

"Why Should Philosophers Rule?: Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Protrepticus*"*

Unless . . . philosophers become kings in the cities or those whom we now call kings and rulers philosophize truly and adequately and there is a conjunction of political power and philosophy . . . there can be no cessation of evils . . . for cities nor, I think, for the human race.¹ (*Rep.* V.473c11-d6)

I. INTRODUCTION

This is perhaps the most famous passage in all of Plato. Some readers may think that further analysis of why Plato thinks that philosophers should rule is unnecessary, because they already sufficiently understand why Plato believes that this claim is true, and thus already adequately understand Plato's political philosophy, at any rate in this respect (at least around the time of the *Republic*). Similarly, some may think that they already adequately understand Aristotle's reactions to such claims and, more generally, his views on the relation between philosophic understanding and good or just political rule. I hope that this paper may, at least in part, help to suggest that such confidence is misplaced.

Plato's and Aristotle's positions on these and related issues are quite complex and depend, sometimes in unobvious ways, on other aspects of their views. Nor would it be safe to assume that each held the same view, with the same foundations, throughout his career. A proper examination of these topics would require much more than a single paper. Here I shall confine my

discussion mostly to Plato's *Republic* in which he first makes the claim that philosophers should rule and a relatively unknown work by Aristotle, the *Protrepticus*. Although, as section III will discuss in more detail, the extant text of the *Protrepticus*, is not complete, I have two reasons for focusing on it. First, it is clearly an early work that precedes Aristotle's better known and more extended treatments of these issues in the *Eudemian Ethics*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and the *Politics*. Understanding the *Protrepticus* will thus help to put Aristotle's later views into context. Second, as I shall argue below, the *Protrepticus* displays interesting similarities and dissimilarities to the views of the *Republic*. Even limiting my analysis to these two works, my discussion will be somewhat exploratory and programmatic. But I hope to raise some lines of thought that may merit further reflection.

II. PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*

Plato has, I think, at least three related but distinct sorts of reasons for these claims about the political importance of philosophic understanding in the *Republic*. First, there is a motivational claim. If those who are to govern are "lovers of ruling" (*Rep.* VII.521b4-5), they will not seek the good of the whole city, but will pursue political office simply for their own benefit, and will thus engender civic strife. Only philosophers have a life that they prefer so strongly to the political life that they "look down on" that life (*Rep.* VII.521b1-2, 520e-521b). Thus only philosophers, Plato thinks, will seek the good of the whole city when they rule. Second, the question of who should rule notoriously leads to bitter, intractable, and destabilizing conflicts between social and economic

elites and the masses. Rule by philosophers, Plato at least sometimes suggests, can forestall such controversy. All citizens can be brought to accept that the rule of philosophers is in their own interest (*Rep.* VI.499d-501e).

Neither of these claims is unproblematic, but I shall turn to Plato's best known justification for the rule of philosophers, and this is epistemic.²

Philosophers alone have knowledge (*epistêmê*) of what really is, e.g., just, good, and fine and this makes them better at ruling.

If he [the philosopher] should come to be compelled to put what he sees there [in the realm of the Platonic Forms] into people's characters, whether into a single person or into a populace, instead of shaping only his own, do you think he will be a poor craftsman of moderation and justice and all forms of ordinary popular virtue . . . no city will ever find happiness until its outline is sketched by painters who use the divine model . . . [after they wiped clean the city and the characters of men] they would sketch the outline of the constitution . . . And I suppose that, as they work, they would look often in each direction, towards the natures of justice, the fine, moderation, and the like, on the one hand, and towards those they are trying to put into human beings, on the other. And in this way, they would mix and blend the various ways of life in the city until they produced a human image based on what Homer too called 'the divine form and image' . . . And they would erase one thing, I suppose, and draw in another until they had made characters for

human beings that the gods would love as much as possible. (*Rep.*
VI.500d5-501c3)

Socrates tells the philosophers who have emerged from the Cave and are
contemplating the Forms:

each of you in turn must go down to live in the common dwelling place
of the others and grow accustomed to seeing in the dark. When you are
used to it, you will see vastly better than the people there. And
because you have seen the truth about the fine, the just, and the good,
you will know each image for what it is and also that of which it is the
image. Thus, for you and for us, the city will be governed, not like most
cities nowadays, by people who fight over shadows . . . but by people
who are awake rather than dreaming (*Rep.* VII.520c1-d1).

Similarly, he asks what is meant to be an easy question:

Then whom will you compel to become guardians of the city, if not those
who have the best understanding of these things through which a city is
best governed (*Rep.* 521b7-9)?

I cannot here consider the possible development of Plato's views in later dialogues such as the *Statesman* and the *Laws*. But the following are some of the most basic questions about the *Republic's* position.

