]. For example, power is not choice-worthy without wisdom, but wisdom is choice-worthy even without any power.[143]

This rule evaluates four possible states: *A*+*B*, -*A*-*B*, -*A*+*B*, and *A*-*B*. Jeffrey reconstructs the inference it recommends as follows:[144]

$$1.\ d\,(\text{A-B}) \geq d\,(\text{-A-B})$$

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[142] For the most authoritative study on this issue, see Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability: A Philosophical Study of Early Ideas about Probability, Induction and Statistical Inference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). For dissenting opinions, see Daniel Garber and Sandy Zabell, "On the emergence of probability" *Archive for the History of Exact Science* 21 (1979): 33–53; Ivo Schneider, "Why do we find the origin of a calculus of probabilities in the seventeenth century," in *Probabilistic Thinking, Thermodynamics and the Interaction of the History and Philosophy of Science* (Proceedings of the 1978 Pisa Conference in the History and Philosophy of Science), edited by Hintikka, D. Gruender and E. Agazzi (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1981). These authors' contributions to the debate surrounding the emergence of probability will be discussed in §5.

[143] In the ethical context, powers are what commentators commonly refer to as 'external goods,' such as wealth, honor, and beauty (*Magna Moralia* 1.2, 1183b27-35).

[144] I follow Jefferey's reconstruction of the inference in order to better engage with his criticism of Aristotle. In the discussion of his reconstruction, also following him, I use '*d* (*x*)' to indicate the desirability of x and '*p* (*x*)' the probability of x.

$$2.\ d\,(\text{B-A}) < d\,(\text{-B-A})$$

$$\therefore\quad d\,(\text{A}) > d\,(\text{B})$$

Jeffrey's point is that this inference is valid only if each of the four viable options is treated as equiprobable: p (-A±B) = p (A±B). But assume that the probabilities for these states are such that p (-A±B) = 0.05 and p (A±B) = 0.45, and make two arbitrary value assignments that are consistent with the set-up of our passage such that d (B-A) = 0 and d (-A-B)= 10. In this scenario where the probability of (A±B) is nine times greater than that of (-A±B), *A* turns out to be less desirable than *B* on an expected utility calculation since d (A) = 30 and d (B) = 36.[145] It seems to Jeffrey that Aristotle fails to recognize the Port Royal logicians' insight: that our evaluation of a good ought to be proportional not only to the magnitude of the desirability of the good, but also to its probability of obtaining—making his analysis of preferability in *Topics* inadequate for a logic of decision.

4. Connecting Desirability with Probability

My objective in the last section was to lay out Jeffrey's observation that at least one of Aristotle's inferential rules concerning the ranking of preferences is valid only under the strict condition that the competing alternatives are conceived as equiprobable. In this section, I want to show that it would be an overstatement to claim that Aristotle altogether ignores any considerations about probability or the fact that events may have varying degrees of probability. The evidence I shall concentrate on is a curious passage from *Topics* III.2. There, despite

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[145] If d (B-A) = 0 and d (-A-B) = 10, then d (A-B) = 20 and d (A+B) = 40.

$$\text{d (B)} = \frac{d\,(\text{A+B})\,p\,(\text{AB}) + d\,(\text{B-A})\,p\,(\text{B-A})}{p\,(\text{AB}) + p\,(\text{B-A})} = \frac{40 * 0.45 + 0}{0.45 + 0.05} = 36$$

Respectively, d (-A) = 5, d (-B) = 19, d (A) = 30

Aristotle's zeal for the intellectual life, he cautions against the preference for philosophical activities over those involving finance. This note of caution occurs in a passage in which Aristotle compares between superfluity and necessity, as follows:

> R36: Καὶ τὰ ἐκ περιουσίας τῶν ἀναγκαίων βελτίω, ἐνίοτε δὲ καὶ αἱρετώτερα· βέλτιον γὰρ τοῦ ζῆν τὸ εὖ ζῆν, τὸ δὲ εὖ ζῆν ἐστιν ἐκ περιουσίας, αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ ζῆν ἀναγκαῖον. ἐνίοτε δὲ τὰ βελτίω οὐχὶ καὶ αἱρετώτερα· οὐ γὰρ εἰ βελτίω, ἀναγκαῖον καὶ αἱρετώτερα· τὸ γοῦν φιλοσοφεῖν βέλτιον τοῦ χρηματίζεσθαι, ἀλλ' οὐχ αἱρετώτερον τῷ ἐνδεεῖ τῶν ἀν αγκαίων. (*Topics* III.2, 118a6-11)
>
> Also, superfluities are better than necessities, and sometimes preferable. For the good life is better than life, and good life is a superfluity, whereas mere life itself is a necessity. Sometimes, though, what is better is not also preferable. For it is not the case that if something is better it should also be preferable. To philosophize is better than to make money, but it is not preferable for a man who lacks the necessities of life.

We are told that what is better and what is preferable need not necessarily coincide and are given the contrast between superfluity and necessity as an example.[146] The label "superfluity" (*ta ek periousias*), as Aristotle explains, applies "whenever a person possesses the necessities of life and sets to work to secure as well other noble acquisitions" (ὅταν ὑπαρχόντων τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἄλλα τινὰ προσκατασκευάζηταί τις τῶν καλῶν, *Top*. III.2, 118a12-13). As such, the description "superfluous" in this context does not carry a pejorative force. What are superfluous are not useless as the English word 'superfluous' might imply but may in fact have more intrinsic worth than their strictly necessary counterparts.[147] But if what is superfluous is better—having more points on the desirability scale—than why is it rational to prefer necessity on some occasions?

In his commentary of the *Topics,* Alexander of Aphrodisias hints at an answer by drawing a distinction between being simply preferable (*haplōs hairetōtera*) and being preferable relative to us (*hēmin hairetōtera*, 258, 2-3).[148] If we follow Alexander in making this distinction,

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[146] Although Aristotle consistently uses 'better' (*beltion*) and 'preferability' (*hairetōteron*) in tandem and interchangeably for the majority on *Topics* III, this passage contains one of the exceptions to this policy.
[147] Brunschwig, *Topiques 1,* 69.
[148] Brunschwig also makes a similar distinction, writing (emphasis mine), "αἱρετώτερον denotes practical superiority, *for us*, βέλτιον demotes axiological superiority, *in itself*" (*Topiques 1*, 154 n.1).

then whether a good is preferable over another may be evaluated in two ways — considered independently and in relation to the agent. I interpret this distinction to be about absolute and relative value, where the absolute value remains unaltered, but the relative value is subject to change depending on the perspective of the agent performing the evaluation. But how do agents assess the relative value of a good? Immediately after he makes this distinction, Alexander explains, as we have now seen in the previous chapter, "the things that are impossible to us, even if they are better than the possible, are not preferable" (258, 3-4). When we assess whether *A* is preferable to *B*, we take into consideration not only the desirability of each good considered absolutely—but also whether it is preferable relative to us—which Alexander considers to be about the probability of events. This rationale, Alexander thinks, underwrites Aristotle's intriguing remark at *Top*. III.2, 118a10. Following Alexander, we should interpret Aristotle to be making the recommendation that the activity of philosophizing is preferable to that of money-making, but it is not preferable relative to those who are unable to do it (258, 9).

If this interpretation is right, then it is occasionally rational to prefer necessity, the option being ranked lower on the scale of desirability, because the probability of events is not conceived as perfectly equal. The idea would be that, while a good belonging in the category of superfluity has more points on the desirability scale as compared to that of necessity, the good in question has a lower score on the scale of probability. The consideration on the side of probability here need not require a measurement of frequency any more precise than the conditional frequency notion that, I shall argue in the following section, Aristotle also employs elsewhere: e.g., in cases where those who lack the necessities of life make living well an aim, they rarely achieve that aim as compared to those who already possess such necessities.

One might be skeptical of this line of interpretation because a more concise explanation would seem to suffice.[149] The alternative explanation has it that having the necessities of life is a necessary condition for philosophizing, and so Aristotle recommends the former over the latter because it is mandatory. Certainly, Aristotle aims to tease apart what is necessary for living from what is superfluous, or optional, in the passage at issue. I do not wish to deny that Aristotle must have a view like this in mind. However, suppose he is only concerned with the fact that one good is necessary for another in issuing the recommendation against the life of the mind. In that case, we should expect him to make a blanket statement that what is necessary is preferable to what is optional due to its essential status. Instead, he makes a qualified claim: that necessity is preferable over superfluity *only to those lacking the necessities of life* (118a11). Presumably, the essential status of life's necessities does not depend on whether or not the agent possesses or lacks such items; food is no less a necessity of life to a satiated person than it is to an impoverished person. But what can vary from individual to individual is the ability to procure the necessities of life and beyond. I believe this is Alexander's keen insight: relative to the person who lacks the necessities of life, philosophizing is not to be preferred because it is not in her power, at least not yet, to bring about.

We need not rely on Alexander's sole authority. In a nearby passage, Aristotle supplies a rule to guide the ranking of preferences which confirms this line of interpretation: "the possible thing is [preferable] to the impossible thing" (καὶ τὸ δυνατὸν τοῦ ἀδυνάτου, *Top*. I.1,116b26, R11). Here, Aristotle envisions at least two options with unequal probability: *A* is possible, but *B* is impossible. Aristotle plainly tells us that *A* is preferable to *B*. If we incorporate this rule in our analysis of the peculiar remark at *Top*. III.2, 118a10, then we arrive at a view similar to

[149] I am grateful to my committee members for presenting this alternative interpretation, which forces me to clarify my own thinking about the issue.

Alexander's—and an intuition that is now common—that whether *A* is preferable over *B* depends, not only on each option's intrinsic desirability, but also on whether each is possible for the agent to obtain. More precisely, I take Aristotle to be claiming that even if *A* is axiologically better than *B*, we should not prefer *A* to *B* if the probability of *A* is impossible, or 0, but that of *B* is greater than 0. The rule expressed in *Topics* III.1,116b26 thus calls into question Jeffrey's assumption that "Aristotle wrote long before the celebrated emergence of probability ca. 1662," and so we must "understand him *as having ignored probability*."[150]

One might still reasonably remain skeptical about whether or not Aristotle connects considerations about the probability of events with their desirability in his rationale for life choices. The skepticism perhaps stems from a more fundamental worry: Could the probability of events play the role this chapter claims it does in Aristotle's discussion of preference structure? The thought would be that, while it is indeed true that Aristotle makes use of notions of frequency such as "for the most part" (*hōs epi to polu*) and "probable" (*eikos*), it remains an open question whether these notions are notions of probability found in contemporary discussions today. It seems that to move the conversation further along we will need to get a clearer understanding of the terms at issue.

5. Probability$_{M}$ and Probability$_{A}$

I begin with the account of probability that is more familiar to us. Call this Probability$_{Modern}$, or Probability$_{M}$. According to the standard narrative, Probability$_{M}$ emerges out of the Renaissance's mathematical advancements from analysis of games of chance to non-mathematical domains.[151]

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[150] "The Logic of Decision Defended," 474.

[151] For example, Johannes Hudde, Christiaan Huygens, and Johan de Witt apply new knowledge of the mathematics of gambling to solve actuarial problems, whereas Nicholas Bernoulli to questions of evidence and testimony, while Blaise Pascal applies it to the problem of whether or not one should believe in the existence of God in his famous wager.

Probability$_M$ is, as Ian Hacking describes, "Janus-faced"[152] since it has a statistical and an epistemological aspect. It is statistical because it concerns with stochastic laws of chance processes; and it is also epistemological, having to do with the degree of credence we have in relation to various propositions. Hacking's verdict, which has now become an orthodoxy, is that no such dualistic concept of probability like Probability$_M$ existed before the mid-17th century.

Central to his argument is the thesis that the notion of internal evidence is missing before the beginning of the Renaissance.[153] To borrow the Port Royal logicians' terminology, internal evidence "belongs to the fact itself" and has to do with things or events, whereas external evidence "concerns the persons whose testimony leads us to believe in it."[154] It is with the idea of external evidence that Hacking associates the pre-modern understanding of probability. Call this pre-modern concept Probability$_{Ancient}$, or Probability$_A$. He writes:

> [Probability$_A$] pertains to opinion, where there was no clear concept of evidence. Hence 'probability' had to mean something other than evidential support. It indicated approval or acceptability by intelligent people.[155]

According to Hacking, Probability$_A$ is grounded on neither a mathematical theory of statistical regularity nor a general theory of rational belief or expectation. To say that some proposition *p* is probable in the sense of Probability$_A$ is, not to say that some things or events provide evidence for *p,* but to say that *p* is approved by authority or supported by ancient writings. Hacking believes that Probability$_M$ grows out of Probability$_A$ when Renaissance thinkers begin to link the core component of Probability$_A$—the Aristotelian (and later Stoic) notion of a sign (*to sēmion*) —with our modern notion of evidence. The development happens as follows:

> The connection between sign and probability is Aristotelian. 'Sign', however, had a life of its own in the Renaissance, to our eyes a bizarre and alien life, but a life that we must

[152] *The Emergence of Probability,* 12. Cf. p. 10 and Ch. 2.
[153] He writes, "I claim not only that the distinction is new, but also that the very concept of internal evidence was new" (*The Emergence of Probability,* 35).
[154] *Logic or the Art of Thinking,* 264.
[155] *The Emergence of Probability,* 30.

> understand if we are to comprehend the emergence of probability. The old probability, as we have seen, is an attribute of opinion. Opinions are probable when they are approved by authority, when they are testified to, supported by ancient books. But in Fracastoro and other Renaissance authors we read of signs that have probability. These signs are the signs of nature, not of the written word… Nature is the written word, the writ of the Author of Nature. Signs have probability because they come from this ultimate authority. It is from this concept of sign that is created the raw material for the mutation that I call the emergence of probability. [156]

According to Hacking, Renaissance theorists are responsible for the emergence of Probability_{M} by way of making the shift from understanding a sign as a kind of testimony of authoritative individuals to the testimony of nature. Thus, while calling something probable in the 17th century would still be appealing to an authority, that authority is grounded on natural signs, which are testimonies with stable law-like frequencies. And this form of evidence is the notion that we associate with Probability_{M}, which is entirely irrelevant to Probability_{A}, as Hacking characterizes it.

Although Hacking's hypothesis is now the dominant narrative, it does not go unchallenged. A number of scholars reject Hacking's radical conceptual revolution of probability, arguing that many of the notions Hacking believes to be core constituents of Probability_{M} were present long before the mid-17th century.[157] Some of these constituents, as Hacking recognizes, are Aristotelian in origin. In the next section, I examine the Aristotelian

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[156] *The Emergence of Probability,* 30.

[157] Garber and Zabell argue that the notion of sign was closely connected with that of internal evidence and for-the-most-part truths long before the Renaissance, and that important aspects of probability which Hacking believes emerged in the 17th century are clearly present in ancient and medieval thought (“On the emergence of probability”, 37 ff). Garbell and Zabell rely primarily on medieval Latin rather than Greek sources. Schneider agrees with Hacking that no concept of probability was applied to games of chance until the mid-17th century, but he argues that such a concept existed but was not applied to games of chance. In fact, it can be dated back to Aristotle and the Academic skeptic, Carneades. My following discussion is indebted to many of Schneider's observations concerning Aristotle's usages of the *endoxas* and the phrase ‘*hōs epi to polu'* and its reception in medieval and early modern Europe (“Why do we find the origin of a calculus of probabilities in the seventeenth century,” 3 ff). Against Schneider, Myles Burnyeat argues that ancient conceptions of probability, skepticism, and induction—especially those belonging to Carneades—cannot be linked up with the modern notions (“Carneades was no probabilist,” unpublished manuscript).

notions of probability (*to eikos*) and sign (*to sêmion*) to reassess the possible ways in which Probability$_{A}$, especially the Aristotelian variety, may have points of contact with Probability$_{M}$.

5.1 The Aristotelian Notion of Probability (*to eikos*)

Although Aristotle is widely recognized as the first to theorize about concepts of probability and signs, what we have from him is an exposition in broad strokes rather than a detailed theory.[158] The following passage in the *Prior Analytics* contains his fullest analysis of these concepts.

> εἰκὸς δὲ καὶ σημεῖον οὐ ταὐτόν ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν εἰκός ἐστι πρότασις ἔνδοξος· ὃ γὰρ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ ἴσασιν οὕτω γινόμενον ἢ μὴ γινόμενον ἢ ὂν ἢ μὴ ὄν, τοῦτ' ἐστὶν εἰκός, οἷον τὸ μισεῖν τοὺς φθονοῦντας ἢ τὸ φιλεῖν τοὺς ἐρωμένους. σημεῖον δὲ βούλεται εἶναι πρότασις ἀποδεικτικὴ ἢ ἀναγκαία ἢ ἔνδοξος· οὗ γὰρ ὄντος ἔστιν ἢ οὗ γενομένου πρότερον ἢ ὕστερον γέγονε τὸ πρᾶγμα, τοῦτο σημεῖόν ἐστι τοῦ γεγονέναι ἢ εἶναι. (II.27, 70a3-9, cf. *Rhet.* I.2, 1357a35-b1)[159]

> Probability and sign are not the same things, but a probability is a reputable proposition. For it is what people know, for the most part, to happen or not happen, to be or not to be—this is a probability. For example, resentful people hate, and those beloved love. A sign is meant to be a demonstrative proposition either necessary or reputable. For any *X* such that when *X* is, *Y* comes to be, or when *X* has come into being, *Y* has come into being before or after, *X* is a sign of the *Y*'s being or coming into being.

Here, Aristotle differentiates between two terms that are traditionally translated as 'probability' and 'sign.' To maintain a distinction between Aristotle's understanding of probability and the two interpretations of probability we have been discussing, I will use the transliterated form of the Greek word usually rendered as 'probability', '*to eikos,*' to talk about the Aristotelian variety of Probability$_{A}$. How do *to eiko*s and a sign differ?[160] Aristotle answers this question by identifying *to eiko*s with a generally admitted position (*protasis endoxos*)*,* something accepted by

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[158] See this observation in Madden, "Aristotle's Treatment of Probability and Signs," *Philosophy of Science* Vol. 24, No. 2 (1957), 167-172, 172; Allen, *Inferences from Signs: Ancient Debates about the Nature of Evidence* (New York: Oxford U Press, 2001), 13.

[159] Greek text of Ross and my translation. *Analytica Priora et Posteriora*, edited by W.D. Ross and L. Minio-Paluello (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

[160] For a complete treatment of this question in relation to the different usage of *to eikos* and signs in *enthymemes* see Allen, *Inferences from Signs,* Study 1.

everyone, the majority, or the wise (*Top*.III.1, 100b21, cf. *EN* VII.1, 1145b5, *Rh*.I.1, 1355a17).[161] Although he links *to eikos* with the *endoxa* here, we should be careful to avoid treating these concepts as synonymous. It is true that Aristotle admits a certain presumption that the *endoxa* are true since they are fortified by a certain body of opinion and can function as a kind of "mental currency."[162] But such a probable assumption is a feature that occasionally accompanies the *endoxa* rather than an essential, defining characteristic belonging to all *endoxa* as such.[163] Aristotle's statement that *to eikos* is something like a reputable proposition fits with Hacking's characterization of Probability_{A} since it tracks what Hacking calls external rather than internal evidence.[164] At best, as Ivo Schneider notes, the Aristotelian *endoxa* is a precursor of the modern notion of subjective probability, which contains no formal calculations about statistical regularity and only reflects the credal state of the subject.[165]

But what Aristotle says next in the *Prior Analytics* II.27 passage at issue comes closer to a subject-independent, statistical interpretation of probability.[166] *To eikos*, he tells us, is what is for the most part (*hōs epi to polu*). In this sense, *to eikos* means something like what is probable,

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[161] Aristotle's three-fold description here invites a classificatory question about *whose* opinion gets to count as reputable. Kraut includes among the *endoxa* not just those of specialists or people with particular experience, but all commonly accepted views. In his view, the *endoxa* are views grounded on what he calls "the ordinary human faculties and truth-gathering process—reason, perception, experience, science," which is to say that the *endoxa* and the *phainonmena* have the same extension ("How to Justify Ethical Propositions: Aristotle's Method" in R. Kraut (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford U Press, 2006), 77-80). For an opposition, see Dorothea Frede who argues that we should preserve the distinctions among the terms *endoxa*, *legomena*, and *phainomena* ("The Endoxon Mystique: What *Endoxa* Are and What They Are Not," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 43 (2012): 187-215).
[162] Brunschwig describes the *endoxa* as "*une monnaie metallique"* (*Topique 1*, xxxv).
[163] George Grote writes about the *endoxa,* "which is not necessarily true even in part, but maybe wholly untrue, which always has some considerations against it, though there may be more in its favour" (*Aristotle*, ed. Bain and Robertson (London: J. Murray, 1872), 269-70). Brunschwig also comments that the *endoxa* function as premises in dialectical arguments not because they are probably true (*probablement vraies*) but rather because they are truly approved (*veritablement approuvées*, *Topique 1*, xxxv). Kraut notes that the *endoxa* are a "mixed bag of truths," containing both near-truths, and falsehoods–all of them deriving from "reputable" sources ("How to Justify Ethical Propositions: Aristotle's Method," 79). I discuss the epistemic status of *endoxa* further in chapter 3 and briefly in the concluding remarks in relation to Aristotle's methods of ethics.
[164] Although he does not use the terminology of internal and external evidence, this is also John Evans' assessment (*Aristotle on the Concept of Dialectic* (New York, Cambridge U Press: 2010), 78).
[165] "Why do we find the origin of a calculus of probabilities in the seventeenth century," 4.
[166] Schneider thinks Aristotle links the notion of the *endoxa* with the statistical notion because "the subjective probability of an event which occurs as a rule is greater than that of the exception to the rule" ("Why do we find the origin of a calculus of probabilities in the seventeenth century," 4).

or likely to occur, which carries the statistical sense of frequent occurrence. It is worth pausing here to consider what kind of frequency Aristotle has in mind: whether it is absolute or conditional frequency. Lindsay Judson, who argues for a conditional frequency interpretation, characterizes conditional frequency as a relation between an ordered pair of events: "E_1 is usual/rare relative to E_2 iff E_2 is usually/rarely accompanied by E_1, when E_2 occurs."[167] This conditional notion coincides with what other commentators call the "case" usage of the phrase "for the most part." The case reading holds that the quantifier "for the most part" ranges over situations (or cases) in which given a situation, S_1, another, S_2, follows as a general rule. The case (or conditional frequency) interpretation is to be distinguished from the temporal (or absolute frequency) interpretation, which takes the quantifier 'for the most part' to govern temporally over a fixed period or all time. In my view, Aristotle's example in our passage from the *Prior Analytic* is best understood as a claim about conditional frequency. For what he seems to be claiming is that hatefulness (E_1) is usually accompanied by resentfulness (E_2), where resentfulness occurs, rather than the claim about absolute frequency—that throughout some period of the entirety of time, people are frequently resentful haters.

If we can accept the immediate conclusion that Aristotle links the concept of *to eikos* with a statistical interpretation of probability , then we are in a position to reconsider Hacking's claim that Probability_A, of which *to eikos* is a variety, lacks grounding on a theory of statistical

[167] Judson argues for conditional frequency rather than absolute frequency, citing the reason that many of Aristotle's examples would be implausible if we interpret them in the sense of absolute frequency ("Chance and 'Always or For the Most Part'," 83). Although Schneider does not discuss the distinction, it is plain that he endorses the conditional frequency reading since he interprets the qualification 'for the most part' as a concept of a general rule, "which for a given starting situation describes the subsequent situation that as a general rule is to be expected ("Why do we find the origin of a calculus of probabilities in the seventeenth century," 4). Similarly, when discussing the enthymemes, Allen writes, "it seems that 'universally or for the most part' is best understood here as a qualification applying to the relation between premises and conclusion rather than to either the premises or the conclusion" (Inferences from Signs, 32). He, too, takes the for-the-most-part to be relational, holding between a set of premises and the conclusion as opposed to any particular proposition in the enthymeme constructed from signs and the probable.

regularity.[168] While *to eikos* is initially associated with reputable propositions in the *Prior Analytics* passage under consideration, the emphasis in Aristotle's classificatory statement is on the frequency of such propositions' being true rather than on the epistemic authority on which they rest.[169] For he explains that *to eikos* is what is for the most part, which calls for a statistical notion of frequent occurrence that involves terms such as 'usually' or 'regularly.' A natural leading question here is whether or not Aristotle extends this frequency notion into a general sense of probability in which a probability of some event may be located on a scale of probability—high, low, or indifferent.

In an earlier passage of the *Prior Analytics,* Aristotle distinguishes two senses of possibility or contingency (*to endekhesthai*) and identifies one of these with what is for the most part, an intermediate between necessity (*to anagkaion*), on the one hand, and luck (*tuchē*), on the other.[170] The passage goes as follows:

> Διωρισμένων δὲ τούτων πάλιν λέγωμεν ὅτι τὸ ἐνδέχεσθαι κατὰ δύο λέγεται τρόπους, ἕμὲν τὸ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ γίνεσθαι καὶ διαλείπειν τὸ ἀναγκαῖον, οἷον τὸ πολιοῦσθαι ἄνθρπον ἢ τὸ αὐξάνεσθαι ἢ φθίνειν, ἢ ὅλως τὸ πεφυκὸς ὑπάρχειν (τοῦτο γὰρ οὐ συνεχὲ μὲν ἔχει τὸ ἀναγκαῖον διὰ τὸ μὴ ἀεὶ εἶναι ἄνθρωπον, ὄντος μέντοι ἀνθρώπου ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἢ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ ἐστιν), ἄλλον δὲ τὸ ἀόριστον, ὃ καὶ οὕτως καὶ μὴ οὕτως δυνατόν, οἷον τὸ βαδίζειν ζῷον ἢ βαδίζοντος γενέσθαι σεισμόν, ἢ ὅλως τὸ ἀπὸ τύχης γινόμενον· οὐδὲν γὰρ μᾶλλον οὕτως πέφυκεν ἢ ἐναντίως. (*APr.* I.13, 32b4-32b13)
>
> Having made these distinctions we next point out that 'to be possible' is said in two ways. In one it means to happen for the most part and to fall short of necessity, e.g., a person's turning grey or growing or decaying, or generally what naturally belongs to a thing (for this does not have continuous necessity because a man does not exist forever, although if a man does exist, it comes about either necessarily or for the most part). In another way it means the indefinite, which can be both so and not so, e.g., an animal's

[168] Hacking is aware of the notion of "for the most part" in Aristotle but dismisses it in a single sentence, writing, "It is true that we may find in Aristotle sentences translated as, 'the probable is what usually happens', but that was too long ago for us" (*The Emergence of Probability,* 17).
[169] Schneider thinks he might associate *to eikos* with *endoxa*, thinking that the subjective probability of an event which occurs as a general rule is greater than that of the exception to the rule ("Why do we find the origin of a calculus of probabilities in the seventeenth century," 4).
[170]Cf. *APr*. 1.13, 356a where there are three sense of possibility: "possibility is used in several ways (for we say that what is necessary and what is not necessary and what is potential is possible."

walking or an earthquake's taking place while it is walking, or generally what happens by chance; for none of these inclines by nature in the one way more than in the opposite.

We get a similar placement of what is for the most part in Aristotle's classification of things coming-to-be (*gignomena*) in *Physics* II.5, which goes as follows:

> Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν, ἐπειδὴ ὁρῶμεν (1) τὰ μὲν ἀεὶ ὡσαύτως γιγνόμενα (2) τὰ δὲ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ, φανερὸν ὅτι οὐδετέρου τούτων αἰτία ἡ τύχη λέγεται οὐδὲ τὸ ἀπὸ τύχης, οὔτε τοῦ ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ αἰεὶ οὔτε τοῦ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ. (3) ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ ἔστιν ἃ γίγνεται καὶ παρὰ ταῦτα, καὶ ταῦτα πάντες φασὶν εἶναι ἀπὸ τύχης, φανερὸν ὅτι ἔστι τι ἡ τύχη καὶ τὸ αὐτόματον· άτε γὰρ τοιαῦτα ἀπὸ τύχης καὶ τὰ ἀπὸ τύχης τοιαῦα ὄντα ἴσμεν. (196b10-16)[171]

> First then we observe that (1) some things come to be in the same way, and (2) others for the most part. It is clear that of neither of these that chance, or the result of chance, is said to be the cause—neither of that which is by necessity and always, nor of that which is for the most part. (3) But as there is a third class of events besides these two—events which all say are by chance—it is plain that there is such a thing as chance and spontaneity: for we know that things of this kind are due to chance and that things due to chance are of this kind.

Here, Aristotle contrasts among three classes of things coming-to-be: (1) by necessity or always in the same way, (2) for the most part, or (3) by chance.[172] Reading this text in conjunction with the *Prior Analytics* I.13 passage under consideration, we get the result that events of types (2) and (3) belong to the general class of possible events, where (2) has a greater likelihood of obtaining than (3), and both are distinguished from necessity.

We can imagine an Aristotelian linear scale of probability ranging from impossibility to necessity, in which the segment covered by what is "for the most part" would be located between necessity and chance, the latter of which would be midway between impossibility and necessity.

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[171] Ross' Greek text and translation with modifications.

[172] I follow Lindsay Judson in interpreting this threefold division to be concerning the conditional frequency of events. But Judson has a very weak notion and non-technical notion of frequency since he denies attributing to Aristotle any theory of probability (Judson, "Chance and 'Always or For the Most Part'," in *Aristotle's Physics: A Collection of Essays*, 2nd, edited by L. Judson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 82). Others take it to be a taxonomy of propositions: (1) some propositions are true necessarily, (2) some are true for the most part, (3) others are neither. See, for example, Anagnostopoulos, *Aristotle on the Goals and Exactness of Ethics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), chapters 5 and 6. It is also worth pointing out that Aristotle makes a distinction between chance and spontaneity (*to automaton*), claiming that the latter is wider in scope. Chance is a kind of spontaneity that involves agency (*Physics* II.6, 197a37-39). For the purpose of this paper, I will not distinguish a difference between these two types of events.

I do mean to suggest, however, that chance events have a 0.5 probability of obtaining since Aristotle nowhere talks about probability with reference to a numeric scale.[173] I only mean to capture Aristotle's thought in our *Prior Analytics* I.13 passage that chance events do not incline by nature "in the one way more than in the opposite," and so the chances on either side may be conceived as perfectly equal. But it's plainly false to assume that, for Aristotle, the probability of any event resulting from chance has exactly 0.5 probability of obtaining. Similarly, by situating what is for the most part between chance events and necessity, I do not mean to suggest that they have 0.75 probability of obtaining. Rather, I follow Aristotle's own characterization of what is for the most part as "falling short of necessity" but is more likely to occur than the product of chance since it is equated with natural, regularly occurring processes (*APr.* 13, 32b4-13, cf. *GA* 4.4, 770a30-b27).

I think we should be cautious about equating Aristotle's scale of probability with the familiar modern one found in textbooks on statistics, which ranges from a score of 0 (impossibility) to 1 (certainty). However, George Grote relies on the *Prior Analytics* I.13 passage at issue to argue that Aristotle's notion of the possible may be interpreted in a way that admits such a fine-grained gradation. He explains:

> The Possible or Problematical, however, in this latter complete sense—*What may or may not be*—exhibits various modifications or gradations. 1. The chances on either side may be conceived as perfectly equal, so that there is no probability, and we have no more reason for expecting one side of the alternative than the other; the sequence or conjunction is indeterminate. Aristotle construes this indeterminateness in many cases (not as *subjective,* or as depending on our want of complete knowledge and calculating power, but) as *objective,* insuperable, and inherent in many phenomenal agencies;

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[173] In a recent study, Stephen Kidd confirms this result, writing "Although Aristotle and Cicero both demonstrate what might be called a common-sense awareness of probability, neither feels the need to express these probabilities mathematically" ("Why Mathematical Probability Failed to Emerge from Ancient Gambling," *Apeiron* 53, no. 1 (2020): 1–25 at 18). The reason Kidd gives is that calculating "odds," taking risks accordingly, and expressing these odds using mathematical notions were generally absent in antiquity since the gambling that took place then tended to be played at a communal risk. The wager involved was thus a group-wager agreed upon by everyone ahead of time, and the risk itself was shared equally before the game began. This means that the incentives to calculate probable outcomes were not at all glaring, since there was simply no gambling game to which such calculations would have been applicable.

> characterizing it, under the names of Spontaneity and Chance, as the essentially unpredictable. 2. The chances on both sides may be conceived as unequal and the ratio between them as varying infinitely: the usual and ordinary tendency of phenomena—what Aristotle calls Nature—prevails in the majority of cases, but not in all; being liable to occasional counteraction from Chance and other forces. Thus, between Necessity and perfect constancy at one extreme (such as the rotation of the sidereal sphere), and Chance at the other, there may be every shade of gradation; from natural agency next below the constant, down to the lowest degree of probability.[174]

I agree with Grote's observation that between the termini of necessity and chance, and indeed all the way to impossibility, there may be every shade of gradation. What the *Prior Analytics* I.13 passage does not allow us to conclude decisively is whether Aristotle recognizes that each of the shades in between represents a distinct expression of probability. Consider the region nearing the locus of impossibility on the Aristotelian scale. If we were to operate with the modern numeric scale of probability ranging from 0 to 1, then it is possible to assign distinct degrees of probability to the region nearing impossibility, say, 0.01. But the concept of *to eikos* does not allow us to do this. Since it is a marker of frequent occurrences, it cannot be applied to the regions approaching impossibility on the space of possibility. But perhaps Grote's point is more conservative: that insofar as Aristotle makes a distinction between various regions in the space of possibility, he recognizes that what is possible exhibits various modifications or gradations. Even if we endorse this charitable reconstruction *à la* Grote, the verdict still remains that Aristotle seems to lack a precise, mathematical means to differentiate these modes of possibility in a finer grained manner than his concepts of chance and *to eikos* would allow.

5.2 The Aristotelian Notion of a Sign (*to sēmeion*)

Our discussion has been focused on the statistical side of the duality of $\text{Probability}_{\text{M}}$ thus far. Turning to the epistemological side and the related notion of external evidence that Hacking

[174] *Aristotle*, 295-6.

believes is missing from Probability_A, we are brought back to Aristotle's discussion of sign (*to sēmeion*) in the same *Prior Analytics* II.27 passage above. Here, I understand Aristotle to mean by 'signs', items that furnish evidence from which a conclusion may be inferred. And the notion of evidence in play here, I argue, is internal rather than external. Consider Aristotle's elucidation: *X* is evidence for *Y* just in case when *X* happens, *Y* also happens or when *X* has come into being, *Y* has come into being before or after (*APr.* 2.27, 70a8-9). It is true that Aristotle's characterization is under-described enough to leave open the possibility that the accompaniment of *X* and *Y* may be constant, frequent, or only occasional. Nevertheless, his elucidation of the usage of sign inferences makes clear that Aristotle has the internal notion of evidence in mind.

Consider Aristotle's instructions of how to draw inferences involving signs. He tells us that there are three ways to use sign inferences, corresponding to the position of the middle term (*meson*) in the figures (*schemata*).[175] Only one of these, the first-figure sign-inference is valid. The example he gives for a first figure-sign-inference, (F1), is that from the fact that this man has a fever, the sign, we may infer that he is ill (*Rhet*. I.2, 1357b14-5, cf. *APr*. II.27, 70a).

F1:
1. Feverish people are ill.
2. This man has a fever.
3. He is ill.

For the second figure-sign-inference, (F2), we have the example of paleness serving as a sign for pregnancy. (*Rhet*. I.2, 1357b20, cf. *APr*. II.27, 70a) The sign reasoning Aristotle has in mind is the following.

F2:
1. All pregnant women are pale.
2. This woman is pale.

[175] Aristotle calls the term shared by the premises the middle term, and each of the other two terms in the premises an extreme (*akron, APr* I.425b32-5). There are three possibilities for the placement of the middle term: it can be the subject of one premise and the predicate of the other, the predicate of both premises, or the subject of both premises. The figure of a categorical syllogism is determined by the position of the middle term.

3. She is pregnant.

And the example of the third figure-sign-inference, (F3), goes as follows (*Rhet*. I. 2, 1357b12-3, cf. *APr*. II.27, 70a):

F3:
1. Socrates is wise.
2. Socrates is good.
3. Therefore, the wise are good.

Aristotle assigns unique names to the minor premise in (F1), '*to tekmērion',* a term usually translated with the word 'evidence' or 'token' (*Rhet.* I.2, 1357b4–5).[176] in (F1), the valid form of sign inference, the sign (the fever) does not simply generally indicate but universally indicates, is sure evidence for, some further fact (the illness). The premise containing the token, as Allen puts it, is a "covering generalization"—something typically treated as part of the background of uncontentious assumptions in virtue of which the sign is able to serve as evidence for the relevant conclusion.[177]

By contrast to (F1), Aristotle says almost nothing about the invalid forms, (F2) and (F3). But of the three forms of sign reasoning Aristotle discusses, the invalid ones are of interest for the reason that they require a concept of the degree to which some evidence confirms a hypothesis. In each of (F2) and (F3), we have an argument that can fail to be a deductively valid syllogism but still qualify as an enthymeme, a rhetorical deduction, since its conclusion would still somehow have to follow for the most part (*APr*. II.27, 70a6–7).[178] If he accepts these as

[176] Allen translates it as 'token', while Roberts uses 'evidence.' Aristotle distinguishes among *to eikos,* a sign, and token in *Rhetoric* I.2, 1357b20-1 but does not differentiate between a sign and a token in the *Prior Analytics*. Second and third figure sign-inferences are treated as sources of genuine enthymemes in the *Prior Analytics* passages but their status as enthymemes are challenged based on passages in the *Rhetoric*.

[177] Allen, *Inferences from Signs,* 25.

[178] Some commentators question whether they are *enthymemes* at all since Aristotle's view appears to be conflicting when we consider the evidence from the *Rhetoric* II.24, *Sophistical Refutation* 5 by contrast with the *Prior Analytic*s II.27. In *Sophistical Refutations* 5, an argumentsfrom signs is presented as an instance of the fallacy of affirming the consequent and said to be especially common in rhetorical debates (167b8–11). Due to these mixed views, Sprute withholds the status of enthymeme from F2 and F3. Sprute, *Die Enthymemtheorie der aristotelischen Rhetorik* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1982), 88 ff.

plausible ways to reason towards a probable conclusion, then Aristotle needs the probability concept of the degree to which some piece of evidence confirms a hypothesis.[179] This degree would be a function of both positive instances of confirmation where the sign in fact is a token of the fact being proven in the conclusion, and the elimination of competing hypotheses by negative instances. While this procedure would still yield only probable knowledge because one could not be in a position to rule out all the competing alternatives, Aristotle thinks it has evidential value in dialectic and rhetorical reasoning. The vexing issue here is that he does not, as far as I'm aware, offer a more precise analysis of probability conferred on a hypothesis by the considered evidence.

We are now in a position to make some closing remarks about Aristotle's discussions of *to eikos* and *to sēmeion* against the background of $\text{Probability}_{\text{M}}$. On the epistemological side of the duality, Aristotle's discussion of the three uses of sign inference shows his awareness of the epistemological connection between the credibility of propositions in the light of evidence. The limitation of his account seems to be that Aristotle neither specifies the means[180] nor the degree to which the evidence in an argument employing a sign premise confirms its hypothesis. But the notion of evidence demanded by sign inferences is internal: a fact, or rather a token of the fact

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Somlsen argues for a developmental view. Somlsen, *Die Entwicklung der aristotelischen Logik und Rhetorik* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1929), 22-3. Raphael observes that the adversarial character of rhetoric makes it natural for Aristotle to take cautionary measure by warning his readers of what can be said against as well as in favor of each variety of rhetorical argument (S. Raphael, 'Rhetoric, Dialectic and Syllogistic Argument: Aristotle's Position in "Rhetoric" I–II', *Phronesis*, 19 (1974), 153–67). Allen argues that there is nothing in the official accounts of the sign in *Rhetoric* 1. 2 or *Prior Analytics* 2. 27 that excludes any of the forms of argument they analyze. Rather, the conclusion of F1, which contains a token, is necessary, but the conclusions of F2 and F3 from an anonymous remaining sign would be reputable. 'Necessary' here means capable (when taken together with an appropriate major premise) of necessitating, rather than implying with a lower degree of likelihood, the conclusion (Allen, *Inferences from Signs,* 28ff).

[179] I interpret Allen to hold a similar view: "Aristotle seems to have supposed that the effect of the for-the-most-part major premise is to give rise to a for-the-most-part relation of consequence…If the premises represent the best state of our knowledge, then a particular instance of this argument form will furnish us with a reputable ground for taking its conclusion to be true" (*Inferences from Signs,* 31-2).

[180] One possible theory of evidence is one in which the probability conferred on a hypothesis by some evidence is a logical relation between propositions—the premises and conclusion of enthymemes. Such a view has been advanced Harold Jeffreys and J. M. Keynes, who held that the probability of a hypothesis *H* in the light of some evidence *E*, is something like the degree to which *H* is logically implied by *E*. Keynes, *A Treatise on Probability* (London: Macmillan, 1921); Jeffreys, *The Theory of Probability* (Oxford: OUP, 1939).

being proven in the conclusion. On the statistical side, I have suggested that insofar as Aristotle distinguishes between various modes of being possible—and thinks that some modes are more probable than others—he recognizes that possibility comes in degrees. But Aristotle does not distinguish these modes of possibility to a degree of precision that approaches the numeric scale of probability that is familiar to a modern audience. I do not deny the possibility that he may conceive of events being more or less possible in finer degrees, but he appears to have the terminology to distinguish only between the notable termini on the scale of probability: impossibility, chance, for the most part, and necessity. What Aristotle lacks is a numerical or mathematical mode of expressing various degrees of probability, such as the one required to generate calculation about decision by weighing the degree of desirability and probability in geometrical proportion. Nonetheless, this much is clear: Aristotle recognizes the now common intuition that the probability of events, along with the measure of desirability, should have an impact on the agent's evaluation of what line of action she should choose.

6. Aristotle's Apparent Failure

My objective thus far has been to reconsider Jeffrey's verdict that Aristotle is unaware that the probability of events need not be equiprobable, and that this consideration should have an impact on the agent's evaluation of what line of action she should choose. But if Aristotle is aware of both considerations—of desirability and probability—then one might reasonably demand an explanation for his apparent ignorance of Jeffrey's counterexample to the inference at *Topics* III.2, 118a18-20. I want to suggest that, by design, any rule of inference subsumed under what Aristotle calls '*topoi*' is subject to counterexamples and that Aristotle is fully aware of this feature of his theory. Indeed, while Jeffrey offers one such counterexample, Aristotle anticipates

many more in *Topics* III. We can make some progress at addressing Jeffrey's concern, thus, by acquiring a correct understanding of the *topoi*, which are the main constituents of the *Topics*.

6.1. The Aristotelian *topoi* and Their Constituents

Although the *topoi* make up the bulk of the *Topics*, Aristotle nowhere defines what a *topos* is there. In search of a definition, scholars generally turn to *Rhetoric* II.26, where Aristotle offers the following sketch of a definition.

> αὐτὸ λέγω στοιχεῖον καὶ τόπον: ἔστιν γὰρ στοιχεῖον καὶ τόπος εἰς ὃ πολλὰ ἐνθυμήματα ἐμπίπτει. (1403a16-17)
>
> By 'element' I mean the same thing as a *topos.* For an element and a *topos* is that under which many enthymemes subsume.

I want to unpack Aristotle's "definition" of a *topos* by getting clear on the technical terms, beginning with enthymemes. Aristotle explains what an enthymeme in three ways. First, he identifies it with "rhetorical demonstration" (ἔστι δ' ἀπόδειξις ῥητορικὴ ἐνθύμημα, *Rhet.* I.1, 1355a6) and, second, with "a deduction of a sort" (ἐνθύμημα συλλογισμός τις, *Rhet*. I.1, 1355a8); finally, he adds that it is "from probability and sign" (ἐνθυμήματα ἐξ εἰκότων καὶ ἐκ σημείων, *Rhet.* II.2, 1357a31-32). Putting these details together, we can glean from Aristotle's remarks that enthymemes are rhetorical demonstrations composed of elements which are probability and sign. In fact, Aristotle makes just this claim in *Prior Analytics* II.27: "An enthymeme is a deduction from probability and sign" (Ἐνθύμημα δὲ ἐστὶ συλλογισμὸς ἐξ εἰκότων ἢ σημείων, 70a10).[181]

[181] In Ross' edition, this line is moved to the beginning of chapter 27. In earlier editions, such as Aldine's 1495, the word *'atelēs'* appears after '*syllogismos*', which would seem to suggest that the enthymemes are abbreviated or incomplete arguments. The placement of *'atelēs'* here—and the brevity of the enthymemes—have been questioned and rejected by Burnyeat ("Enthymeme: The Logic of Persuasion", 6 ff.).

In light of our discussion of *Prior Analytics* II.27,70a3-9 in which Aristotle elucidates what he calls “probability” and “sign,” the fact that an enthymeme is from probability and sign implies that it is a deduction constructed from at least one premise which contains only probable evidence in support of its conclusion.[182] Perhaps Aristotle allows enthymemes to contain premises which are probably rather than universally true because these claims could serve as starting points in rhetorical debates.[183] The germane point here is that given their constituents, enthymemes only lead to probable knowledge, or other for-the-most-part truths, rather than absolute knowledge. Since the enthymemes subsumed under the *topoi* have a lower standard of validity in this sense, i.e., they are not true under every interpretation and admits of exceptions, it is hardly surprising that they should be subject to counterexamples.

Moreover, that there will be counterexamples is a feature that Aristotle is well aware of. Indeed, he even occasionally alerts the audience to possible exceptions to his rules immediately after laying them out. Consider the following inferential rule, which claims that when considering two bundles of goods, the bundle containing the greater number of goods is to be preferred.

R14: ᾧ γὰρ ἕπεται μεῖζον ἀγαθόν, τοῦθ’ αἱρετώτερον. (117a7-8)

For the one that is followed by the greater good is the preferable one.

Immediately, Aristotle adds the following counterexample to his rule.

> ἔνστασις, εἴ που θάτερον θατέρου χάριν· οὐδὲν γὰρ αἱρετώτερα τὰ ἄμφω τοῦ ἑνός, οἷον τὸ ὑγιάζεσθαι καὶ ἡ ὑγίεια τῆς ὑγιείας, ἐπειδὴ τὸ ὑγιάζεσθαι τῆς ὑγιείας ἕνεκεν αἱρούμεθα. (*Top*. III.2, 117a18-21)

An objection—if one thing is at the service of (or is for the sake of) the other: for the

[182] Here I include tokens (*to tekmērion*) as a kind—indeed the best kind—of signs. Tokens could be substituted for signs where signs are used in this section. In doing so, I assume the views that deductions in the second and third figures sign inferences are enthymemes.

[183] In his description of the art of rhetoric in *Rhet.* I.2, Aristotle explains that it deals with matters we deliberate about but for which we lack expert knowledge (*technē*, 1357a1-2).

> combination of these things is not to be preferred over one of them, e.g., the combination of the recovery of health and health is not to be preferred over health since we desire the recovery for the sake of health.

What Aristotle clarifies here is the fact that, while R14 says we ought to generally prefer the greater of two bundles of goods such that the combination (*A*+*B*) is preferable to *B* by itself, if *A* is at service to *B*, or for the sake of *B*, then the combination (*A*+*B*) is not preferable to *B*. In Aristotle's example, the recovery from an illness in combination with good health is not to be preferred over having good health without undergoing a recovery process.

Aristotle is aware of further complications concerning how one ought to assess the value of a bundle of goods in the following passage, where he clearly expresses knowledge of the idea that complementary goods should be treated differently than the standard case of value addition.

> Ἔτι ἐκ τῆς προσθέσεως, εἰ τῷ αὐτῷ προστιθέμενόν τὸ ὅλον αἱρετώτερον ποιεῖ. εὐλαβεῖσθαι δὲ δεῖ προτείνειν ἐφ'ὧν τῷ μὲν ἑτέρῳ τῶν προστιθεμένων χρῆται τὸ κοινὸν ἢ ἄλλως πως συνεργόν ἐστι, τῷ δὲ λοιπῷ μὴ χρῆται μηδὲ συνεργόν ἐστιν, οἷον πρίονα καὶ δρέπανον μετὰ τεκτονικῆς· αἱρετώτερον γὰρ ὁ πρίων συνδυαζομένοιν, ἁπλῶς δὲ οὐχ αἱρετώτερον. (*Top*. III.3, 118b10-15)
>
> Moreover, judge by means of addition, and see between the two things to-be-compared which one makes the whole more desirable when added to the same third thing. One must, however, beware of adducing a case in which the common term uses, or in some other way helps the case, one of the things added to it but not the other, e.g., if one took a saw and a pruning knife in combination with the art of carpentry. For the saw is a more desirable thing in the combination, but it is not a more desirable thing without qualification.

In the light of this passage, there can be no doubt that Aristotle is cognizant of an idea made prominent by G. E. Moore in the early 20th century: that the value of an organic unity is not the mere sum of the value of its parts.[184] In Moorean terms, there are unities in which the value of

[184] *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 263-4. Some contemporary philosophers have challenged Moore's principle in recent years. See, for example, Jonathan Dancy, "Moore's account of vindictive punishment: A test case for theories of organic unities" in *Themes from G. E. Moore: New essays in epistemology and ethics* edited by S. Nuccetelli & G. Seay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); McNaughton & Rawling, "Benefits, holism, and the aggregation of value," *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 26, (2008): 354–374.

such a whole "bears no regular proportion to the sum of the values of its parts."[185] The unity Aristotle discusses in the passage under consideration consists of the art of carpentry and the tools useful to this art, viz., a saw and a pruning knife. Certainly, the combination of the art and the tools that can be beneficial to achieving the aim of the art forms a greater value, especially to a carpenter, than the invariable values of these parts.

I have been arguing that, since the arguments subsumed under the topoi have a lower standard of validity, it is hardly surprising that they should be subject to counterexamples, such as the one formulated by Jeffrey or the ones brought up by Aristotle himself. Having a lower standard of validity does not, however, imply that the enthymemes have no credibility. While they are not exceptionless, we should expect more cases in which the conclusions of enthymemes hold than negative instances in which they do not. At any rate, Aristotle takes enthymemes to be deductions, but ones that contain premises that are probably (*to eikos*) rather than categorically true. However, if there are a host of exceptions to the rules that Aristotle identifies in *Topics* III, one might reasonably worry about their effectiveness in guiding action. To frame the issue differently, the question has to do with how, exactly, a dialectician might use these topoi to help him succeed at persuasion if the inferences he draws from them are subject to counterexamples. This is the question I will attempt to answer next.

6.2 *Topoi*: A User's Manual

Since dialectic is, as Brunschwig puts it, "a game no one plays anymore," we have to use our imagination in attempting to understand how these *topoi* might be used by a participant of the game. I propose that we start with Aristotle's characterization of *topos* as that under which many

[185] *Principia Ethica,* 263.

enthymemes subsumed. This description suggests an account of a *topos* as a way of categorizing a single class of enthymemes which share a loose common feature, allowing for such grouping.[186] We may imagine a *topos* to be something like a general type of argument under which many token enthymemes of the same group can be subsumed. But how should we make sense of the additional detail in Aristotle's description in *Rhetoric* II.26, 1403a16-17: viz. his identification of a *topos* with an element (*stoicheion*)? To answer this question, I want to consider one salient way in which Aristotle defines an element in *Metaphysics* V.

In *Metaphysics* V, Aristotle enumerates multiple meanings of the word 'element' (1041a26-1041b15). Of those he considers, one usage of 'element' is "applied metaphorically to any small unit which is useful for various purposes" (μεταφέροντες δὲ στοιχεῖον καλοῦσιν ἐντεῦθεν ὃ ἂν ἓν ὂν καὶ μικρὸν ἐπὶ πολλὰ ᾖ χρήσιμον, 1041b3-5). This metaphorical usage is a good fit for our *Rhetoric* II.26 passage: a *topos* is a metaphorical element insofar as it is a small and simple unity containing a body of enthymemes. Aristotle thinks that the fact that elements are "small or simple or indivisible" allows us to conceive of them as something like genera. Aristotle explains, "the most universal things are elements; because each of them, being a simple unity, is present in many things, either in all or in as many as possible" (τὰ μάλιστα καθόλου στοιχεῖα εἶναι, ὅτι ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ἓν ὂν καὶ ἁπλοῦν ἐν πολλοῖς ὑπάρχει ἢ πᾶσιν ἢ ὅτι πλείστοις, 1041b9-11).

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[186] This is conceivably why some scholars translate *'topos'* as 'a commonplace rule' or 'commomplace.' See Forster's Loeb translation and W. A. Pickard-Cambridge's in Barnes' *The Complete Works of Aristotle* 1. There seems to be no universal agreement on what a *topos* is. Scholarly conjectures generally fall into three categories. The dominant view seems to be that a *topos* is something like (1) a set of investigational instructions. De Pater, for instance, understands *topos* as "a formula" (formule) for research (*Les Topiques d'Aristote et la dialectique platonicienne*, 231); Brunschwig thinks that the *topoi* are, as it were, "recipes" (recettes) of argumentation for dialectical discussion (*Topiques* 1, ix); Oliver Primavesi defends a similar view: that although the topoi are uninformed, they "must, in any case, give guidance for transforming the affirmative sentence under discussion into a premise from which the truth or falseness of the sentence can be deduced" (Die *Aristotelische Topik,* 103). In even finer grain, Paul Slomkowski argues that (2) a *topos* is a first principle (*archē) a*nd a *protasis, (Aristotle's Topics,* ch. 2). The final position holds that (3) it is something like a rule of logic. For instance, Vittorio Sainati maintains that top*oi ar*e rules of inference (*Storia dell'Organon aristotelico 1,* 1, 41), whereas Bocheński and de Pater see them as laws of logic (Bocheński, Anc*ient formal logic, 7*).

If a *topos* behaves like an element in this way, then, in *Topics* III, Aristotle confines his project to that of articulating rules for the ranking of preference from the standpoint of some loose common feature shared by the items being compared. As we have seen, the rules provided in the first chapter of the *Topics,* for example, have to do with non-consequential features of the *comparanda* like their intrinsic goodness, durability, and finality. But what are we to do when confronting, as we often do, scenarios in which it is necessary to evaluate the preferability of competing goods from multiple vantage points, e.g., from both their additive value and their intrinsic desirability? In such a scenario, I want to suggest that there is an implicit expectation that those relying on the *topoi* would be able to discern the appropriate contexts where a certain combination of rules would be required to construct arguments that have a higher standard of validity, or is more likely to yield a true conclusion. In Aristotle's words, we are to u "orient the argument in those directions which will prove useful" (*Top*. III.1, 116a20-22).

To better clarify the present proposal, consider a puzzling passage in *Prior Analytics* II.22, which seems to suggest that Aristotle is not aware of the principle of organic unity. That passage goes as follows:

> Ὅταν δὲ δυοῖν ὄντοιν τὸ *Α* τοῦ *Β* αἱρετώτερον ᾖ, ὄντων ἀντικειμένων, καὶ τὸ *Δ* τοῦ *Γ* ὡσαύτως, εἰ αἱρετώτερα τὰ *Α Γ* τῶν *Β* Δ, τὸ *Α* τοῦ *Δ* αἱρετώτερον. (68a 25-27)
>
> Of two opposites *A* and *B*, *A* is preferable to *B*, and similarly *D* is preferable to *C*, then if *A* and *C* are preferable to *B* and *D*, *A* must be preferable to *D*.

This passage, taken by itself, might lead one to believe that Aristotle fails to recognize the exception cases of complementary goods, where the inference he claims here may not necessarily follow. Suppose that *A*, *B*, *C*, and *D* stand for goods or their opposites, the absence of these goods. If the bundle (*A*+*C*) forms an organic unity, then it is not necessarily true that *d* (*A*) > *d* (*D*) should follow from the fact that *d* (*A*+*C*) > *d* (*B*+*D*). This is a case in which, as Aristotle

warns us in *Topics* III.3, 118b10-15, the desirability of the bundle of complementary good, possibly (*A*+*C*), is greater than the sum of their desirability. My suggestion to make sense of this *Prior Analytics* passage is to imagine that there is a tacit expectation for those using these inference rules to treat them as elements with which one combines to construct more plausible arguments, given that these rules are nested and some are presented as qualifications of others. Here, in light of the *Topics* III.3, 118b10-15, one would need to be mindful that the rule expressed in the *Prior Analytics* II.22 is not true without qualification; it only contains an element of the truth and must be supplemented by other elements, e.g., whether or not these goods are complementary.

To illustrate this point further, I want to revisit the counterexample that Jeffrey considers and apply my suggestion to show how the worry may be preempted by using a combination of rules in Aristotle' system. Recall from §3 that Jeffrey gives a counterexample to the rule at *Topics* III.2, 118a18-20, which states that if *A* is desirable without *B*, and *B* is not desirable without *A*, then $d(A) > d(B)$. My suggestion is that a person who diligently consults the *topoi*, too, should be aware of that there is a counterexample to this rule. One might think, for instance, that the combination of *phronēsis* and an external good behaves in ways that are saliently similar to the organic unity that Aristotle discusses in *Top.*, III.3, 118b10-15. Moreover, this would not be a straightforward case of value addition since obtaining *phronēsis* and obtaining some external good are not obviously independent. What I mean is that it is perhaps in virtue of possessing *phronēsis* that one is better disposed to also acquire the external goods. In fact, part of what it is to be a *phronimos* is to be excellent at deliberation without qualification. And because the *phronimos* is skilled in deliberation, one might think that he would be more successful in his attempt to acquire the external goods. One could also think, in the most straightforward

exception to the inference rule at issue, that if *A* is impossible to obtain, having a probability of 0, then regardless of what its desirability score *A* is, $d(A) < d(B)$, granted that $p(B) > 0$. Aristotle, in fact, already articulates the relevant rule to construct this counterexample when he claims that "the possible thing is [preferable] to the impossible thing" (καὶ τὸ δυνατὸν τοῦ ἀδυνάτου, *Top.* III.1, 116b26).

Certainty, there are counterexamples to the rules Aristotle catalogs in *Topics* III since they are constructed from premises that are true, not always, but only for the most part. But I want to suggest that these counterexamples are foreseeable if one studies the *topoi* carefully. Aristotle, at any rate, is aware and often supplies the counterexamples himself. It is ultimately the business of the dialecticians who use these *topoi* as a manual to cross-check these rules, as it is called upon by the relevant context, in order to construct arguments that have a higher standard of validity and are less vulnerable to counterexamples. Aristotle does not always make the exceptions to his rules explicit, but rather relies on the readers of *Topics III* to exercise judgment.

However, there is an objection. If the text of *Topics* III assumes that those practicing the dialectical art would be using the *topoi* skillfully in the way that I suggest, then perhaps we should conclude, along with Jeffrey, that Aristotle offers neither a logic of decision nor a theory of preference. Perhaps Aristotle is doing something rather differently than theorizing about decision-making and preference-ranking in *Topics* III. Indeed, one might reasonably ask why we should expect to find, in a treatise dealing with, or at any rate deeply entrenched in, the art of dialectic, a formal framework for a theory of preference. As scholars have pointed out, Aristotle composes *Topics* III with an eye to settle practical disputes among dialecticians.[187] And if Aristotle intends for *Topic* III to serve as a dialectical guide for settling practical disputes, then

[187] Aristoteles, *Topik* iii. 1-3, 234. Gigon also claims that *Topics* 3 contains ethical content insofar as it addresses dialectical dialogues concerned ethical questions, which links it directly with the *Nicomachean Ethics.*

perhaps Jeffrey is right to point out that Aristotle formulates no system for the logic of preference or decision. As I mentioned, I think it is indisputable that what we find in the text of *Topics* III is neither a complete nor formal system of preference logic. This much is clear. But what is also clear is the fact that there are crucial points of contact that Aristotle's writing in *Topics* III share with contemporary theory of preference. In the following section, I address this objection by elucidating three of these points of contact.

7. Aristotle: The Father of the Logic of Preference?

We have now seen the key features of the Aristotelian theory of preference structure which distinguish it from modern logic of preference. Should these differences lead us to conclude that Aristotle's theory is far too removed from its contemporary offspring to count as an inaugural treatment? In this final section, I argue that despite these differences, the label "inaugural treatment" of preference logic can comfortably be employed in the context of Aristotle's *Topics.* Three fundamental points of contact will be discussed to support this claim: (1) preference is an inherently comparative concept; (2) preferences are not tastes; (3) the logical order of preference provides a rationale for preferential choice.

7.1 Preference is Inherently Comparative

Although it is common to find, in everyday language, instances of the word 'preference' used to convey a liking for some particular thing. To have a preference for a fair outcome, on this usage of the word 'preference', is to have a liking or a taste for fairness. Understanding preference as something like a liking is to understand preference as crucially noncomparative: the agent who

has a preference for *x* likes *x*, has a taste for *x*, or desires *x*. But the notion of preference of interest to philosophers and decision theorists is always understood as comparative: the agent always prefers some *x* over *y* rather than *x tout court*.[188]

Aristotle, too, clearly treats preference as an inherently comparative concept. As we saw in the opening lines of *Topics* III*,* he proposes to (emphasis mine) "investigate in the following lines which one is preferable or better *between two or more things*" (116a3). What his opening statement demonstrates is that Aristotle construes preference, not as a preference for some individual thing, but a preference always and necessarily relates two options and compares them in terms of their choice-worthiness. The subsequent rules he gives, although strictly for the ranking of options that are not sufficiently heterogeneous, all aim to shed light on the choice-worthiness of the options being compared. A close examination of these rules indeed confirms that Aristotle does not conceive of preference as mere matter of taste, but rather as the agent's deliberative rankings of her options.

7.2 Preference is Susceptible to Deliberative connections

For Aristotle, to have preferences is not to have brute psychological states which are not open to debate and, importantly, to revision. The fact that Aristotle's analysis of the logical structure of preference is situated in a treatise largely concerned with the art of dialectic is confirmation of this view. For it makes little sense to articulate rules for dialectical arguments to persuade one's opponent to adopt or eliminate a certain position, if the position is just concerned with individual taste about which, as the popular maxim has it, there can be no dispute (*de gustibus non*

[188] See, for example, Gerald Gaus, *On Philosophy, Politics, and Economics,* Wadsworth Philosophical Topics (Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth, 2008), 31-32; Pettit, "Preference, deliberation and satisfaction," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 59 (2006):131-154.

disputandum est). There is also little evidence that he conceives of having a preference as an isolated psychological state. Instead, Aristotle thinks that the state of having a preference for one thing rather than another is intricately connected with choice and deliberation.

There are at least two supporting reasons for this hypothesis. First, the preferable thing that Aristotle discusses *Top.* III.2, the *hairetōteron,* is intimately related to the object of *prohairesis* in his ethics. We saw in the previous chapter that according to Aristotle's characterization of *prohairesis* in *EN* 3.2, the object of *prohairesis* is the chosen thing (*haireton*), which is preferred over other things (1112a15-17). The '*hairetōteron'* that he is concerned with in *Topics* III is the comparative form of '*haireton'*—the thing more worthy of choice. Second, the examples Aristotle discusses are not obviously about tastes, urges, or passions. Rather, being eminently practical, they concern common aspects of deliberation, such as whether one should pursue an external good or the excellence of practical rationality (*Top*. III.2, 118a18) or whether one should devote one's time to make meaningful friendships or making money (*Top.* III.1, 116b26).

If Aristotle does not conceive of having preferences to be psychologically equivalent to having brute inclinations, then we are invited to reconsider Rescher's negative review of Aristotle's project. Recall that the fatal flaw he detects in Aristotle's analysis of preference-ranking is that the theory is built upon a "particular substantive theory of preference-determination" rather on "abstract, formal, systematic grounds."[189] Rescher points out further that Aristotle only gives a series of examples, rather than articulating the overarching rules governing the logical structure of preference. Certainty, Aristotle offers a substantive theory of preference determination since, unlike contemporary decision theorists, he does not conceive of

[189] "Semantic Foundations for the Logic of Preference," 38.

preferences in a manner "irrespective of factual or moral justification."[190] His theory does not tell the decision-maker that, given that these are your probability and utility assignments, you ought to prefer *A* over *B*. But what Aristotle is also not doing, I contend, is expressing his own idiosyncratic view about what we ought to prefer which is not based on discernable features of the items in question, although such features may be difficult to discern (*Top*. I.1,1163a23-24). At least, none of his examples is of this sort.

That Aristotle does not take himself to be providing a mere list of examples of which preference-determination would be better is confirmed by the following passage, where he distinguishes between two different modes a persuasive speech may take.

> εἰσὶν γὰρ αἱ μὲν παραδειγματώδεις ῥητορεῖαι αἱ δὲ ἐνθυμηματικαί, καὶ ῥήτορες ὁμοίως οἱ μὲν παραδειγματώδεις οἱ δὲ ἐνθυμηματικοί. πιθανοὶ μὲν οὖν οὐχ ἧττον οἱ λόγοι οἱ διὰ τῶν παραδειγμάτων, θορυβοῦνται δὲ μᾶλλον οἱ ἐνθυμηματικοί· (*Rhet.* I.2, 1356b21-5)
>
> In some oratorical styles, examples prevail, in other, enthymemes; and in like manner, some orators are better at the former and some at the latter. Speeches that rely on examples are as persuasive no less than the other kind, but those which rely on enthymemes excite the louder applause.

There is a juxtaposition in this text between two types of material constituents of rhetorical speeches: examples and enthymemes. If Aristotle recognizes such a distinction, then he cannot mean to give a series of examples in the collection of *topoi* in *Topics* III. For the things subsumed under the *topoi* are enthymemes, not examples. In fact, Aristotle continues, in *Rhetoric* I.2, to state why the elements of the rhetoric, and presumably, dialectic must not be individual instances, as follows:

> οὐδὲ ἡ ῥητορικὴ τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον ἔνδοξον θεωρήσει, οἷον Σωκράτει ἢ Ἱππίᾳ, ἀλλὰ τὸ τοιοισδί, καθάπερ καὶ ἡ διαλεκτική. (1356b33-4)

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[190] Jeffrey, *The Logic of Decision*, 1

> Rhetoric is not theorizing about what seems reputable to a particular individual like Socrates or Hippias, but about what seems to people of a certain sort, and this is true of dialectic also.

This remark about the "theory" of rhetoric invites a complexity: it is clear that Aristotle thinks rhetoric is not to be concerned with individual cases, but what should we make of the fact that it concerns "what seems to people of a certain sort"? I propose to read this classification in light of the opening remark of *Topics* III.1:

> ἐπὶ τῶν τοιούτων ὅτι δειχθείσης ὑπεροχῆς ἢ μιᾶς ἢ πλειόνων συγκαταθήσεται ἡ διάνοια ὅτι τοῦτ' ἐστὶν αἱρετώτερον, ὁπότερον τυγχάνει αὐτῶν ὑπερέχον. (116a10-13)
>
> If we can shed light on one or many superiorities, our thought will assent that the one that is more desirable is whichever one happens to have the superiority.

Aristotle suggests that he is articulating some kind of reason that can prompt our thought (*dianoia*) to respond appropriately by assenting to the judgment that one thing is to be chosen as opposed to another. Rhetoric, then, is concerned with what appears to be the case for people who are responsive to reason. In fact, Aristotle tells us that the material of dialectic is not haphazard, such as what appears to people in a trance (*Rhet.* I.2, 1356b36). But if the enthymemes can be used to lead our thought to assent to the judgment that one thing is to be preferred over another, then, once more, Aristotle cannot conceive of preferences as mere tastes and cannot be limiting himself to illustrating a series of examples.

7.3 A Rationale for Preferential Choice

The fact that preferences are not mere tastes but are inextricably linked up with deliberation and choice dovetails with the final feature of Aristotle's analysis to which I want to draw attention: its aims of providing a rationale for preference choice. One might be skeptical of this claim since

the *Topics* is deeply embedded in a dialectical background. Perhaps one thinks Aristotle composes this material to serve the art of dialectic rather than to provide any rationale for preferential choice. After all, a speaker could persuade his audience, as Aristotle recognizes, by stirring up the audience's emotions rather than presenting factually relevant arguments. However, Aristotle marginalizes the affective components of rhetoric and regards them as "accessory" (προσθήκη**,** *Rhet.* I.1, 1354a14). His unequivocal position is that "the arousing of prejudice, pity, anger, and similar emotions has nothing to do with the essential facts" (καὶ ἔλεος καὶ ὀργὴ καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα πάθη τῆς ψυχῆς οὐ περὶ τοῦ πράγματός ἐστιν, *Rhet*. I.1, 1354a15-8). His predecessors give insufficient accounts of the art of rhetoric because they only deal with the inessentials, the affective components, whereas, Aristotle claims, the true constituents of rhetoric are the modes of persuasion, which he defines as "a sort of demonstration" (ἀπόδειξίς τις), especially the enthymemes (*Rhet*. I.1, 1355a3-7).

Given that Aristotle holds that the enthymemes are demonstrations, one should indeed expect him to be articulating justifications, in the form of an argument resembling a demonstration, for some preferential choice. And if the aim of a logic of decisions, as Jeffrey defines it, is "to provide a rationale for preferential choice" then Aristotle presents such a logic of decision in his discussion of the *topoi* dealing with preference structure. For Jeffrey, in the simplest case, "options are represented by propositions that are within the agent's power to make true, and it is the option furthest to the right on the desirability scale that is to be chosen."[191] In my view, Aristotle's "logic" of decision contains both of these considerations, although they do not interact in the same way as the current standard model. Regarding the first, as we saw, Aristotle conceives of the subjects of deliberation as things "up to us"—things within the agent's

[191] "The Logic of Decision Defended," 473.

power to do or refrain from doing (*EN* III.3, 1112a31).[192] The options that we select from can thus be represented by proposition that are up to us to make true. Second, *Topics* III.1-5 aims to provide arguments that can reveal which option is the furthest to the right on the desirability scale. The fact that Aristotle recognizes both of these elements is the extent to which, I believe, Aristotle decisively has a logic of decision.

8. Conclusion

In his introductory remarks to *A History of Western Philosophy,* Bertrand Russell propose to use the word 'philosophy' in a very wide sense. Russell's methodology is apt since the further back we delve into the history of a subject matter, the broader and more inclusive we would have to construe our understanding of that subject matter. The history of science is an excellent example. Ancient science contained elements that would not be recognized as strict science today because science, historically, was much more closely connected to the humanities, especially to natural philosophy. Similarly, in Aristotle's "inaugural treatment" of preference logic, we should expect to find elements that do not resemble modern systems of logic. In light of these differences, we must avoid the danger of overlooking the fact that many of the ingredients of the logic of preference are already present in Aristotle's analysis in *Topics* III. Aristotle's analysis is the ancestor of modern preference logic and an integral part of its history.

[192] See Chapter 1.2.1.

Appendix

Catalog of the Preference Principles with Greek Text and Translation

This appendix follows closely the text of *Topics* III.1-5. At the beginning of each chapter, I offer a summary of the rules to follow, in which I classify the rules according to the feature with which they are concerned. The numbering system used in the **Rule** column is my own. Many of these rules, as Aristotle clarifies, have the same content, but they "differ in the mode of expression" (διαφέρει δὲ τῷ τρόπῳ, *Top*. I.1, 116a36). Where a rule contains more or less the same contents as a preceding rule, I indicate that it is a variation of another rule with an added lowercase letter. E.g., 'Na' marks that the rule in question is a variation of rule N. In the **Principle** column, '*d* (*x*)' = desirability of *x*; 'X*∈x' = X is the best member of *x*; '*x-y'* = the bundle of goods consisting of *x* without *y*; '*x+y'* = the bundle of goods consisting of *x* and *y*; '*d* (*x*^)' = the surplus of *x*; 'p_x' = the property belonging to *x*. As discussed in the main body of chapter two, Aristotle is well aware that the rules cataloged below are subject to various counterexamples and, occasionally, formulates the counterexamples himself. Where Aristotle makes cautionary remarks about his own rules, I present them as well as any counterexamples Aristotle constructs in a footnote to the corresponding principles. In general, I express Aristotle's rules in the form of conditionals, except where a rule involves more than two terms. For the sake of clarity, I formulate these more complex, multi-variable rules in the form of inferences. In crafting this Appendix, I've followed the **Greek text** of Jacques Brunschwig. The **translation** offered here is my own, in consultation with Brunschwig's translation in French and those of E.

S. Forster and W. A. Pickard-Cambridge in English. The examples displayed in the **Example** column are those given by Aristotle himself. Aristotle does not always provide an example. As it is the case elsewhere, some of his examples are more illuminating than others; where the examples are obscure, I've attempted to elucidate them by drawing on the explanations, if any, offered by Aristotle. These clarificatory notes can be found in footnotes following some of the more puzzling examples.

***Topics* III.1** The rules in this chapter have to do with: durability (1); what commends itself to experts and the majority (2-3); what belongs in a genus (4); intrinsic desirability (5); what is the cause of the good (6); the absolute and naturally good (7-8); what belongs to the better (9); ends and means (10, 12); possibility (11); what is fine, valuable, and praiseworthy (13).				
Rule	**Translation**	**Greek Text**	**Principle**	**Example**
1	First, what is more long-lasting, or durable is preferable to the thing that is less so.	Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν τὸ πολυχρονιώτερον ἢ βεβαιότερον αἱρετώτερον τοῦ ἧττον τοιούτου. (116a13-14)	If *A* is longer lasting than *B*, then *d* (*A*) > *d* (*B*).	
2	[The thing that is preferable is] that which would be chosen by the *phronimos* or the good person or the law or the upright person or the excellent person in each corresponding domain [or would be chosen by the experts in each category].	ὃ μᾶλλον ἂν No suggestions ὁ φρόνιμος ἢ ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἀνὴρ ἢ ὁ νόμος ὁ ὀρθὸς ἢ οἱ σπουδαῖοι περὶ ἕκαστα αἱρούμενοι ᾖ τοιοῦτοί εἰσιν [ἢ οἱ ἐν ἑκάστῳ γένει ἐπιστήμονες] (116a14-17)	If *A* would be chosen by an expert in a domain, *D,* for any value of *D,* but *B* is not what an expert in *D* would choose*,* then *d* (A) > *d* (B).	In medicine, *d* (chosen by a doctor) > *d* (not chosen by a doctor).
3	[The thing that is preferable is the thing that would be chosen] by the majority or all.	[ὃ μᾶλλον ἂν ἕλοιτο...] ἢ ὅσα ὅλως οἱ πλείους ἢ πάντες ἢ πάντα. (116a17-18)	If A is chosen by the majority generally but B is not, then *d* (A) > *d* (B).	the good (*tagathon*) Cf. EN 1.1, 1094a3

4	Next, that which is simply this[193] is preferable to that which does not fall within the genus.	Ἔπειτα δὲ τὸ ὅπερ τόδε τι τοῦ μὴ ἐν γένει. (116a23-24)	If A is just what an *x* is but B does not belong in the genus *x*, then *d* (A) > *d* (B).	*d* (justice) > *d* (the just person)[194]
5	That which is desirable because of itself is preferable to what is desirable because of something else.	τὸ δι' αὑτὸ αἱρετὸν τοῦ δι' ἕτερον αἱρετοῦ αἱρετώτερον. (116a29-30)	If A is desirable because of itself but B is desirable for something else, *d* (A) > *d* (B).	*d* (health) > *d* (gymnas-tics)
5a	That which is [desirable] for its own sake is preferable to what is so accidentally.	καὶ τὸ καθ' αὑτὸ τοῦ κατὰ συμβεβηκός. (116a31-32)[195]	If A is desirable for its own sake but B is desirable accidentally, *d* (A) > *d* (B).	*d* (just friends) > *d* (just enemies)[196]
6	That which is the cause of good on its own is preferable to what is the cause by accident.	τὸ αἴτιον ἀγαθοῦ καθ' αὑτὸ τοῦ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς αἰτίου. (116b1-2)	If A is the cause of a good on its own but B is a cause accidentally, *d* (A) > *d* (B).	*d* (excellen-ces) > *d* (chance)
6a	Similarly, in the case of contraries: for what is the cause of evil on its own is to be avoided more than what is the cause by accident.	ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐναντίου· τὸ γὰρ καθ' αὑτὸ κακοῦ αἴτιον φευκτότερον τοῦ κατὰ συμβεβηκός. (116b4-5)	If A is the cause of an evil on its own but B is a cause accidentally, *d* (B) > *d* (A).	*d* (chance) > *d* (vice)

[193] I follow Brunschwig's advice to take '*tode ti*' not as a concrete substance as the word is used elsewhere in the *Topics* (cf. 120b23, 122b19, 123a2, 124a18, 125a29, 126a21, 128a35), but rather as a kind of variable that designates the same thing which is discussed in the notions considered, or as Brunschwig puts it, "the core of meaning" (le noyau de sens) which is exhibited in them (*Topiques 1*,154-5).

[194] Justice and the just person exhibit a common core of meaning—the idea of justice—but whereas justice is just the essence of this core of meaning, the just person possesses justice rather than identifying with justice itself.