For exactly which political functions is philosophic knowledge required and for what is it required? To begin, such knowledge seems required for, to put it as neutrally as possible, the goodness or correctness of political decisions. But, first, which decisions? Is it required only for the great, and presumably infrequent, task of designing *de novo* the constitution of a new city? Or does the need extend more deeply than that and reach to revising the constitution (in perhaps less than fundamental ways), passing laws, making decrees, issuing judicial verdicts, or making the sorts of decisions entrusted to magistrates by the constitution?³ It may be tempting to think that the need for philosophic knowledge is greatest for the most fundamental decisions, e.g., those about the end (*telos*) and basic structure of the constitution, but in section III, I shall consider a line of thought that may make such temptation resistible. Relatedly, are there some subject matters that especially require philosophic knowledge for good decision-making? Is a philosopher especially needed for setting up the educational system and perhaps less necessary for, e.g., "matters concerning war" (e.g. *Laches* 198e2-199a3)? Second, for exactly what kind of goodness or correctness is philosophic knowledge needed? Is it that the city and its citizens will fail to be happy (or as happy as possible) without such knowledge? Or is it that even if a set of laws succeeded in making

the citizens happy, such laws would fail to be (fully) correct or good or just or to possess some other excellence unless based on such knowledge?

The requirement for philosophic knowledge might be justified synchronically or diachronically; it might be justified by its overall effects or, more narrowly, purely for its epistemic features. True belief, for example, might do as well as philosophic knowledge as long as it remains, but true belief is more precarious and may be undermined over time. Knowledge might do better than true belief in inhibiting bad non-rational motivations, but this might only be an indirect effect of the features that make knowledge knowledge.

In the *Republic*, in my view, Plato requires that a virtuous person possess philosophic knowledge and that virtuous actions be based on such knowledge.⁴ So suppose you and I both perform "the same action", e.g. paying a debt in normal circumstances, but your action is based on your philosophic knowledge, while I lack all knowledge. Plato holds that only you are virtuous and act virtuously and he can defend this judgment by appealing to the greater value or goodness of the state that you are in: only you really appreciate the values at stake in, and expressed by, your choice. This is important, since Plato need not (and probably does not) think that ordinary, decent non-philosophers (especially those who have received the non-philosophic, "musical" education designed for the auxiliaries in the just city) and philosophers differ much in the overwhelming majority of actions typically open to assessment as virtuous or vicious: both, for example, avoid theft, the

neglect of parents and the betrayal of friends (see, e.g., *Rep.* IV.442d-443a). This is consistent with the fact that interlocutors, such as Polemarchus, offer defective definitions of justice (in his case, one that entails that theft practiced against enemies is just, *Rep.* I.334ab): Polemarchus and the other interlocutors reject these definitions when their consequence are pointed out and, in any case, they have not received the appropriate musical education. This is not to say that there is complete agreement between philosophers' and non-philosophers' judgments: even properly educated auxiliaries might have qualms about founding the city by expelling all citizens over age ten or the use of lies in carrying out the city's eugenic policies (*Rep.* VII.540e-541a, V.459de).

It would, in principle, be open to Plato to hold an analogous position with respect to political functions. On this view, a city governed by philosophers or a constitution and laws that are the expression of philosophic knowledge are better, more correct, or more just simply on similar perfectionist grounds. This line of thought is not totally absent from Plato: in the *Republic*, in order for the city to possess the virtue of wisdom, its rulers must possess knowledge (*Rep.* IV.428b-429a). Since only someone who knows at least some Forms can possess knowledge (*Rep.* V.475d-480a), the rulers must know at least some Forms and thus must be philosophers. This is not, however, the primary thrust of Plato's remarks in the *Republic*. In the passages quoted above, especially 520c and 500d-501c, what the metaphors draw our attention to is the idea that mistakes will be made by non-philosophers, and Plato seems to suggest that on any occasion of decision, the non-philosopher is very likely

to go wrong. Philosophic knowledge is needed for ruling in order to avoid actual substantive error.

The sort of knowledge that Plato stresses in the passages quoted above is, in the first place, knowledge of what the just, the fine, and the good are. Having such knowledge requires having knowledge of the corresponding Forms and at least a necessary condition of knowing a Form is knowing its definition. Among the Forms, the Form of the Good has a special place: "once they have seen the Good itself, they must each in turn put the city, its citizens, and themselves in order, using it as their model" (*Rep.* VII.540a8-b1). Such knowledge of the Form of the Good will require, in some way or another, having knowledge of many (perhaps all) of the Forms, especially those concerned with values and virtue.⁵ Plato here makes it clear that what is particularly significant about such knowledge is that it provides the correct pattern for ordering one's own character, those of others, and the city.

Indeed, it is such ordering of individual characters that is the main way by which the city itself is to be ordered. The philosopher alone has a grasp of the "single target" at which all their actions, including their political actions, are to aim (*Rep.* VII.519c). This goal, at its most general, is to make the city as happy as possible, and since virtue is vastly the most important factor in happiness, this will involve making the citizens virtuous. Moreover, since virtue requires wisdom and this requires knowledge and, in particular, knowledge of the Forms, the philosopher will aim at producing a philosophic character in those capable of it, and doing what he can to improve characters

of the rest of the city. Thus the knowledge that Plato stresses as justifying the rule of philosophers is, in the first place, knowledge of the Forms, of the goodness of such knowledge, and of the sort of education necessary to inculcate it.