[195] There is a question about whether the *di'auto* relation is the same as the *kath'auto* relation here. I have chosen to read '*kai*' in line 116a31 expegetically, with the implication that Aristotle is treating these relations as more or less synonymous. There is very good textual evidence for this interpretation. Aristotle makes clear immediately after presenting his example for this principle that it is the same as the preceding one (ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο ταὐτὸ τῷ πρὸ αὐτοῦ); they "differ in the mode of expression" (διαφέρει δὲ τῷ τρόπῳ, 116a36).

[196] His rationale is that we desire that our enemies should be just accidentally, rather than for their own sakes, in order that they may not harm us unjustly. By contrast, we desire justice in our friends for their own sake, presumably because we care about their wellbeing, and even though, Aristotle adds, "they be in India" and their just character will make no difference to us (116a36-9).

7	That which is good absolutely is preferable to what is good relative to someone, to something, or in some respect.	τὸ ἁπλῶς ἀγαθὸν τοῦ τινὶ αἱρετώτερον. (116b7)	If A is good absolutely but B is good relative to someone, to something, or in some respect, then *d* (A) > *d* (B).	*d* (being healed) > *d* (being operated on)
8	[What is] by nature [is preferable to] what is not by nature.	τὸ φύσει τοῦ μὴ φύσει. (116b10)	If A is good by nature but B is good in some other mode than by nature (e.g., acquired goodness), then *d* (A) > *d* (B).	*d* (justice) > *d* (the just person)[197] Cf. Rule 4, *GA*721b30
9	What belongs to the superior thing or the more valuable thing is preferable to what belongs to the inferior thing or the less valuable thing	τὸ τῷ βελτίονι καὶ τιμιωτέρῳ ὑπάρχον αἱρετώτερον. (116b12-13)	If A belongs to the superior thing or the more valuable thing but B belongs to the inferior thing or the less valuable thing, then *d* (A) > *d* (B).	*d* (the thing that belongs to the gods or the soul) > *d* (the thing that belongs to humans or the body).
9a	What is a characteristic property of the superior thing is preferable to that of the inferior thing.	τὸ τοῦ βελτίονος ἴδιον βέλτιον ἢ τὸ τοῦ χείρονος (116b13-14)	If A is a characteristic property of the superior thing, but B is a characteristic property of an inferior thing, then *d* (A) > *d* (B).	*d* (the feature that belongs uniquely to the gods or the soul) > *d* (the feature that belongs uniquely to humans or the body).
9b	The thing that inheres in the better, prior, or more valuable thing is better.	τὸ ἐν βελτίοσιν ἢ προτέροις ἢ τιμιωτέροις βέλτιον (116b17-18)	If A inheres in the better, prior, or more valuable thing than B, *d* (A) > *d* (B).	*d* (health) > *d* (beauty)

[197] Although Aristotle uses the same example as he does in rule 4, his reasoning is different. Here, Aristotle explains that justice is good by nature, whereas the goodness of the just person is one that is acquired (δ' ἐπίκτητον, 116b11).

10	The goal is preferable to the things that contribute to the goal.	τὸ τέλος τῶν πρὸς τὸ τέλος αἱρετώτερον (116b22-3)	If A is the goal but B contributes to the goal, *d* (A) > *d* (B).	
10a	Concerning two things towards the goal, the one nearer to the goal [is preferable].	Καὶ δυοῖν τὸ ἔγγιον τοῦ τέλους. (116b23)	Of two things towards the goal, if *A* is closer to the goal than *B*, then *d* (*A*) > *d* (*B*).	
10b	Generally, the thing that is conducive to the goal of living is preferable to the thing that is conducive to some other thing.	καὶ ὅλως τὸ πρὸς τὸ τοῦ βίου τέλος αἱρετώτερον μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ πρὸς ἄλλο τι (116b24-5)	If A contributes to the goal of living but B contributes to something else, then *d* (*A*) > *d* (*B*).	*d* (*eudaimo-nia*) > *d* (*phronesis*)
11	The possible thing [is preferable] to the impossible thing.	τὸ δυνατὸν τοῦ ἀδυνάτου (116b26)	If A is possible but B is not, then *d* (A) > *d* (B).	
12	Concerning two productive agents, the one whose goal is better [is preferable].[198]	ἔτι δύο ποιητικῶν οὗ τὸ τέλος βέλτιον· (116b26-35)	If *d* (A)> *d* (B), then *d* (the productive agent of A) > *d* (the productive agent of B).	*d* (the productive agent of *eudaimo-nia*) > *d* (the productive agent of health)
13	Moreover, the thing that is finer and more valuable and more praiseworthy by itself [is preferable to the thing that is finer, more valuable, and	Ἔτι τὸ κάλλιον καθ' αὑτὸ καὶ τιμιώτερον καὶ ἐπαινετώτερον (116b37-38)	If A is finer, more valuable, and more praiseworthy by itself than B, which is finer, more valuable, and more praiseworthy by	*d* (friendship) > *d* (richness).

[198] This is the reading, variably expressed, of Brunschwig, Forster, and Pickard-Cambridge. It is also possible to read this rule to say: "Concerning two productive agents, the one which produces the goal better [is preferable]." Aristotle's example seems to indicate that he has in mind the productive agents of two distinct goals as the subjects of comparison since he reasons from the fact that *eudaimonia* is better than health to the conclusion that the productive agent of the former must be preferable over that of the latter (τὸ ποιητικὸν εὐδαιμονίας βέλτιον ὑγιείας, 116b30).

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>more praiseworthy by accident].</td><td></td><td>accident then d (A)> d (B).</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Topics III.2
In chapter two, Aristotle’s attention shifts to the considerations about consequences (14-15), combination (16-17, 38), pleasure and pain (18), time and season (19-20), self-sufficiency (21), generation and corruption (22-23), proximity and resemblance (24-27), prominence (28), effort (29), private versus common good (30), association with something undesirable (31), set membership (32-33), what is beneficial to our friends (34-35), necessity versus superfluity (36-37), appearance (39), and blameworthiness (40-41).</td></tr>
<tr><td>14</td><td>For the one that is followed by the greater good is the preferable one.</td><td>ᾧ γὰρ ἕπεται μεῖζον ἀγαθόν, τοῦθ’ αἱρετώτερον (117a7-8)</td><td>If A is followed by a greater good than B, then $d(A) > d(B)$.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>15</td><td>1. If the consequences are bad, then the one that is followed by the lesser evil is preferable.</td><td>ἂν δ’ ᾖ τὰ ἑπόμενα κακά, ᾧ
τὸ ἔλαττον ἀκολουθεῖ κακόν, τοῦθ’ αἱρετώτερον·[199] (117a8-9)</td><td>2. A —> C, where C is an evil.
3. B —> D, where D is an evil
4. D > C
5. ∴ d (A) > d (B</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>16</td><td>The greater number of goods is preferable to the lesser number of goods.</td><td>Ἔτι τὰ πλείω ἀγαθὰ τῶν ἐλαττόνων (117a16)</td><td>Of two bundles of goods, if A > B, then d (A) > d (B).[200]</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>17</td><td>Also, nothing prevents [the combination of] what is not a good and a good to be preferable [over a greater number of good things.][201]</td><td>καὶ μὴ ἀγαθὰ δὲ ἀγαθῶν οὐδὲν κωλύει εἶναι αἱρετώτερα (117a21-23)</td><td>If A, B, C are goods, but D is not a good, then ◇¬ (d (A+D) < d (B+C)).[202]</td><td>◇¬ (d (eudaimonia & something neutral) <
d (courage and justice)</td></tr>
</table>

[199] Cautionary note:

ὄντων γὰρ ἀμφοτέρων αἱρετῶν οὐδὲν κωλύει δυσχερές τι παρέπεσθαι. (*Top.* 3.2, 117a9-10)

Note that although both may be desirable, nothing prevents some unpleasant accompanied consequences.

[200] Here, he allows for two possibilities: either the two lumps of goods being compared are two materially distinct lumps, *A* and *B*, or overlapping lumps, *A* and *A** such that *A** is a subset of *A* (*Top.* 3.2, 117a17).
Aristotle also notes an objection to this rule, as follows:

ἔνστασις, εἴ που θάτερον θατέρου χάριν· οὐδὲν γὰρ αἱρετώτερα τὰ ἄμφω τοῦ ἑνός. (*Top*. 3.2, 17a18-19)

An objection: if the one is valued for the sake of the other since the two together are not more desirable than the one.

I take him to be saying something like the following formulation: ◇¬ (d (A+B)> d (B)), where A is at service of B. In Aristotle’s counterexample, let A be the state of recovery from a sickness and B be health.

[201] Here, I retain the *comparandum* from line 117a16. Many translations do the same, including those of Brunschwig and W. A. Pickard-Cambridge.

[202] There is a question here about whether D is neutral or an evil.

18	Concerning the same things, [it is] preferable if accompanied than if unaccompanied by pleasure.	καὶ ταὐτὰ μεθ’ ἡδονῆς μᾶλλον ἢ ἄνευ ἡδονῆς. (117a23-24)	Of the same things[203], if *A* is accompanied by pleasure but *B* is not, then *d* (*A*) > *d* (*B*)	
18a	Concerning the same things, [it is] preferable if unaccompanied than if accompanied by pain.	καὶ ταὐτὰ μετ’ ἀλυπίας ἢ μετὰ λύπης. (117a24-25)	Of the same things, if *B* is accompanied by pain but *A* is not, then *d* (*A*) > *d* (*B*).	
19	Also, for each thing there is a moment when it is more appropriate—this is when it is also preferable.	Καὶ ἕκαστον ἐν ᾧ καιρῷ μεῖζον δύναται, ἐν τούτῳ καὶ αἱρετώτερον (117a 26-28)	If *A* is more appropriate at t_2 than at t_1, then *d* (*A* at t_2) > *d* (*A* at t_1).	*d* (painlessness at old age) > *d* (painlessness in youth); *d* (wisdom at old age) > *d* (wisdom in youth)
20	Moreover, the thing that is more useful on all or most occasions is preferable.	Καὶ ὃ ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ ἢ ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις χρησιμώτερον. (117a35-36)	If *A* is useful on more occasions than *B*, then *d* (*A*) > *d* (*B*).	*d* (justice) > *d* (courage).
21	[Of two things], if one is such that, if everyone had it, the other would become useless, while the other is such that, even if everyone had it, we would still need the first, [then it is the first which is preferable].	καὶ ὃ πάντων ἐχόντων μηδὲν θατέρου δεόμεθα ἢ ὃ ἐχόντων προσδεόμεθα τοῦ λοιποῦ (117a37-41)	Of two things, if *B* becomes unneeded if everyone obtains *A*, but *A* does not become unneeded if everyone obtains *B*, then *d* (*A*) > *d* (*B*).	*d* (justice) > *d* (courage)
22	Moreover, judge by the destructions and losses, and generations and acquisitions of things, and by their contraries; for things whose destruction is	Ἔτι ἐκ τῶν φθορῶν καὶ τῶν ἀποβολῶν, καὶ τῶν γενέσεων καὶ τῶν λήψεων, καὶ τῶν ἐναντίων. ὧν γὰρ αἱ φθοραὶ φευκτότεραι, αὐτὰ αἱρετώτερα. (117b4-5)	If the destruction of *A* is more avoidable than that of *B*, then *d* (*A*) > *d* (*B*).	

[203] In this rule and the following, I take it Aristotle has type rather than token identity in mind.

	more avoidable are preferable.			
23	With the generations or acquisitions of things the opposite is the case: for things whose acquisition or generation is more desirable are themselves also desirable.	ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν γενέσεων καὶ τῶν λήψεων ἀνάπαλιν· ὧν γὰρ αἱ λήψεις καὶ αἱ γενέσεις αἱρετώτεραι, καὶ αὐτὰ αἱρετώτερα. (117b5-9)	If the generation and acquisition of *A* is more desirable than *B*, then $d(A) > d(B)$.	
24	The one that is closer to the good is better and preferable.	τὸ ἐγγύτερον τἀγαθοῦ βέλτιον καὶ αἱρετώτερον. (117b10-11)	If *A* is closer to the good than *B*, then $d(A) > d(B)$.	*d* (justice) > *d* (the just person)
25	And the thing that is more like the good is [better and preferable].	καὶ τὸ ὁμοιότερον τἀγαθῷ (117b11)	If *A* resembles the good more than *B*, then $d(A) > d(B)$.	*d* (justice) > *d* (the just person)
26	Moreover, the thing that is more like a better thing than the two being compared [is preferable]. For example, they say that Ajax is better than Odysseus because he is more like Achilles.	καὶ τὸ τῷ βελτίονι αὐτῶν[204] ὁμοιότερον, καθάπερ τὸν Αἴαντα τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως φασὶ βελτίω τινὲς εἶναι, διότι ὁμοιότερος τῷ Ἀχιλλεῖ. (117b12-4)	1. C is better than both A and B, considered individually. 2. A resembles C more than B does. ∴ $d(A) > d(B)$.[205]	*d* (Ajax) > *d* (Odysseus)

[204] I follow Brunschwig in reading 'αὐτῶν' rather than 'αὐτοῦ', which is printed in Ross' edition. If 'αὐτοῦ' is accepted, then it is difficult to make sense of Aristotle's subsequent explanation and example, which relates two compared items to a single term.

[205] Aristotle recognizes two objections here. The first one goes as follows:

> ἔνστασις τούτου ὅτι οὐκ ἀληθές· οὐδὲν γὰρ κωλύει μὴ ᾗ βέλτιστος ὁ Ἀχιλλεύς, ταύτῃ ὁμοιότερον εἶναι τὸν Αἴαντα, τοῦ ἑτέρου ὄντος μὲν ἀγαθοῦ μὴ ὁμοίου δέ. (117b14-7)
>
> [There is] an objection that this principle is not true: For nothing prevents it from being the case that, in the aspects which make Achilles the best [of the three], Ajax does not resemble Achilles [more than Odysseus does], and that he [Odysseus] excels, though being unlike Achilles.

Suppose that the aspects which make Achilles the best of the three are his bravery and strength. The counterexample, I take it, is this: Ajax may resemble Achilles in ways other than being comparably brave and strong. Ajax may resemble Achilles more than Odysseus, say, because he has the same hair and eye color, or by having a name which also starts with the letter 'A.' In this case, it would not follow that Ajax is better than Odysseus simply on the basis of his resemblance to Achilles.

> And the second one has the following form. (117b18-20)
>
> σκοπεῖν δὲ καὶ εἰ ἐπὶ τὰ γελοιότερα εἴη ὅμοιον, καθάπερ ὁ πίθηκος τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, τοῦ ἵππου μὴ ὄντος ὁμοίου· οὐ γὰρ κάλλιον ὁ πίθηκος, ὁμοιότερον δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ.
>
> Look also to see whether or not the resemblance is of a caricature, like the resemblance of a monkey to a human, whereas a horse has none: for the monkey is not more beautiful than the horse, although it resembles a human more.

In interpreting lines 117b18-20 as another objection to R26, I am following Brunschwig, who takes the suggestion of Verdenius, against Ross, to include this passage in the parenthetical remarks starting at beginning of the first objection at line 117b14.

27	Again, concerning a pair [i.e., two terms of reference], if one is more like the better [of the two terms of reference], while the other is more like the worse, then what would be better is that more like the better.	πάλιν ἐπὶ δυοῖν, εἰ τὸ μὲν τῷ βελτίονι τὸ δὲ τῷ χείρονι ὁμοιότερον, εἴη ἂν βέλτιον τὸ τῷ βελτίονι ὁμοιότερον.	1. C is better than D. 2. A is more like C than B is. 3. B is more like D than A is. ∴ d (A) > d (B).[206]	
28	Moreover, the thing that is more prominent is more desirable than the one that is less.	Ἄλλος, τὸ ἐπιφανέστερον τοῦ ἧττον τοιούτου. (117b28)	If A is more prominent than B, then d (A) > d (B).	
29	And the one that is more difficult is more desirable.	καὶ τὸ χαλεπώτερον· (117b29)	If A is more difficult than B, then d (A) >d (B).	
30	The thing that is more of a personal belonging is more desirable than the one belonging more commonly.	καὶ τὸ ἰδιαίτερον τοῦ κοινοτέρου. (117b30)	If A is a personal possession, but B is a common possession, then d (A) > d (B).	
31	The thing that belongs less commonly to evil things is more desirable.	καὶ τὸ τοῖς κακοῖς ἀκοινωνητότερον· (117b31-32)	If A is freer from association with an evil than B, then d (A) > d (B).	

[206] This inference, too, is subject to two counterexamples. Aristotle points out the first in the following.

> ἔχει δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ἔνστασιν· οὐδὲν γὰρ κωλύει τὸ μὲν τῷ βελτίονι ἠρέμα ὅμοιον εἶναι, τὸ δὲ τῷ χείρονι σφόδρα, οἷον εἰ ὁ μὲν Αἴας τῷ Ἀχιλλεῖ ἠρέμα, ὁ δ’ Ὀδυσσεὺς τῷ Νέστορι σφόδρα. (117b21-4).
>
> There is also an objection: For nothing prevents it from being the case that the one only slightly resembles the better, while the other strongly resembles the worse, such as, supposing the resemblance of Ajax to Achilles to be little, while that of Odysseus to Nestor is strong.

In this example, Achilles is presumably superior to Nestor, and the likeness of Ajax to Achilles is far less than that of Odysseus to Nestor. Still, Ajax may be better than Odysseus.

> And the second goes as follows:
>
> καὶ εἰ τὸ μὲν τῷ βελτίονι ἐπὶ τὰ χείρω ὅμοιον εἴη, τὸ δὲ τῷ χείρονι ἐπὶ τὰ βελτίω, καθάπερ ἵππος ὄνῳ καὶ πίθηκος ἀνθρώπῳ. (117b25-7)
>
> And [there is an analogous objection] if the one which is similar to the better [of the duo C and D] shows a degrading likeness, whereas the one which is like the worse improves upon it: for example, the likeness of a horse to a donkey, and that of a monkey to a human.

I take it that, for Aristotle, a human is better than a donkey. While a horse is more like a donkey than a human, and a monkey is more like a human than a horse, the similarity in the latter pair is a degrading likeness. We may not conclude, Aristotle points out, that a monkey is better than a horse.

32	If one thing is without qualification better than another, then also the best of the members of the former is better than the best of the members of latter.	Ἔτι εἰ ἁπλῶς τοῦτο τούτου βέλτιον, καὶ τὸ βέλτιστον τῶν ἐν τούτῳ βέλτιον τοῦ ἐν τῷ ἑτέρῳ βελτίστου· (117b33-34)	Given $A^* \in \alpha$, $B^* \in \beta$, $(\alpha>\beta) \supset (A^*>B)$.	*d* (human beings) > *d* (horses) ⊃ *d* (the best human)> *d* (the best horse)
33	And if the best member in a set is better than the best in another, then the former set is better than the latter without qualification.	καὶ εἰ τὸ βέλτιστον τοῦ βελτίστου βέλτιον, καὶ ἁπλῶς τοῦτο τούτου βέλτιον· (117b36-37)	Given $A^* \in \alpha$, $B^* \in \beta$, $(A^*>B^*) \supset (\alpha>\beta)$.	*d* (the best human) > *d* (the best horse) ⊃ *d* (humans)> *d* (horse)
34	Moreover, things that friends can share are more desirable than those they cannot.	Ἔτι ὧν ἔστι τοὺς φίλους μετασχεῖν, αἱρετώτερα ἢ ὧν μή. (118a1-2)	If A is sharable with friends but B is not, then *d* (A) > *d* (B).	
35	And things that we wish to do to benefit our friend are more desirable than those we wish to do to benefit a stranger.	καὶ ἃ πρὸς τὸν φίλον πρᾶξαι μᾶλλον βουλόμεθα ἢ ἃ πρὸς τὸν τυχόντα, ταῦτα αἱρετώτερα (118a2-3)	If we wish to perform A to benefit our friends, but B a stranger, then *d* (A) > *d* (B).	*d* (doing good) > *d* (appearing to do good).[207]
36	And the thing that is superfluous is better than the thing that is of necessity, and sometimes it is preferable.	Καὶ τὰ ἐκ περιουσίας τῶν ἀναγκαίων βελτίω, ἐνίοτε δὲ καὶ αἱρετώτερα· (118a6-7)	If A is a superfluity,[208] but B is a necessity, then *d* (A) > *d* (B).[209]	*d* (living well) > *d* (living)
37	Also, the thing that cannot be provided by	Καὶ ὃ μὴ ἔστι παρ’ ἄλλου πορίσασθαι ἢ ὃ	1. *A* cannot be	*d* (justice)> *d* (courage)[210]

[207] Aristotle’s rationale is that we would rather really do good to our friends than seem to do so, whereas towards strangers the converse is the case (118a4-5).

[208] The label “superfluity” (*ta ek periousia*), as Aristotle explains, applies “whenever a person possesses the necessities of life and sets to work to secure as well other noble acquisitions” (ὅταν ὑπαρχόντων τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἄλλα τινὰ προσκατασκευάζηταί τις τῶν καλῶν, *Top*. III.2, 118a12-3). As such, the description “superfluous” in this context does not carry a pejorative force. See this discussion in §4.

[209] There is an objection to this rule, which has to do with the preference for the philosophical life over that of money-making. Aristotle’s thought is that, to a person who lacks the necessities of life, the superfluous thing—philosophy—is not better than the necessity of money-making. I discuss this counterexample in great detail in §4.

[210] Aristotle sheds no light on this example here. Presumably, his thought is that what courage provides, to use Brunschwig’s example, good protection can also provide, but the benefits provided by justice cannot be brought about by anything else (*Topiques 1*, 159).

	another is more desirable than what can be provided by another.	ἔστι καὶ παρ’ ἄλλου (118a16-17)	provided by *C* 2. *B* can be provided by *C* ∴ d (A) > *d* (B).	
38	And if one thing is preferable without another, but the latter is not preferable without the former [then the former is preferable].	καὶ εἰ τόδε μὲν ἄνευ τοῦδε αἱρετόν, τόδε δὲ ἄνευ τοῦδε μή· (118a18-20)	((A-B) > (B-A)) ⊃ *d* (A) > *d* (B)	*d* (*phronēsis*) > *d* (power - *phronēsis*)
39	And of two things if we reject one of them such that it seems that we have the other, then that is the preferable thing—the one that we wish to seem to have.	καὶ δυοῖν εἰ θάτερον ἀρνούμεθα, ἵνα τὸ λοιπὸν δόξῃ ἡμῖν ὑπάρχειν, ἐκεῖνο αἱρετώτερον ὃ βουλόμεθα δοκεῖν ὑπάρχειν· (118a20-21)	If we reject A so that we appear to possess B, then *d* (A) > *d* (B).	*d* (hardworking) < *d* (genius)
40	Moreover, the thing whose absence is less reprehensible for us to endure [such an absence] poorly is preferable.[211]	Ἔτι οὗ τῇ ἀπουσίᾳ ἧττον ἐπιτιμητέον δυσφοροῦσι, τοῦτο αἱρετώτερον. (118a24-25)	If A’s absence is less reprehensible for an agent to endure its absence poorly than B’s absence, then *d* (A) > *d* (B).	
41	And the thing whose absence is more reprehensible for us not to endure [its absence] badly is also preferable.	καὶ οὗ τῇ ἀπουσίᾳ μὴ δυσφοροῦσι μᾶλλον ἐπιτιμητέον, τοῦτο αἱρετώτερον. (118a25-26)	If A’s absence is more reprehensible for an agent not to endure its absence poorly than B’s absence, then *d* (A) > *d* (B).	

[211] This rule is awkwardly expressed. Forster renders it as follows: “Furthermore, that is preferable at the absence of which it is less reprehensible to be annoyed” (*Posterior Analytics. Topica,* 399). Brunschwig’s translation reads, “En outre, est préférable ce dont il est moins blâmable de mal supporter la privation” (*Topiques 1*), 70.

***Topics* III. 3** The rules in this chapter can be grouped according to concerns about excellence (42-43), production of goodness (44-46, 51), inflexions (47), comparison with some common standard (48-49), surplus (50), addition (52-53), subtraction (54), reputation (55-56), consequence (57), usefulness (58), belonging (59), the for-the-sake-of relation (60), hinderance to goodness (61), mixed goods (62).				
42	Moreover, of things belonging to the same kind, the one that possesses the proper excellence [of the kind] is preferable than the one that does not possess it.	Ἔτι τῶν ὑπὸ τὸ εἶδος τὸ ἔχον τὴν οἰκείαν ἀρετὴν τοῦ μὴ ἔχοντος· (118a27-28) Cf. III.5, 119a28-31	1. A and B both belong to the same kind 2. A possesses the proper excellence of the kind $\therefore\ d(A) > d(B)$.	
43	If both possess it [the proper excellence], then the one possessing more [of it] is preferable.	ἄμφω δ’ ἐχόντων τὸ μᾶλλον ἔχον. (118a28)	1. A and B both belong to the same kind. 2. A possesses more of the proper excellence of the kind. $\therefore\ d(A) > d(B)$.	
44	Moreover, if one thing makes what it is present to good, but another does not, then the former is preferable.	Ἔτι εἰ τὸ μὲν ποιεῖ ἀγαθὸν ἐκεῖνο ᾧ ἂν παρῇ, τὸ δὲ μὴ ποιεῖ, τὸ ποιοῦν αἱρετώτερον. (118a29-30)	If A improves what it is present to, but B does not, then $d(A) > d(B)$.	The thing that heats another thing is more hot than one that does not.
45	If both improves [the thing they are present to], then the one that does more is preferable.	εἰ δ’ ἄμφω ποιεῖ, τὸ μᾶλλον ποιοῦν· (118a31)	If A improves what it is present to better than B does, then $d(A) > d(B)$.	
46	Or if that thing improves the better and more authoritative thing [then it is preferable].	ἢ εἰ τὸ βέλτιον καὶ κυριώτερον ποιεῖ ἀγαθόν (118a32-3)	If A improves the more authoritative thing than B, then $d(\mathrm{A}) > d(\mathrm{B})$.	d (what improves the soul) > d (what improves the body)
47	Moreover, we can compare things by considering their	Ἔτι ἀπὸ τῶν πτώσεων καὶ τῶν χρήσεων καὶ τῶν πράξεων καὶ τῶν ἔργων. (118a34-36)	If the inflected forms of A are better than the inflected forms of B, then $d(\mathrm{A}) > d(\mathrm{B})$.	(d (‘justly’) > d (‘courageously’)) ⊃ d (justice) > d (courage)

	inflected forms, uses, actions and deeds.[212]			
47a	And we can also compare them on the basis of these: for from the one group we can infer about another group [i.e. their inflected forms, uses, actions and deeds]. If justice is preferable to courage, then ‘justly’ is preferable to ‘courageously’.	καὶ ταῦτα δὲ ἀπ’ ἐκείνων· ἀκολουθεῖ γὰρ ἀλλήλοις. καὶ εἰ ἡ δικαιοσύνη τῆς ἀνδρείας αἱρετώτερον, καὶ τὸ δικαίως τοῦ ἀνδρείως. (118a36-39)	If *A* is better than *B,* then *d* (the inflection of A) > *d* (the inflection of B).	(*d* (justice) > *d* (courage)) ⊃ *d* (‘justly’) > *d* (‘courageously’)
48	Moreover, with relation to one and the same thing, one good is greater, the other lesser, the greater is to be preferred.	Ἔτι εἴ τινος τοῦ αὐτοῦ τὸ μὲν μεῖζον ἀγαθόν ἐστι τὸ δὲ ἔλαττον, αἱρετώτερον τὸ μεῖζον. (118b1-2, cf. III.5, 119a20-22)	1. *A* > *C* 2. *B* < *C* ∴ *d* (*A*) > *d* (*B*)	
49	But if two things were to be preferable to a single thing, the one that is preferable to a greater degree is preferable to the one that is less so.	ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰ δύο τινὰ ἑνός τινος εἴη αἱρετώτερα, τὸ μᾶλλον αἱρετώτερον τοῦ ἧττον αἱρετωτέρου αἱρετώτερον. (118b3-4)	1. *A* > *C* 2. *B* > *C* 3. (A-C) > (B-C) ∴ *d* (*A*) > *d* (*B*)	
50	Moreover, when the surplus of one thing is preferable to the surplus of another, that thing is itself preferable.	ἔτι οὗ ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς ὑπερβολῆς αἱρετωτέρα, καὶ αὐτὸ αἱρετώτερον· (118b4-5)	(*d* (*A*^) > *d* (*B*^)) ⊃ *d* (A) > *d* (B)	(*d* (surplus of friendship) > *d* (surplus of money)) ⊃ *d* (friendship) > *d* (money)
51	And that which a person would prefer to be the cause of [by his	καὶ οὗ μᾶλλον ἂν ἕλοιτο αὐτὸς αὑτῷ	If *A* is what the agent wishes to be the cause of,	*d* (friends) > *d* (money)

[212] Forster suggests that we take this rule to recommend the consideration of how other words containing these ideas—e.g., courage and justice—are used. He writes, “These may be adverbs which are πτώσεις (cf. 106 b 29) or denote action or actual deed; χρήσεις seems to refer to the different usages of a word” (401 n.a).

	own action] is preferable to that of which he would wish another to be the cause.	αἴτιος εἶναι ἢ οὗ ἕτερον (118b 7-8)	but B is what the agent wishes someone else to be the cause of, then d (A) > d (B).	
52	Moreover, compare by means of an addition, if the addition of one to the same thing as the other makes the whole preferable, then it is preferable.	Ἔτι ἐκ τῆς προσθέσεως, εἰ τῷ αὐτῷ προστιθέμενόν τι τὸ ὅλον αἱρετώτερον ποιεῖ. (118b10-11) Cf. III.6, 119a22-25	$(d\,(\mathrm{A{+}C}) > d\,(\mathrm{B{+}C})) \supset d\,(\mathrm{A}) > d\,(\mathrm{B})$[213]	
53	Again, if when added to an inferior thing it makes the whole greater good [then it is preferable].	πάλιν εἰ ἐλάττονι προστεθέν τι τὸ ὅλον μεῖζον ποιεῖ. (118b16)	1. $A > C$ 2. $B > C$ 3. $(A{+}C) > (B{+}C)$ $\therefore\ d\,(A) > d\,(B)$	
54	Similarly, compare by means of subtraction. For the thing whose subtraction from the same whole leaves a lesser remainder, may be taken to be greater, whichever one whose subtraction makes the remainder lesser.	ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἀφαιρέσεως· οὗ γὰρ ἀφαιρεθέντος ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ τὸ λειπόμενον ἔλαττον, ἐκεῖνο μεῖζον ἂν εἴη, ὅ ποτε ἀφαιρεθὲν τὸ λειπόμενον ἔλαττον ποιεῖ. (118b,18-20) Cf. III.5, 119a25-26	$((C{-}B) > (C{-}A)) \supset d\,(A) > d\,(B)$	
55	And if the one is chosen because of itself, while the other is chosen because of	Καὶ εἰ τὸ μὲν δι' αὑτὸ τὸ δὲ διὰ τὴν δόξαν αἱρετόν (118b20-2)	If A is chosen because of itself, but B is chosen	d (health) > d (beauty)

[213] Aristotle offers a cautionary note and a counterexample to this rule, as follows:

> εὐλαβεῖσθαι δὲ δεῖ προτείνειν ἐφ' ὧν τῷ μὲν ἑτέρῳ τῶν προστιθεμένων χρῆται τὸ κοινὸν ἢ ἄλλως πως συνεργόν ἐστι, τῷ δὲ λοιπῷ μὴ χρῆται μηδὲ συνεργόν ἐστιν, οἷον πρίονα καὶ δρέπανον μετὰ τεκτονικῆς· αἱρετώτερον γὰρ ὁ πρίων συνδυαζομένοιν, ἁπλῶς δὲ οὐχ αἱρετώτερον. (118b10-13)
>
> Be careful when adding in a case where the common term uses, or in some other way improves, one of the things added to it but not the other. For example, if one took a saw and a pruning knife in combination with the art of carpentry. For the saw is a more desirable thing in the combination, but it is not a more desirable thing without qualification.

I take Aristotle to be expressing the idea that it is possibly not the case that the desirability of a bundle of two goods is commensurate with the additive desirability of the goods, especially where these goods form an organic unity. In a formulized expression, the idea is: $\Diamond\neg\,(d\,(A+B) = d\,(A) + d\,(B))$, where A and B form an organic unity like the saw and the art of carpentry. I discuss this counterexample in more detail in §6.1, demonstrating Aristotle's awareness of the notion of an organic unity.

	reputation[214], [then the former is preferable].		because of reputation, then $d(A) > d(B)$.	
56	And if the one is chosen because of itself and because of opinion, while the other is chosen because of only one of the two [then the former is preferable].	καὶ εἰ τὸ μὲν δι' αὑτὸ καὶ διὰ τὴν δόξαν αἱρετόν, τὸ δὲ διὰ θάτερον μόνον. (118b22-3)	1. A is chosen because of itself and of reputation 2. B is chosen because of itself or of reputation exclusively $\therefore d(A) > d(B)$.	
57	Also, whichever is the more valuable because of itself, is also better and preferable. We may say that a thing is more valuable in itself is the thing which we would choose for itself, without anything else coming of it.	καὶ ὁπότερον μᾶλλον δι' αὑτὸ τίμιον, τοῦτο καὶ βέλτιον καὶ αἱρετώτερον. τιμιώτερον δ' ἂν εἴη καθ' αὑτὸ ὃ μηδενὸς ἄλλου μέλλοντος ὑπάρξειν δι' αὑτὸ αἱρούμεθα μᾶλλον. (118b23-26)	If A is chosen because of itself, but B is chosen because of something else likely to result from it, then $d(A) > d(B)$.	
58	For we may say that what is useful for all or more occasions is preferable to what is not like that.	τὸ γὰρ πρὸς ἅπαντα ἢ πρὸς τὰ πλείω χρήσιμον αἱρετώτερον ἂν ὑπάρχοι τοῦ μὴ ὁμοίως. (118b28-30)	1. A is useful for n numbers of occasions. 2. B is useful for $< n$ numbers of occasions. $\therefore d(A) > d(B)$	
59	If the same things belong in both things, we must look for the one they belong to more.	τῶν δ' αὐτῶν ἀμφοτέροις ὑπαρχόντων, ὁποτέρῳ μᾶλλον ὑπάρχει σκεπτέον (118b30-1)	If C belongs to A to a greater degree than it does to B, then $d(A) > d(B)$.	
60	Again, the item that is for the sake of a better thing is preferable.	πάλιν τὸ τοῦ βελτίονος ἕνεκεν αἱρετώτερον	1. A is for the sake of C	d (for the sake of virtue) > d (for the sake of pleasure).

[214] He defines being chosen for the sake of opinion as "the thing supposing no one knew of it, one would not care to have it" (τὸ μηδενὸς συνειδότος μὴ ἂν σπουδάσαι ὑπάρχειν, 118b21-22).

		(118b32-33)	2. B is for the sake of D 3. $C > D$ ∴ d(A) > d (B)	
61	Similarly, with things to be avoided. For the thing to be avoided more is the one that hinders more what is choice worthy.	ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν φευκτῶν· φευκτότερον γὰρ τὸ μᾶλλον ἐμποδιστικὸν τῶν αἱρετῶν (118b34-5)	1. A is a greater hinderance to C than B is 2. C is choice worthy ∴ d (B) > d (A)	d (disease) < d (ugliness)
62	Further, [one can compare] by showing that the thing at issue is equally an object of avoidance and of choice: for the kind of thing which one would equally choose and avoid is less worthy of choice than something else which is choice worthy only.	Ἔτι ἐκ τοῦ ὁμοίως δεικνύναι φευκτὸν καὶ αἱρετὸν τὸ προκείμενον· ἧττον γὰρ αἱρετὸν τὸ τοιοῦτον ὃ καὶ ἕλοιτ' ἄν τις ὁμοίως καὶ φύγοι, τοῦ ἑτέρου ὄντος αἱρετοῦ μόνον. (118b36-39)	If A is equally choice worthy and objectionable, but B is choice worthy, then d (B) > d (A)	
***Topics* III.4** The two rules below (63-64) have to do with the adaptation of the rules to simple predication of value.				
63	If something that is more valuable is preferable, then also that which is valuable is worthy of choice.	εἰ γὰρ τὸ τιμιώτερον αἱρετώτερον, καὶ τὸ τίμιον αἱρετόν (119a4-5).	If A is more valuable than B and A is preferable, then any x that is valuable is worthy of choice.	
63a	If something that is more useful is preferable, then also that which is useful is worthy of choice.	καὶ εἰ τὸ χρησιμώτερον αἱρετώτερον, καὶ τὸ χρήσιμον αἱρετόν (119a5-6).	If A is more useful than B and A is preferable, then any x that is useful is worthy of choice.	

***Topics* III.5** The remaining rules (64-66) deal with the imparting of property.				
64	And if something imparts, whereas another does not, a certain quality that belongs to it, the one that does is better than the one that does not.	καὶ εἰ τὸ μὲν ποιεῖ τὸ δὲ μὴ ποιεῖ τὸ ἔχον τοιόνδε ᾧ ἂν ὑπάρχῃ, μᾶλλον τοιοῦτο ὅ ποτε ποιεῖ ἢ ὃ μὴ ποιεῖ (119a17-18)	1. *A* imparts property p_A, for any value of *A,* to *S.* 2. *B* does not impart property p_B, for any value of *B,* to *S.* $\therefore\ d(A) > d(B)$	
65	If they both do [impart their respective property], then the one that does so more is preferable.	εἰ δ’ ἄμφω ποιεῖ, τὸ μᾶλλον ποιοῦν τοιοῦτο. (119a19)	1. *A* imparts property p_A, for any value of *A,* to *S.* 2. *B* imparts property p_B, for any value of *B,* to *S.* 3. $p_A > p_B$ $\therefore\ d(A) > d(B)$	
66	Moreover, if something is more of a certain quality and some other thing is less, [then the former is preferable].	Ἔτι εἰ τοῦ αὐτοῦ τινὸς τὸ μὲν μᾶλλον τὸ δὲ ἧττον τοιοῦτο (119a20-1)	Given that *A* and *B* are of a certain quality and *A* possesses more of the quality than *B*, $d(A) > d(B)$.	

Chapter Three

Navigating the Landscape of Value: The Role of Reason in Aristotle's Ethics

As is well known, reason looms large in Aristotle's ethical psychology, especially in his project of defining the human good and explaining how it is to be achieved.[215] Central to the framework of Aristotle's ethical project is the identification of the human good, *eudaimonia,* with activity exhibiting excellence and involving the use of reason—a faculty which he thinks should lead rather than obey the non-rational faculties.[216] As is also well known, in a set of puzzling passages, Aristotle appears to confine reason's role to the identification of means to the realization of ends determined by non-rational motive forces. As if anticipating Hume's bold identification of reason with "the slave of passions",[217] Aristotle writes, "We deliberate, not about the goals, but about the things towards the goals" (βουλευόμεθα δ' οὐ περὶ τῶν τελῶν ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν πρὸς τὰ τέλη, *EN* III.3, 1112b12) and "virtue[218] makes the target right, while the excellence of practical rationality the things towards it" (ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀρετὴ τὸν σκοπὸν ποιεῖ ὀρθόν, ἡ δὲ φρόνησις τὰ πρὸς τοῦτον, *EN* VI.12, 1144a7-9/*EE* II.11, 1227b22-25). These puzzling remarks invite a deeper reflection on the following question about the scope of practical

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[215] Aristotle is, of course, not alone in expressing a preference for reason with respect to the old combat between reason and the passions. The general attitude that we see across Greek ethics from Socrates all the way to the Hellenistic philosophers is that it is the person's unique practical application of reason that determines whether her life will go well or poorly. See Introduction §1.

[216] *EN* I.7, 1098a13-15; *EE* I.7, 1217a25-27; II.1, 1219b39-1220a2.

[217] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*, 2nd edition, edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge and P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 419.

[218] What Aristotle calls "character-virtue" (*ēthikē aretē*) is a genus that includes courage, temperance, justice, and so on. Aristotle regularly uses the unqualified term "virtue" (*aretē*) as a shorthand for 'character virtue', and I'll be doing the same throughout this chapter.

reason. What, exactly, is the work of practical reason in action, particularly with respect to the formulation and adoption of ends?

This question has been a subject of scholarly debate since antiquity and continues to vex interpreters, as evidenced by the ongoing debate between a group of so-called "intellectualists," those who think that Aristotle grants the task of setting the ends of action to reason rather than virtue,[219] and those embracing a Humean or qualified Humean interpretations.[220] The goal of this chapter is, in part, to revive and defend the intellectualist line of interpretation, which has come under serious attack in recent years[221] and, in keeping with the major theme of the dissertation, to contribute to our understanding of Aristotle's doctrine on practical reason by offering a new angle from which to approach a persistent interpretative issue. I will argue that Aristotle assigns to the excellence of practical rationality, what he calls *phronēsis*, the task of mapping out of the landscape of value corresponding to the agent's reasoned conception of what the human good consists in—a conception which, I also argue, requires both the understandings of what sort of being the human agent is and how such a being's life should be arranged and oriented. I defend this interpretation in five sections, as follows.

Section one offers the lay of the land by accomplishing three tasks: sketching the Humean theory of practical reason, introducing the "Humean passages," and laying out how the passages at issue have been interpreted as Aristotle's endorsement of a *quasi* Humean conception of rationality in a recent influential study (§1). Various strategies to accommodate the Humean passages in an intellectualist framework and challenges to the intellectualist approach are

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[219] Versions of it this view has been defended or endorsed, among others, by Cooper, Irwin, McDowell, Nussbaum, and Wiggins. Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle*, 20-23; Irwin, "Aristotle on Reason, Desire and Virtue," *Journal of Philosophy* 72 (1975): 567–78; McDowell, "Some Issues in Aristotle's Moral Psychology," in McDowell, Mind, *Value and Reality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 23–40 at 26; Nussbaum, Aristotle's *De Motu Animalium*, 170n.13; Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 297; Wiggins, "Deliberation and Practical Reasoning," 38.
[220] See n.6
[221] I have in mind Moss' careful study, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good,* on these issues.

canvassed in the following sections. I defend an interpretation that can meet these challenges by showing that Aristotle denies neither that there can be agential rational scrutiny of ends (§2) nor that a piece of practical reasoning can be rationally evaluated under two different aspects: *qua* orientation and *qua* design (§3). Finally, I argue that Aristotle's claim that virtue makes the goal right should not be interpreted as a restriction on the power of reason, but rather as an acknowledgement of the ethical significance of pleasure and its influence on the nonrational half of the divided soul (§4).

1. Aristotelian-Humean Parallels?

Since the central issue of this chapter has to do with whether or not Aristotle can hold a view resembling that of Hume on practical reason, I begin with a brief sketch of the Humean theory.[222] When Humeans claim, to quote Hume, that "reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions" (T II.3.3, 415), they mean that motivation always has a desire at its source and that practical reasoning necessarily begins from the agent's prior or given desires. There is an implicit claim at the basis of this Humean division of labor: reasoning is exclusively linked up with the cognitive side of human psychology, i.e., with beliefs and relations among a set of beliefs. These cognitive elements are to be distinguished from psychological states such as desires and passions. Indeed, Hume holds that all objects of human reason or inquiry fall into either one of two categories: matters of fact and relations of ideas.[223] Given this dichotomy, it is unsurprising that Hume should be skeptical of practical reasoning, reasoning that exclusively and independently issues in action.

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[222] This view is also called subjectivism, the desire-based theory, and internalism. For further discussion, see Mark Schroeder *Slaves of the Passions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Chris Heathwood, "Desire-Based Theories of Reasons, Pleasure, and Welfare" in *Oxford Studies in Metaethics* 6, (2011): 79–106; and Julia Markovits, *Moral Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[223] He asserts, "The understanding exerts itself after two different ways, as it judges from demonstration or probability; as it regards the abstract relations of our ideas, or those relations of objects, of which experience only gives us information" (T 2.3.3.2).

For he thinks that demonstrative reasoning about matters of fact is incapable of motivating and regulating the agent's action. In Hume's view, this form of reasoning concerns the domain of ideas, whereas the will that brings about actions concerns the external world of objects. We cannot merely assume, Hume thinks, an interaction between these two faculties (T II.3.3.2).

But there is *prima facie* evidence to think that the branch of reasons dealing with the relations of ideas has more of a role to play in influencing the will to action. One might reasonably think that the work of reason here would be to work out the relations between the necessary ends to the realization of the agent's goals. Indeed, scholars typically interpret Hume along these lines, attributing to him an instrumentalist approach on the question of practical reason.[224] According to the instrumentalist account, agents are rationally required to take the means that are necessary to achieve their ends. The ends themselves, having originated from desires, cannot be contrary to reason and subject to rational evaluations, echoing Hume's claims, "Tis not contrary to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger" (T II.3.3.6). With the contour of the Humean picture in place, we are in a position to consider the question, Whether or not it is possible for Aristotle to be in agreement with Hume that something non-rational, like a person's desires, are the sources of all of her reasons for action and that practical reason is thus confined to the service of these masters.

[224] See, for example, Kieran Setiya "Hume on Practical Reason" *Philosophical Perspectives* 18 (2004): 365-89; Bernard Williams, "Internal and external reasons" in *Moral Luck* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1981), 101–113. Some scholars have challenged the instrumentalist reading of Hume, while suggesting that there is no normativity at all in Hume's account of practical reason. Reason only delineates the means one can take in order to achieve one's ends but does not require the agent to adopt these means. Jean Hampton, "Does Hume have an instrumental conception of practical reason?" *Hume Studies* 21 (1995): 57-74; Korsgaard, "The normativity of instrumental reason," in G. Cullity and B. Gaut, eds., *Ethics and Practical Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 215-254; Millgram, "Was Hume a Humean?".

1.1. The "Humean Passages"

Although there is a coalition of commentators who resist a Humeanizing reading of Aristotle, there are nonetheless widespread disagreements about the contribution of reason in the generation of action. The persistent interpretative issue concerns the following pair of passages in which Aristotle, as if anticipating Hume's bold claims centuries later, writes:

> βουλευόμεθα δ' οὐ περὶ τῶν τελῶν ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν πρὸς τὰ τέλη. Οὔτε γὰρ ἰατρὸς βουλεύεται εἰ ὑγιάσει, οὔτε ῥήτωρ εἰ πείσει, οὔτε πολιτικὸς εἰ εὐνομίαν ποιήσει, οὐδὲ τῶν λοιπῶν οὐδεὶς περὶ τοῦ τέλους· ἀλλὰ θέμενοι τὸ τέλος τὸ πῶς καὶ διὰ τίνων ἔσται σκοποῦσι· (*EN* III.3, 1112b11-16)
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> We deliberate, not about the goals, but about the things towards the goals. The doctor does not deliberate about whether he will heal; nor an orator whether he will persuade; nor the politician whether he will produce laws; nor does any of the rest [of the experts] deliberate about their goals. But having posited the goal, we investigate how and by what means it will be obtained.
>
> ἔτι τὸ ἔργον ἀποτελεῖται κατὰ τὴν φρόνησιν καὶ τὴν ἠθικὴν ἀρετήν· ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀρετὴ τὸν σκοπὸν ποιεῖ ὀρθόν, ἡ δὲ φρόνησις τὰ πρὸς τοῦτον. (*EN* VI.12, 1144a7-9/*EE* II.11, 1227b22-25)
>
> Our function is completed in accordance with the excellence of practical rationality and character virtue. For character virtue makes the goal right, and the excellence of practical rationality the things towards the goal.

Call the first of the pair the "deliberation passage" and the other the "virtue passage." Lately, it is argued that on a "face-value" reading of the deliberation passage, Aristotle embraces a qualified Humean theory insofar as he, too, restricts practical reason to working out the things towards the goal.[225] It is also argued that the intended meaning of the phrase "virtue makes the goal right" is for virtue to be "literally supplying the content of the goal" on the basis of the parallel structure of the virtue passage. The reasoning behind this reading is as follows:

[225] Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good*, 157. She is careful to emphasize that her view is a qualified Humean interpretation since, unlike Hume, Aristotle on this view holds that that we want our ends because we find them good, writing, "Aristotle can maintain it while still holding that we desire our ends because we find them good, so long as he holds that we find them good through a non-rational form of cognition, one available to the part of the soul which is the seat of character" (198).

> Whatever it is that *phronesis* does in relation to the "things toward the goal" ("make it right," "make us do it"), virtue does in relation to the goal itself. And surely what *phronesis* does in relation to the things toward the end is literally identify them – tell us what they are. Thus, the clear implication […] is that virtue dictates what the goal is.[226]

This interpretation straightforwardly implies that practical reason, by itself, cannot make a recommendation about what ends our actions aim at. Rather, the ends for each person are determined by virtue, which is thought to be some extra, non-intellectual motivational orientation of the person's character. If a person happens to be mistaken about her ends, then this person goes astray because she does not have the right kind of character, not because her reasoning fails. And whether the person has the right moral character, whether she is virtuous or vicious, is a function of what Moss calls "practical induction."

The notion of practical induction is an expansion on Aristotle's analogies between practical and theoretical epistemology, especially the parallel between habituation and induction.[227] Practical induction "works through perception and then *phantasia* to give us an unarticulated grasp of the end."[228] To conceive of a certain kind of action as good is to have a pleasurable *phantasia* of an instance of that kind of action, which is caused by previous experience of the pleasure of doing or imagining something of that kind. Someone properly brought up has experienced many such pleasures in the course of his upbringing, which produce the appropriate *phantasia*, which in turn motivates the doing of the appropriate action. It is *phantasia*, therefore, not reason, which furnishes agents with a view of the end. For the thought "*x* is the good, i.e. is the end" is made possible by the pleasurable perception of many activities, and the eventual grasping, mediated by *phantasia*, of the universal property they all

[226] Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good*, 174.
[227] Versions of this account, in addition to Moss, have been defended by Burnet in *The Ethics of Aristotle,* Engberg-Pedersen in *Aristotle's Theory of Moral Insight* (Oxford: OUP, 1983) and Achtenberg in *Cognition of Value in Aristotle's Ethics: Promise of Enrichment, Threat of Destruction.*
[228] *Aristotle on the Apparent Good,* 199.

have in common. On this view, the function of practical reason is thus regelated to working out the best means of achieving, as it were, the "phantasised" end.

Sure enough, the passages under consideration appear to lend themselves to a Humean analysis with reason in its proper role of being motivationally inert at setting ends. Such an analysis challenges the received intellectualist view in recent decades that practical reason, if not outright ascertains the ends, has a far greater contribution than merely directing us to the relevant means for the satisfaction of an end fixed by the nonrational motive forces. What, then, are the grounds for rejecting this "face value" interpretation of the passages that I've been calling the "Humean passages"? The next two sections present the intellectualist responses to the Humean passages and their challenges, beginning with the deliberation passage.

2. Deliberation is of Ends: Flogging a Dead Horse?

The copious amount of ink that has been spilled over the deliberation passage would seem to indicate that any further debates about Aristotle's claim that we do not deliberate about our ends, in the words of Aurel Kolnai, "may perhaps amount to flogging a dead horse."[229] But the horse in question is still not quite dead given the revival of interest in Aristotle's theory of deliberation recently[230] and, especially, the sustained defense of a Humeanizing interpretation in recent years. Indeed, the horse "may deserve another course of flogging,"[231]as follows:

Common to prevalent intellectualist readings of the deliberation passage is the suggestion, variably expressed, that the "things towards the goals" (πρὸς τὰ τέλη) include both

[229] "Deliberation is of Ends," 195.
[230] See, for instance, discussions of recent reconstructions of Aristotle's theory of deliberation in chapter 1.
[231] Kolnai, "Deliberation is of Ends," 195.

means and also constituents of those goals.[232] By expanding the scope of the "the things towards the goals", intellectualists can avoid the result "that reason has nothing to do with the ends of human life, its only sphere being the efficient realization of specific goals in whose determination or modification argument plays no substantive part."[233] As such, deliberation, the paradigmatic operation of practical reason, need not be strictly instrumental, as on Hume's view, where our passions and desires set our goals while reason is confined to working out how to achieve them.

If the theory of deliberation defended in the first chapter is plausible, then Aristotle indeed defends a completely wide and general notion of deliberation, as the intellectualists claim. There is nothing in Aristotle's official account of deliberation in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3 which dictates that agents can never deliberate about any goals *tout court*.[234] What Aristotle does claim, as I discussed in chapter one, is that the possible subjects of deliberation must meet a certain standard of predictability and indeterminacy (*EN* III.3, 1112b8-9). But he says nothing additionally about their classification as means or ends, leaving open the possibility for rational reflections of ends. The interpretation put forth in chapter one is that one simply cannot, for any episode of deliberation, carry out the investigation if one does not assume something as a starting point and a good to-be-pursued. But this is merely an operational limitation of Aristotle's theory of deliberation rather than a denial that our ends are subject to rational scrutiny, given that he thinks deliberation is essentially a process of backward analysis from an assumed starting point.

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[232] Versions of it this view has been defended or endorsed by Cooper, Irwin, McDowell, Nussbaum, and Wiggins. Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle,* 20-23; Irwin, "Aristotle on Reason, Desire and Virtue," *Journal of Philosophy* 72 (1975): 567–78; McDowell, "Some Issues in Aristotle's Moral Psychology," in McDowell, *Mind, Value and Reality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 23–40 at 26; Nussbaum, *Aristotle's De Motu Animalium*, 170n.13; Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 297; Wiggins, "Deliberation and Practical Reasoning," 38.

[233] Wiggins, "Deliberation and Practical Reasoning," 36.

[234] That Aristotle does not preclude deliberation about ends is also noted by Bostock and Taylor. Bostock, *Aristotle's Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 94; C. C. W. Taylor, "Aristotle on the Practical Intellect," in Taylor, *Pleasure, Mind, and Soul: Selected Papers in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2008) 204–222.

Even interpreters who resist the intellectualist reading of the deliberation passage do not wish to restrict deliberation to the identification of means.[235] What they oppose is the intellectualist implication that there are deliberations of ends. For instance, Moss argues:

> What deliberation does is to make determinate the indeterminate goal with which the agent began. And thus accurately working out how best to achieve that goal – working out the finest "things toward it," i.e. deliberating well – is "determining the mean," i.e. is correctly making specific the worthy but overly-general goal of acting as one should.[236]

One may reasonably wonder whether allowing practical reason to "correctly making specific the worthy but overly-general goal of acting" without thereby granting it the task of supplying the content of our goals, in the words of one critic, " verge on being contradictory."[237] Let us grant that there is a meaningful distinction that can be drawn between Moss' view and that of the intellectualist camp on whether or not there are deliberations of ends, even loosely construed. The distinction is motivated by the reasoning, as we saw, that Aristotle's emphasis in the virtue passage is on the parallelism between the function of virtue and the excellence of practical rationality. And so, the argument goes, for Aristotle to claim that "virtue makes the goal right" is for him to assign to it the power of finding ends.

Moreover, critics of the intellectualist interpretation insist that we take the structural limitation of reasoning more seriously and infer from it a constraint on the ability of practical reason. Their reasoning goes as follows: Aristotle is extremely clear on the point that every instance of inquiry requires starting points—and it is on these accepted starting points that the rest of the reasoning process depends. The starting points, then, must be secured through some

[235] Moss, for instance, concedes, "The view [the constituent-deliberation] is indeed similar to the one I have advanced […] Like myself, the constituents-deliberation camp argue that we can do justice to the ethical significance of deliberation while respecting Aristotle's claim that it is of 'things toward ends,' on the grounds that 'making right the things toward ends' is an ethically demanding task which involves giving specific content to a general goal" (*Aristotle on the Apparent Good,* 197). Tuozzo, too, clarifies that he is not endorsing a quasi-Humean interpretation of Aristotle in his rejection of the opposing "quasi-Kantian" one ("Aristotelian Deliberation is Not of Ends," 194).

[236] "Virtue Makes the Goal Right": Virtue and *Phronesis* in Aristotle's Ethics," *Phronesis* 56, (2011): 204-61, 247.

[237] Vasiliou, "Apparent Good," 378.

means other than reasoning itself.[238] In a text often cited in support of this reading, Aristotle tells us that there is not a reasoned account (*logos*) that "teaches" the end. The text reads:

> ἐν δὲ ταῖς πράξεσι τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα ἀρχή, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς μαθηματικοῖς αἱ ὑποθέσεις· οὔτε δὴ ἐκεῖ ὁ λόγος διδασκαλικὸς τῶν ἀρχῶν οὔτε ἐνταῦθα, ἀλλ' ἀρετὴ ἢ φυσικὴ ἢ ἐθιστὴ τοῦ ὀρθοδοξεῖν περὶ τὴν ἀρχήν. (*EN* VII.7, 1151a16-17, cf. *EE* 1227b25)
>
> In actions that for the sake of which is the first principles, as the hypotheses are in mathematics; neither in that case is it reason that teaches the first principles, nor is it so here—excellence either natural or produced by habituation is what teaches right opinion about the first principles.

These critics infer from these remarks that "he means that what makes the goal right is solely a state of the non-rational soul"[239] and "there can be no discursive argument for the first principles (theoretical or moral)."[240]

I will address, first, the contention that it is a non-rational part of the soul that is responsible for making our goals right in relation to the deliberation passage at issue. We can safely conclude that, unless each process of deliberation begins from the conception of some end that is not arrived at by the same deliberation, the deliberation would have no beginning. But the passage does not warrant the more restrictive conclusion that "the starting-points must be secured through *something other than reasoning.*"[241] For we may agree that, for any given episode of deliberation at time *t*, the starting point provisionally accepted at *t* did not arrive through the same process of deliberation. Yet, there is no independent reason to infer from this structural constraint that the starting point assumed in deliberation at time *t* should not be the subject of deliberation at a time prior to or after *t.*

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[238] Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good*, 156-7.
[239] Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good,* 173.
[240] Tuozzo, "Aristotelian Deliberation is Not o Ends," 193.
[241] Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good*, 156.

That the structural limitation of deliberation should not be interpreted as a limitation on practical reason is confirmed by other details in Aristotle's analysis of the process. It is true that both theoretical and practical reasoning requires the agent to make some assumptions about her starting points. But the starting points of theoretical and practical reasoning are not the same in kind. In the theoretical case, these starting points are the hypotheses, axioms, postulates, and definitions, but in the productive case, these starting points are the goals of action (*EE* II.11, 1227b28-32). Here, unlike the first principles of a demonstration, there is nothing special about the ontological status of practical goods posited as starting points in deliberation such that they cannot be amended. It would require further evidence and arguments to show that Aristotle rejects the possibility that the starting points of practical reasoning are not open to rational scrutiny *tout court*.

What we do have from Aristotle is evidence to the contrary. In his discussion of deliberation in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3, Aristotle mentions a scenario in which the agent discovers at the end of deliberation that her initial goal is unattainable.[242] Here, we have it on Aristotle's authority that the right thing to do is to give up. If Aristotle is aware of this kind of case and offers the advice to give up, then he must believe that it is possible to change one's mind about what one ought to have as a goal as a result of deliberation because one is persuaded by the reason(s) in favor of desisting. The idea is that while one carries out the process of deliberation, one indeed cannot deliberate about whether one ought to have one's goal as a goal. It is simply assumed, minimally for the duration of the deliberation in question, that this goal is worthwhile and a good to be pursued. However, since Aristotle explicitly refers to deliberation as a search (*zētēsis*) or investigation (*skepsis*), and it is occasionally the case that this search leads to

[242] See chapter 1.6.1.

the discovery of new facts that ought to influence one's answer to the question whether one should (or continue to) have one's initial goal as a goal. In the example under consideration, the agent who continues to pursue some goal, having discovered that this goal is unattainable, would be vulnerable to the charge of irrationality.

Let me turn now to the charge that "there can be no discursive argument for the first principles (theoretical or moral)."[243] As commentators have observed, Aristotle uses the expression "a *logos* that teaches" (*logos didaskalikos*) as a synonym for a *logos* of demonstration (*apodeixis*),[244] which involves a deductive type of reasoning.[245] As such, the word '*logos*' should not be understood broadly to mean just any process of reasoning *simpliciter.* What I take Aristotle to be claiming, rather, is that we cannot teach others how to construct their ends nor can anyone teach us how to construct our ends by using a demonstration since no such demonstration exists. For one, demonstrations have their starting points from explanatory universals (*APo.* II.19, 100a6-9) and issue judgments that are universal and necessary, but practical-ethical inquiries have an inevitable tie to particularity and contingency (*EN* VI.8, 1142a10-15). However, this constraint is perfectly compatible with the possibility that agents ascertain for themselves what their ends ought to be or to discover that their initial posited ends ought to be revised through a process involving reason other than via a demonstration. What Aristotle denies in the passage at issue is that there can be a *logos* that teaches us our goals and, I take it, how to have the right kind of motivational orientation more generally.

To make the point more lucid, I want to borrow an expression from John McDowell, who holds that a correct conception of how to conduct oneself is grasped, "from the inside out."[246]

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[243] Tuozzo, "Aristotelian Deliberation is Not of Ends," 193.
[244] Olav Eikeland, *The Ways of Aristotle: Aristotelian Phrónêsis, Aristotelian Philosophy of Dialogue, and Action Research* (Bern: International Academic Publisher, 2008), 253-4.
[245] Dahl, *Practical Reason, Aristotle, and Weakness of the Will*, 84.
[246] McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," *The* Monist (1972): 331-50, 331.

But at the same time, we need not be committed to the view that "it is extra-intellectual something that directs the practical application of the intellect from outside."[247] Indeed, nothing Aristotle says forbids us from subjecting our goals to rational scrutiny, and from examining our conduct "from the inside out" by means of reflective introspection. Rather, all he intends to convey in the passage at issue is that there can be no demonstrative arguments made in support of or to disprove first moral principles. But if it is plausible to think that Aristotle leaves intact other modes of reasoning about our goals, or first moral principles, then what might such modes of reasoning look like? Fortunately, Aristotle plainly tells us that dialectic is "capable of examining the principles of all inquiries" (ἐξεταστικὴ γὰρ οὖσα πρὸς τὰς ἁπασῶν τῶν μεθόδων ἀρχὰς ὁδὸν ἔχει, *Top.* I.2, 101b3–4). I follow up on this clue in what follows.

2.1 How to Reason about Ends: Gathering, Purifying, and Proving *endoxa*

Before unpacking what Aristotle means for dialectic to examine the first principles, which Brunschwig goes as far as calling "the proper task of dialectic,"[248] it would be helpful to briefly restate what dialectical reasoning looks like.[249] In broad strokes, dialectical arguments yield conclusions that are probably, rather than absolutely, true since they have their starting points in the empirically sourced reputable *endoxa*—common beliefs which are accepted by everyone, or by the majority, or by the most notable of them (*Top.* I.1, 100b21; *SE* 2, 165bl-4; *APr.* I.1, 24-25). As widely endorsed by scholars, one way to make moral inquiry via dialectic is by drawing starting points from this database and then proceed by raising and attempting to solve puzzles

[247] McDowell, "Some Issues in Aristotle's Moral Psychology," 32.
[248] *Topiques,1,* 117.
[249] See also the discussion of dialectic in chapter 2.

about the initial *endoxa*.[250] Aristotle may, as has been pointed out recently, recognize other, non-dialectical ways to make moral inquiries, but I cannot give these recent studies the full engagement that they deserve here. At any rate, as Jonathan Barnes points out, "he [Aristotle] nowhere suggests that any other method will lead to results which conflict with, or go beyond, the results achieved by the Method of Ἔνδοξα [i.e., the dialectical method]" (495). [251]

Returning to the question about the intended meaning of the claim that dialectic is "capable of examining the principles of all inquiries," perhaps we can start by ruling out what Aristotle does not mean. It is unlikely that what it is for dialectic to examine the first principles is for it to prove that they are certain truths, holding unqualifiedly and universally. For there are no truth-preserving operations that can begin with inputs from the database of the *endoxa* and yield outputs in the form of unconditional knowledge. We may rule out the proving hypothesis.[252] Perhaps what it is for dialectical reasoning to examine into the principles is for it to find

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[250] G. E. L. Owen, 'Tithenai ta phainomena' in *Aristote et les problèmes de méthode*, edited by S. Mansion (Louvain: Publications universitaires,1961), 83–103; J. Barnes, "Sheep have four legs" in *Proceedings of the World Congress on Aristotle* (Athens: Ministry of Culture and Science, 1981), 113–19; J. Cooper, "Nicomachean Ethics VII.1–2: introduction, method, puzzles" in *Symposium Aristotelicum: Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics Book VII*, edited by C. Natali (Oxford: OUP, 2009), 9–39; R. Kraut, "How to justify ethical propositions: Aristotle's method" in *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, edited by R. Kraut (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 76–95.

[251] That the dialectical approach is not one for which Aristotle advocates exclusively in his *Ethics* is already noted by Barnes in his 1980 article, "Aristotle and the Method of Ethics" *Revue Internationale De Philosophie* 34, no. 133/134 (1980): 490-511, 495. In recent years, Natali argues, against the dominant view, that Aristotle employs a scientific method in his ethical inquiry rather than the oft-believed dialectical method. "*Posterior Analytics* and the definition of happiness in *NE* I" *Phronesis* 55 (2010): 304–24. Following Natali, Karbowski argues, "our default assumption about *EN* 1 should be that it is a scientific enquiry tailored to a practical subject matter, not a dialectical enquiry" ("Endoxa, facts, and the starting points of the *EN*," in *Bridging the Gap Between Aristotle's Science and Ethics* edited by D. Henry and K.M. Nielsen (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015), 113-29, 127). Other papers in this volume also argue for the similar broad idea that Aristotle's method of ethics shares important features with the empirical method of his scientific enquiry. See Part II of *Bridging the Gap Between Aristotle's Science and Ethics* especially. D. Frede, "The endoxon mystique: what *endoxa* are and what they are not" *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 43 (2012):185-215; Gregory Salmieri, "Aristotle's Non-dialectical Methodology in the *Nicomachean Ethics*," *Ancient Philosophy* 29 (2009): 311–335.

[252] Other scholars arrive at the same conclusion. C.W.C. Taylor asserts, "The role of dialectical argument here described cannot be to *prove* principles" (his emphasis). "Aristotle's Epistemology," in *Epistemology* edited by Stephen Everson (Cambridge: Cambridge Universal Press, 1990), 133; Robert Pasnau states that dialectic is "an epistemology of non-ideal conditions." "Epistemology Idealized," *Mind* (2013): 987-1021, 1006; Karbowski agrees, writing, "he [Aristotle] is primarily denying dialectic the ability to demonstrate (explain by appeal to first principles) anything." *Aristotle's Method in Ethics: Philosophy in Practice* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019), 41.

buttressing arguments for such principles and to consider defeating counter-arguments, if there are any, so that our credence in the principles at issue can be strengthened.

This suggestion, as is well-known, is confirmed by the following passage in *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.1, 1145b2–7, where Aristotle introduces his discussion of *akrasia* by laying out his methodology:

> δεῖ δ’, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων, τιθέντας τὰ φαινόμενα καὶ πρῶτον διαπορήσαντας οὕτω δεικνύναι μάλιστα μὲν πάντα τὰ ἔνδοξα περὶ ταῦτα τὰ πάθη, εἰ δὲ μή, τὰ πλεῖστα καὶ κυριώτατα· ἐὰν γὰρ λύηταί τε τὰ δυσχερῆ καὶ καταλείπηται τὰ ἔνδοξα, δεδειγμένον ἂν εἴη ἱκανῶς.
>
> We must, as all other cases, set the phenomena before us and, after puzzling through, go on to prove, if possible, the truth of all the *endoxa* about these affections or, failing this, of the greater number and the most important; for if we both resolve the difficulties and leave the reputable opinions undisturbed, we shall have proved the case sufficiently.

The passage speaks for itself: like “all other cases,”[253] investigators must begin by setting out the *phainomena* and asking questions, and so proving (*deiknunai*) all the *endoxa*, or if not all, as many as possible and the most authoritative.[254] While Aristotle himself does not give a name to this method, it has been widely referred to as his “dialectical” method[255] or the “endoxic” method.[256] This method unfolds into three stages.[257] The first stage consists of gathering

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[253] It is not entirely clear what the scope of “all other cases” is and whether Aristotle intends to restrict the scope to ethical inquiry. As many specialists noted, Aristotle frequently opens his enquiries by surveying the views of his predecessors, which belong in the database of *endoxa*. Consider *Metaphysics* I and *Physics* II for example outside of the *Ethics*. Barnes, “Aristotle and the Method of Ethics” *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 34, no. 133/134 (1980): 490-511, 494; Kraut, *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's* Nicomachean Ethics, 77; Nielsen, “Aristotle on principles in ethics,” in *Bridging the Gap Between Aristotle's Science and Ethics* edited by D. Henry and K. M. Nielsen (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015), 29-48, 32. Frede has a more restrictive reading since she does not think that items such as “things said” (*legomena*) and “the appearances” (*phainomena*) should count in the body of *endoxa*. “The *endoxon* mystique: what *endoxa* are and what they are not,”187-8.

[254] This text has been cited by many to make a similar point. Taylor “Aristotle’s Epistemology,” 133-4; Kraut calls the method as presented in *EN* VII.1 “the proposed method for testing the truth of ethical propositions.” *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, 77.

[255] Broadie, *Nicomachean Ethics: Translation, Introduction, and Commentary*, 385; Brown, *The Nicomachean Ethics,* xxvii; Crisp, *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), ix-x; Dahl, *Practical Reason, Aristotle, and Weakness of the Will,* 75; Irwin, *Aristotle’s First Principles,* 352; Wiggins, “Deliberation and Practical Reason,” 45.

[256] Barnes, “Aristotle and the Method of Ethics,” 494; Frede, “The *endoxon* mystique: what *endoxa* are and what they are not,”185; Kraut, “*The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's* Nicomachean Ethics,” 80.

[257] I find Barnes’ schematic analysis of the dialectical method, what he calls the “method of ἐνδοξα*,*” to be most helpful and lucid. My discussion of the three stages of the dialectical method here is largely informed by Barnes’ discussion in “Aristotle and the Method of Ethics,” 495. Others also agree that the dialectical method unfolds into three stages. See, for example, Cooper, “*Nicomachean Ethics* VII.1–2: introduction, method, puzzles” and Kraut, “How to justify ethical propositions: Aristotle’s method.”

a set of *endoxa* on the subject at issue, say, the set A consisting of $\{\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \ldots \alpha_n\}$. In the second stage, investigators are to uncover various difficulties in the set A initially laid down. Some of these difficulties may be due to vagueness or ambiguity of expression; others may have to do with genuine incompatibilities among the *endoxa* surveyed. The goal of this exercise—the process Aristotle calls "puzzling through" (*diaporein*)—is to, as it were, purify the original set A to produce a new and improved set of *endoxa* B, consisting of $\{\beta_1, \beta_2, \ldots \beta_n\}$. In the final stage, construct a maximal consistent subset of B as to contain its most important (*kuriōtata*) members. At the end of this dialectal process of puzzling and proving, the finished product is $\{\gamma_1, \gamma_2, \ldots \gamma_n\}$ such that each member in the set Γ is "sufficiently proved."[258]

I want to suggest that Aristotle's own conceptual analysis of the constituents of *eudaimonia* in the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is an example of this three-stage-dialectical process of reasoning about final ends.[259] Although the text of *Nicomachean Ethics* I.4-

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[258] One difference between practical and the scientific branch is that the former contemplates things whose principles (*archai*) are variable (*EN* VI.1, 1139a7-8). For Aristotle to claim that the proper objects of practical intellect have contingent and variable starting points is for him to restate his position that the conclusion of any practical or ethical inquiry can have only a moderate degree of precision. Aristotle opens the *Nicomachean Ethics* with just this claim, reminding us that we should only hope to achieve conclusions which are true for the most part in investigations of ethical subject matter (*EN* I.3, 1094b19-23). This is the reason, I take it, that Aristotle has for asserting that the case in question is proved sufficiently rather than absolutely. Although there have been recent attempts to strengthen the conclusions of ethical inquiries by bridging the gap between Aristotle's methodology in conducting moral and scientific inquiries, as Charlotte Witt sensibly points out, "To the extent that Aristotle's ethics is directed towards the understanding of fine things and just things (actions and objects like constitutions), goods, including pleasure, health, wealth, and virtues like courage, there is good reason to think that it would not count as a scientific enquiry because of the radical instability of its objects" ("'As if by convention alone': the unstable ontology of Aristotle's Ethics" in *Bridging the Gap Between Aristotle's Science and Ethics,* 276-92, 292).

[259] In making this claim, I am in broad agreement with the standard view, although it is also important to recognize that this traditional view has been challenged in recent years. See n. 114. Karbowski argues, for one, that Aristotle does not treat the *endoxa* initially laid down in *EN* I.4-6 as immune from rejection at the beginning of the enquiry, unlike the *endoxa* set out in *EN* VII.1. So, he cannot be using them as starting points for the enquiry. Since dialectical arguments must have their starting points in the *endoxa*, Aristotle, Karbowski argues, cannot be using a dialectical argument in his inquiry about happiness at the beginning of the *Ethics*. I remain unconvinced why the fact that some *endoxa* become rejected throughout the course of the investigation should lead us to conclude that Aristotle is not using a dialectical method. As Barnes points out, "there are remarkably few propositions which Aristotle cannot, in one way or another, include among the initial α_i's" ("Aristotle and the Method of Ethics," 510). The set of initially laid down *endoxa* in the discussion of happiness, as I read Aristotle, is broad indeed and includes propositions which he himself endorses at the end of the function argument. Some members of this initially laid down set of *endoxa* thus end up surviving the purification process in the second stage, which is what we would expect. In the *EN* VII.1 passage at issue, Aristotle warns us in that it is not always possible for all of the *endoxa* to survive examination. Karbowski appears to be aware of this response from friends of the dialectical interpretation, writing, "this argument does not entirely rule out a dialectical interpretation of Aristotle's ethical methodology, because it is still possible that these claims (1–4) are themselves deeply entrenched *endoxa*" ("Endoxa, facts, and the starting points of the *EN*," 122).

7 and its central argument are well known, it would be helpful to have a brief reminder. In these chapters, Aristotle famously argues for the identification of human good with activity of the rational part of the soul in accordance with excellence *via* his so-called "function argument", which goes as follows:

> (1) The good (*tagathon*), and the living well (*to eu*), of a thing lies in the function (*ergon*) of that thing.
> (2) The human function consists in the activity of the rational part of the soul in accordance with excellence.
> So, (3) the human good consists of the activity of the rational part of the soul in accordance with excellence (*EN* I.7, 1098a26-27).

Nearly every premise and presupposition of the function argument has been challenged.[260] My aim is not to defend the validity of the function argument here. I simply argue that Aristotle takes himself to be demonstrating that *eudaimonia* is a rational end—and that he does this through the process of dialectical reasoning previously discussed.

In the first stage, Aristotle proceeds by laying out the *endoxa*. Call this initially laid down set of *endoxa*, to follow the format of the preceding analysis, set A. Among members of A are the views that:

> α_1: every action is thought to purposively aim at some good (*EN* I.1, 1094a1).
> α_2: *eudaimonia* is the chief good (*EN* I.4, 1095a16).
> α_3: *eudaimonia* is living well and faring well (*EN* I.4, 1095a19).
> α_4: *eudaimonia* is identified with pleasure (*EN* I.5, 1095b17).
> α_5: *eudaimonia* is identified with honor (*EN* I.5, 1095b23).
> α_6: *eudaimonia* is identified with wealth (*EN* I.5, 1096a5).
> α_7: *eudaimonia* is something distinctively human (*EN* I.7, 1097b24).

[260] The following is an incomplete list of complaints. The function argument seems to depend on a teleological conception of the world that we no longer accept (Hardie, *Aristotle's Ethical Theory*, 23); it relies on a form of reasoning that proceeds from relative to absolute purposes which may be illegitimate (Martha Nussbaum, *Aristotle's De Motu Animalium,* 100 ff); it is questionable that it is good for a human being to be a good human being (Peter Glassen, "A Fallacy in Aristotle's Argument about the Good," *The Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 7, No. 29 (1957): 319-322); or that it is good for a human being to be a morally good human being (Bernard Williams, *Morality: An Introduction to Ethics* (Cambridge University Press; 2012) 64). For discussion of and replies to these objections, consult Terence Irwin, "The Metaphysical and Psychological Basis of Aristotle's Ethics,'' in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* edited by Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press; 1981), 35-54, 49; Christine Korsgard, "Aristotle's Function Argument" in *The Constitution of Agency: Essays on Practical Reason and Moral Psychology* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2008), 129-59; John McDowell, "The Role of *Eudaimonia* in Aristotle's Ethics" in *Mind, Value, and Reality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 3-22; Kathleen V. Wilkes, ''The Good Man and the Good for Man in Aristotle's Ethics,'' in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, 341–57.

α_8: *eudaimonia* is not something that is essentially dependent upon other people's opinions or taken away; (*EN* I.5, 1095b26).
$\alpha_{9:}$ eudaimonia is a final end (*EN* I.7, 1097a28).