This is not to say that this is the only kind of knowledge that helps the philosopher to govern. The philosopher's knowledge of the Forms provides the basis for the laws and institutions he will introduce and knowledge, e.g., of the Form of Justice, that is, knowledge of what justice is, which requires knowledge of the definition of its essence, will in some cases improve judgments about how far possible or actual laws or institutions are just (cf. *Rep.* VI.484cd, VII.520cd). But it is, I think, quite important to see that Plato does not seem to believe that it requires expert philosophic judgment based on knowledge of the Forms to make correct judgments about a wide variety of laws. He dismisses the need to specify laws about "market business, such as the private contracts people make with one another in the marketplace, for example, or contracts with manual laborers" (*Rep.* IV.425c10-d1), and criticizes those who

pass laws on the subjects we have just been enumerating and then amend them, and always think they will find a way to stop cheating on contracts and the other things I mentioned, not realizing that they are really just cutting off a Hydra's head . . . the true lawgiver should not bother with that form of law or constitution, either in a badly governed

city or in a well-governed one—in the former, because it is useless and accomplishes nothing; in the latter, because anyone could discover some of these things, while the others follow automatically from the ways of life we have established (*Rep.* IV.426e4-427a7).

Plato is not claiming that getting right these sorts of laws is easy merely for philosophers who have knowledge of the Forms; the above passage occurs before the introduction of genuine philosophers and what Plato is confident about here is rather the capacities of those who have been raised in the entirely non-philosophical, musical education prescribed for those who will be auxiliaries. People who receive such an education will be able, without recourse to philosophers or philosophic knowledge, to make correct judgments about these sorts of laws and institutions. Philosophic knowledge, even philosophic knowledge about value, is not needed for correctness about these matters.

Similarly, Plato assumes that basically everyone can see that things such as embezzlement, theft, and betrayal of comrades are unjust (*Rep.* IV.442e-443b). Indeed, much more basic aspects of the constitution do not seem to require philosophic knowledge based on knowledge of the Forms. Plato argues for the three great innovations of the *Republic's* ideal city—the education of women, the community of women and children, and the rule of philosophers—to people who have no knowledge of Forms, and do not seem even to have true beliefs about the content of the definition of, e.g., the Form of Justice.⁶ His

arguments for these claims are not presented as deductions from truths about the Forms or cases of subsuming these innovations under rules or principles drawn from, e.g., the definition of the Form of Justice. Discovery of these arguments might require a philosopher, and if one lacks knowledge, it is always possible to be persuaded out of one's true beliefs, but it is not at all clear that Plato thinks that well-brought up non-philosophers will go disastrously wrong even on these controversial and difficult issues.

Where else might a philosopher's knowledge be required?⁷ Calculation of the "nuptial number," that is, roughly, the mathematics that determine what the right times are to have the members of the two upper classes procreate, requires at least a great deal of mathematical sophistication, although its relation to knowledge of Forms is very unclear (*Rep.* VIII.545eff.). Such mathematical calculation will also have to be supplemented by perception in some way, since, for example, identifying particular individuals and particular times will require perception. The nuptial number provides a good illustration of the need for highly sophisticated theoretical knowledge in the making of particular political decisions. The calculation requires highly developed intellectual skills not widely shared (or shareable) by the citizen body. Without such specialized knowledge, a mistake is almost inevitable and will have disastrous consequences: failure get the number right is the cause of the dissolution of the ideal city. Eventually, even those with knowledge will make a mistake (*Rep.* VIII.546ab), but it seems that error would be almost immediate and inevitable for those lacking knowledge.

But is this really a good example of the intrinsic necessity of theoretical knowledge for good rule? The knowledge in question seems simply instrumental to the further end of having a stable and fit population and such mathematical knowledge may not seem to involve any sort of grasp of intrinsic value. Such use of mathematical knowledge seems merely to be a case of the instrumental usefulness of mathematics for practical purposes (at least from our point of view). Strikingly, however, it is precisely this need to make such cosmological-astronomical calculations which are relevant to procreation that is one of the main reasons that some Neo-Platonists think that the rule of philosophers is necessary. But on their views, the link to philosophic knowledge of value is clearer, since apprehension of the relevant mathematical structures is in itself an apprehension of intrinsic value. (Although it may well have been for Plato himself.⁸)

The other main reason the Neo-Platonists think that the rule of philosophers is necessary is also clearly derived from the *Republic*. A philosopher's knowledge is required for inculcating the "political virtues" in the character of the citizens of the just city, but the inculcation of such virtues is not the ultimate end of the city or its education. Acquiring the political virtues is required for dealing with the ordinary demands of life, interacting with others, and for fostering the control of desires and emotions necessary for undertaking rigorous intellectual inquiry. But, according to the great Neo-Platonist philosopher, Plotinus (204-270AD), the political virtues must be left

behind when one attains the greater, more divine virtues associated with the cognition of purely intelligible objects.

[Such a person] will not make moderation consist in that former observance of measure and limit [in political virtue], but will altogether separate himself, as far as possible, from his lower nature and will not live the life of the good man that political virtue requires. He will leave that behind, and choose another, the life of the gods: for it is to them, not to good men, that we are to be made like.⁹

To return to Plato himself and summarize my previous discussion, for Plato what is of central importance in justifying the need for philosophers to rule is the philosopher's knowledge of virtue. This is necessary not because such knowledge is the only way of getting right the evaluation of particular actions or laws; rather it is necessary because it involves a correct grasp of the central element of happiness, that is, of what is the best kind of character for humans to have. This is in the first place a correct grasp of the nature and value of philosophic understanding, and such a grasp requires philosophic knowledge itself.