In the second stage of his dialectical argument, Aristotle uses the more critical approach of puzzling through the *endoxa.* He subjects the various competing conceptions of *eudaimonia* to scrutiny by assessing them using various criteria that are also selected from the *endoxa*. The candidate for *eudaimonia* must meet the conditions of finality (α_9), self-sufficiency (α_8), and being distinctly human (α_7). These conditions allow him to rule out common contenders such as pleasure, wealth, and honor (*EN* 1.7, 1097b1 ff). We are thus left with the revised set of *endoxa*, B, some of whose members include:

β_1: every action is thought to purposively aim at some good (*EN* I.1, 1094a1).
β_2: *eudaimonia* is the chief good (*EN* I.4, 1095a16).
β_3: *eudaimonia* is living well and faring well (*EN* I.4, 1095a19).
β_4: *eudaimonia* is something distinctively human (*EN* I.7, 1097b24).
β_5: *eudaimonia* is not something that is essentially dependent upon other people's opinions (*EN* I.5, 1095b26).
β_6: *eudaimonia* is a final end (*EN* I.7, 1097a28).

Finally, the maximally consistent subset of B can be determined, and the true account of *eudaimonia* can be found, exclusively and exhaustively in the *endoxa* that remain. Here, by using the condition of human distinctiveness in his function argument, Aristotle concludes that the human good consists of the activity of the rational part of the soul in accordance with excellence (*EN* I.7, 1098a26-27). It is worth noting that, in arguing for this conclusion, Aristotle does not appeal to some notion of intuitive plausibility. Rather, he offers arguments to think that one position is more "authoritative" than another. The identification of *eudaimonia* with the activity of the rational part of the soul is the one best supported by argument in comparison to the other *endoxa* about *eudaimonia*. Aristotle conception of the human good follows from a set of *endoxa*

that has survived the dialectical reasoning process of purification through consideration of possible defeaters.

Relating this three-stage-process of gathering, puzzling, and proving the *endoxa* back to our discussion about practical reasoning of ends, we can see why Aristotle may think that our ends need not be arbitrarily set by non-rational motive forces and idiosyncratic preferences. Rather, they are ascertained by reason insofar as they can be questioned and proven through a process consisting in a series of examinations based on criteria that all or most people *qua* rational beings can be persuaded to accept.[261] Just like the *endoxa* which we lay down at the start of our investigations may require purification and selection, so, too, our posited ends may require revision and reselection. Our ends may be, for one, too imprecise to issue in action. In this case, we can gain a better conceptual understanding of what the end consists in through further reflection. It is also conceivable that in the process of deliberation, we come to reject the starting points initially assumed, viz., the common views that wealth, money, or honor is to be pursued as the highest good, because we discover that such goals may be incompatible with our concurrent values and commitments or be at odds with other fundamental beliefs shared among members of the human species.

Aristotle's model of ethical inquiry reminds us that although we may begin from what we unreflectively desire, or think would be worthwhile to desire, such initial desires are subject to rational criticism. We do not simply possess beliefs and desires in the manner of non-humans, and act as those states dictate. We can give linguistic expression to the contents of many of those states, and we can articulate what goals we are seeking and what facts we are assuming. And we can ask questions about those properties and relations of goals and facts, subjecting them to

[261] As I discussed in chapter 2, Aristotle wants to exclude certain *doxoi* from consideration, viz., those of mad men, of the sick, and of children.

interrogations and second-order examinations. The fact that the contents of our ends may be further specified and revised through a process practical reasoning, friends of the Humean interpretations will want to point out, still does not show that reason supplies us with the contents of our goals. For it is the non-rational elements which provides reason with a blueprint, as it were, from which to perform its specification operation through dialectical reasoning perhaps. And "'determining the mean,' i.e. is correctly making specific the worthy but overly general goal of acting as one should."[262] In the following section, I argue that practical reason supplies the contents of our ends in light of knowledge of ourselves *qua* rational being. Further, it is the person with the excellence of rationality will have a conception of *eudaimonia* which binds the multitude of her goals together in a way that is reflective of her conception of how to live. To accomplish this task, I will need to return to the virtue passage.

3. Virtue Makes the Goal Right

Commentators who take an intellectualist line tend to rely on two strategies to explain the virtue passage. The first is to concede that virtue plays a crucial role in supplying agents with their goals, while insisting that it is capable of doing so because it is, in part, an intellectual state or necessarily involves intellectual states. To make their case, the intellectualists tend to rely on a passage like the following where Aristotle clarifies that virtue is a state issuing in decisions (*hexis prohairētikē*).

> πᾶσα ἀρετὴ προαιρετική (τοῦτο δὲ πῶς λέγομεν, εἴρηται πρότερον, ὅτι ἕνεκά τινος πάντα αἱρεῖσθαι ποιεῖ, καὶ τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα, τὸ καλόν. (*EE* III.1, 1230a26-29)
>
> All virtue is *prohairetic* (what we mean by this has been said earlier: that it makes one choose everything for the sake of something, and this is the that-for-the-sake-of-which— the fine).

[262] Moss, "Virtue Makes the Goal Right": Virtue and *Phronesis* in Aristotle's Ethics," 247.

They argue that since *prohairesis* is the result of rational deliberation,[263] so virtue, being a *prohairetic* state, must be intellectual. And if so, it must belong not exclusively to the non-rational, appetitive part of the soul, but also to the rational part.[264] Even if virtue is the result of proper upbringing and habituation, as widely accepted, "there is no reason why a state whose content is so determined cannot be an intellectual excellence."[265] A denial this claim would render habituation "mechanical"[266] and "a mindless process."[267]

The second strategy is to accept that virtue is non-rational while rejecting that it single-handedly dictates what the agent's goals are. This reading of what it means for virtue to "make the goal right" is founded on the basis of the following passage.

> ἡ γὰρ ἀρετὴ καὶ μοχθηρία τὴν ἀρχὴν ἣ μὲν φθείρει ἣ δὲ σῴζει, ἐν δὲ ταῖς πράξεσι τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα ἀρχή, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς μαθηματικοῖς αἱ ὑποθέσεις· (*EN* VII.7, 1151a15-17)
>
> For virtue preserves the starting point, but depravity ruins it; in actions the end for which we do them is the starting point, just as hypotheses are [the starting points] in mathematics.

The intellectualist argument here goes something like this: if we incorporate what Aristotle has to say in the passage at issue into our understanding of the virtue passage, then one way for virtue to "make the goal right" is for it to preserve it. Virtue might preserve the goal in two ways: either by ensuring that the agent will want the goal which reason identifies as best[268] or by preventing the non-virtuous desires from influencing reason to change its determination of which goal the agent should adopt.[269] According to interpretations along these lines, virtue plays no role

[263] See chapter 1.1
[264] People who take this line include Sorabji, McDowell, and Cooper. Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle*, 8; Sorabji "Aristotle on the Role of Intellect in Virtue," 216; McDowell, "Some Issues in Aristotle's Psychology," 31-2.
[265] McDowell, "Some Issues in Aristotle's Psychology," 31.
[266] Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle*, 8.
[267] Sorabji "Aristotle on the Role of Intellect in Virtue," 216.
[268] Allan, "Aristotle's Account of the Origin of Moral Principles," 74-75.
[269] Irwin, *Nicomachean Ethics (Indianapolis, Hackett: 1999), 232-3.*

in identifying the content of the end, but it determines whether the non-rational motives forces (the appetites and passions) that constitute character accept the end recommended by reason.

These various intellectualist strategies have been criticized recently. It is argued that reading the Humean passages in a way that allows reason to contribute to the task of identification of end would commit two mistakes, as follows (emphasis mine):

> (1) *It is simply to obliterate the distinction Aristotle clearly thinks so important: the distinction between being right about the end and being right about the "things toward it."* It may be fair to say that Aristotle does not give us much guidance in drawing the line between the two, but we should nonetheless avoid *an interpretation which precludes its being drawn*. (2) Moreover, to say that practical reasoning can furnish specifications of ends but not ultimate ends themselves is to place a restriction on its powers that is far from arbitrary. *Aristotle's claim is that while we can reason about how to live or what to care about, given a set of ultimate values, those ultimate values are fixed and determined by our upbringings – that is, by the affective, evaluative dispositions that our upbringings produce: our characters.*[270]

There are two criticisms expressed in these lines: the first is about the distinction Aristotle draws between having a correct conception of one's goal and being correct about the things toward the goal, and the second is about the sources of our evaluative dispositions, which are linked up with our upbringings and characters. Let me address, first, the worry that the intellectualist interpretation obliterates the distinction Aristotle draws between having a correct conception of one's goal and being correct about the things toward the goal.

3.1 Two Modes of Correctness

I wholeheartedly agree with the idea that any interpretation must retain the distinction between having a correct conception of the goal and being correct about the things towards the goal. This distinction has both philosophical and exegetical significance. We can indeed make a conceptual distinction between, on the one hand, being right about the things that contribute to our goals—

[270] Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good,* 197.

be it means or constituents—and, on the other, being right in having this thing rather than that thing as a goal. Having a veridical account of the things towards the goal is a matter of having the correct plan of action in view of one's goal. A person's practical reason is right under the description "about the things towards the goals" if she fulfills the requirement of instrumental rationality, which instructs agents to take those means that are necessary in relation to their given ends. Since this requirement is a structural requirement on the agent's attitudes, the truth-maker here is something like the internal coherence among those attitudes. Having a correct conception of the goal is, however, a matter of orientation and endorsing—a matter of value. For it is a question concerning the goodness of the goal itself, and whether agents have good reasons in favor of such goals. And so, for practical thought to be right under the description "about the goal" is for it to have a conception of the goal that corresponds to those reasons and values which provide standards for assessment of ends—standards that are independent from psychological facts about what people happen to be motivated to pursue.

This distinction is not only philosophically meaningful, but it must also be maintained on any interpretation of Aristotle's ethical psychology because Aristotle distinguishes the excellence of practical rationality from mere cleverness by making just this distinction, as follows:

> ἔστι δὴ δύναμις ἣν καλοῦσι δεινότητα· αὕτη δ' ἐστὶ τοιαύτη ὥστε τὰ πρὸς τὸν ὑποτεθέντα σκοπὸν συντείνοντα δύνασθαι ταῦτα πράττειν καὶ τυγχάνειν αὐτοῦ. ἂν μὲν οὖν ὁ σκοπὸς ᾖ καλός, ἐπαινετή ἐστιν, ἐὰν δὲ φαῦλος, πανουργία· διὸ καὶ τοὺς φρονίμους δεινοὺς καὶ πανούργους φαμὲν εἶναι. ἔστι δ' ἡ φρόνησις οὐχ ἡ δύναμις, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἄνευ τῆς δυνάμεως ταύτης. (*EN* VI.12, 1144a23-9)
>
> There is, then, a capacity called cleverness, and this is the sort of thing that, when it comes to the things that further hitting a proposed target, is able to do these and to hit upon them. If, then, the target is a fine one, this capacity is praiseworthy, but, if it is a base one, it is unscrupulous. That is why both people possessing the excellence of practical rationality and base ones are said to be clever. The excellence of practical rationality, however, is not the capacity [of cleverness] but does not exist without this capacity.

Aristotle is clear that, in addition to attending to the logic of instrumental rationality, the person with the excellence of practical rationality also evaluates his goals correctly with an eye to what is really good and conducive to *eudaimonia*. Whereas most people think *eudaimonia* is "something obvious and manifest, like pleasure or wealth or honor" (τῶν ἐναργῶν τι καὶ φανερῶν, οἷον ἡδονὴν ἢ πλοῦτον ἢ τιμήν, *EN* I.4 1095a22-23); the *phronimos* knows that it is the life of virtuous activity or of contemplation. Indeed, clever but corrupt individuals may be capable logisticians, who can easily hit upon the starting points of their deliberations due to their endowed intelligence. Yet, Aristotle plainly denies that they deliberate well because, like most people, they have incorrect starting points in deliberation insofar as they identify the end as pleasure or wealth, say, rather than excellent rational activity. The text is unambiguous on the point that *phronēsis* requires that practical thought is right about the content of the goals and about the things contributing to such goals, whereas cleverness requires only the latter. That Aristotle draws a distinction between having a correct conception of one's goal and being correct about the things toward the goal, and that such a distinction must be maintained, I take it, is clear.

I am unconvinced, however, that an intellectualist interpretation "precludes its being drawn."[271] It is intelligible for practical thought to be both instrumental and evaluative, allowing it to be correct or not with respect to the conception of one's goal and the things toward the goal. If this is right, then a piece of practical reasoning can thus be evaluated under two distinct aspects: *qua* orientation and *qua* design. A person's practical reason may be right or wrong in its orientation in thinking that something is a good to-be-gone for—a goal at which her subsequent actions aim. The assessment of whether or not one's practical reason is correct in its orientation

[271] Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good,* 197.

would, presumably, require that it be justifiable by the relevant sort of reasons. These reasons might be the things known, believed, or apprehended by the agent, the sum of this agent's relevant commitments, opinions, and attitudes. It might even be thought that Aristotle himself lays out the various sort of reasons by which value judgments may be formulated and justified in the discussion of preference structure discussed in the previous chapter. In short, practical reason can be correct or not *qua* orientation in virtue of the kind of evaluative judgment of goodness it issues. But the person's practical reason may be equally right or wrong in its instrumental design—in indicating that a certain pattern of action is in conformity with the orientation that the agent has chosen. Her practical reason is right under the aspect of design if it identifies the correct action, or series of action, that are necessary to serve its orientation.

Before proceeding it is important to address a natural worry that a proposal such as this one threatens the unity of the faculty of reason since one and the same faculty is responsible for distinct mental activities of both the evaluative and instrumental reasoning sorts.[272] To answer this objection, it is crucial to bear in mind that even those who gravitate towards a Humean reading acknowledge this duality of practical reason: to wit, Moss accepts that "intellect contributes to action by being both instrumental and evaluative."[273] What makes her view distinctive is that she thinks "all evaluative thoughts derive their content from evaluative *phantasia*, and thus ultimately from evaluative perception" which are themselves pleasurable or painful.[274] As I have argued in chapter one, this pleasure-centered view of evaluative *phantasia* and the identification of this faculty as one which underwrites practical thought do not seem to fit

[272] I thank Aidan Gray for a helpful discussion on this point.
[273] *Aristotle on the Apparent Goo*d, 11
[274] *Aristotle on the Apparent Goo*d, 66.

with Aristotle's analysis of deliberation, the paradigmatic exercise of practical thought.[275] Furthermore, while Aristotle thinks that pleasure improves the consideration of an option all else being equal,[276] pleasure surely does not dominate his thinking about how options are to be evaluated and ranked in the discussion of preference in *Topics* III. For pleasure is featured in a single rule of inference among over sixty rules articulated in that text.

Returning now to the reply to objection at issue, Aristotle certainty thinks that practical thought is capable of yielding evaluative cognitions, as widely accepted by specialists[277] and confirmed by the following passages.

> τοῦτο [τὸ ὀρεκτόν] γὰρ κινεῖ οὐ κινούμενον, τῷ νοηθῆναι ἢ φαντασθῆναι. (*DA* III.10, 433b12)
>
> For it [the object of desire] moves, remaining unmoved, by being thought or by being presented through *phantasia.*
>
> ὁρῶμεν δὲ τὰ κινοῦντα τὸ ζῷον διάνοιαν καὶ φαντασίαν καὶ προαίρεσιν καὶ βούλησιν καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν. ταῦτα δὲ πάντα ἀνάγεται εἰς νοῦν καὶ ὄρεξιν…τῆς μὲν ἐσχάτης αἰτίας τοῦ κινεῖσθαι ὀρέξεως οὔσης, ταύτης δὲ γινομένης ἢ δι' αἰσθήσεως ἢ διὰ φαντασίας καὶ νοήσεως. (*MA* 6, 700b17-701a701a36)

[275] See chapter 1.3. There is perhaps a middle ground position, according to which it would take *intellectual* work in order to arrive at a state where one can recognize and appreciate the pleasurable or painful feelings attached to different options. But after one completes this intellectual labor, deliberation would consist in something along the line that Moss suggest, where one has a representative valance (the pleasure or pain attached to the options) and one chooses on the basis of that valance. The intellectual work would, on this view, be a prerequisite for appreciating the relevant features of the representations. But once one appreciates them, one has a pleasurable feeling when thinking about some options and unpleasurable feelings about others. I suspect that something like this process is what the agent does when she confronts a familiar decision problem—one in which she already carried out the necessary intellectual tasks that Aristotle conceives as components of deliberation, viz., causal analysis and weighing the options. She may associate the better option, after considering the reason(s) counting in favor of such an option, with pleasure and takes pleasure in thinking about such an option. And she may select the option with the positive valence on this basis. However, this position assumes that the unit by which one measures the options is pleasure, which Aristotle does not. As I understand Moss, she would not contest this point but would take issue with the claim that the work of recognizing and appreciating the pleasurable or painful feelings attached to different options is of an intellectual sort. This is because she thinks it is through *phantasia*'s role in the process of practical induction that we find something as good, writing, "in being habituated into a certain kind of activity we come to take pleasure in it: to perceive it as good. These perceptions are preserved and generalized through *phantasia*, yielding a general appearance – something analogous to an "experience" – of that kind of activity as good" (*Aristotle on the Apparent Good*, 201).

[276] See R18 of chapter 2's appendix.

[277] For variations on it in recent literature, see S. Hudson, "Reason and Motivation in Aristotle," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 11 (1981): 111–35; Charles, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Action*, 89; Richardson, "Desire and the Good in *De Anima;*" Cynthia Freeland, "Aristotle on Perception, Appetition, and Self-Motion," in Self-Motion edited by M.L. Gill and J.G. Lennox (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 35–63; Segvić, "Deliberation and Choice in Aristotle;" Destrée, "Aristotle on the Causes of Akrasia."

> We see that the things that move the animal are thinking and *phantasia* and decision and wish and appetite. But all these reduce to intellect and desire…The proximate cause of the movement is desire, and this comes to be through perception or through *phantasia* and thought.

In the *DA* III.10 text, the object of desire is said to be an unmoved mover because *nous* or *phantasia* represents it as something desirable. If *nous* is capable of presenting something as desirable, then it must be the kind of evaluative faculty capable of issuing value judgments. Similarly, in the *MA* 6 passage, Aristotle identifies the proximate cause of action with desire and reiterates the claim that desire moves through perception, *phantasia*, and thought. Desire initiates movement because the object of desire is something that the agent finds worthy of doing "something else for its sake" (700b27). As he does in the *DA* III.10 passage, Aristotle is explicit on the point that the agent finds the object of desire as something to-be-gone, i.e., something worthy of being an end of her action through *nous*, among other faculties.

It is also worth noting that Aristotle does not require that there be a one-to-one correspondence between a cognitive faculty and its function. *Phantasia*, too, for example, is responsible for a host of mental activities, including the generation of representation (*DA* III.3, 428aa1–2) as well as memory and recollection (*Mem*. I, 450a22-25). The empirical research appears to bear Aristotle out on this point insofar as one and the same part of the brain, the hippocampus, is responsible for imagination and memory reconstruction.[278] There is not textual, philosophical, or empirical reason to suppose that multiple functions cannot fall under the purview of practical reason.[279]

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[278] See, for example, the recent study by Kirwan et al. which confirms, at a broad anatomical level, that both memory and future imagination relies on similar regions of the hippocampus. C.B Kirwan, S.R Ashby, and M.I Nash, "Remembering and Imagining Differentially Engage the Hippocampus: A Multivariate fMRI Investigation," *Cognitive Neuroscience* 5 (2014):1-9. I am grateful for Marya Schechtman for pointing out this connection to the empirical data.

[279] If readers need further convincing, then they are encouraged to consider also Aristotle's division of reason into its theoretical and practical applications. See Introduction.

If practical reason can be both evaluative and instrumental in the way suggested, then the distinction Aristotle draws between having a correct conception of one's goal and being correct about the things toward the goal can be maintained by the intellectualist. Indeed, both the design and orientation of one's practical reasoning can be true, both can be false, or either one can be true. To my mind, any episode of practical reasoning can be assessed in both or either one of these ways. Aristotle, too, seems to agree. Presumably, as we saw in the *EN* VI.12, 1144a23-9 passage above, he is willing to grant that the clever person's practical reasoning is correct with respect to its design, while denying that its orientation is correct due to its erroneous selection of ends.

3.2. The Helmsman of the Soul: on the Power of Practical Reason

The claim I've been establishing thus far is that practical reason participates, not only in the instrumental design, but also in the orientation, or formulation, of the goals of human action. But this claim is perhaps hollow without a theory of how, for Aristotle, practical reason actually accomplishes this task. I want to suggest that practical reason does this by furnishing the agent with something like a map of the landscape of value—a map whose contents are derived from a formal understanding of what kind of being a human is and what is suitable, is good for, and is valuable to such a being. By way of developing this view, I am also responding to the challenge that "Aristotle's claim is that while we can reason about how to live or what to care about, given a set of ultimate values, those ultimate values are fixed and determined by our upbringings – that is, by the affective, evaluative dispositions that our upbringings produce: our characters."[280] To response to this criticism, I want to begin with Aristotle's understanding of *phronēsis* as that excellence which furnishes the agent with a correct conception of *eudaimonia*.

[280] Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good,* 197.

We have seen that, for Aristotle, being correct about the goal is a state requiring the excellence of practical rationality (*EN* VI.12, 1144a23-9). Since the excellence of a thing is relative to that thing's peculiar function (*EN* I.7, 1098a26-27; VI.2, 1139a17), the excellence of practical rationality would seem to be the states in virtue of which we acquire practical truths (*alētheia praktikē*, *EN* VI.2, 1139a26).[281] These practical truths constitute the right conception of what actions ought to be performed or would be desirable to perform. Aristotle's preferred methodology is to study these cognitive states from the inside out by examining the person said to possess the excellence of practical rationality.[282] This person, we are told in the following passages, can deliberate well about what is good and expedient not only at the local level (e.g., about what sorts of things are conducive to wealth or reputation), but globally about what sorts of things promote the good life.

> δοκεῖ δὴ φρονίμου εἶναι τὸ δύνασθαι καλῶς βουλεύσασθαι περὶ τὰ αὑτῷ ἀγαθὰ καὶ συμφέροντα, οὐ κατὰ μέρος, οἷον ποῖα πρὸς ὑγίειαν, πρὸς ἰσχύν, ἀλλὰ ποῖα πρὸς τὸ εὖ ζῆν ὅλως. (*EN* VI.5, 1140a25-28)
>
> It seems that the *phronimos* can deliberate well about what is good and advantageous for himself — not with an eye to a single part of the good life, e.g., what is good for his health or strength — but what is conducive to the good life wholly.
>
> φρόνησις δ' ἐστὶν ἀρετὴ διανοίας καθ' ἣν εὖ βουλεύεσθαι δύνανται περὶ ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν τῶν εἰρημένων εἰς εὐδαιμονίαν. (*Rhet.* I.9, 1366b20-22)
>
> Phronēsis is that virtue of thought that enables people to deliberate well concerning the goods and evils related to happiness that has been previously mentioned.

If *phronēsis* is the excellence of the rational part of the soul, and if what it does is enable the *phronimos* to acquire a correct conception of how to live well without qualification, then

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[281] See n. 27

[282] John McDowell labels this approach 'inside out' in this in his discussion of Aristotle's methodology in ethical inquiries. For Aristotle, the question "How should one live?" is necessarily approached via a morally virtuous agent. McDowell, "Virtue and Reason" *The Monist* 62, no. 3 (Jul 01, 1979): 331.

practical reason must participate in the determination of what goals the agents ought to have in a way that is reflective of this conception of living well.

Aristotle's observation in the passages above in which he claims that *phronēsis* produces a conception of *eudaimonia* which binds the multitude of the agent's goals together in a way that is reflective of a correct conception of how to live well has, in my view, not been sufficiently explored in the literature.[283] What I'd like to do now is to give this interpretation of practical reason in Aristotle a more thorough and sustained defense than it has hitherto received by showing why it must be practical reason, rather a non-rational faculty, that furnishes the agent with a conception of what a good human life consists in. My argument, briefly, will be that such a conception presupposes knowledge of what kind of being a human is and what is required if such a being is to live well. This knowledge falls under the domain of reason, rather than virtue.

To forestall potential worries, let me begin by clarifying what I am not claiming about the participation of reason in shaping and arranging a life. It might be thought that, on my account, practical rationality is analogous to something like the maximizing rationality conception one finds in the contemporary literature. For it seems as if what practical reason is doing on my view is determining which course of action would optimally advance the agent's complete set of ends, rather than any arbitrarily chosen end. This view is widely accepted in the literature of rational choice theory: the rational action for a given agent to take is the one whose subjective expected utility—reflecting both the utility of possible outcomes from that agent's point of view and her beliefs about the probability of those outcomes—is the highest. But this maximizing notion still insufficiently captures the role that reason plays in the formation of the agent's conception of

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[283] As far as I'm aware, Martha Nussbaum hints at such a view, writing (emphasis mine):

> Eudaimonia is good activity according to, *shaped by, the work of reason*, in which the shared elements are not excluded, but included in a way infused by and organized by practical reason. In the rest of the work, especially in Book vi, Aristotle shows us *how practical reason shapes and arranges a life* that includes both contemplative and ethical elements. (*The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, 376)

eudaimonia since practical reason does more than maximizing the agent's subjective expected utility in light of that agent's complete set of ends. What it does crucially is identify a structure that can explain how those goals are to be organized and ordered. Moreover, these various goals are not merely linked by formal, sequential relations, e.g., first, I pursue *A*, next, I accomplish *B*, and then I attend to *C*, on my way to *D*. Rather, the kind of conception of *eudaimonia* furnished by practical reason requires conceiving of one's life with reference to an extended period of time rather than consisting in merely a succession-of separate moments. Such a unified and integrated conception requires that the agent has a grasp of the kind of being that she is and what is required if such a creature is to live well.

The evidence I will concentrate on is a well-known passage containing Aristotle's famous hierarchy of ends. In the opening book of *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle tells us that our goals are to be organized and ordered according to an ordered ranking since some ends are more choice-worthy, or preferable (*hairetōtero*n), than others. Aristotle thinks, "the ends of the architectonic craft are things more to be desired than the ends of the arts subordinate to them" (δὲ τὰ τῶν ἀρχιτεκτονικῶν τέλη πάντων ἐστὶν αἱρετώτερα τῶν ὑπ' αὐτά, *EN* I.1, 1095a14-5). At the end of the passage, he identifies the highest art with politics (*politikē*) and its end with the human good (*tanthrōpinon agathon*), which is *eudaimonia* (*EN* I.1, 1094a27-1094b7).

To better understand Aristotle's thesis about the primacy of the end of the architectonic craft, we need to go outside of his ethics, to a passage in *Physics* II.2, which goes as follows:

> δύο δὲ αἱ ἄρχουσαι τῆς ὕλης καὶ γνωρίζουσαι τέχναι, ἥ τε χρωμένη καὶ τῆς ποιητικῆς ἡ ἀρχιτεκτονική. διὸ καὶ ἡ χρωμένη ἀρχιτεκτονική πως, διαφέρει δὲ ᾗ ἡ μὲν τοῦ εἴδους γνωριστική, ἡ ἀρχιτεκτονική, ἡ δὲ ὡς ποιητική, τῆς ὕλης· ὁ μὲν γὰρ κυβερνήτης ποῖόν τι τὸ εἶδος τοῦ πηδαλίου γνωρίζει καὶ ἐπιτάττει, ὁ δ' ἐκ ποίου ξύλου καὶ ποίων κινήσεων ἔσται. ἐν μὲν οὖν τοῖς κατὰ τέχνην ἡμεῖς ποιοῦμεν τὴν ὕλην τοῦ ἔργου ἕνεκα, ἐν δὲ τοῖς φυσικοῖς ὑπάρχει οὖσα. Ἔτι τῶν πρός τι ἡ ὕλη· ἄλλῳ γὰρ εἴδει ἄλλη ὕλη. (194a36–b7)

> There are two kinds of crafts, then, to which matter is subordinate and which have knowledge of it: one makes use of matter and the other directs its making. The one which makes use of matter is in a way directive as well, but the difference is that it involves knowing about the form, while the other, since it is concerned with the making, has knowledge [only] of the matter.

The two kinds of crafts Aristotle discusses in this passage are the architectonic craft (*architektonikē*) and the productive craft (*poiētikē*); both involving knowledge. In his usual manner, Aristotle distinguishes the two by specifying the body of knowledge that each ranges over. The architectonic craftsperson possesses knowledge of both the form, or the account (*eidos*) and matter (*hulē*), whereas a practitioner of any productive craft only grasps the matter. Both are also directive. The ends of the productive crafts themselves are directive only in the sense of being for-the-sake of something; they thus direct how the matter can acquire the qualities necessary for producing something appropriate for this purpose. [284] The ends of the architectonic crafts alone are informed by formal considerations as opposed to mere material and procedural considerations. He gives the example of a helmsman and a manufacturer of rudder. The helmsman is an architectonic craftsperson who has a formal account of what a rudder is; he knows both the fact (*to hoti*), say, that such type of wood is suitable material for the rudder and the why (*di hoti*), say, why this type of wood rather than that type of wood is suitable. The manufacturer, however, simply knows that this type of wood is suitable for the form that the helmsman provides.

Aristotle consistently draws this distinction between knowing the fact that and the causal explanation of that fact on multiple occasions, for instance, in the following passages.

> Τὸ δ’ ὅτι διαφέρει καὶ τὸ διότι ἐπίστασθαι, πρῶτον μὲν ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ ἐπιστήμῃ, καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ διχῶς. (*APo*. I.13, 78a22-28)

[284] It has been argued that they are also directive in a further sense: the executing side of the craft, i.e., the actual manual labor needed to produce its product (P. Pellegrin, *Aristote, Physique* (Paris: Flammarion, 2000), 1–26).

Knowing the fact that and the reason why differ, first in the same science, and in that [sense] in two ways.

Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον εἴρηται νῦν ὡς ἐν τύπῳ, γεύματος χάριν περὶ ὅσων καὶ ὅσα θεωρητέον· δι'ἀκριβείας δ' ὕστερον ἐροῦμεν, ἵνα πρῶτον τὰς ὑπαρχούσας διαφορὰς καὶ τὰ συμβεβηκότα πᾶσι λαμβάνωμεν. Μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο τὰς αἰτίας τούτων πειρατέον εὑρεῖν. Οὕτω γὰρ κατὰ φύσιν ἐστὶ ποιεῖσθαι τὴν μέθοδον, ὑπαρχούσης τῆς ἱστορίας τῆς περὶ ἕκαστον· περὶ ὧν τε γὰρ καὶ ἐξ ὧν εἶναι δεῖ τὴν ἀπόδειξιν, ἐκ τούτων γίνεται φανερόν. (*HA* 1.6, 491a7-13)[285]

These preceding facts, then, have been put forward thus in a general way, as a kind of foretaste of the number of subjects and of the properties that we have to consider in order that we may first get a clear notion of their actual differences and common properties. By and by we shall discuss these matters with greater accuracy. After this we shall pass on to the discussion of causes. For to do this when the investigation of the details is complete is the natural method; for from them the subjects and the premises of our proof become clear.

It is, then, in virtue of having knowledge of the form, the account (*eidos*) of the rudder, that the architectonic craftsperson, the helmsman, is in a position to direct the making of a rudder since, in addition to the facts, he has the causal explanation of why a rudder is to be so constituted and arranged.

This conclusion is hardly surprising since, on Aristotle's view, knowing what is good or has value for *X,* for any value of *X,* requires that we have an account of what *X* is.[286] We get a confirmation for this view both in Aristotle's recommendation of the study of the soul to the student of politics, which goes as follows:

περὶ ἀρετῆς δὲ ἐπισκεπτέον ἀνθρωπίνης δῆλον ὅτι· καὶ γὰρ τἀγαθὸν ἀνθρώπινον ἐζητοῦμεν καὶ τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν ἀνθρωπίνην. ἀρετὴν δὲ λέγομεν ἀνθρωπίνην οὐ τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀλλὰ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς· καὶ τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν δὲ ψυχῆς ἐνέργειαν λέγομεν. εἰ δὲ ταῦθ' οὕτως ἔχει, δῆλον ὅτι δεῖ τὸν πολιτικὸν εἰδέναι πως τὰ περὶ ψυχῆς, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸν ὀφθαλμοὺς θεραπεύσοντα καὶ πᾶν [τὸ] σῶμα . . .θεωρητέον δὴ καὶ τῷ πολιτικῷ περὶ ψυχῆς. (*EN* I.13, 1102a13-23)

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[285] Greek of P. Louis; D.M. Balme's translation.

[286] Consider also the function argument discussed in §2. This doctrine is also hardly unprecedented. A good example is in Plato's *Apology* 25b-c, where Socrates tells us that only the horse trainers — those with the relevant knowledge of horses — can benefit them, whereas the majority of people would harm them.

> Now the virtue that we have to consider is clearly human virtue. For the good or happiness which we set out to seek is human good and human happiness. But we say that human virtue is, not virtue of the body, but of the soul. And we also say that *eudaimonia* is an activity of the soul. Now if this is the case, then the politician clearly must somehow know about the soul, just as the person who is to heal the eye (or some other parts of the body) must know their anatomy…The student of politics must study the soul.

Aristotle's reasoning goes as follows:

1. Politics has as its end the human good.
2. The human good turns out to be *eudaimonia*.
3. *Eudaimonia* is an activity of the soul.
4. Knowing what is good for the soul requires that we have an account of what the soul is.
5. So, the student of politics must have knowledge of the soul.

I want to suggest that practical reason is something akin to the architectonic craftsperson, or the helmsman, that Aristotle speaks about in the *Physics* II.2 passage insofar as this faculty alone can have knowledge of the form or account of the kind of being a human is. This account is what allows practical reason to ascertain the kind of orientation and design a flourishing human life has and, moreover, to give explanations and justifications of why such an orientation and design is preferable over the alternatives. This is what I mean when I make the claim that *phronēsis* furnishes the agent with a map of the landscape of value. And it does this by grasping the form—a general conception of how a human should live and one that consists of an organized collection of goals, dispositions, and values rather than an unstructured amalgamation of dispositions to act on this rather than that occasion, or for the sake of this rather than that value.

If we follow this interpretation, then there is a very straightforward explanation of Aristotle's claim that the *phronimos*, whom he identifies with Pericles (*EN* VI.5, 1140b5), is said to be able to deliberate well about the good life wholly (*EN* VI.5, 1140a25-28). It is due, at least in part, to the fact that Pericles has the knowledge of what form a human life should have: that is to say what ends, if they were attained, would make for a good human life, and what values and concerns are appropriate for a human, as the kind of being that she is. I want to argue further that this conception of living well involves a ranking of values, or the ability to rank such values such that the agent can identify and explain why one value is operative in a given situation as opposed to another.[287] But the fact that there is some ranking of concerns involved in a scenario where many different values may impinge does not imply that there is just one single and unalterable ranking of concerns built into the conception of *eudaimonia* possessed by the person with the excellence of practical rationality. On the basis of Aristotle's view that a defining feature of humans is their social nature (*Pol* I.2, 1253a3), one might think, for one, that each person's ranking of values is partially shaped by the range of social contexts and relationships operative in her life.

The fact that such a ranking of concerns is highly sensitive to the particular salient facts at issue is confirmed, for instance, by Aristotle's discussion of preference in *Topics* III. There, he advises us to "orient the argument in those directions which will prove useful" and claims that what is better is determined by the science that is "is proper to the domain at issue" (116a20-22).

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[287] Such a proposal may appear dubious, if one follows McDowell and allies in thinking that Aristotle's ethical theory is thought not to be codifiable in light of Aristotle's cautionary note that conclusions of ethical investigations are true only for the most part (*EN* I.3, 1094b19-23). He argues that an uncodifiable view of how to live issues in concerns which cannot be ranked. Rather, one's uncodifiable view of how to live interacts with particular knowledge so that one concern or fact rather than another is seen as salient (McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," 344). A neighboring view is expressed by Nussbaum, who maintains that the cognitive component of ethical virtue is not knowledge of universals or rules, but perception of particulars—recognition of the salient features of complex, concrete situations (*Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 54–105). Views such as these have been challenged, for instance, by Achtenberg. See her *Cognition of Value in Aristotle's Ethics: Promise of Enrichment, Threat of Destruction,* chapter one.

This statement leaves open the possibility, if not outright implies, that what particular value or concern is appropriate in one situation may not be consistent across the board. As I argued in chapter one, a ranking can be maintained without violating Aristotle's doctrine that ethical judgments are true only for the most part. This is because the ranking need not be absolute, but simply relative to the salient facts at issue. There, I have attributed to Aristotle something like a Weak-Commensurability thesis that, for each deliberation, there is one common unit of measurement the agent can use to determine which course of action to pursue. But this view does not imply the stronger, and quite different, position that the one unit must be the same in every case. It is ultimately due to the complex sensitivity arising from experience that will make the relevant concern and value salient to the *phronimos*. This is precisely why Aristotle insists, as discussed in chapter one, that no *phronimos* is found among young people.[288]

Still, the fact that there is a ranking of concern involved where many different values may impinge is supported by Aristotle's own recommendation of the life of contemplation in his ethics. Aristotle describes contemplation as follows:

> δόξαι τ' ἂν αὐτὴ μόνη δι' αὑτὴν ἀγαπᾶσθαι· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀπ' αὐτῆς γίνεται παρὰ τὸ θεωρῆσαι, ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν πρακτικῶν ἢ πλεῖον ἢ ἔλαττον περιποιούμεθα παρὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν. δοκεῖ τε ἡ εὐδαιμονία ἐν τῇ σχολῇ εἶναι· ἀσχολούμεθα γὰρ ἵνα σχολάζωεν, καὶ πολεμοῦμεν ἵν' εἰρήνην ἄγωμεν. τῶν μὲν οὖν πρακτικῶν ἀρετῶν ἐν τοῖς πολιτικοῖς ἢ ἐν τοῖς πολεμικοῖς ἡ ἐνέργεια, αἱ δὲ περὶ ταῦτα πράξεις δοκοῦσιν ἄσχολοι εἶναι. (*EN* X.7, 1177b1-8)
>
> This activity alone would seem to be loved for its own sake; for nothing comes to be from it but the contemplating, while from practical activities we gain more or less beside the action. *Eudaimonia* is thought to depend on leisure; for we are busy so that we may have leisure and engage in war so that we may live in peace. Now the activity of the practical virtues is exhibited in political or military affairs, but the actions concerned with these seem to be unleisurely.

[288] See chapter 1.5.3.