There are lines of argument that I shall now sketch, without endorsing, by which one might try to show a more pervasive need for philosophic knowledge. One might hold, for example, that evaluation of particular actions, laws or institutions for correctness can only be reliably done on the basis of

philosophic knowledge. One way to develop such a view would involve the claim that actual mistakes with serious consequences will be made unless such evaluation is carried out on the basis of philosophic knowledge, e.g., via knowledge of the definitions of value Forms. Or even if the application of such definitions (or of high-level principles stating, e.g., necessary and sufficient conditions for something being just) on the basis of philosophic knowledge is not necessary, it might be that so many factors are relevant to determining the correct verdict in a particular case that highly sophisticated knowledge is required for getting things right. Compare, for example, Plato's dismissal of various economic regulations noted above (*Rep.* IV.425cd) with the following explanation of the need for casuistry given by the secretary of the Society of Jesus to the Council of Trent in 1554.

As it is supremely necessary to avoid cheating one's neighbor in business or acting toward him unjustly, so it is extremely difficult to detect when such deception or injustice takes place in commercial dealings. On the one hand, neither Scripture nor the ancient Fathers and philosophers deal with the matter in detail, and on the other, the astuteness of merchants, fostered by their lust for gain, has discovered so many tricks and dodges that it is hardly possible to see the plain facts, much less to pronounce judgment on them . . . finally, the matter being a question of morals, only admits of probability, because its nature is such that the least change in circumstances renders it necessary to revise one's

judgment of the whole affair . . . As Saint Basil well says, 'to understand justice calls for a great intellect and a perfect heart.'¹⁰

Or perhaps more radically, one might think that we simply cannot codify in any useful way general principles about, e.g., justice.¹¹ Correct determination of particular instances requires a kind of uncodifiable knowledge. This is an especially important line of thought, that I shall take up again in the next section, since, many contemporary defenders of the importance of general principles appeal to the idea that moral principles, unlike uncodifiable insight, are typically available to all:

the public articulation of such principles reflects the democratic character of the moral point of view and reveals the illegitimacy of any attempted privatization of moral standards, that is, of any claim by an elite to have a privileged access to moral ideas or to the moral truth.¹²

Such lines of argument that attempt to show a more pervasive need for philosophic knowledge in ethical and political matters do not, however, form a significant part of Plato's case for the rule of philosophers in the *Republic*.

Before turning to Aristotle, let me emphasize that I am limiting my discussion of Plato to the *Republic*. In the later dialogues, there are several lines of thought that might make the need for sophisticated theoretical reflection more pervasive in ethical and political judgments. First, in the

Statesman (294aff.), Plato seems to endorse the uncodifiability, in some sense, of ethical and political principles and to claim that the correction of general rules requires philosophic knowledge. Second, the metaphysics of value in the *Statesman* and the *Philebus* suggests that valuable objects, states, or actions are to be understood as those that hit the mean on a continuum of possibilities. If this is combined with the view that value falls off fairly sharply as the mean is diverged from and that sophisticated theoretical reflection is needed for hitting the mean or getting within the narrow band of acceptable divergence, this might show a pervasive need for such reflection. I cannot explore these issues further here, however, and the development of Plato's ethical epistemology is a complicated story.

III. ARISTOTLE

Let us now turn to Aristotle. Aristotle's positions, in works such as the *Eudemian Ethics*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and the *Politics*, on whether philosophers should rule in a good (or the best) city and on the relation between political science or statesmanship and philosophy are surprisingly complex, and not without some apparent tensions. I cannot cover this material adequately in this paper, but would instead like to consider a text of Aristotle which may be able to provide a fresh starting point for the consideration of the rest of his views, yet has received fairly little philosophical attention in the past forty years, the *Protrepticus*. We have reliable ancient evidence that Aristotle wrote a work with that title which, like other of his earliest works, was not preserved and transmitted in the ancient edition of Aristotle's writings

that forms the basis for the standard edition of his works today. A *protrepticus logos* is a speech or discourse (*logos*) which aims at turning (*trepein*) the reader towards (*pro*) a certain way of living. Starting with the work of the English scholar Ingram Bywater in 1869, there have been scholarly efforts to reconstruct at least large parts of Aristotle's text by drawing upon a work also called the *Protrepticus* written by the Neo-Platonist philosopher, Iamblichus (c. 250-330AD), which appears to contain excerpts from Aristotle's own text. Recent scholarship has made a strong case for thinking that we can identify significant parts of this text as Aristotle's own work.¹³

Since the *Protrepticus* is familiar to relatively few and is not as easily available as most of Aristotle's other works, I shall begin with a fairly extensive quotation.

[T]hose who are to be good doctors or trainers must be experienced about nature, so good lawmakers too must be experienced about nature--and indeed much more than the former. For the former are only producers of virtue in the body, while the latter, being concerned with the virtues of the soul and claiming to teach about the happiness and misery of the city, need philosophy much more. For just as in the other productive arts the best of their tools were discovered from nature (for example, in the builder's art, the plumbline, the ruler, and the compass) . . . and it is by reference to these that we determine what is to the senses sufficiently straight and smooth--in the same way, the statesman