In this passage, Aristotle gives us a rationale to prefer contemplative activity for two reasons: (1) it is performed for its own sake and (2) is more leisurely, presumably also more pleasurable, than practical ones. In a later passage, he is careful to specify further that this activity corresponds to a capacity (*nous*) that is not, properly speaking, human, but divine (*EN* X.7, 1177b26-30). In Aristotle's theory of preference, as we saw in the previous chapter, *A* is generally preferred over *B* if any of the following is true: (1) *A* is desired for its own sake while *B* for the sake of something else (*Top*. III.1, 116a29-30); (2) *A* is accompanied by pleasure, all things being equal (*Top*. III.2, 117a23-24); finally (3) *A* belongs to what is better and more valuable (*Top*. III.1,116b12-13). These three features—being desired for its own sake, accompanied by pleasure, and belonging to something superior—are the relevant facts that the agent with the right kind of conception of how to live would be sensitive to and ranks more highly over the alternatives.

I hope that the metaphor of a map of the landscape of value has, thorough the course of this discussion, become less metaphorical. In summary, what I am calling a map of the landscape of value is the complete and veridical conception of *eudaimonia* that can both inform and justify our value judgments. Equipped with such an account of human *eudaimonia,* agents can navigate the value landscape by using a ranking of values in a scenario where many different values may impinge. Of course, as we saw, perceptive sensitivity and experience also play key roles in enabling the *phronimos* to detect the relevant concerns at issue in order to use the appropriate, context-sensitive ranking of concerns. Neither sensitivity nor experience alone, however, can effectively guide our decision making without an understanding of the good relative to the kind of being a human is. Even if one grants this conclusion, one may reasonably wonder whether this account of the role of reason in the orientation, or formulation, of the goals of human action

makes good sense of Aristotle's plain assertion that virtue makes the goal right? I want to conclude this chapter by gesturing at an account of what the role of virtue would be on the view in consideration.

4. "By the Rudders of Pleasure and Pain": Virtue Makes the Goal Right, Again

What does Aristotle mean when he says that virtue makes the goal right? In the remainder of this chapter, I sketch an answer to this question of enormous importance, noting but sidestepping the interpretative debates that are orthogonal to the chapter's central claims. The answer I offer is grounded on the view that Aristotle does not have a dispassionate view of human psychology. What I mean is that Aristotle does not believe that a person, especially a virtuous one, ought to be governed by reason in a dispassionate and callous manner. For Aristotle, to live well, we must not only reason correctly, but desire correctly, and indeed feel correctly. He thinks that a virtuous person must experience the right kind of emotions and desires along with having the right cognitive state (*EN* II.4.1105a 27-33). If this is right, then reason will not compel the non-rational part to obey it by brute force, but the latter must be persuaded.

How, then, will the non-rational part of the soul be persuaded by the rational part to feel and desire correctly? There are two options. Either the non-rational part will be persuaded by a rational means—by arguments and demonstrations—or by some other means.[289] If the appetitive part is persuaded by arguments and demonstrations, then it turns out to be capable of reasoning

[289] For the former view, see Cooper, "Some Remarks on Aristotle's Moral Psychology," *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 27 (1988): 25–42. According to Cooper, the non-rational part can listen to and be persuaded by reason in virtue of having recourse to the same conceptual framework which reason has. Moreover, he also holds that the persuasion of the non-rational part implies that it does not blindly follow the commands of reason, which implies that it can actually be brought to understand the reasons in favor of the recommended course of action. For the latter, see Gösta Grönross, "Listening to Reason in Aristotle's Moral Psychology," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 32 (2007): 251–272. He argues that the "following" relation that Aristotle is concerned with in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.13 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 rather than through argumentation. Lorenz holds a similar position in regard to both his accounts of Plato and of Aristotle. See *The Brute Within: Appetitive Desire in Plato and Aristotle*, 186–94.

after all. The alogical part, it would seem, is already imbued with rationality, appetitive half of the soul. I do not think that this is a feature of Aristotle's bipartite soul.[290] This is how he explains the reason-responsiveness of the nonrational part at the end of *Nicomachean Ethics* I:

> φαίνεται δὴ καὶ τὸ ἄλογον διττόν. τὸ μὲν γὰρ φυτικὸν οὐδαμῶς κοινωνεῖ λόγου, τὸ δ'ἐπιθυμητικὸν καὶ ὅλως ὀρεκτικὸν μετέχει πως, ᾗ κατήκοόν ἐστιν αὐτοῦ καὶ πειθαρχικόν· οὕτω δὴ καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τῶν φίλων φαμὲν ἔχειν λόγον, καὶ οὐχ ὥσπερ τῶν μαθηματικῶν. (I.13, 1102b33-1103a4)

> The nonrational element also appears to be two-fold. For the vegetative element in no way shares in reason, but the appetitive and in general the desiring element in a sense shares in it, in so far as it listens to and obeys it; this is the sense in which we speak of paying heed to one's father or one' friends, not that in which we speak of the 'rational' in mathematics.

Aristotle's example is instructive: He compares the reason-responsiveness of the alogical half to that of a child, not of the mathematician. Children are not required to understand sophisticated *logos* in the form of demonstrations in order to obey their parents, but mathematicians will need to be able to follow, if not also construct, such demonstrations. This suggestion does not imply that children cannot recognized at least some considerations offered by their parents, but only that the kind of considerations they will respond to cannot be identical in kind to the one exchanged among adults with fully developed cognitive faculties. Another possibility is that children simply accept a command of their parents on mere authority without knowing their parents' considerations in favor of it.[291] At any rate, a qualified responsiveness to reason makes good sense of why Aristotle restricts the kind of persuasion at issue with the qualifier "in a sense" (*pōs*) in the passage under consideration.

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[290] Grönross makes a similar point, writing, "The problem with this suggestion is that the distinction between the two ways of having reason is blurred. For what are we to make of the point that only the rational part possesses reason by itself, if the non-rational part understands not only the commands of reason but also the considerations in favour of them?" ("Listening to Reason in Aristotle's Moral Psychology," 255). For the same reason, I have qualms with William Fortenbaugh's reliance on the two modes of having reason to explain the (ir)rationality of slaves. Fortenbaugh maintains that slaves lack a deliberative faculty but are nevertheless responsive to reason in so far as they can apprehend the master's reasoning and, as such, are open to reasoned explanation (*logos*) (Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle on Slaves and Women," in his *Aristotle's Practical Side: On his Psychology, Ethics, Politics and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

[291] Grönross, "Listening to Reason in Aristotle's Moral Psychology," 259.

We need, then, to consult Aristotle's teachings on the education of children. Fortunately for us, Aristotle has some valuable tips. He tells us that "in educating the young we steer them by the rudders of pleasure and pain" (παιδεύουσι τοὺς νέους οἰακίζοντες ἡδονῇ καὶ λύπῃ, *EN* X.1, 1172a20–21). Scholarly opinions diverge with respect to how, exactly, we are to understand Aristotle's recommended method of instruction. On the one hand, the dominant, pleasure-centered reading of this passage has it that learning to be good is similar to learning a sport, such as skiing. As learners continues to practice the sport, they come to recognize the intrinsic value of the activity, and thereby learn to enjoy it for the right reasons. It is precisely by experiencing those pleasures associated with virtuous activities that learners both come to grasp the value of these activities and are motivated to perform them.[292] On the other hand, critics of the pleasure-centered view point out that it reverses the causal direction between taking pleasure in virtuous

[292] This view originates from Burnyeat in his seminal article, "Aristotle on Learning to be Good," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* edited by A. O. Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 69-92. Its followers include Annas, "Aristotle on Pleasure and Goodness" also in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, 285–99; Engberg-Pedersen, *Aristotle's Theory of Moral Insight*; Nancy Sherman, *The Fabric of Character* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Tuozzo, "Conceptualized and Unconceptualized Desire in Aristotle" *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 32 (1994): 525–49; Taylor, *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics, Books II–IV* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Weinman, *Pleasure in Aristotle's Ethics* (London: Continuum, 2007); (Weinman 2007) Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good* and "Aristotle's Non-trivial, Non-insane View that We Always Desire Things Under the Guise of the Good" in *Desire and the Good* edited by S. Tenenbaum (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 65–81. Moss holds, "The claim is that on Aristotle's view, perceptual pleasure forms the basis for our thoughts about goodness. Just as ordinary perception is at the basis of all theoretical cognition, so practical perception, i.e., pleasurable or painful perception, is at the basis of all practical cognition, i.e. finding good" ("Aristotle's Non-trivial, Non-insane View that We Always Desire Things Under the Guise of the Good", 76).

activities and grasping and valuing their goodness[293] and that it ignores politics, laws, conventions, and external incentives that learners may have to make moral progress.[294]

Setting these disagreements aside, it is nonetheless widely agreed that the goal of moral education for Aristotle is to instill proper pleasures in virtuous action. Indeed, Aristotle plainly tells us that, since virtue has to do with pleasure and pain, "it is necessary to be brought up straight from childhood, as Plato says, to enjoy and be pained by the things one should" (τὴν ἡδονὴν τὰ φαῦλα πράττομεν, διὰ δὲ τὴν λύπην τῶν καλῶν ἀπεχόμεθα. διὸ δεῖ ἦχθαί πως εὐθὺς ἐκ νέων, ὡς ὁ Πλάτων φησίν, *EN* II.3 1104b8-13). This is the simple insight that I want to transport to our reading of how it is that the nonrational part of the soul is to be persuaded. It, too, will be "persuaded" by means of pleasure and pain—especially if we are to take Aristotle at his word that the reason-responsiveness of the alogical half of the soul is like that of children. In an ideal moral agent, the non-rational element of the soul would have been successfully persuaded insofar as it finds pleasure in correct activities—the ones ascertained by reason—presumably since it has become familiar with these and has learned to love them from a correct upbringing.[295]

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[293] Broadie argues, "Burnyeat must assume that there is a special pleasure in doing what one takes to be just; for the point is hardly that we learn to pay our debts spontaneously by coming to enjoy, through doing it, the handing over of banknotes, etc. But on that assumption the agent's pleasure presupposes, hence cannot be thought to explain, the love of just dealing that is characteristic of the virtue" (*Ethics with* Aristotle, 122 n.46). Cooper criticizes in Burnyeat's account the ground that "Aristotle says that a young person must become habituated to take pleasure not just in the doing of just actions (and others required by the virtues) but in these as "noble"—to take pleasure in these actions for the order, symmetry, and determinateness that is found in them, therefore. How are they to come to do that? Evidently, they must first become aware of and experience the nobility and fineness of the actions required by the virtues, before discovering a pleasure in that nobility (and their experience of it)" ("Reason, Moral Virtue, and Moral Value" in his *Reason and Emotion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 253–80, 277). H.J. Curzer objects to Burnyeat's account for having the order of the stages reversed. He argues rather that learners first come to desire virtuous acts by internalizing punishments, then become able to recognize virtuous acts through shame (*aidos*). Finally, "prompted by aidos the generous-minded gradually come to choose, not just the acts they think are virtuous, but the acts that really are virtuous" (H. D. Curzer, "Aristotle's Painful Path to Virtue" *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40 (2002): 141-162 and *Aristotle and the Virtues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)).
[294] Zena Hitz, "Aristotle on Law and Moral Education," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 42 (2012): 263-306.
[295] I do not think that the broad account in articulation here requires presupposes either the pleasure-center view or its alternative. Although I tend to agree with critics Burnyeat, I also think that some of them take the criticism too far. My own view is that pleasure must play a role in order to get the learners motivated and sustaining their progress by confirming when the virtuous activities are performed correctly, but pleasure cannot be the reason for which such activities are performed. I am in broad agreement with the view recently defended by Marta Jimenez, "Aristotle on 'Steering the Young by Pleasure and Pain'" *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2015): 137-164.

We are now in a position to give an answer to the question regarding the participation of virtue in action. When Aristotle claims that "virtue makes the goal right" what he means is, not that virtue supplies the contents of the goal, but that it ensures that the nonrational part of the soul will be persuaded by reason to find the goal right, viz., as something pleasant. In making this claim, I am in general agreement with those commentators who interpret "making the goal right" as "preserving the goal." Virtue preserves the goal by ensuring that the goal ascertained by the rational part of the soul is also the one that is endorsed by the nonrational part, such that the virtuous person can be wholeheartedly committed to her goal. I also think, however, along with Moss, that virtue's contribution is more significant than the traditional intellectualist reading allows. For virtue also "makes the goal right" by confirming that the agent is acting correctly in the adaptation of the goal so formulated and identified by reason using the currency of pleasure. In other words, virtue makes it possible for the agent to carry out the actions in fulfillment of her fine goal with pleasure without acting for the sake of pleasure.

Aristotle recognizes that pleasure is ethically significant in its relation to activity, character, and conceptions of what is choice worthy. To feel pleasure and pain rightly or wrongly has no small effect on our actions. Rather, pleasures are said to encourage the performance of the activity that they are proper to and to make the performance more precise, more enduring, and overall better in the following passage.

> συναύξει γὰρ τὴν ἐνέργειαν ἡ οἰκεία ἡδονή. μᾶλλον γὰρ ἕκαστα κρίνουσι καὶ ἐξακριβοῦσινοί μεθ' ἡδονῆς ἐνεργοῦντες, οἷον γεωμετρικοὶ γίνονται οἱ χαίροντες τῷ γεωμετρεῖν, καὶ κατανοοῦσιν ἕκαστα μᾶλλον, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ οἱ φιλόμουσοι καὶ φιλοικοδόμοι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἕκαστοι ἐπιδιδόασιν εἰς τὸ οἰκεῖον ἔργον χαίροντες αὐτῷ· συναύξουσι δὲ αἱ ἡδοναί, τὰ δὲ συναύξοντα οἰκεῖα· (*EN* X.3, 1175a30–36)

> For an activity is intensified by its proper pleasure. For each class of things is better judged and brought to precision by those who engage in the activity with pleasure; e.g. it is those who enjoy geometrical thinking that become geometers and grasp it better, and, similarly, those who are fond of music or of building, and so on, make progress in their

proper function by enjoying it; and the pleasures intensify the activities, and what intensifies a thing is proper to it.

Aristotle seems to think that performing some activity, *A*, with pleasure leads to a better, more precise understanding of *A*, which then improves the agent's progress in accomplishing the purpose (*ergon*) of *A*. All things being equal, there are reasons to prefer doing the activity with pleasure over doing the same activity without pleasure (Cf. *Top*. III.2, 117a23-24).

The characteristic pleasures of virtuous actions are, however, only reliably accessible to virtuous people, as he makes clear in the following passage.

> ἔστι δὲ καὶ ὁ βίος αὐτῶν καθ' αὑτὸν ἡδύς. τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἥδεσθαι τῶν ψυχικῶν, ἑκάστῳ δ' ἐστὶν ἡδὺ πρὸς ὃ λέγεται φιλοτοιοῦτος. . .τοῖς δὲ φιλοκάλοις ἐστὶν ἡδέα τὰ φύσει ἡδέα· τοιαῦται δ' αἱ κατ' ἀρετὴν πράξεις, ὥστε καὶ τούτοις εἰσὶν ἡδεῖαι καὶ καθ' αὑτάς. οὐδὲν δὴ προσδεῖται τῆς ἡδονῆς ὁ βίος αὐτῶν ὥσπερ περιάπτου τινός, ἀλλ' ἔχει τὴν ἡδονὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ. πρὸς τοῖς εἰρημένοις γὰρ οὐδ' ἐστὶν ἀγαθὸς ὁ μὴ χαίρων ταῖς καλαῖς πράξεσιν·οὔτε γὰρ δίκαιον οὐθεὶς ἂν εἴποι τὸν μὴ χαίροντα τῷ δικαιοπραγεῖν, οὔτ' ἐλευθέριον τὸν μὴ χαίροντα ταῖς ἐλευθερίοις πράξεσιν· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων. εἰ δ' οὕτω, καθ' αὑτὰς ἂν εἶεν αἱ κατ' ἀρετὴν πράξεις ἡδεῖαι. (*EN* I.8,1099a7–21)
>
> Their life is also in itself pleasant. For enjoying pleasure is something that belongs to the soul, and to each person that which he is said to be a lover of is pleasant. . . The lovers of what is fine find pleasant the things that are by nature pleasant; and excellent actions are such, so that these are pleasant for such people as well as in their own nature. Their life, therefore, has no further need of pleasure as a sort of ornament, but has its pleasure in itself. For, besides what we have said, the person who does not rejoice in noble actions is not even good; since no one would call just someone who did not enjoy acting justly, nor would call liberal someone who did not enjoy liberal actions; and similarly, in all other cases. If this is so, virtuous actions must be in themselves pleasant.

On the basis of this passage, it is uncontroversial that Aristotle does not have a supercilious attitude towards pleasure. Rather, he thinks that pleasure is ethically significant and indeed a necessary component of virtue. Thus, when Aristotle says that virtue "makes the goal right," I believe he means that virtue makes the goals ascertained by practical reason pleasing, and the activity of pursuing such goals worthwhile and enjoyable to the one pursuing the goal in

question. Virtue makes the goal right by ensuring that the agent—especially her nonrational half—desires and feels rightly about the goal ascertained by reason. To desire correctly is no trivial matter since, as we saw, the proper function of practical reason is to be concerned not only with truth, but truth in agreement with correct desire.[296] Aristotle makes this point abundantly clear in his claim that *phronēsis* is yoked together with virtue (*EN* X.8, 1178a16-19): both of these elements must be present for the agent to reach an accurate conclusion about what to aim for and a correct desire for the aim specified.

5. Conclusion

The literature on Aristotelian practical reason has lately been dominated by the idea that practical reason is far less sovereign and self-standing than it has previously been thought to be. This chapter offers an alternative to this quasi-Humean interpretation, while addressing the central issues associated with the traditional intellectualist lines of interpretation. Certainty, Aristotle is no Humean given the preeminent role he reserves for practical reason in the formulation of a veridical account of *eudaimonia*—an account which presupposes the kind of knowledge graspable only by the faculty of reason. This account, in turn, informs our value judgments about what constitutes a good human life, irrespective of what our attitudes and desires happen to be. But, as I have also argued, Aristotle does not have a conception of reason that rules in us as an independent force inserted, as it were, from above. We can see Aristotle's nuanced position manifest in his account of *eudaimonia*. For Aristotle, *eudaimonia*, is an activity, or rather a series of activities, of the rational part of the soul in accordance with excellence. Proper pleasures complete these activities and encourage those able to properly perform them by intensifying

[296] For an account that explores the connection between practical truth and pleasure, see Olfert, *Aristotle on Practical Truth*, chapter 5.

those very activities. After all, *eudaimonia* is supposed to be, not only the best, finest, but indeed the most pleasant thing (*EN* I.8, 1099a24-5). This is why Aristotle insists that unless one is virtuous, one cannot find the correct goal of action as something good, pleasurable, and indeed right.

Chapter Four

Aristotle on Women's Deliberation as *Akuron*: A Puzzle about Coming-to-Be

We should complete this study by considering a critical perspective, one that challenges both the value and legitimacy of Aristotle's theory of practical rationality. Suppose one agrees with the major conclusion of this study. One grants that Aristotle makes noteworthy contributions to the study of decision and logic of preference. One accepts his theory of practical reason as an attractive alternative to the squarely instrumental reason model widely endorsed today. Despite these accomplishments, one might reasonably wonder whether Aristotle's theory of rationality is really credible, given that he appeals to reason and rationality to justify the subordination of individuals deemed to be rationally inferior. Indeed, three groups of individuals—women, children, and slaves—are said to have compromised deliberative capacity in a puzzling passage from *Politics* I.1.3. In Aristotle's view, it is precisely due to this deliberative deficiency that these individuals justly merit lower political standings relative to freeborn adult males.

In this chapter, I am to address this difficulty by focusing on the case of women.[297] What we have from Aristotle's *Politics* is the claim that the deliberative faculty (*to bouleutikon*) is

[297] See Introduction §3 for the motivation behind the strategic choice to focus solely on the deliberative ability of women rather than that of natural slaves. See also n. 299 below.

"ineffective" (*akuron*)[298] in women (1260a13).[299] If we are to assess whether or not his political agenda problematizes his theory of rationality, we must first grasp the intended meaning of Aristotle's incendiary claim. To this end, the chapter offers an interpretation of Aristotle's view on women's deliberative capacity by resolving the following pair of questions. First, what does Aristotle have in mind in describing the deliberation of women as *akuron*? Second, why does the deliberative capacity of female children become defective but that of male children does not, given that the deliberative faculty is unperfected (*atelē*) in all children (Pol. I.13, 1260a12-13)?[300]

The answer to the first question about the intended meaning of Aristotle's perplexing claim is subject to an on-going debate in the secondary literature. Some scholars take Aristotle to be making a fundamentally descriptive claim about women's social standing, which prevents

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[298] Throughout this chapter, I translate '*akuron*' as 'ineffectual' rather than the more common translation, 'without authority.' This practice is inspired by Martha Nussbaum's translation of '*akuron*' in *de Motu Animalium* 3, 698b8-10. I discuss this line in context in §4. Briefly, a preference for the translation 'ineffectual' over 'without authority' has to do with the thought that the deficiency of women's deliberative ability is due to disabling external conditions rather than to their own psychic or biological limitations.

[299] In the same breath, Aristotle claims that the deliberative faculty is unperfected (*atelē*) in children and utterly nonexistent in slaves. David Halperin suggests that it is a common practice in antiquity to discuss the conditions of slaves, children, and women in the same breath due to their common subordinate social status relative to freeborn adult males (*One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: and other essays on Greek Love* (New York : Routledge, 1990), 30). At present, I focus exclusively on the deliberative capacity of women for two reasons since the case of individuals Aristotle calls "natural slaves" requires a separate treatment, one that cannot be sufficiently done here. Where thinking about Aristotle's treatment of slaves in connection with their reasoning ability may shed light on the parallel treatment of women, I include such a discussion. For an influential analysis of the relation between slaves' decisional capacity and their political status, see William Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle on Slaves and Women," in his *Aristotle's Practical Side: On his Psychology, Ethics, Politics and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Brill, 2006). In general, Fortenbaugh maintains that slaves lack a deliberative faculty but are nevertheless responsive to reason in so far as they can apprehend the master's reasoning and, as such, are open to reasoned explanation (*logos*). In more recent years, Malcolm Heath takes a different approach by appealing to a set of historical and anthropological facts about non-Greeks, the so-called "natural slaves" (*Pol*. I.2, 1250b5-9), to argue that Aristotle is only denying that slaves are incapable of global deliberation—reasoning in the sphere of action that is guided by an architectonic conception of a good life—while leaving the slave's technical and theoretical reasoning ability unimpaired (Malcolm Heath, "Aristotle on Natural Slavery," *Phronesis* 53, No. 3 (2008), 243-270).

[300] Some may object at the outset that this is not a legitimate question on the ground that when Aristotle talks about the deliberative capacity of the child (*pais*), he is only talking about the male rather the female child. But this reading is forced. At the linguistic level, '*pais*' is a common Greek word for both child and young person—male and female—according to the LSJ. At least from the time of Aeschylus, '*pais*' and certain of its derivatives may also denote a slave of any age. LSJ gives Aesch. *Cho*., 653 as the first instance of '*pais*' for 'slave.' For a study of the etymology of '*pais*' and its usage in antiquity see Mark Golden, "*Pais*, 'Child' and 'Slave'," *L'Antiquité Classique* 54, no. 1(1985): 91–104. As far as the exposition of Aristotle's text is concerned, reading '*pais*' to mean exclusively male children would imply that Aristotle fails to discuss the condition of female children altogether. This implication is highly implausible given that Aristotle sets out to discuss the status and condition of all members of the household and *polis* in the passage at issue but somehow intentionally omits a significant segment of the population, the female children.

them from making authoritative decisions about political and legislative ends (POLITICAL READING).[301] Others interpret Aristotle to be expressing serious skepticism about the female's deliberative ability, especially her ability to perform or be committed to the result of rational deliberation. Aristotle's dismal claim about the female's deliberative ability, they argue, is grounded in beliefs about intrinsic psychological differences between the sexes (PSYCHOLOGICAL READING).[302] Whereas the political reading asserts that women's deliberation is ineffective because they happen to lack political influence, the psychological reading understands women's impaired deliberative capacity as the explanation for their exclusion from the political sphere. How one answers the first question about the intended meaning of the '*akuron*' adjective will have a significant bearing on her answer to the second question about the cause of the disparity. With respect to the 'why' question, the political reading attributes the cause of political inequality to contingent social norms, whereas the disparity is generally rooted in physiological differences on the prevalent strand of the psychological reading.

This chapter defends a modest version of the psychological reading. I argue that the political reading fails to capture the argumentative strategy of the *Politics* I.13 passage at issue. It may be true, as a matter of fact, that women's deliberation is *akuron* relative to the deliberative reason exercised by men, but this interpretation trivializes Aristotle's argumentative strategy in the context of the *Politics* I.13 passage. However, prevalent versions of the psychological reading—those presuming that Aristotle intends to ground his political claims on inalterable

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[301] For prominent versions of the political reading, see Leah Bradshaw, "Political Rule, Prudence and the 'Woman Question' in Aristotle, *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 24, no. 3 (1991): 557-573; Marguerite Deslauriers, "Political Rule over Women in *Politics* I" *Aristotle's Politics: A Critical Guide*, edited by T. Lockwood and T. Samaras, 46-63, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); A. Saxonhouse, "Family, polity & unity: Aristotle on Socrates' community of wives", *Polity* 15 (1982).

[302] Defenders of the psychological reading include Fortenbaugh in "Aristotle on Slaves and Women; Joseph Karbowski, "Aristotle on the Deliberative Abilities of Women" *Apeiron* 47, no. 4 (2014): 435–460; K.M. Nielsen, "The Constitution of the Soul: Aristotle on Lack of Deliberative Authority" *Classical Quarterly* (2015): 572-586; Mariska Leunissen, *From Natural Character to Moral Virtue in Aristotle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), especially chapter 6.

biological differences—fall short concerning the 'why' question. I do not challenge that there are material differences between the two sexes, but my contention is that none of the hitherto identified biological differences can play the explanatory role it is purported that they play. According to the modest, social psychological reading defended, moral education plays the primary role in shaping the development of the female's deliberative capacity, a role that has traditionally been assigned to biological differences between the sexes. This reading, if correct, implies that men and women differ psychologically, but the difference is conditioned and thus alterable.

I should say at the outset that the aim of this chapter is neither to vindicate nor to legitimize Aristotle's problematic position on the condition of women. Rather, it is to answer the question of whether or not his psychological and ethical views consistently and coherently inform his views on practical rationality, particularly, the practical rationality of women. For Aristotle's thorny remark in *Politics* I.13 functions as a justification for the subordination and marginalization of individuals who are thought to be deficient in their decision-making ability, such as women. Some might suspect from the start that we can never eliminate the possibility that Aristotle's justification for this tenuous claim is nothing more than a blind preference for his gender. There are nonetheless reasons to suspend, at least at the onset, the belief that "on the question of women, Aristotle in general offers arguments so ludicrous as to be unworthy of any serious person."[303] The principle of charity demands the reader to make the author approximately rational or, as Donald Davidson puts it, "consistent, a believer of truths, and a lover of the good."[304] And even if Aristotle turns out to be neither a believer of the truth nor a lover of the

[303] Martha Nussbaum, "Aristotle, Politics, and Human Capabilities: A Response to Antony, Arneson, Charlesworth, and Mulgan," *Ethics* 111, no. 1 (2000): 102–40, 114.
[304] "Mental Events," in *Essays on Actions and Events*, edited by D. Davidson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 207-244, 222.

good on the question of women, an investigation into his political views may not be altogether worthless. For in the words of the authors of the *Port-Royal Logic*, "Due to the great number of respectable persons who have embraced his philosophy, it has become so famous that one ought to know it even to the extent of knowing its defects."[305] It is a major commitment of this chapter to show that we can acknowledge just how significance a role reason and rationality occupies in Aristotle's political theorizing without coming to the conclusion that Aristotle's beliefs about the rational capacity of women are grounded on a misogynistic physiology.

1. Political Sense of '*Akuron*'

I begin by presenting the central text before laying out the political reading, noting both its virtues and what I take to be its shortcomings. Unlike freeborn males, slaves, women, and children suffer some form of deficiency that has restrictive effects on their practical deliberation. Aristotle describes their respective conditions as follows:

> ὁ μὲν γὰρ δοῦλος ὅλως οὐκ ἔχει τὸ βουλευτικόν, τὸ δὲ θῆλυ ἔχει μέν, ἀλλ' ἄκυρον, ὁ δὲ παῖς ἔχει μέν, ἀλλ' ἀτελές. (*Politics* I.13, 1160a12-14)[306]
>
> The slave does not have the deliberative faculty, and the female has it, but it is ineffectual, while the child has it, but in an unperfected form.

As mentioned, in this chapter I will not be able to address the unique impediments of children and slaves but will focus exclusively on the condition of women. What, exactly, does the description '*akuron*' mean in this context, where it is said of the deliberative faculty of women?

One possibility is that Aristotle uses the adjective '*akuron*' to describe the deliberative ability of women that is reflective of the social practice of his time. In light of the contemporaneous social practice of excluding women from participation in the public sphere,

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[305] Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole, *Logic or the Art of Thinking*, trans. and ed. Buroker (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1996), 19.
[306] I follow the Greek of Ross' edition; my translation.

Arlene Saxonhouse reminds us that women happen to be powerless in public deliberations, and this may be the very meaning of '*akuron,'* as follows:

> Whether this want of 'authority' in the woman's deliberative capacity inheres in the soul itself or becomes manifest in groups of men who would scorn it coming from a woman is unclear in the text.[307]

This reading leaves open the possibility that Aristotle is merely reporting conventional views. For Aristotle to say that the deliberation of women is *akuron* is for him to say that, as a matter of conventional practice, women lack political influence over men such that their deliberation cannot terminate in any legislative actions. The adjective '*akuron*' thus describes women's degree of influence over men, especially with respect to political affairs, leaving their cognitive ability to perform practical reasoning unimpaired.

In the same vein, Marguerite Deslauriers argues that the *akuron* qualification is derived from women's social standing *vis-à-vis* others. What it means to say that the faculty of deliberation in women is *akuron* is to say that their deliberative faculty operates only in the domestic domain, which exists for the sake of the city. She reasons, "Because the household is for the sake of the city, the city is better than the household, and hence the rule of the former is without authority relative to the rule of the latter."[308] Although the scope of women's deliberative activities extends within the domestic sphere, it is still the male head who rules the household insofar as he is the origin of the actions of its members. Deslauriers' interpretation thus preserves the female's ability to participate in deliberation although conceding that the origins of actions of members of the household ultimately rest with the male heads. She explains:

They would be entitled to express an opinion, and in principle that opinion should be

[307] In context, her claim is that Aristotle's disagreement with Socrates on the issue of women's function at the end of *Politics* I does not require the assumption of a natural sexual hierarchy ("Family, polity & unity: Aristotle on Socrates' community of wives," 208).

[308] Marguerite Deslauriers, "Aristotle on the Virtues of Slaves and Women," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* (2003): 213–231, 229.

> taken into account by those who do have a vote. This is the implication of the claim that women have a deliberative faculty, but one that is without authority.[309]

Like Saxonhouse, Deslauriers emphasizes the fact that the scope of '*akuron'* ranges over the female's interpersonal relationship with others, especially her degree of influence over men in the *polis* and household. Unlike Saxonhouse, however, Deslauriers does not maintain that the female's deliberation is *akuron* entirely due to a contingent social convention. By appealing to Aristotle's analysis of the hierarchy of ends in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.7 and his treatment of mereology in *Metaphysics* V.6, 1016b11-16, she concludes that different social roles taken by men and women are natural insofar as "women and men are both part of some whole, and men are the better part of that whole."[310] The subjection of women to men is natural because women's deliberative faculty is limited to the operation of domestic affairs; and since domestic affairs are teleologically subordinate to political affairs—men's highest sphere of practical deliberation—women's deliberations are naturally subordinate. Yet, as critics have pointed out, this division of labor may very well be arbitrary[311] or simply assumed.[312] It remains an open question, on Deslauriers' interpretation, why the domestic sphere, rather than the political sphere, is the proper domain of a woman's deliberative activity.

A common strength of political readings is that they do not commit Aristotle to holding the deplorable position that women are psychologically or cognitively inferior to men. As we have seen, the fact that women's deliberative capacity is said to be *akuron* can be accounted for by a certain arrangement of living—artificial arrangement even—rather than by any natural traits that belong to women *qua* women. It may even be true that this arrangement aligns with a

[309] "Political Rule over Women in *Politics* I," 60.
[310] "Aristotle on the Virtues of Slaves and Women," 225.
[311] Nielsen, "The Constitution of the Soul," 573.
[312] Karbowski, "Aristotle on the Rational Abilities of Women," 445.

beneficial division of labor since it preserves the household, an integral unit of the state.[313] Provided that this social convention is well-motivated, the fact that the female's deliberation is *akuron* still says more about the kind of society of which she is a member rather than the kind of being that she is. It would seem that if Aristotle is intending for the '*akuron*' adjective to refer to the degree of influence women have over others, as political readings suggest, then his thorny remark about women's deliberation turns out to be rather innocuous. For Aristotle's assertion of the superiority of men "is founded, however, on a mere stipulation, namely that women have authority only in the household, whereas men have authority that extends to political deliberations."[314] By describing the deliberation of women as *akuron*, Aristotle either intends to make a straightforward empirical observation about the *status quo*, as Saxonhouse suggests, or to express an observation about the hierarchical ordering of domains, as Deslauriers argues.

While the principle of charity would seem to favor interpretations along these lines, I want to argue that the commitment to charity comes at a cost. Reading the *akuron* line in a political way would trivialize Aristotle's justification for the rule-differentiation thesis: the idea that the freeborn males ought to rule over women, slaves, and children differently since the constitution of the soul differs in each (*Pol*. I.13, 1260a9-15). To be clear, political readings can make sense of the rule-differentiation thesis. They might point out the fact that women can participate in household deliberations but are inert at converting such deliberations into actions independently of the male head is just an indication of the rule-differentiation thesis. This

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[313] This position is defended by Deslauriers. Other scholars also suggest that Aristotle argues that women should be excluded from politics because saving the household requires of women confinement to a domestic role (Martha Nussbaum, "Aristotle, Politics, and Human Capabilities: A Response to Antony, Arneson, Charlesworth, and Mulgan," 114); dependence (Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 121); subservience (Richard Mulgan, "Aristotle and the Political Role of Women," *History of Political Thought* 15, no. 2 (1994): 179–202, 200); or preserving the household and bearing the young, which deprive women of leisure (Saxonhouse, *Women in the History of Political Thought* (New York: Praeger, 1985), 88).
[314] Deslauriers, "Aristotle on the Virtues of Slaves and Women," 230.

differential treatment sets women apart from both children and slaves, who have no contribution to domestic decision-making, even indirectly. The trouble is that Aristotle's justification for such a thesis would not be an explanation of their inequality, as he intends it to be, but rather the manifest effect of the inequality. In the following section, I turn to Aristotle's argument for the rule-differentiation thesis in *Politics* I.13 to show that the relevant difference among the various ruled subjects that sanctions differential treatment is the constitution of the soul rather than social standing *vis-à-vis* others.

1.2 The Argument for the Rule-Differentiating Thesis in *Politics* I.13

Before I can restate the argument for the rule-differentiation thesis in *Politics* I.13, some background details will be necessary. The *aporia* of *Politics* I.13 concerns a tension between two Aristotelian doctrines: the first is that slaves and women are fully humans, although inferior to adult males (*Pol*. I.13 1259b27; *Met*. X.9 1058b21-24), and the second is that they have an imperfect share in the rational principle. Since women, slaves, and children have an imperfect share in the rational principle, one might reasonably ask whether or not they also have a share in human excellence. Aristotle tells us, "Of this, we straightway find an indication in connection with the soul" (καὶ τοῦτο εὐθὺς ὑφήγηται περὶ τὴν ψυχήν, *Pol*. I.13, 1260a4-7). This remark thus sets up an argument, or perhaps a series of arguments, aiming to show that that there are, by nature, a variety of ruler and subject relations. The passage containing the argument goes as follows:

> (1) ἐν ταύτῃ γάρ ἐστι φύσει τὸ μὲν ἄρχον τὸ δ' ἀρχόμενον, (2) ὧν ἑτέραν φαμὲν εἶναι ἀρετήν, οἷον τοῦ λόγον ἔχοντος καὶ τοῦ ἀλόγου. (3) δῆλον τοίνυν ὅτι τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ἔχει καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων, ὥστε (4) φύσει τὰ πλείω ἄρχοντα καὶ ἀρχόμενα. (3b) ἄλλον γὰρ τρόπον τὸ ἐλεύθερον τοῦ δούλου ἄρχει καὶ τὸ ἄρρεν τοῦ θήλεος

> καὶ ἀνὴρ παιδός, καὶ (3a) πᾶσιν ἐνυπάρχει μὲν τὰ μόρια τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀλλ' ἐνυπάρχει διαφερόντως. ὁ μὲν γὰρ δοῦλος ὅλως οὐκ ἔχει τὸ βουλευτικόν,τὸ δὲ θῆλυ ἔχει μέν, ἀλλ' ἄκυρον, ὁ δὲ παῖς ἔχει μέν, ἀλλ' ἀτελές. (*Pol*. I.13, 1260a5-14)

> For, (1) in [the soul], a part rules and a part is ruled by nature, (2) which we say have different virtues, e.g., a virtue of the part possessing reason and without reason. (3) It is clear, then, that the same holds for other cases of ruler and ruled, such that (4) there are by nature many rulers and those ruled. For, (3b) in one way, the free rules the slave, the male the female, and the man the child in another way. And (3a) all possess the parts of the soul, but possess them in different ways. For the slave has not got the deliberative part at all, and the slave lacks the deliberative faculty, and the female has it, but it is *akuron*, while the child has it, but in an undeveloped form.

The argument Aristotle offers for the rule-differentiation thesis may be constructed in the following way.

> 1. In the soul, there is by nature a part that rules and a part that is ruled (1260a5-6).
>
> 2. These parts have different virtues: the virtues of the ruling part belong to the rational element of the soul whereas the subordinate the non-rational (1260a6-7).
>
> 3. The same arrangement (*tropon*) in the soul applies generally to other instances of rulers and subjects (1260a7-8).
>
> 4. There are, by nature, many types of rulers and subordinates (1260a8).

According to this argument, [4], marked by the *hōste* clause at 1260a8, is supposed to follow from Aristotle's claim in [3]. What we can glean from the transition from [3] to [4] is that Aristotle intends for the soul to have explanatory priority such that psychological facts about the rulers and various subordinates can explain, and justify, a multitude of political arrangements. Indeed, Aristotle proceeds to lends further justification for the inference from [3] to [4] by including the following subordinate argument, which concludes with the rule-differentiation thesis.