must have certain norms [*horous*] taken from nature itself and from the truth, by reference to which he will determine what is just, what is fine, and what is advantageous. For just as there [in the other productive arts] these tools surpass all others, so too the finest law is the one that most accords with nature. But no one who has not done philosophy and come to know the truth is able to do this. And in the other arts people do not take their tools and their most exact reasonings from the primary things . . . they take them from what is second or third hand or at a distant remove, and take their reasonings from experience; whereas the imitation of the exact things themselves [*autôn tôn akribôn*] is only for the philosopher, for the philosopher's vision is of these things themselves, not of imitations. So just as no one is a good builder who does not use a ruler nor any other such tool, but takes his measure from other buildings, so too presumably if someone either gives laws for cities or performs actions by looking at and imitating other human actions or constitutions, either of Sparta or Crete or of any other such city, he is neither a good lawmaker nor a virtuous man; for an imitation of what is not fine cannot be fine, nor can an imitation of what is not divine and secure in nature be immortal and secure. But it is clear that the philosopher is the only producer to have laws that are secure and actions that are correct and fine. For he alone lives looking at nature and at the divine, and, just like a good helmsman, ties the first principles of his life onto things which are eternal and steadfast, drops his anchor there and

lives as his own master. So then, this knowledge is contemplative [*theôretikê*], but it provides us with the ability to do all that we do in accordance with it. For just as sight makes and shapes nothing (for its only function is to judge and to make clear each visible thing), but enables us to act in accordance with it and gives the greatest help towards our actions . . . (84.11-86.4, B46-51)¹⁴

How are we to cash out Aristotle's metaphors? To begin, the lawgiver (*nomothetês*) who has philosophic knowledge of nature and, in particular, of the appropriate norms (*horoi*) is like a builder who uses the plumbline, ruler, and compass. The use of such tools is necessary because the unaided senses will judge that something is, e.g., straight, when it is not. Aristotle does not suggest that the senses will dispute over this, or that such disputes would be irresolvable at the level of the senses, although there is nothing to rule it out. The point is worth noting, however, since the need for measurement is not confined to hard cases or those of special difficulty: every time one needs to determine whether something is straight, a ruler must be used. Also there is no suggestion here, unlike, for example, in Plato's *Euthyphro*, that such measurements get rid of disagreements among all disputants; although they should end disagreements among the experts who use these instruments.

If you and I were to differ about numbers as to which is the greater, would this difference make us enemies and angry with each other, or

would we proceed to count and soon resolve our difference this way? Again, if we differed about the larger and smaller, we would turn to measurement and soon cease to differ. . . . And about the heavier and lighter, we would resort to weighing and be reconciled. . . . What subject of difference would make us angry and hostile to each other if we were unable to come to a decision? . . . these subjects are the just and unjust, the fine and base, the good and bad. (*Euthyphro* 7b7-d2)

What exactly, then, according to the *Protrepticus*, is defective about the rule of non-philosophers? The passage quoted above does claim that only the philosopher acts virtuously. This would apply to political actions too: only the philosopher acts virtuously with respect to politics and this might be so, even if both the philosopher and the non-philosopher performed the same type of political actions. But the building analogy seems to go further and appears to suggest that because they do not use the right tools, non-philosophers will tend to make mistakes and establish laws that would have inferior substantive content. Indeed, if we take the analogy seriously, it seems that the mistakes made by failing to use the proper tools are very significant in that typically or frequently the outcome is affected for the worse to a considerable degree. This is perhaps especially plausible, if many such measurements must be made and matters may only get worse if one starts to use items previously judged straight by the senses to make further determinations of straightness.

The application of these tools, at least by an expert builder, appears to be easy and Aristotle seems to present such tool use as yielding a decisive answer to any particular question; he shows no concern about vagueness. But the idea that application of these tools is easy does raise some problems. If it is easy, is there a continuing need for philosophers? In the case of tools, it may have been a great intellectual accomplishment to invent the ruler or the plumbline, but it seems that once invented almost anyone can apply them. If the application of norms is to continue to require philosophers, it is not sufficient that philosophic knowledge is necessary for deriving, or determining in the first place, what the norms are nor that such knowledge is necessary for justifying them or explaining why the preferred candidates are true. Their very application, it seems, must require a philosopher.

This still leaves several important issues undetermined: we are not told, for example, whether what is required is philosophic knowledge expressed in the form of knowledge of definitions or whether what is necessary is some other intellectual ability. But this idea does help, I think, explain the significance of a controversial passage in the *Protrepticus*.

What standard or norm of good things do we have that is more exact than the wise man? (69. 27-29, B39)

This cannot mean, as some commentators have worried, that the judgment of a wise man constitutes the goodness or justice of acts or things. Nor need it

even mean that the wise person cannot state universal and exceptionless rules or definitions; it may just mean that such rules or definitions cannot be properly used except by a philosopher.

So how does the philosopher use these tools? It seems that there are three relevant items: (i) nature, the primary things, or the exact things themselves, (ii) the norms the philosopher "takes from" the items in (i), and (iii) the laws (or institutions or actions) that are judged against the norms. We are not told exactly how this works, but one perhaps plausible picture is that the norms are something like definitions of justice, fineness, and so on, and the laws are evaluated with respect to whether they satisfy these definitions. Although knowing the exact things themselves, deriving norms from them, and applying these norms to proposed laws or courses of action seem to be distinct activities, Aristotle does not divide them up between two different faculties with distinct objects. (The distinction between "practical wisdom" (*phronêsis*) and "wisdom" (*sophia*) understood as separate faculties with their own objects is central to *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 6 (which identical to *Eudemian Ethics* Book 5) and thus to Aristotle's ethical theory in the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. It is also, I think, what is most distinctive of Aristotle's ethics as opposed to Plato's.)

Aristotle in the *Protrepticus*, is willing, however, to draw a distinction between contemplative knowledge (*theôretikê epistêmê*) insofar as it grasps the truth about its objects and the ability to act on the basis of this knowledge. Such a grasp of the truth or the "most exact truth" is the function (*ergon*) of the

human being (72.24-5, B65) and the function of virtue itself (74.3-5, B70), but this does not undermine the idea that such knowledge can and should be used to ensure correct action and correct lawmaking.¹⁵

In the passage quoted above, Aristotle tells us that

imitation of the exact things themselves is only for the philosopher, for the philosopher's vision is of these things themselves, not of imitations (85.6-9, B48).

This arguably marks a significant apparent difference between the *Protrepticus* and Aristotle's thought in the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the common book, *E.N.* 6.7, Aristotle holds that

it would be strange to think that political science or *phronêsis* is the loftiest kind of knowledge, since man is not the best thing in the world . . . wisdom is knowledge, combined with intelligence, of the things that are highest by nature (*E.N.* 1141a20-22, 1141b2-3).¹⁶

This will be true, even if we were to grant that some kind of wisdom concerning what is best for human beings is possible. In contrast, it is at least plausible to think that in the *Protrepticus*, the knowledge that the philosopher uses in moving to judgments, e.g., about laws, is the highest kind of knowledge there is. Philosophy is a kind of knowledge that "contemplates the good as a

whole" (68.10) and on this basis, issues orders that allow us to engage in politics correctly and conduct our own lives in a beneficial manner.

What, then, should we expect the content or orientation of the commands issued on the basis of such knowledge of primary things to be? The *Protrepticus* might go in one of two directions here and it is not, I think, entirely clear which one it takes. First, its position might resemble that of the *Republic*. The *Protrepticus*, unsurprisingly, emphasizes the enormous value of philosophic contemplation for its own sake and, at times, has a dismissive attitude toward other possible human goods:

so nothing divine or happy belongs to humans apart from just that one thing worth taking seriously, as much intelligence [*nou*] and wisdom [*phronêseôs*] as is in us, for, of what is ours, this alone seems to be immortal, and this alone divine . . . We ought, therefore, either to do philosophy or say goodbye to life and depart from this world, since all of the other things anyway seem to be great nonsense and folly (78.12-15, 78. 21-79.2, B108-110).

Further, while the derivation of norms from primary things might be a considerable achievement, the analogy with tools suggests that their application in judgments about particular laws or institutions is, at least for one with philosophic knowledge, straightforward and almost trivial. On this line of thought, as in the *Republic*, the basic sort of knowledge that is needed

for ruling well would be knowledge of the nature and value of contemplation itself (and, presumably, of the sort of education required to foster contemplation).

Although this interpretation is possible, the long passage quoted above, appears, I think, to suggest a much greater role for philosophic knowledge. In particular, the most straightforward reading of the tool metaphor suggests that philosophic knowledge of primary things is required for getting right basic ethical and political principles and for correct ethical and political decision-making. Such knowledge might, for example, be required for reliably getting right decisions not only about the basic shape or end of the constitution, but about laws *seriatim*. Moreover, such a view would have significant resemblances to both to views held by Plato (although not, I have argued, in the *Republic*) and to Aristotle's own later views.

At the end of section II, I gave some reasons for thinking that in some post-*Republic* dialogues, there is a more pervasive need for sophisticated theoretical reflection in ethical and political judgments. But also in some of the "Socratic" dialogues (e.g. the *Apology*, the *Charmides*, the *Crito* and the *Laches*) which are generally thought to be earlier than the Republic, Plato emphasizes the need for rigorous intellectual inquiry into ethical matters. Such inquiry, carried out by means of the elenchus, into general ethical principles (e.g. definitions of the virtues) is necessary not merely for hard cases, but is supposed to be a feature of any good human life and is meant to be employed by all in order to guide their lives and actions in general.¹⁷

Although Aristotle's views about practical wisdom in the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* are controversial, it is clear that he thought that practical wisdom is an intellectual virtue (although distinct from philosophic wisdom) that is very difficult to acquire and needed for action in general, not just hard cases. (This is consistent with the claim accepted by some scholars, that the exercise of practical wisdom does not involve the application of rules or general principles to particular cases.) The idea that philosophical reflection (or at least sophisticated intellectual inquiry) is needed for establishing the correct content of moral and political principles may also, I think, seem plausible to many readers of this volume and it may seem more convincing after the upsurge of work in substantive moral and political philosophy in the Anglo-American tradition since the 1970's, and the more recent explosion of work in practical or applied ethics.