> 3. The same arrangement (*tropon*) in the soul applies generally to other instances of rulers and subjects. (1260a7-8)

3a. Everyone possesses the various parts of the soul, but possess them in different ways. For example, the slave lacks the deliberative faculty, and the female has it, but it is *akuron*, while the child has it, but in an undeveloped form. (1260a10-14)

3b. The freeman rules the slave, child, and female differently. (1260a9-10)

4. There are, by nature, many categories of rulers and those who are ruled. (1260a8)

Recall that on the political reading, [3a] is thought to be an observation about the social standing of women rather than an observation about women's psychological condition. But if we suppose, along with defenders of the political reading, that in [3a], Aristotle is referring to the political influence of women, then it is difficult to see how [3a], and by extension [3b], can be a non-vacuous justification for [4] since [4] says that *by nature* some individuals are fit to rule and others to be their subordinates. It is as if Aristotle is merely restating the same content using two modes of expressing in his move from [3a] to [3b]: since women have no political power, they indeed have no political power, i.e., they are ruled by men in the *polis*.[315]

I want to suggest that we should instead take Aristotle at his words and expect him to ground political inequality on psychological facts—facts about the constitution of the soul—as he promises in [3], rather than on other extraneous political facts. When Aristotle claims that women are not effective deliberators, he is plainly citing facts about their believed impaired

[315] Nielsen puts the point differently: "It is not because the boy ought to obey that his deliberative capacity is incomplete; rather, it is because his deliberative capacity is incomplete that he ought to obey. In the same way, a natural slave—a tool with a soul—does not lack the ability to deliberate because the master does it for him. Rather, his master deliberates for him because the slave lacks the deliberative part." Similarly, it is not because a woman ought to be subject to the authority of another that her deliberative capacity is ineffective ("The Constitution of the Soul,"576). Karbowski also notes a similar weakness of the political reading on the ground that "the psychological condition being attributed to women here is meant to underwrite and explain their unique social position. Thus, we have reason to reject or at least emend any interpretation that fails to meet this explanatory constraint satisfactorily" ("Aristotle on the Deliberative Abilities of Women," 441). Fortenbaugh deems the political reading superficial, writing, "The problem is on a more fundamental level: namely, why different kinds of people have different functions or roles in society. Here a reference to the newly developed bipartite psychology and to the capacity of deliberation is useful" ("Aristotle on Slaves and Women," 138). My argument here relies on the incompatibility between Aristotle's commitment to the rule-differentiation thesis and the political reading. To this end, I hope to provide a different and perhaps more sustained argument against the political reading than what its critics have hitherto offered.

psychological abilities as evidence. For Aristotle, a more fundamental and prior form of psychological deficiency is supposed to justify unequal treatments in the political domain. It is for this reason that the male head ought to rule the women, children, and slaves differently, corresponding to their proper psychological conditions.

Aristotle's commitment to the thesis that psychology, the study of the soul, should inform politics is confirmed, for instance, by his recommendation of the study of the soul to the student of politics in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.13:

> δῆλον ὅτι δεῖ τὸν πολιτικὸν εἰδέναι πως τὰ περὶ ψυχῆς, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸν ὀφθαλμοὺς θεραπεύσοντα καὶ πᾶν [τὸ] σῶμα . . .θεωρητέον δὴ καὶ τῷ πολιτικῷ περὶ ψυχῆς.
>
> The politician clearly must in some way know about the soul, just as the person who is to heal the eye (or some other parts of the body) must know their anatomy…The student of politics, then, must study the soul.

Aristotle urges the students of politics to study the soul on the ground that politics is the art (*technē*) concerned with the human good, a psychological good on his view. Politicians, therefore, must have some knowledge of psychology. For it is knowledge of the constitution of the soul and what things are beneficial and harmful to it that informs the politician of what policies he ought to adopt, given his final end. If the constitution of the subject's soul should matter for how she is to be ruled, then differences at the level of the soul—psychological differences—are supposed to be explanatorily prior to political differences.

Some defenders of the political reading even recognize that the textual evidence is against them but resist Aristotle's recommendation to draw political inferences from psychological facts: witness, e.g. Saxonhouse's complaint that "when Aristotle turns in Chapter 13 of Book I of the *Politics* to issues concerning virtue or goodness, he claims that we must turn to the soul, for that is where virtue is located. But a problem arises: We cannot see the soul, and

thus it is difficult to recognize the goodness of one individual in contrast with another."[316] Clearly Aristotle thinks that "it is not entirely easy to see the beauty of the soul as of the body" (ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁμοίως ῥᾴδιον ἰδεῖν τό τε τῆς ψυχῆς κάλλος καὶ τὸ τοῦ σώματος, *Pol*. I.5, 1254b38-9). But the acknowledgement that psychological differences are more difficult to ascertain than bodily ones immediately follows Aristotle's claim that, since nature distinguishes between the bodies of freeman and slaves, "how much more just that a similar distinction should exist in the soul?" (πολὺ δικαιότερον ἐπὶ τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦτο διωρίσθαι, *Pol*. I.5, 1254b37-8). He also concludes the passage at issue with the confirmation that, "some people are by nature free, and others slaves" (εἰσὶ φύσει τινὲς οἱ μὲν ἐλεύθεροι οἱ δὲ δοῦλοι, 1255a1). What we should infer from Aristotle's claim that goodness of soul is difficult to detect is neither the denial that psychological variations exist among individuals, nor the skepticism that psychological facts are ill-suited as a marker of social standing. The implication is rather that there is a standard by which one can determine who ought to be subservient and who ought to rule, but the standard employed by Aristotle requires knowledge about psychological differentiations, knowledge that may be difficult to come by to the untrained. If we ever acquire such knowledge, perhaps by studying the soul as Aristotle seems to think, then we might just make judgments about social standing like the ones he does by allowing the constitution of the soul to lead the way (*Pol*. I.13, 1260a4-5).

2. The Psychological Reading

Although I have been suggesting that we have reasons to doubt the political reading, I also propose that we reconsider the prospects of certain prevalent psychological interpretations. I approach this topic by sketching the general outline of all psychological interpretations before

[316] *Women in the History of Political Thought,* 75.

homing in on the biologically driven variety: the view that the female's defective decisional capacity is sufficiently explicable in virtue of biological sexual differences. Next, I show that the evidence for this view is scant and, more importantly, can be interpreted to support other incompatible conclusions. I argue, instead, that the naturalness of the political subjection of women is, for Aristotle, a fact about the psychic condition of many women that is largely due to cultural factors rather than entirely, or even mostly, a function of the biological conditions of men and women.[317]

Common to all psychological readings is the thesis that Aristotle's perplexing claim about women's deliberative ability is about their psychological condition: precisely, the relationship between the reasoning and emotive parts of their souls. The deliberation of women is *akuron* because their best and most authoritative part, reason, is incapable of commanding their irrational half, which inevitably leads them astray in decision-making. The earliest notable proponent of this line of interpretation is perhaps William Fortenbaugh, who urges us to exploit the dichotomy between emotion and reason in our interpretation of Aristotle's puzzling claim, as follows:

> In stating this lack of authority Aristotle is not referring to interpersonal relationships but rather to an intra-personal relationship… Her deliberative capacity lacks authority, because it is often overruled by her emotions or alogical side. Her decisions and actions are too often misguided by pleasures and pains, so that she is unfit for leadership and very much in need of temperance.[318]

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[317] I am in broad agreement with proponent of political readings who have argued that the naturalness of the political subjection of women is, for Aristotle, a fact independent of the biological conditions of men and women. See a thorough critique of the trend to ground Aristotle's political claims on the biological differences in Deslauriers, "Sexual difference in Aristotle's Politics and his biology," *Classical World* (Special Issue): *Bodies, Households and Landscapes: Sexuality and Gender in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* 102 (2009), 215–31. Saxonhouse also offers reasons to resist the tendency to overstate the biological differences among the sexes in chapter four of her *Women in the History of Political Thought*.

[318] Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle on Slaves and Women," 245. Fortenbaugh's interpretation has been dismissed on the grounds that it entails that women are naturally akratic and incapable of attaining virtue. For a discussion of this objection, see M. Deslauriers, "Aristotle on the Virtues of Slaves and Women."

On Fortenbaugh's reading, Aristotle's position on the deliberative ability of women is grounded on beliefs about their natural impulsiveness, which results in an inferior ability to deliberate and legislate.

This interpretative tendency resurfaces in K.M Nielsen's analysis of the passage at issue. She writes (emphasis mine):

> Women are deficient, since the faculty of the rational part of the soul that makes decisions, τὸ ἡγούμενον or 'commanding part' (*Eth. Nic*. 1113a6), is less likely to prevail in women than in men. This inequality, which is a matter of the more and the less (τῷ μᾶλλον καὶ ἧττον, cf. *Hist. an*. 7.1, 588a22), *is not conventional. Rather, it is an intrinsic psychological difference. As such, it exists 'by nature' (φύσει).* Aristotle's claim, then, is not that women's deliberative faculty fails to be authoritative because it—or its subject matter—is in fact governed by that of the male, but rather that men rule because they are psychologically better suited to the task.

Like Fortenbaugh, Nielsen's view is that the commanding part of women's soul is less capable of controlling and altering their lawless desires, leading to the peculiar deficiency of their deliberative faculty.[319] More recently, Mariska Leunissen joins forces with these commentators, witting (emphasis mine):

> When Aristotle claims that the deliberative capacity of women "lacks authority," he is thus making a claim about their *internal, inborn psychological capacities*.[320]

All versions of the psychological reading thus reject the explanation that what Aristotle intends for the '*akuron*' adjective to describe is the fact that, in the society in which Aristotle happens to be a member, men do not grant women any authority in legislative matters. Nor does

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[319] Fortenbaugh finds some precedent for his proposal in Greek literature, especially in the Euripides' *Medea*, which he discusses in "Aristotle on Slaves and Women." More recently, he also cites a scholion on Homer's *Odyssey* xiii, most recently printed in Olof Gigon's Berlin/De Gruyter collection of Aristotelian fragments 538, fr. 399 as evidence (O. Gigon,. *Aristotelis opera III: Librorum deperditorum fragmenta* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1987)). The central question posed by the scholion is, Why does Odysseus refrain from revealing himself to Penelope, especially in light of the fact that he does reveal himself to Telemachus, the swineherd, and the cowherd. The speculation that the scholion offers is that, unlike Telemachus, who is able to control his emotions (κρατεῖν τοῦ πάθους), Penelope is prone to become exceedingly joyful (περιχαρής) and reveal his presence (Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle on Women: *Politics* i 13.1260a13," Anci*ent Philosophy (20*15): 395-404).

[320] *From Natural Character to Moral Virtue in Aristotle*, 171.

the '*akuron*' adjective describe a deficiency that women have as a result of a ranking of deliberative activities, a ranking which places the deliberative activities of women below those of their male counterparts, whose range of activities extends more widely to include the public sphere. In rejecting convention or social standing as an explanation of Aristotle's odd claim about the deliberative defect of women, psychological readings do not deny the plain fact that women suffer from these kinds of social and political subjugation. What psychological readings contend, rightly, is that this oppressive cultural practice would be following what Aristotle believes to be a preexisting differentiation between the two sexes based on some psychological deficiency women allegedly possess.[321]

Proponents of the psychological readings, however, also tend to maintain that differentiation on the psychological ground is causally the physiological imperfections of the female on Aristotle's view. Call this interpretative trend the 'biological-psychological' reading. The biological-psychological reading is particularly appealing if what we desire is cohesion from Aristotle's works. The thought is that since Aristotle is something like a system builder, we might expect to find important links between his political and biological thoughts. For this reason, perhaps, even commentators who admit that Aristotle does not make the argument that political claims are based on biological ones suggest that he ought to have done so. For example, Deborah Modrak writes:

> What is needed to fill out Aristotle's story in the *Politics* is evidence that weakness in the movements of the semen correspond to the defective replication of the human form such

[321] See a synthesis of these positions in Reeve, *Action, Contemplation, and Happiness: An Essay on Aristotle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 110. "Part of what this implies may be that a woman, having arrived through deliberation at what she judges is the best thing to do in particular circumstances, may sometimes decide to do something else, because she tends to be less able to control her appetites and emotions than a man (*NE* VII 7 1150b1–16). On the other hand, the fact that it is women's lack of fitness to command that is at issue (*Pol*. I 13 1259b1–3) makes it more likely that what women lack control over is not so much themselves as other people, since females have less spirit than males (*HA* IX 1 608a33–b16, *PA* III 1 661b33– 34), and spirit is responsible for the ability to command (*Pol*. VII 7 1328a6–7)."

> that female humans have poorer ratiocinative powers. Such evidence, however, is hard to come by.[322]

Her suggestion is that we ought to find evidence of some physical defect, say, embryological formation of the female, that could plausibly explain the deficiency Aristotle attributes to the deliberative ability in women. Although such evidence is scant, the interpretative strategy of founding the political claims on the biological is apparent in all prominent versions of the psychological reading. I want to examine next how the biological evidence may be woven into a psychological reading of the '*akuron'* adjective.

2.1. Biological-Psychological Reading

Underlying the biological-psychological reading is the presumption that Aristotle allows for matter to make a difference in the operation of the higher faculties. Matter can indeed prevent, or at least make more difficult, the exercise of a faculty if the matter is not properly or optimally arranged. For example, in order for an agent to exercise her perceptive ability, her eyes, which Aristotle calls "the matter of sight" (ὕλη ὄψεως, *DA* II.1, 412b20), must be transparent just as the medium in between the perceptible object and the eye must also be transparent (*Sens*. II, 438b8-16). To ascertain whether or not women's material constitution can impede their deliberative activities, I give a schematic account of the biological sexual differences between men and women before considering whether or not the differences in the bodies of men and women can sufficiently account for their unequal deliberative abilities.

In his official study of the two sexes in *Generation of Animals*, Aristotle describes the male and female as "the principles of generation" (ἀρχαὶ γενέσεως, *GA* II.1, 731b18). There, he

[322] "Aristotle: Women, Deliberation, and Nature" in *Engendering Origins: Critical Feminist Readings in Plato and Aristotle*, edited by B.-A. Bar On (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 207-222.

suggests that the two sexes be differentiated definitionally (κατὰ μὲν τὸν λόγον) according to the distinctive power of each, writing:

> Τὸ δ'ἄρρεν καὶ τὸ θῆλυ διαφέρει κατὰ μὲν τὸν λόγον τῷ δύνασθαι ἕτερον ἑκάτερον, κατὰ δὲ τὴν αἴσθησιν μορίοις τισίν· κατὰ μὲν τὸν λόγον τῷ τὸ ἄρρεν μὲν εἶναι τὸ δυνάμενον γεννᾶν εἰς ἕτερον, καθάπερ ἐλέχθη πρότερον, τὸ δὲ θῆλυ τὸ εἰς αὑτό, καὶ ἐξ οὗ γίγνεται ἐνυπάρχον ἐν τῷ γεννῶντι τὸ γεννώμενον. (*GA* I.1, 716a17-23)[323]
>
> Male and female differ in their definition by each being capable of something different, and to perception by certain parts; by definition the male is that which is able to generate in another, as said above; the female is that which is able to generate in itself and out of which comes into being the offspring previously existing in the generator.

While Aristotle distinguishes maleness from femaleness by the distinctive power of each, he makes clear that *that* power is a reproductive power. If what it is to be a female is to lack the capacity to reproduce in another, then there is no evidence to directly warrant the conclusion that the female's deliberative capacity is predetermined by her biological make-up to take on a defective form. Aristotle is simply silent on the issue of deliberative inequality in the account of sexual differences. The expectation that sexual differences, at least characterized exclusively in terms of reproductive power, should have consequences for deliberative power seems to be quite implausible.

More promising, perhaps, is the thought that this difference in reproductive power is accompanied, or even the cause of, differences in the bodies or temperament of men and women. Such differences, in turn, would be responsible for the disparity in deliberative capacity. Fortenbaugh, for instance, relies on the differentiation between body sizes to explain for the subjugated condition of women: that the deliberative faculty in women operates only in a limited domain, the household, which exists for the sake of the city. He writes (emphasis mine):

[323] Greek of Drossaart Lulofs; Platt's translation with modifications.

> In comparison with man's bodily condition, *the bodily condition of women is one of weakness*, and this comparative weakness points toward a retiring domestic role within the home.[324]

On Fortenbaugh's suggestion, the fact that Aristotle assigns to women a subordinate and domestic role is due, at least in part, to their naturally weak bodily condition. It is a virtue of Fortenbaugh's reading that the division of labor between men and women would not be endorsed by Aristotle as a matter of stipulation, as the political reading would suggest. Moreover, given that the male and female are differentiated by their reproductive function, and that different instruments, viz. sexual organs, are needed for distinct functions we should expect the bodies of men and women to be different (*GA* IV.1, 766a4–5). Aristotle also seems to think that these reproductive differences contribute to the phenomenon that the bodies of women are generally smaller and weaker than the bodies of men (*GA* I.19, 726b31-2).

Yet, it is far from obvious why the relative weak bodily condition of women would lead them to be less effective decision makers. Consider individuals Aristotle calls "natural slaves." As we have seen, Aristotle believes that nature tends to produce bodily differences between natural slaves and free people such that "the former strong enough to be used for necessities, and the latter upright in posture and useless for those kinds of tasks, but useful for a political life" (τὰ μὲν ἰσχυρὰ πρὸς τὴν ἀναγκαίαν χρῆσιν, τὰ δ' ὀρθὰ καὶ ἄχρηστα πρὸς τὰς τοιαύτας ἐργασίας, ἀλλὰ χρήσιμα πρὸς πολιτικόν, *Pol* I.5, 1254b26–39). According to this line of reasoning, having a strong body would make a person more capable at performing the physical labor necessary to sustain the city rather than to engage in deliberations about its affairs. If it is to justify the

[324] "Aristotle on Slaves and Women," 138.

division of labor between the sexes, the claim that the bodily condition of women is "one of weakness"[325] cannot simply refer to their smaller stature.

The deficiency of the female sex has been analyzed, alternatively, in terms of a softness that makes her prone to chronic *akrasia* according to Nielsen, who argues that softness is a defining feature of female psychology.[326] This condition causes the rational part of the soul—the one responsible for making decisions (τὸ ἡγούμενον)—to be less likely to prevail in women than in men. The soft person lacks endurance in the face of pain, which causes her to abscond impulsively when confronted with danger without pausing to deliberate, much like Aristotle's impetuous akratic agent.[327] Even when she does pause to deliberate and reaches the right decision, she is overwhelmed by feelings of fear that she abandons the decision.

It is argued that the evidence for attributing a gender-specific softness to women can be found in Aristotle's observations about sexual differentiation in *History of Animals* VIII.1 and weakness of will (*akrasia*) in *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.7. The passage in *History of Animals* VIII.1, where Aristotle claims that the female has a soft character, goes as follows:

> Ἐν πᾶσι δ' ὅσοις ἐστὶ γένεσι τὸ θῆλυ καὶ τὸ ἄρρεν, σχεδὸν ἡ φύσις ὁμοίως διέστησε τὸ ἦθος τῶν θηλειῶν πρὸς τὸ τῶν ἀρρένων. Μάλιστα δὲ φανερὸν ἐπί τε τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν μέγεθος ἐχόντων καὶ τῶν ζῳοτόκων τετραπόδων· μαλακώτερον γὰρ τὸ ἦθός ἐστι τῶν θηλειῶν, καὶ τιθασσεύεται θᾶττον, καὶ προσίεται τὰς χεῖρας μᾶλλον, καὶ μαθητικώτερον, οἷον καὶ αἱ Λάκαιναι κύνες αἱ θήλειαι εὐφυέστεραι τῶν ἀρρένων εἰσίν. (608a21-31)
>
> In all genera in which the distinction of male and female is found, nature makes a similar differentiation in the characteristics of the two sexes. This differentiation is the most

[325] "Aristotle on Slaves and Women," 138.
[326] "The Constitution of the Soul," 578. In his recent article, Fortenbaugh, too, asserts the position that women are "naturally akratic" ("Aristotle on Women: *Politics* i 13.1260a13," 396).
[327] Aristotle makes a distinction between two kinds of *akrasia*: impetuosity (*propeteia*) and weakness (*astheneia*) in *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.7, 1150b19. The impetuous person, one who is 'keen' and 'excitable,' does not deliberate and does not make a reasoned choice; she simply acts under the influence of a passion. The person who is weak completes the process of deliberation and makes a choice; but rather than act in accordance with her reasoned choice, she acts under the influence of a passion.

obvious in the case of humankind and in that of the larger animals and the viviparous quadrupeds. For the female is softer in character, is the sooner tamed, admits more readily of caressing, is more apt in the way of learning; as, for instance, in the Laconian breed of dogs the female is cleverer than the male.

We find the claim that the female is distinguished from the male by softness reiterated in the famous analysis of *akrasia* in *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.7, as follows:

ἀλλ' εἴ τις πρὸς ἃς οἱ πολλοὶ δύνανται ἀντέχειν, τούτων ἡττᾶται καὶ μὴ δύναται ἀντιτείνειν, μὴ διὰ φύσιν τοῦ γένους ἢ διὰ νόσον, οἷον ἐν τοῖς Σκυθῶν βασιλεῦσιν ἡ μαλακία διὰ τὸ γένος, καὶ ὡς τὸ θῆλυ πρὸς τὸ ἄρρεν διέστηκεν. (1150b12-6)

But we are surprised when a man is overcome by pleasures and pains which most men are able to withstand, except when his failure to resist is due to some natural tendency, or to disease: for example, the hereditary effeminacy of the royal family of Scythia, and the difference of the female sex as compared with the male.

Together these passages indicate that women have a softer disposition relative to that of men and that this soft disposition causes them to be more vulnerable to the influences of pain and pleasure. This softness has consequences for the deliberation of women because, granted that they perform each step in the process correctly, the deliberation is ineffective since they recoil from enacting their plans due to emotional defeaters like pain or fear. Based on this line of reasoning, Nielsen concludes:

When Aristotle says that the deliberative part of a woman's soul is ἄκυρον, then, we should take him to mean that their decrees do not reliably guide their action. What reason asserts is not what desire pursues (see *Eth. Nic.* 6.2, 1139a25), contrary to what happens in prudent agents.[328]

The consequence, and strength, of this reading is that Aristotle's perplexing claim does not imply women are mediocre at deliberating due to a lack of intelligence. Given what Aristotle says in the *History of Animals* VII.1 passage above about women's natural adeptness at learning

[328] The Constitution of the Soul," 580.

(μαθηματικώτερον), we should expect just this result.[329] Women's softness of disposition has little, if any, impact on the cognitive aspects of deliberation. They may be equally capable as their male counterparts at uncovering efficient pathways to their ends and selecting between those alternatives. What makes women poor deliberators, on this view, is the fact that they cannot reliably transform the result of their deliberation into action.[330] The deficiency is executive rather than intellectual. And women suffer from inequality in executive power, the power to put one's decisions into practice, because of softness of character.

The *History of Animals* VIII.1 passage is unambiguous in its claim: softness is a defining feature of female psychology. But one might still reasonably ask, What is Aristotle's reason for attributing such a quality to the female? On this interpretation, the cause of the female's softness is a biological one. In Aristotle's words, "Females are weaker and colder by nature, and it is necessary to understand the female condition to be a kind of natural deformity" (ἀσθενέστερα γάρ ἐστι καὶ ψυχρότερα τὰ θήλεα τὴν φύσιν, καὶ δεῖ ὑπολαμβάνειν ὥσπερ ἀναπηρίαν εἶναι τὴν θηλύτητα φυσικήν, *Gen. An*. IV.6 775a14–16). The text of *Generation of Animal* claims that the female condition is a kind of deformity for the following reason. The fundamental difference in reproductive functions between the sexes is a difference in degree that leads to a difference in the kind of contribution each makes to the generation of the offspring. Whereas the male is able to fully concoct and to emit semen outside his body, the female only partially concocts the semen

[329] In a nearby passage which I will discuss in §4, Aristotle goes on to claim that women are also less simple, more cunning, and have better memories than men. Indeed, H.L. Levy goes so far as to claim that women are "superior in every intellectual characteristic worth noting" ("Does Aristotle Exclude Women from Politics," *Review of Politics*, 52 (1990): 397-416, 399).
[330] Nielsen is careful to clarify that her reading implies that women suffer from an executive rather than cognitive problem in her criticism of Robert Mayhew, *The Female in Aristotle's Biology : Reason or Rationalization* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 2004), chapter 6, who characterizes the matter purely on cognitive ground, which implies that women are naturally less intelligent than men (Nielsen, "The Constitution of the Soul," 579).

and retains it within her body. Aristotle is clear on the point that the coldness of her nature is to responsible for her incapacity to concoct the blood into form-bestowing semen, as follows:

> Ἔοικε δὲ καὶ τὴν μορφὴν γυναικὶ παῖς, καὶ ἔστιν ἡ γυνὴ ὥσπερ ἄρρεν ἄγονον· ἀδυναμίᾳ γάρ τινι τὸ θῆλύ ἐστι τῷ μὴ δύνασθαι πέττειν ἐκ τῆς τροφῆς σπέρμα τῆς ὑστάτης (τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶν ἢ αἷμα ἢ τὸ ἀνάλογον ἐν τοῖς ἀναίμοις) διὰ ψυχρότητα τῆς φύσεως. (*GA* I.20, 728a17-21)
>
> It seems that a child is like a woman in form and even a woman is, as it were, a sterile man. For it is through some incapacity that the female is female being unable to concoct the nutrient in its last stage into semen (this is either blood or something analogous in the bloodless) because the coldness of her nature.

The fundamental biological difference between men and women—and the cause of her biological defect—is some incapacity to concoct due to her cold nature.[331]

It is worth asking how, exactly, the female's cold nature serves as an explanation of her deliberative deficiency, which, on the psychological reading, is the explanation for her political subordination. On a proposal put forth by Nancy Tuana, for example, Aristotle's view that the female has a natural incapacity to concoct the blood into form-bestowing semen is the cause of "her brain being smaller and less developed, and her inferior brain size in turn accounts for much of her defective nature. Women's less concocted brain renders her deliberative faculty too ineffective to rule over her emotions."[332] This interpretation has been rejected by commentators in both camps. Deslauriers argues that Aristotle, unlike contemporary cognitive scientists, did not believe that the function of the brain is intellectual and so would not have argued that women's less concocted brain renders her deliberative faculty faulty.[333] Nielsen, too, rejects this

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[331] At a later passage, *Generation of Animals* IV.1, 766a31–35, Aristotle makes clear that what is concocted is blood or the counterpart of blood, the "ultimate nutriment," up to the point where it becomes semen, and that the process of concoction involves the transmission of heat.

[332] Tuana, "Aristotle and the Politics of Reproduction," in *Engendering Origins: Critical Feminist Readings in Plato and Aristotle*, edited by B.-A. Bar On, 189–206., (Albany, 1994), 202-3.

[333] "Sexual Difference in Aristotle," 220. She also points out that Aristotle would not describe a woman's brain as less "concocted." For concoction, as we saw in the *Generation of Animals* passages, is a chemical process in which heat is added to

line of interpretation on the ground that there is lack of evidence to attribute to Aristotle the view that women are intellectually inferior to freeborn men in their capacity for practical deliberation.[334]

Recall that on Nielsen's interpretation, what Aristotle intends the '*akuron*' adjective to refer to is a deficiency of execution—the inability to follow through with the course of option reason identifies as best due to the force of the irrational passions. The biological explanation for this executive inefficaciousness preferred by Nielsen is gestured at *Parts of Animals* II.4, as follows:

> δειλότερα δὲ τὰ λίαν ὑδατώδη. ὁ γὰρ φόβος καταψύχει· προωδοποίηται οὖν τῷ πάθει τὰ τοιαύτην ἔχοντα τὴν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ κρᾶσιν· τὸ γὰρ ὕδωρ τῷ ψυχρῷ πηκτόν ἐστιν. (650b27-3)
>
> Those [animals], however, that have *excessively watery blood* are somewhat timorous. This is because water is congealed by cold; and coldness also accompanies fear: therefore, in those creatures whose heart contain a predominantly watery blend, the way is already prepared for this affection [i.e., for fear].

Here, Aristotle flatly says that coldness is associated with fear (Cf. *PA* III.4, 667a16; III.11, 692a22; *Rhet*. II.13, 1389b31). Owing to her inborn coldness, women are likely to be fearful and easily deterred in dangerous situations.

Leunissen joins Nielsen in founding the female's softness on her lack of vital heat, arguing that the female's deliberative deficiency is due to inalterable biological differences between the sexes, especially to her lack of internal heat and spirit (emphasis mine):

> Perhaps also *as a consequence of her lack of internal heat and spirit, her rational desires lack their natural control and executive power over their nonrational desires*, especially those that concern avoidance of pain and that psychophysically speaking constitute

some fluid or solid in the body, most likely blood. The brain, in Aristotle's view, would only be formed during embryological development. If this is right, then there is no reason to suppose that he thought female brains were less well-concocted than males.

[334] "The Constitution of the Soul," 572.

> coolings of the blood, *such that women are by nature prone to weakness of will due to weakness of the kind pertaining to pain*. In the case of women, it is her nonrational desires that are by nature set up "to win" and to exert power over her actions and thereby to produce predominantly.[335]

The implication of this biological-psychological reading for the 'why' question about the development of children's unperfected deliberative capacity is that the male child can grow out of his temporary natural imperfection regarding his deliberative capacity in ideal conditions (viz. given the right kind of diet, physical exercise, education, and do forth). Since nature is rigged in favor of the male's side, one should naturally expect, she concludes, that "no change in conventions or education can restore the natural lack of authority or controlling power over actions in the deliberative capacity of women."[336]

We should grant defenders of the biological-psychological reading that there is reason to think that, in Aristotle's view, the female's inborn coldness makes her more cowardly and thus less likely to remain single-mindedly committed to the result of her deliberation. But I want to point out that this consequence is simply one side of a duality. One could no less forcefully infer that being cold-blooded would make women less vulnerable to the effects of certain trifling emotions in their decision-making. If being colder by nature makes a woman more fearful, then it should make her less susceptible to the passions accompanied by heat—particularly anger, which features prominently in Aristotle's discussion of *akrasia*.

In Aristotle's treatment of *akrasia,* he identifies a unique form of *akrasia* which he calls *akrasia* with respect to anger (*thumos*) and distinguishes from *akrasia* with respect to appetite (*epithumia*, *EN* VII.6, 1149a24-114925). It is not obvious whether there is a substantive basis for

[335] *From Natural Character to Moral Virtue in Aristotle*, 173.
[336] *From Natural Character to Moral Virtue in Aristotle,* 176.

this distinction. Aristotle's analysis seems to suggest that an evaluative belief, viz. 'I've been slighted', is part of the account of anger in a way in which it is not part of a desire for pleasure. Equally salient is Aristotle's conception of anger as an embodied phenomenon. He describes anger, for instance, as involving "boiling blood around the heart" (ζέσιν τοῦ περὶ καρδίαν, *DA* I.1, 403a29-b1). Indeed, anger and fear have opposite physical properties: anger involves heating of the blood around the heart, whereas in fear the subject is cool and turns pale.[337]

There is further evidence linking heat with the cause of lack of control. In the discussion of problems connected with the drinking of wine and drunkenness, for instance, the Aristotelian author of *Problems* offers the following explanation for the passionate condition of the inebriated.

> Διὰ τί οἱ μεθύοντες ἀριδάκρυοι μᾶλλον; ἢ ὅτι θερμοὶ καὶ ὑγροὶ γίνονται· ἀκρατεῖς οὖν εἰσίν, ὥστε ὑπὸ μικρῶν κινεῖσθαι. (II.24, 874b8-10)[338]
>
> Why are the drunken more easily moved to tears? Is it because they become hot and moist, and so they have no command over themselves and are affected by trifling causes?

According to this passage, heat is at least a partial cause of lack of control due to trifling causes. The inference that we can reasonably draw from this passage is that a woman, due to her inborn coldness, would be less vulnerable to the motive forces of the passions accompanied by heat. Since she is naturally colder than men, a woman's blood will either not be heated or only heated to a lesser degree as compared to that of men given the same kind of sensory stimulation. When both sides of the duality are accounted for, coldness turns out to be a cause of the female's chronic *akrasia* sometimes and a preventive remedy at others, especially when *akrasia* with respect to anger is at issue.

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[337] *DA* I.1, 403a26-b1, *EN* IV.8, 1128b10-16, *MA* 7, 701b18, 22-3, *Problems* IV.7, 877a24-6.
[338] Greek of Bekker; Forster's translation.

One natural pushback is to point out that Aristotle considers *akrasia* with respect to anger to be less shameful than the appetitive variety from which women presumably suffer (*EN* VII.6, 1149b1-2). The implication of this inequality is that even if men are more susceptible to *akrasia* with respect to anger than women, their akratic actions due to anger are still less faulty than the kind of *akrasia* associated with women. It is not apparent, however, what the inequality rests on. Aristotle's reasoning seems to be twofold: that "anger seems to obey reason" (θυμὸς ἀκολουθεῖ τῷ λόγῳ) and that we forgive people acting on a natural desire like anger more easily than we do those having appetites for excess (*EN* VII.6, 1149b1-8). But the person whose motive is anger is just as likely to abandon his deliberation in the case of weakness or act without stopping to deliberate in the case of impetuous *akrasia.* For when people are angry, as Aristotle observes, they are preoccupied with their pain and desire for revenge and so do not take heed of the future such that they become dangerous (*Pol.* V.11, 1315a), reckless, and inattentive to dangers (*EN* III.8, 1116b34-1117a4). Anger, like the appetitive passions, does not follow a rational principle (*Pol.* V.10, 1312b26-30), and is an "impediment to reason" (οὐ ῥᾴδιον λογίζεσθαι, 1312b31-34).

Aristotle is also aware that men, too, can be influenced by the passions, and indeed the fear of pain. In *Rhetoric* II.13, he discusses coldness in relation with old age and associates this coldness with fear and the cause of cowardly behavior in old men, as follows:

> καὶ δειλοὶκαὶ πάντα προφοβητικοί· ἐναντίως γὰρ διάκεινται τοῖς νέοις· κατεψυγμένοι γάρ εἰσιν, οἱ δὲ θερμοί, ὥστε προωδοπεποίηκε τὸ γῆρας τῇ δειλίᾳ· καὶ γὰρ ὁ φόβος κατάψυξίς τίς ἐστιν. (1389b29-31)
>
> They are cowardly and are always anticipating danger; unlike that of the young, who are warm-blooded, their temperament is chilly; old age has paved the way for cowardice; fear is, in fact, a form of chilling.

Aristotle certainly recognizes bodily temperature as a cause, an important one even, of passions like fear and anger. But to say that individuals are poor deliberators because of their lack of internal heat is compatible with *some* men being poor deliberators due to lack of internal heat. However, if men, even only a subset of them, suffer from this condition, then the subjection of reason to the emotions due to bodily temperature cannot be a *differentia* of the two sexes.[339] For we would have to say that old men are women rather than men.

It is far from obvious how *akrasia* can be sufficiently explained by biological, sexual differences. It is for this reason, perhaps, that Aristotle nowhere speaks of heat and coldness as causes of *akrasia* in his most extensive analysis of the phenomenon—even in the physical (*phusikōs*) account (*EN* VII.3, 1147a25-1147b12).[340] In this physical exposition of akratic behaviors, Aristotle simply appeals to his psychological works on human behaviors and movements, viz. the famous chapters of *De Motu Animalium* 6-8 and *De Anima* III, 7-11. He leaves his biological writings altogether aside, indicating that they are not immediately relevant to the discussion at issue. This omission is entirely enigmatic if internal heat, or lack thereof, actually plays a significant causal role in the generation of *akratic* actions, especially in connection with to the softness of women, as some specialists believe it does. But there is no

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[339] Deslauriers makes an analogous point when she writes, "If we appeal to differences in temperature to explain the intellectual differences between men and women, we will have to posit a separate mechanism to explain the production of natural slaves who are men. That is, if heat determines intellectual capacity, then we would expect intellectual capacities to track sexual differences—but they do not… if defective heat or concoction in women is responsible somehow for their deliberative faculty, then is the perfect capacity for concoction in men responsible for their deliberative faculty" ("Sexual Difference in Aristotle," 229-30).

[340] In the final passages of *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.3 (1147a25-1147b12) Aristotle promises to provide an account of the cause of akrasia 'in a way a student of nature would' (ὧδε φυσικῶς ἄν τις ἐπιβλέψειε, 1147a25). I should note that the legitimacy of the *phusikōs* explanation has been challenged by commentators. Richard Robinson, for example, claims that Aristotle adds the *phusikōs* explanation in order to, in his words, "set aside those unfortunate persons who cannot distinguish philosophy from psychology" (Richard Robinson, "Aristotle on Akrasia," in *Articles on Aristotle*, edited by J. Barnes, M. Schofield and R. Sorabji (London: Duckworth, 1977), 151. Other scholars such as Pickavé, Whiting, and Pierre Destrée think more favorable of the *phusikōs* explanation. See Martin Pickavé and Jennifer Whiting, "*Nicomachean Ethics* 7.3 on Akratic Ignorance," in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 34 (Summer 2008), 323–372; Pierre Destrée, "Aristotle on the Cause of Akrasia" in *Akrasia in Greek Philosophy: from Socrates to Plonitus*, edited by Christopher Bobonich and Pierre Destrée (The Netherlands: Brill, 2007), 139-165.

enigma, if my argument is correct, since Aristotle never intends for bodily temperature to play such a role in his explanation of *akrasia* in the first place.

3. The Social-Psychological Reading

If biological differences, as I have argued, cannot sufficiently ground the discrepancy in the cognitive or psychological development of freemen and women, then how will we answer the puzzle of coming-to-be concerning the female's ineffective deliberation? My proposal is a moderate interpretation that preserves the intelligibility of Aristotle's argumentative strategy in *Pol*. I.13, 1260a9-15 without committing to the textually tenuous thesis that it is inalterable sexual differences which underwrite women's decisional deficiency. On this reading, we can acknowledge Aristotle's belief in a natural political hierarchy, but we need not attribute to him the view that a person's position in that hierarchy is singlehandedly determined by nature. Aristotle's view is rather that one's political standing is a function of one's ability to exercise practical reason. I want to suggest that moral training plays a vital role in shaping the development of a person's practical reason—a role others have reserved for biological differences. To see how moral education could play an explanatory role in the defective deliberation of women in particular, it will be instructive to explain the difference between my reading and the biological-psychological reading by comparing them against the background of the model of deliberation defended in the first chapter. There, I argue that deliberation is a decision-making process that generally unfolds into four stages: (1) positing a provisional goal, (2) constructing a set of possible alternatives by process of analysis, (3) identifying the best alternative from the set by evaluation, and (4) forming an intention to do the first action towards the achievement of the goal. I am in broad agreement with the majority of commentators who

argue that women do not suffer from a cognitive impairment,[341] which implies that they can perform steps two and three in any given episode of deliberation just as effectively as their male counterparts. Whereas others identified the weakness of women in the final stage of deliberation, which is characterized in this four-stage model as the formation of the intention to perform the first step in the series of action identified in the penultimate stage, I argue that a mistake has already been made in the first stage. The deficiency, as I understand it, is not one of implementation in which women are unable to regulate their passions under the directive force of reason to ensure the performance of the course of action identified by deliberation. The problem is rather that women do not have the perceptive sensibility to ascertain which goals are worthy of positing at the start of deliberation, which causes them to identify goals of action that are in fact undesirable. In the following I offer positive reasons to believe that Aristotle describes the deliberative capacity of women as *akuron* because of their incapacity to ascertain the correct conception of the good.

In Aristotle's eyes, females are clever. We have already seen him make this observation in the *History of Animals* VIII.1, 608a21-28 passage above. Cleverness is a desirable quality, but not when cleverness is coupled with a less than virtuous moral character. The following passage suggests that Aristotle believes women to have such a dreadful combination—cleverness and an odious moral character.

> Ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις γένεσι τὰ θήλεα μαλακώτερα καὶ κακουργότερα καὶ ἧττον ἁπλᾶ καὶ προπετέστερα καὶ περὶ τῶν τέκνων τροφὴν φροντιστικώτερα, τὰ δ' ἄρρενα ἐναντίως θυμωδέστερα καὶ ἀγριώτερα καὶ ἁπλούστερα καὶ ἧττον ἐπίβουλα. Τούτων δ' ἴχνη μὲν τῶν ἠθῶν ἐστιν ἐν πᾶσιν ὡς εἰπεῖν, μᾶλλον δὲ φανερώτερα ἐν τοῖς ἔχουσι μᾶλλον ἦθος καὶ μάλιστα ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ … Ἔστι δὲ καὶ δύσθυμον μᾶλλον τὸ θῆλυ τοῦ ἄρρενος καὶ δύσελπι, καὶ ἀναιδέστερον καὶ ψευδέστερον, εὐαπατητότερον δὲ καὶ μνημονικώτερον. (*History of Animals* VIII.1, 608a35-608b13)

[341] Exceptions include Tuana and Mayhew. See n. 313 and the discussion of Tuana's view in §3.

> With all other animals [besides bears and leopards] the female is softer in disposition, is more malicious, less simple-minded, more impulsive, and more attentive to the nurture of the young; the male, on the other hand, is more spirited, more savage, simpler and less treacherous. The traces of these characteristics are more or less visible everywhere, but they are especially visible where character is the more developed, and most of all in humankind…She is, furthermore, more prone to despondency and less hopeful than the man, more shameless, more false of speech, more deceptive, and of more retentive memory.

On the basis of this passage, it is clear that Aristotle finds fault, not with a woman's intellect, but rather with her character (*ēthos*). One of the adjectives he uses to describe her, 'shameless', is used by Homer, for instance, to describe Agamemnon in his quarrel with Achilles (*Il*.1.158) as well as the opportunist suitors of Penelope (*Od*.1.254). If Medea is Fortenbaugh's preferred spokeswomen for the reading that women are feeble creatures, unable to control their emotions such that they chronically act against their better judgments, then Clytemnestra is the embodiment of female duplicity on this proposed reading. She is resourceful, intelligent, and is not afraid to use these skills, combined with her womanly trickeries, at the service of an abhorrent end. The murder of Agamemnon is surely premeditated, showing that she is callous, wickedly calculative, and willing to go to any extreme to achieve her goals. It is precisely her moral depravity, I argue, that makes a woman's deliberation *akuron.*

That moral depravity has consequences for deliberation is a central doctrine of Aristotle's ethics. He believes that clever but corrupt individuals are capable logicians, who can easily hit upon the starting points of their deliberations. But while they achieve one kind of correctness in deliberation, viz., the mapping of the necessary steps to reach the goal and the weighing of the open options, these individuals do not deliberate well without qualification. Aristotle writes:

> ἐπεὶ δ’ ἡ ὀρθότης πλεοναχῶς, δῆλον ὅτι οὐ πᾶσα· ὁ γὰρ ἀκρατὴς καὶ ὁ φαῦλος ὃ προτίθεται δεῖν[342] ἐκ τοῦ λογισμοῦ τεύξεται, ὥστε ὀρθῶς ἔσται βεβουλευμένος, κακὸν δὲ μέγα εἰληφώς. (*EN* VI.9, 1142b17-19)
>
> Since ‘correctness’ is said in many ways, it is clear that [excellence in deliberation] is not any and every kind of accuracy; for the weak-willed person and the bad person will reach as a result of his calculation what he takes to be the right thing to do, so that he will have deliberated correctly, but he will have got for himself a great evil.

Far from being rewarded for her cleverness, the vicious person receives a foul outcome. The justification for this position is that if the state from which the agent acts is vice, then her deliberative faculty will grasp what is in fact an evil falsely believing it to be a good end of action. For Aristotle, if there is an error in the identification of one’s goal—the object of deliberation—then the entire deliberation itself is ineffective, even if the subsequent stages are conducted correctly, judging by their own internal standards.

Relating this analysis to the meaning of the ‘*akuron*’ adjective, we can see how the deliberation described in the *EN* VI.9 passage at issue is both ineffective and unauthoritative. It is ineffective because the agent ultimately fails to acquire what is really good (as opposed to merely appearing good), which is the object of her rational desire. To the extent that a person is properly her rational part (*EN* IX.8, 1169a1-2; X.7, 1178a2-7), what reason desires is also what the agent desires most of all. And since what the agent obtains is not what reason desires, this deliberation is also unauthoritative since practical reason is put to the service of satisfying the agent’s non-rational desires. This, I argue, is the fatal error with the deliberation of women.

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[342] I follow Rackham, who follows Richards in accepting ‘δεῖν’ rather than ‘ἰδεῖν’ for ‘εἰ δειν<ός>’ (H. Richards, *Aristotelica* (London: G. Richards ltd ,1915), 75). The salient point of the passage as I understand it does not, however, rest on either emendation.

One likely objection to this interpretation is its implication that women are believed to be vicious.[343] For the *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.9 passage above identifies two types of imperfect agent: the *akratēs* and the vicious person. If, on the current view, Aristotle does not find the deliberation of women faulty because they are *akratic*, then he must believe they are vicious. But surely, if women are vicious, the objection goes, then they will be excluded from the nobility of moral virtues—and, importantly, happiness. This implication is thought to be incompatible with what Aristotle has to say about a woman's capability, through motherhood, to partake in or perhaps even transcend the highest form of friendship (*EN* IX.7, 1167b32-1168a5, 25-28). The inclusion of women in friendship in its highest form confirms Aristotle's belief that full participation in political deliberation and action, the nobility of moral virtue, and the life of philosophy can and should be open to women.[344]

We should acknowledge, I think, that this objection is a *prima facie* challenge to any psychological interpretation of the meaning of the '*akuron'* adjective. Whether it is because she is naturally *akratic*[345] or I as argue, lacks the perceptive sensitivity to ascertain noble ends of actions, Aristotle thinks poorly of women's moral character—and the text is decisive on this point. But the biological-psychological interpretation which identifies women's inborn coldness

[343] I am grateful to Julie Ward for raising this objection in person at the conference on Sex, Gender, and Science in Ancient Greece hosted by the Interdisciplinary Center for Hellenic Studies at the University of South Florida in 2019.

[344] See this view in Ann Ward, "Mothering and the Sacrifice of Self: Women and Friendship in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*," *Thirdspace* 7 (2008): 32–57; Julie Ward, "Aristotle on *Philia*: The Beginning of a Feminist Ideal of Friendship," in *Feminism and Ancient Philosophy*, edited by J. Ward (New York: Routledge, 1996), 155-71. Other scholars also argue for the inclusion of women in the political life. Mary Nichols argues that in Aristotle's *Politics* an alternative to despotism and the development of free relations first emerges within the family. Moreover, by defining the relations between men and women in the family as political, Aristotle implies that women should participate with men in rule of the household. For Nichols, Aristotle's argument that political rule should govern the relations the between the sexes is based on his belief in their equality, making shared rule just, and in their differences, such as differences in virtue, making shared rule advantageous (Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen: A Study of Aristotle's Politics* (Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1992); "Toward a New – and Old – Feminism for Liberal Democracy," in *Finding a New Feminism: Rethinking the Woman Question for Liberal Democracy* edited by Pamela Grande Jensen (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996), 171-91). Levy argues that for Aristotle women should exercise political rule not only within the family but should assume political power within the city as well ("Does Aristotle Exclude Women from Politics," 402-03, 408, 410, 412, 415n18).

[345] I do not intend to identify *akratic* agents with vicious ones; my point is simply that Aristotle recognizes chronic *akrasia* as a defective character trait and that for as long as a person suffers from this condition, she cannot be virtuous and happy.

with the cause of their depravity would seem to be most vulnerable to this objection. One defender of such a reading goes as far as suggesting that women will never be morally virtuous (emphasis mine):

> Because women are the result of a process of reproduction that involves lower levels of concoction, they are colder and lacking in internal heat compared to men. And presumably because of this lack, women are also born naturally soft and with a deliberative capacity that naturally lacks executive control over their nonrational desires to avoid pain. And because of this, women are naturally weak willed due to weakness of the type concerned with pain, cannot be allowed to rule households or cities, *and will never be able to live life and flourish in a way that, according to Aristotle, constitutes the perfection of human nature*.[346]

The social-psychological reading rejects the explanation that the vices of women are biologically driven, which leaves open the possibility that at least some women can attain the nobility of moral virtues, at least of the derivative sort if they receive assistance from virtuous relatives. To defend this thesis I will need to establish the plausibility of a cluster of claims: that neither vice nor virtue arises naturally; that moral education is necessary for the cultivation of the perceptive sensitivity to ascertain noble ends of action; and that the women of Aristotle's time would have received such an education, if they're lucky, exclusively from their relatives in a domestic setting.

That neither vice nor virtue arises naturally is a central Aristotelian tenet. He tells us at the beginning of the main discussion of the moral virtues that none of them "arises in us by nature or contrary to nature" (οὔτ'ἄρα φύσει οὔτε παρὰ φύσιν ἐγγίνονται αἱ ἀρεταί, *EN* II.1,

[346] Leunissen, *From Natural Character to Moral Virtue in Aristotle,* 176. Richard Kraut also holds a similar view, arguing on the basis of Aristotle's remark in *Politics* VII.13 that to become morally good, one must be human and not another kind of animal and that "one must have a certain kind of body and a certain kind of soul" (ποιόν τινα τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὴν ψυχήν, 1332a41–2). The specific kind of body and specific kind of soul Aristotle speaks of is a masculine one. *Aristotle's Politics Books VII and VIII* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 131–2. Julie Ward has challenged Kraut's reading in the ground that "it does not square well with the other parts of the passage according to which nature may be altered by habit or contradicted by reason" and incompatible with Aristotle's claim that moral virtue arises neither by nature nor against nature (*EN* II.1, 1103a24). "Aristotle on *Physis*: Human Nature in the *Ethics* and *Politics*," *Polis 22* (2005): 278-308, 300-1.

1103a24; II.5, 1106a9-10), but the moral virtues "come about as a result of habit" (ἡ δ' ἠθικὴ ἐξ ἔθους περιγίνεται, *EN* II.1, 1103a17). On the basis of this claim, I understand Aristotle to be expressing the view that no one would acquire the moral virtues unless they have been so habituated. Equally important, everyone is "constituted by nature as to be able to acquire them and reach our complete perfection through habit" (πεφυκόσι μὲν ἡμῖν δέξασθαι αὐτάς, τελειουμένοις δὲ διὰ τοῦ ἔθους, *EN* II.1, 1103a 25–6). If this understanding is correct, then education through the instillation of habit would be a necessary means by which individuals develop their virtues of character. [347] Aristotle makes clear that learners would have to be given the occasions to practice acting well in order to develop the habit of acting well as follows:

> πράττοντες δὲ τὰ ἐν τοῖς δεινοῖς καὶ ἐθιζόμενοι φοβεῖσθαι ἢ θαρρεῖν οἳ μὲν ἀνδρεῖοι οἳ δὲ δειλοί. ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰ περὶ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας ἔχει καὶ τὰ περὶ τὰς ὀργάς· οἳ μὲν γὰρ σώφρονες καὶ πρᾶοι γίνονται, οἳ δ' ἀκόλαστοι καὶ ὀργίλοι, οἳ μὲν ἐκ τοῦ οὑτωσὶ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀναστρέφεσθαι, οἳ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ οὑτωσί. καὶ ἑνὶ δὴ λόγῳ ἐκ τῶν ὁμοίων ἐνεργειῶν αἱ ἕξεις γίνονται. (*EN* II.1, 1103b16-22)

> By doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become brave or cowardly. The same is true of appetites and feeling of anger; some men become temperate and good-tempered, others self-indulgent and irascible, by behaving in one way to the other in the appropriate circumstances. Thus, in one word, states arise out of like activities.

As a result of this process of moral education, the individual's appetites, desires, and emotive forces become amended, developed, and enriched such that she feels and desires the true noble ends of action.

[347] Scholars' opinions diverge with respect to the question just how moral teaching works for Aristotle, exactly. But on everyone's view, it is clear that the cultivation of moral character requires the process of habituation as a necessary constituent. The question is how we are to understand that process. As discussed in the last chapter, Myles Burnyeat seems to envisage the habituation period as a combination of two essentially different processes: first, a non-rational one where conditioning is the only means of instruction, and then a rational one where learners continue to be conditioned but where the conditioning is accompanied by description and explanation. On his view, learners begin by being told which acts are virtuous; then by repeatedly performing and enjoying them learners internalize this teaching and come to desire virtuous acts for their own sake (Burnyeat, "Aristotle on Learning to be Good"). I also discussed various objections to Burnyeat's theory in n. 293.

The text is unambiguous on the point that moral education is necessary for the cultivation of the virtue (*EN* II.3, 1104b13). Lacking the right moral training, especially in the early, developmental stage of one's life has the effect of permitting the person to find pleasure and pain in inappropriate sources. Aristotle makes clear this much when he, in explicit agreement with Plato, writes, "we ought to have been brought up in a particular way from our very youth, as Plato says, so as both to delight in and to be pained by the things that we ought" (δεῖ ἦχθαί πως εὐθὺς ἐκ νέων, ὡς ὁ Πλάτων φησίν, ὥστε χαίρειν τε καὶ λυπεῖσθαι οἷς δεῖ, *EN* II.3, 1104b11-2). Since moral virtue is concerned with pleasure and pain in this way, the correct conception of the noble object as the starting point of the deliberation will not be available to a person who has been corrupted by excessive desire for pleasure or aversion from pain—someone lacking the appropriate moral education (*EN* 6.5, 1140b11–21).[348]

Female children, in comparison to their male counterparts, lack just the kind of moral education required for the development of virtuous perceptive sensitivity to select worthy ends of action. It is crucial to stress that on the account of practical rationality that I defend in the previous chapter, the inability to ascertain worthy ends is a failure of practical rationality. For to be practically rational is not simply a matter of having the correct instrumental design or action plan, but also to have the correct orientation to be properly in tune with truly good ends. However, the fact that women, on Aristotle's view, lack the correct motivation orientation has to do with the fact that they are deprived of the formal instructions and opportunities to practice and foster virtuous behavior. For in the archaic and classical Greek world, women were excluded from the public sphere and participated only to an extremely limited degree in other areas of

[348] See also the discussion in chapter 3.4.

community life. Traditional culture imagined her duty and privilege as primarily reproduction.[349] Men received a formal education, while women are not educated outside of the home. The consequence of this arrangement is that women are unable to actualize, as it were, their potentiality to cultivate the moral virtue, at least not without external aid from their relatives.[350]

To the extent possible, any contemporary women would have received moral training exclusively from their relatives at home. And the occasions to put these beliefs into action which would be available to her are limited to the management of domestic affairs. For example, a woman may be given the opportunity to act justly through the fair distribution of wages or through the determination of what punishment is fair for a negligent servant. [351] The fact that a woman must rely exclusively on relatives for moral education—and ultimately the attainment of virtue—is instructive for our understanding of why a woman's deliberative capacity is *akuron*, especially with a view to how the *akuron* adjective is used elsewhere. Consider the following usage from *de Motu Animalium.*

> Ἀλλὰ πᾶσα ἡ ἐν αὐτῷ ἠρεμία ὅμως ἄκυρος, ἂν μή τι ἔξωθεν ᾖ ἁπλῶς ἠρεμοῦν καὶ ἀκίνητον. (3, 698b8-10)
>
> Any rest within the animal is nonetheless ineffectual, if there is not something outside which is unqualifiedly at rest and unmoved.

The point of this line is that in addition to the mover and moved within the animal, there must also be something external to it that is not moved with its motion. One such external thing may

[349] A. Wolicki, "The Education of Women in Ancient Greece" in *A Companion to Ancient Education*, edited by W.M. Bloomer (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 305-320.
[350] Ward hints at this view in the conclusion of her article, "Aristotle on *Physis*: Human Nature in the *Ethics* and *Politics*," which reads, "Aristotle's distinctions about moral potentiality and specifically, the fact that the primary capacity for moral virtue counts as a first level potentiality that must be worked upon by moral training contain the seed for a more revisionary view about the effects of moral education on human nature than what one finds in *Pol*." (308).
[351] These are the type of activities that the Latin text of *Economics* III describes as fitting activities for a woman within the household.

be a resisting surface, which the animal uses to support itself against, allowing it to move. If the surface does not offer sufficiently stable resistance, motion will not be possible. In the context of women's deliberative capacity, if her external conditions are hindering (e.g., if she has little access to acquire correct moral beliefs or the occasions to practice deliberating and acting well), then whatever natural deliberative capacity she has would be similarly ineffectual. She will not be able to deliberate and make sound decisions despite how quick-witted she may be.

But even if women are educated at home with the assistance of their relatives, they would only be able to attain a secondary, derivative kind of nobility of virtue. This is because for Aristotle, the development of moral and intellectual virtues is not a private affair or achievement but fundamentally a public one. To be and to remain fully virtuous, one needs to live in a society with a correct constitution, and under such a constitution the legislators should be particularly concerned with the education of the young. Aristotle makes clear that no matter how morally vigilant a person's parents and teachers are, "it is difficult for someone to get a correct training for virtue from his youth if he has not been brought up under correct laws" (ἐκ νέου δ' ἀγωγῆς ὀρθῆς τυχεῖν πρὸς ἀρετὴν χαλεπὸν μὴ ὑπὸ τοιούτοις τραφέντα νόμοις·, *EN* X.9, 1179b31-2). Indeed, Aristotle sees it as the task of the legislator to make his citizens morally good, and that whether a good constitution is distinguished from a bad one is determined by whether or it accomplishes this task (*EN* II.1, 1103b3-6).

If this reading is right, then it might be thought that Aristotle would advocate that legislators be attentive to the education of women. He does just this. In the following passage, Aristotle warns of the outcome of neglecting the education of women by using Spartan affairs as an example.

> ὥσπερ γὰρ οἰκίας μέρος ἀνὴρ καὶ γυνή, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ πόλιν ἐγγὺς τοῦ δίχα διῃρῆσθαι δεῖ νομίζειν εἴς τε τὸ τῶν ἀνδρῶν πλῆθος καὶ τὸ τῶν γυναικῶν, ὥστ᾽ ἐν ὅσαις πολιτείαις φαύλως ἔχει τὸ περὶ τὰς γυναῖκας, τὸ ἥμισυ τῆς πόλεως εἶναι δεῖ νομίζειν ἀνομοθέτητον. ὅπερ ἐκεῖ συμβέβηκεν· ὅλην γὰρ τὴν πόλιν ὁ νομοθέτης εἶναι βουλόμενος καρτερικήν, κατὰ μὲν τοὺς ἄνδρας φανερός ἐστι τοιοῦτος ὤν, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν γυναικῶν ἐξημέληκεν· ζῶσι γὰρ ἀκολάστως πρὸς ἅπασαν ἀκολασίαν καὶ τρυφερῶς. (*Pol*. II.9, 1269b13-1270a14)
>
> For, a husband and a wife being each a part of every family, the state may be considered as about equally divided into men and women; and, therefore, in those states in which the condition of the women is bad, half the city may be regarded as having no laws. And this is what has actually happened at Sparta; the legislator wanted to make the whole state hardy, and he has carried out his intention in the case of the men, but he has neglected the women, who live in every sort of intemperance and luxury.

The ancient sources agree that Spartan women dedicated themselves to intensive physical exercise.[352] Presumably, the training that the Aristotle identifies as missing in the education of Spartan women is something along the lines of moral education. When the state neglects to educate its female citizens, the text suggests, they have a preference for intemperance and luxury over noble objects of choice, such as virtue and wisdom.[353] This is the result we should expect in light of Aristotle's position, as we saw, that moral education has to do with guiding the learner to take pleasure and pain in the right sources. The morally cultivated person would not find pleasure in the pursuit of luxury and the gratification of her appetitive desires. For these ends are unworthy of being the final end of one's actions, a thesis prominently in Aristotle's ethics, for instance, in his comparison of the various types of life at the beginning of the *Ethics* (I.5, 1095b15-1096a9).[354] That the topic of moral education is an issue present in Aristotle's mind

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[352] According to Plato, for instance, Spartan girls were not taught weaving (*Laws* VIII 806a). Instead, Spartan girls were to practice running, wrestling, pankration, discus and javelin throwing, horse riding, sword fighting, and the Spartan bibasis.
[353] Plato uses the Spartan example to make a similar point about the importance of educating women, writing, "A legislator should go to the whole way and not stick at half-measures; he mustn't just regulate the men and allow the women to live as they like and wallow in expensive luxury" (τέλεον γὰρ καὶ οὐ διήμισυν δεῖν τὸν νομοθέτην εἶναι, τὸ θῆλυ μὲν ἀφιέντα τρυφᾶν καὶ ἀναλίσκειν διαίταις ἀτάκτως χρώμενον, τοῦ δὲ ἄρρενος ἐπιμεληθέντα, *Laws* VIII 806c3-5).
[354] Martha Nussbaum points out that the Greek suspiciousness of the life of money making is so profound that people of good background typically would not take salaried posts; even the work of running estates was frequently delegated to women, as confirmed by the texts of the *Economics* and *Politics*, since this base type of occupation is not suited to free men ("Aristotle, Politics, and Human Capabilities: A Response to Antony, Arneson, Charlesworth, and Mulgan," n.21, 113).

while he reflects on the condition of women is suggested by the conclusion of chapter thirteen of *Politics* I, the very one in which he makes his claim about the deliberative capacity of women. There, he urges:

> ἀναγκαῖον πρὸς τὴν πολιτείαν βλέποντας παιδεύειν καὶ τοὺς παῖδας καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας, εἴπερ τι διαφέρει πρὸς τὸ τὴν πόλιν εἶναι σπουδαίαν καὶ <τὸ> τοὺς παῖδας εἶναι σπουδαίους καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας σπουδαίας. ἀναγκαῖον δὲ διαφέρειν· αἱ μὲν γὰρ γυναῖκες ἥμισυ μέρος τῶν ἐλευθέρων, ἐκ δὲ τῶν παίδων οἱ κοινωνοὶ γίνονται τῆς πολιτείας. (*Pol.* 1.13, 1260b9-1260b20)
>
> Women and children must be trained by education with an eye to the constitution, if the excellences of either of them are supposed to make any difference in the excellences of the state. And they must make a difference: for the children grow up to be citizens, and half the free persons in a state are women.

The fact that Aristotle ends the first book of the *Politics*—and the infamous discussion of women's deliberative ability—with the recommendation that women be educated establishes the connection between their inability to make sound judgments and their lack of education. And therefore, to return at last to the main claim of this section and the previous, the solution to the female's ineffective deliberative condition is for legislators to be particularly concerned, or more concerned, with the education of the female population.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued for a social-psychological reading: that the *akuron* remark is directly about the souls of men and women—particularly, their moral character—but the relevant difference between the constitutions of their souls is not solely a function of biological forces. Unlike all versions of the political reading, this reading is committed to the thesis that political inequality between the sexes is grounded on psychological differences, while insisting that women are not condemned to a defective psychological condition due to their believed biological limitations, in contrast to the prevalent psychological readings. The social-psychological reading

therefore offers an alternative to the widespread interpretations of Aristotle's puzzling claim about the deliberative ability of women. It is possible for a combination of different factors—ranging from social factors shaping reasons and choice to biological constitution—to affect the deliberative ability of women. But if the argument of this chapter is correct, then the female's deficiency has a great deal to do with hindering external conditions rather than her biological limitations. And the deliberative capacity of a female child becomes defective but that of a freeborn male child does not because he has access to the prerequisite moral instruction and the occasions to practice acting and choosing rightly. She would only have limited exposures to such training within her home and by the goodwill of male relatives. Aristotle clearly thinks the negligence to cultivate virtues in women is a mistake. For where "the state of women is bad, almost half of them are not happy" (ὅσοις γὰρ τὰ κατὰ γυναῖκας φαῦλα … σχεδὸν κατὰ τὸ ἥμισυ οὐκ εὐδαιμονοῦσιν, *Rhet*. I.5, 1361a10).

Concluding Remarks

In these concluding remarks, I hope to accomplish three related goals. The first is to offer a summary of the dissertation's major claims and findings while situating them in a wider context. The second is to acknowledge the relevant issues that I have excluded from the scope of the dissertation. Finally, I discuss potential future directions for a fully realized version of the view defended here.

I introduced the following question at the beginning of this dissertation. How should an agent reason about what to do? According to the theory of practical rationality emerging from this study, Aristotle would offer a twofold answer. He would say that reasoning, engaged in correctly, should lead a person to acquire certain ends and to correctly determine the best available means to achieve these ends. As we saw in chapter one, Aristotle would say that we can reason about what to do by engaging in deliberation, the process of identifying and selecting the most effective pathway to our ends. But Aristotle would not—unlike many contemporary philosophers and economists who are considering the same question—assume that agents always know just what their ends ought to be. The primary goal of chapter three was to show that Aristotelian practical reasoning provides for the possibility of finding out just what ends are rational for anyone to have, preeminently, by aiding agents in navigating the landscape of value in the course of making life choices.

However, not every decision-maker will be an ideal agent. Aristotle is aware that some of us may fail to act in reflective ways for what is best at times, falling short of the ideal of practical rationality. We have now seen in chapter four that women, in Aristotle's view, are one such kind of decision-makers. But they fall short of the ideal of practical rationality, if the argument in the last chapter is right, neither due to lack of intelligence nor any strict biological condition. Instead, their shortcomings are primarily the result of the obstructing social conditions to which they are subject. The social-psychological reading, though not as forgiving as the political reading, also does not commit Aristotle's position on the deliberative ability of women to a misogynistic physiology as the biological version of the psychological reading would imply.[355] Following this social-psychological reading, we may sensibly give up Aristotle's misogynistic physiology without doing away with his theory of practical rationality, especially with respect to how we are to understand his view on the deliberation of women. What the social-psychological reading does reveal, however, is Aristotle's willingness to subjugate individuals to subordinate political stations based on their perceived irrationality.[356] It also exposes, more broadly, the moral, epistemological, and psychological underpinnings of Aristotle's political views as well as the importance of being rational in his theories of human conduct and political interactions.

That Aristotle places a great emphasis on rationality in his theories of human conduct, and indeed human flourishing, is supportive of the idea that the function of practical reason, as he understands it, is both extensive and highly complex. In this respect, Aristotle's conception of

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[355] Of course, the fact that Aristotle believes in a misogynist physiology is uncontestable. He notoriously claims, for instance, that females are, as it were, defective males (τὸ γὰρ θῆλυ ὥσπερ ἄρρεν ἐστὶ πεπηρωμένον, *GA* II, 737a). My point here, though, is that his claim about the deliberative ability of women in that famous passage in *Politics* I.13 is not grounded in this misogynist physiology.

[356] This feature of Aristotle's view may appear repugnant to members of liberal democracy such as ours, but it puts Aristotle's view in harmony with that of other mainstream ancient philosophers, such as Plato in his discussion of how the *kallipolis* is to be governed in the *Republic*, for example.

practical reason stands in stark contrast with—and presents an alternative to—the over-narrow construal of reason commonly found in the considerations of contemporary philosophers and social scientists. It is nevertheless important to stress the fact that, although Aristotle decidedly has a non-Humean preference for reason over the passions, it is not a dispassionate view of rationality either. On this topic, Kant provides an instructive point of comparison since his view on practical reason is regularly interpreted to be diametrically opposed to that of Hume. Against Hume, Aristotle would agree with Kant that reason can be the source of unconditional demands, i.e., demands that do not presuppose any particular ends or inclinations. However, he would point out that reason is not the only morally significant source of such demands that human beings can ever have access to.[357] This is because Aristotle is sensitive to our divided human nature[358] and the ethical significance of pleasure, the means by which our irrational half will be persuaded to want to do those moral demands and actions which reason identifies as best. As I have argued in chapter three, this sensitivity to our divided human nature is at the crux of Aristotle oft-misunderstood claim that virtue makes the goal right. We should take Aristotle, not to have a quasi-Humean view as suggested in recent years, but rather as occupying an attractive middle ground between the Humean and Kantian positions on the issue of practical reason.

It is also important to acknowledge that there may be sensible causes to object to Aristotle's view on practical reason, as they are interpreted in this study. One such objection may be addressed directly at his apparent commonsense way of thinking about moral and practical problems. Indeed, the dialectical method of reasoning about ends discussed in chapter three is

[357] Kant is standardly taken to hold this view. See for instance this assumption in Korsgaard's "The Normativity of Instrumental Reason."
[358] See Introduction §2 on the division of the soul into its rational and non-rational parts.

often construed as a method of commonsense ethical thinking.[359] It is deeply pluralistic, expressed through non-consequentialist norms, and appears to lack the universality, and precision many philosophers demand of theoretically respectable claims. In the eloquent words of Jonathan Barnes, "It [the dialectical method] assumes, depressingly, that the answers to our ethical questions are already to hand, enshrined in τά ένδοξα; and it restricts our intellectual grazing to pastures the common herd has already cropped."[360] Indeed, why should we assume that the *endoxa* are the proper starting points of moral and practical inquiries?

A common response that scholars have offered makes use of the idea that the human mind, when properly oriented, is apt to find the truth, or something close to it—a central Aristotelian doctrine.[361] The following passages are frequently cited as evidence.

> γνώμην δ' ἔχειν καὶ σύνεσιν καὶ νοῦν. σημεῖον δ'ὅτι καὶ ταῖς ἡλικίαις οἰόμεθα ἀκολουθεῖ, καὶ ἥδε ἡ ἡλικία νοῦν ἔχει καὶ γνώμην, ὡς τῆς φύσεως αἰτίας οὔσης. (*EN* VI.12, 1143b 7-10)
>
> [People are thought] to have by nature judgment, understanding, and reason. The evidence of this is the fact that we think our powers correspond to our time of life, and that a particular age brings with it reason and judgement; this implies that nature is the cause.
>
> οἱ ἄνθρωποι πρὸς τὸ ἀληθὲς πεφύκασιν ἱκανῶς καὶ τὰ πλείω τυγχάνουσι τῆς ἀληθείας· διὸ πρὸς τὰ ἔνδοξα στοχαστικῶς ἔχειν τοῦ ὁμοίως ἔχοντος καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειάν ἐστιν. (*Rhet.* I.1.1355a15–18. Cf. *Met*. I.1, 980a21)
>
> Human beings have a nature that is sufficient for the truth, and for the most part they do arrive at the truth. That is why someone who is good at hitting upon the *endoxa* is similarly good at hitting upon the truth.

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[359] See for instance, Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus* (Berolini: G. Reimer, 1870), 203a27; Stewart, *Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics*, 123; Joachim, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, 219.

[360] "Aristotle and the Method of Ethics," 497.

[361] See this view defended by both Barnes and Kraut, for example. Barnes, "Aristotle and the Method of Ethics"; Kraut, "How to Justify Ethical Propositions: Aristotle's Method."

Certainty, we need not share the optimism expressed in these passages for the capacity of human minds to grasp truths or for the existence of a natural teleology which grounds this optimism. We cannot infer that whatever anyone believes is true;[362] nor even whatever everyone believes is true. Aristotle indeed offers no argument to show that truths tend to be *endoxa*. Still, our common experience and perception—the body of *endoxa*—is the only set of empirical data that we can have collective access to. Aristotle relies on the *endoxa* to provide the raw materials on which reason operates and puzzles over, I would contend, in a way not too different from the way contemporary analytic philosophers rely on intuitions to justify or refute other claims.[363] If we do not tend to be suspicious of those contemporary philosophers who use intuitions as evidence, then perhaps Aristotle's method is not as dubiously commonsensical as some may believe.

Thus far, I have been emphasizing the contrast between Aristotle's more wide-ranging notion of practical reason as compared to the current prevalent way of thinking about practical reason. But there are also striking similarities and ingenuities of his view that are worthy of noting in these next paragraphs. The first is that, on the model of deliberation that chapter one attributed to Aristotle, he has an understanding of deliberation that comes surprisingly close to what experts know about how people make decisions in realistic conditions. Aristotle recognizes that deliberation, being a multi-stage process, requires a tremendous amount of time and effort. As such, it is a decision-making process which people tend to reserve for momentous rather than trivial decisions. Moreover, just as Aristotle does not assume that agents always know just what

[362] The opinions of those who are mad, or of mere children, will not qualify as *endoxa*, since they lack the basic reasonableness of normal adults and are severely limited in their experience (*EE* I.3, 1214b28–9).

[363] Nevin Climenhaga, "Intuitions are Used as Evidence in Philosophy," *Mind*, (2018): 69–104. For a critique of the reliance on commonsense, see, H. Cappelen, *Philosophy without intuitions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). And for a defense, see David Chalmers, "Intuitions in philosophy: a minimal defense" *Philosophical Studies* 171**,** (2014): 535–544.

their goals are, so too he does not assume that they know just what lines of action are open to them, if any. His theory of deliberation thus takes into account these constraints of decision-making under non-ideal conditions.

It is not possible, in highlighting Aristotle's ingenuities here, to neglect mentioning his analysis of preference and its logical structure. The text of *Topics* III reveals his awareness, for example, of the principle of organic unity and of preference as a comparative concept concerning the ranking of two or more options based on features commonly shared among them. Most significantly, if the argument of chapter two is compelling, Aristotle indeed connects desirability with probability in his theory of preference-ranking, and decision more broadly. As I have suggested in that chapter, the deficit of Aristotle's theory is that he lacks a mathematical means to express the various measures of the possibility space. This limitation goes some length to explain why some of the rules he articulates in *Topics* III are subject to counterexamples, a feature Aristotle himself is fully aware of. Even if Aristotle lacks the technical resources to articulate a formal and complete logic of preference, we can at least conclude, in agreement with Rescher, that "the founder of the 'logic of preference' is the father of logic itself."[364]

The examination of Aristotle's view on practical reason in this dissertation confirms the widely expressed view that the mainstream ancient thinkers consider exercising and perfecting reason a prerequisite for leading a good life.[365] At the same time, the extensive and highly complex account of practical reason attributed to Aristotle in this study runs counter to the common overly narrow construal of reason as a mere formal ability to process data. The

[364] "The Logic of Preference," *Topics in Philosophical Logic* 17 (1968): 287-320, 287.
[365] See this view, for instance, in Frede and Striker's *Rationality in Greek Thought* and Rabbås' *The Quest for the Good Life: Ancient Philosophers on Happiness.*

significance of practical rationality in Aristotle's practical and moral philosophy encapsulates ancient Greek philosophers' concern with the question that occupied, for example, Socrates in the *Gorgias*: How should we live if we are to be happy? While the various strands of ancient Greek philosophy—including the hedonist brand of the Epicureans—recommend living in accordance with reason, the particular details of this recommendation are nebulous. This dissertation has been an attempt to reconstruct Aristotle's account of how we use reason to make decisions about what to do, and indeed how to live well. A natural continuation of this project is to extend this line of inquiry to examine how other prominent ancient Greek thinkers conceive of the role of reason in guiding decision-making, especially the Hellenistic philosophers in light of their emphasis on the practical dimensions of philosophy.

There are, however, still many lingering questions and open ends to explore about the Aristotelian theory of practical reason defended here. In my discussion of deliberation in chapter one, I hinted, in agreement with Cooper and Corcilius, that the practical syllogism should not be interpreted as a component of deliberation.[366] However, I did not offer an explicit argument in defense of this claim. I take it that a full discussion on the topic of the practical syllogism as it relates to the theory of deliberation defended here would be a fruitful area of further inquiry. Another question has to do with the precise connection between the two aspects of practical reason discussed in chapter three: the aspects of motivational orientation and of design. Although I have suggested that they have different truth conditions, and that practical reason may be evaluated under either or both of these aspects, I am convinced that this is not the full story.

There is also an element of Aristotle's position on the deliberative ability of women which requires greater attention than I was able to give in chapter four: the contribution of nature

[366] See n.31

(*physis*) to the formation of moral character, especially in relation to Aristotle's view that "the male is by nature fitter for command than the female" (τό τε γὰρ ἄρρεν φύσει τοῦ θήλεος ἡγεμονικώτερον, *Pol*. I.12, 1259b2-3). One possible development of the work in that chapter is to examine, through a more sustained analysis of *physis*, the extent to which Aristotle thinks moral and political nature is amenable to external influences such as education.

Lastly, there is still so much more to discuss, and to study, in Aristotle's *Topics* III. I take the main contribution of chapter two to be articulating, not a complete Aristotelian theory of preference, but rather the various features of the theory that have been hitherto ignored or misunderstood. Specifically: Aristotle's awareness that both the desirability and probability of an option should have an impact on whether or not the option should be chosen; an articulation of the principle of organic unity; and the analysis of the concept of preference that shares multiple points of contact with our own. My treatment of these issues here, although it may seem lengthy, is actually much shorter, or at least covers much less materials, than the chapter I initially intended to write. That chapter would a develop a systematic Aristotelian theory of preference and examine more closely whether Aristotle connects his notion of frequency with the degree of belief warranted by evidence in his epistemology. I would still like to write that chapter someday. In the meantime, I hope to spark some renewed interest in *Topics* III and recast its place in the history of the logic of decision.

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