But we should note that this view is in clear tension with much of early modern moral and political philosophy, especially that outside the casuistic tradition. Interestingly, the denial that the acquisition and use of ethical or moral knowledge is difficult cuts across several other important divisions among modern moral philosophers. We find it, for example, not only in prominent sentimentalists, but also among rationalists and those in the natural law tradition. To begin, Benjamin Whichcote, the 17th century philosopher and theologian, and the founding father of the Cambridge Platonists, holds that God has made men such that all normal adults are capable of attaining the moral knowledge needed to regulate their action and relations with each

other. The first principles of religion and morality are "self-evident, must be seen in their own Light, and are perceived by an inward Power of Nature."¹⁸

Knowledge of such principles occurs as a normal part of human development:

"Man in the Use of his Reason, by Force of Mind and Understanding, may as well know, that there is a God that governs the World, as he may know, by the Use of his Eyes, there is a Sun."¹⁹

But it is not only the existence of a providential God that is made so cognitively accessible to each man. Moral laws are not, as voluntarists thought, merely the arbitrary expression of God's will; their existence and obligation are objective facts about the world. Such laws are, however, embodied in God's commands for us. The fact that we can all, by exercise of reason, know the moral laws that bind us as individuals and in our relation with others is essential to Whichcote's theology. Because we all know, or can know if we are not culpably ignorant or indifferent to what morality requires, we are condemned by our own reason whenever we violate morality. Indeed, the basic sanction of violating morality does not consist in external punishment imposed by God or other men, but lies, rather, in condemnation by our own reason which constitutes our true unhappiness.

Man by his nature and Constitution, as God made him at first, being an intelligent Agent, hath Sense of Good and Evil, upon a Moral account. All inferior Beings have a Sense of Convenience or Inconvenience, in a natural Way . . . for, you cannot get a mere Animal, either to eat or

drink that which is not good and agreeable to its nature. And, whereas we call this Instinct; it is most certain that in intelligent Agents, this other is INSTINCT, at least. And, for this Reason, Man is faulty, when either he is found in a naughty Temper or any bad Practice. For, he hath Judgment and Power of Discerning: He is made to know the Difference of Things: and he acts as a mad Man, that knowing what is better, chuseth the worse. This is the Ground and Foundation of Man's being truly miserable: For, to be happy or miserable: is mainly in his intellectual Nature. Inferior natures may suffer Wrong: But they are not capable of Happiness or Misery, as intellectual Agents are; because they are not acquitted or condemned from within; nor have anything to challenge or reprove them.²⁰

Unlike Whichcote, the 17th century political thinker Hugo Grotius belonged to the natural law tradition. But despite the great length of his *On the Law of War and Peace* and its promise to treat "such controversies, of any and every kind, as are likely to arise" and lead to war, Grotius adopts a position similar to Whichcote

I have made it my concern to refer the proofs of things touching the law of nature to certain fundamental conceptions which are beyond question, so that no one can deny them without doing violence to himself. For the principles of that law, if only you pay strict heed to

them, are in themselves manifest and clear, almost as evident as those things which we perceive by the external senses; and the senses do not err if the organs of perception are properly formed.²¹

Grotius agrees with Aristotle that certainty is lacking in ethics and that this is the case, at least in part, because very small changes in circumstances can make a great ethical difference.²² Nevertheless, Grotius adds to these claims an important reason for rejecting Aristotle's views in the *Nicomachean Ethics* about the difficulty of determining what to do.

What Aristotle wrote is perfectly true, that certainty is not to be found in moral questions in the same degree as in mathematical science. . . In moral questions . . . even trifling circumstances alter the substance . . . thus it comes about that between what should be done and what it is wrong to do there is a mean, that which is permissible; and this is now closer to the former, now to the latter.²³

The mean, in Grotius' view, is not, as Aristotle thought, a single point on a continuum such that there is only one way to go right and an indefinite number of ways of going wrong. That there is a range of permissible actions constituting the mean makes unnecessary the precise discrimination of the unique right choice.

Finally, consider Adam Smith. As a sentimentalist, Smith holds that for something to be right or virtuous is for it to elicit the appropriate kinds of feelings of approval. Smith also thinks that

The general rules of almost all the virtues, the general rules which determine what are the offices of prudence, of charity, of generosity, of gratitude, of friendship, are in many respects loose and inaccurate, admit of many exceptions, and require so many modifications, that it is scarce possible to regulate our conduct entirely by a regard to them. The common proverbial maxims of prudence, being founded in universal experience, are perhaps the best general rules which can be given about it.²⁴

Since the rules of morality with the exception of justice, are so "loose, vague, and indeterminate," there are, Smith thinks, only two ways of trying to make practical ethics systematic.²⁵ First, we can (i) describe the "sentiment of the heart" upon which is virtue is founded, and (ii) describe in a general manner the sorts of actions that each virtue prompts us to. Some refinement is possible in doing (i), but (ii) is "easy" and straightforward. The main point of developing such descriptions is not, however, cognitive, that is, to learn more about the virtues and what they require, but it is rather to excite the emotions of love of virtue and abhorrence of vice. This is, Smith thinks, all that ancient moralists, including Aristotle are doing.²⁶ The second way of trying to make

practical ethics systematic is that of the casuists who attempted to make precise the loose rules of virtue. Such effort, Smith thinks, is simply useless because it attempts to direct "by precise rules what it belongs to feeling and sentiment only to judge of."²⁷

Certainly a picture of each of these three thinkers has only been sketched in the broadest outline and it would require much more elaboration to be an adequate depiction of their thought. But even the little we have seen is sufficient, I think, to serve the intended purpose, that is, to make vivid a position of which it is easy for contemporary academic writers on ethics to lose sight. There are an important set of views in modern moral philosophy, all of which accept that moral statements do not merely express our feelings or attachment to norms, but rather, at least sometimes, make literally true claims while at the same time holding that grasping these principles and making them as exact as they allow does not call for sophisticated theoretical or philosophical reflection.

I have argued in section I that Plato, in the *Republic* at any rate, may have some sympathy for this conclusion even if his reasons are different from those of the three modern philosophers I have discussed. If the straightforward interpretation of the tool analogy in the *Protrepticus* is correct, Aristotle there rejects the *Republic's* view and thinks that philosophic understanding of the most fundamental entities is necessary for getting right ethical and political judgments in general. I shall suggest in the conclusion that this provides an

important, new context for Aristotle's views in later works such as the *Eudemian Ethics*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and the *Politics*.

IV. CONCLUSION

I cannot here even begin to consider Aristotle's views on these issues in the *Eudemian Ethics*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and the *Politics*. But let me note, very briefly, a few points that would merit further attention. In these latter works, Aristotle seems to hold that high-level ethical generalizations are fairly easily available to those who have been well-brought up even without any philosophic, or quasi-philosophic, training. Such ethical training and habituation will be sufficient to enable the auditors of the *Nicomachean Ethics* to grasp, e.g., that justice and courage are virtues, that virtue is fine, and that virtue is good in itself and choiceworthy in itself. Practical wisdom is necessary for the perfection of the virtues of character, but neither practical wisdom nor the ethical virtues require philosophic understanding (*sophia*). Practical wisdom is the intellectual or rational excellence of a virtuous person, and what is especially distinctive of it is the ability to hit the mean in the complex circumstances of actual life and choice.

What might the political analogue of this be? One would expect that non-philosophically well-brought up people would already grasp correct high-level political principles, such as that the constitution should aim at the common good of all the citizens, that the end or *telos* of a good city is not merely living, but living well, and thus that the citizens should cooperate in fostering and sustaining virtue in each other. In this sense, sophisticated

theoretical reflection is not needed to grasp the basic goals and structure of a good city. Political practical wisdom should rather be required for finding the best ways of instantiating these goals in the highly complex and changing circumstances that all cities face.

The basic task of political reflection in all cities, except the ideal one—i.e. in all cities that are likely to exist—will be to make gradual and moderate changes in laws and institutions to approximate more closely the ideal city. Moreover, the sort of serious intellectual reflection especially required for this will involve study of the history of various constitutions and of the regularities in human behavior that are relevant to politics. This is not, of course, to make the crude error of thinking that political science or reflection is now for Aristotle a value-free, "empirical" study; the regularities will be understood in a thoroughly value-laden way. But it will not, for example, consist of working out more precise definitions of the virtues or in elaborating, e.g., the function of man argument and determining its political implications.²⁸

Although the above claims would require considerable qualification and expansion, they do, I think, reflect some important tendencies in later Aristotle's thought. I shall conclude by noting two issues that arise in connection with these claims. First, if the suggested interpretation of the *Protrepticus* is correct, we need either to explain why in the later works Aristotle no longer thinks that a philosopher is needed to determine or apply ethical and political principles or reduce the gap between the earlier and later views by building up the sort of knowledge required in the later works.²⁹

Second, as I have noted, Aristotle expects that the auditors of his ethical lectures have been well-brought up. They may not yet possess practical wisdom and thus will not be fully virtuous, but they should accept basic ethical principles and already have a strong love of what is fine and hatred for what is base (*E.N.* I.4.1095a30-b13, *E.N.*X.9.1179a33-b31). The education that achieves this is not philosophic training, nor even that education prescribed for the ideal city of the *Politics*. Since Aristotle's auditors have already been well-brought up, this sort of education must be that available at least to many better-off Greeks both inside and outside Athens (the Lyceum was not restricted to Athenians).

So will there be cities whose constitutions foster a genuine love of virtue for its own sake in their citizens, even if the rulers lack practical wisdom and thus often go wrong in dealing with complex and novel circumstances? The closest any city comes to this is Sparta (and perhaps Crete) which Aristotle commends for being the only ones whose lawgivers aim at educating their citizens to virtue (*E.N.* I.13.1102a10-11, X.9.1180a24-6).³⁰ The Spartan constitution is, however, a failure. The Spartans value external goods more than virtue and, indeed, value virtue only insofar as it is instrumentally productive of the external goods. This would seem to be a grave ethical defect and Aristotle makes it clear in the *Politics* that this ethical education led to the ruin of Sparta.³¹

The answer to the question above thus seems to be "no," but why are there no such cities? In many cities, those who have been carefully habituated

and educated lack the power to arrange the laws and constitution, but this is not true in Sparta. There the fault is part of the very nature of the ethical character and education of the Spartan elite. Despite the Spartan constitution's concern with training the citizens' characters, Aristotle criticizes its education for cultivating only one virtue, that is, courage (e.g. *Pol.* II.9.1271a41-b3, VII.15.1334a22-b3). But then the question becomes why they developed and maintain such a defective education. This question is especially pressing, because the failure is so drastic: the Spartans do not choose fine things for their own sake and do fine actions only "coincidentally" (*kata to sumbebêkos*, *E.E.* VII.15.1249a1-16).

Perhaps the failure of all cities can be explained either by the fact that those who have been well-brought up and have the right attitude towards virtue are too few to exercise authority or where a carefully and rigorously educated group does exercise authority, special circumstances corrupt the education. In the case of Sparta, for example, dwindling numbers and the constant threat of overthrow by their serfs (*helots*) had something to do with the corruption of their education.³²

But it is hard to see why such special circumstances should be inevitable. It would take further investigation to determine whether there are deeper reasons for such failure. One plausible constraint on an explanation is that it must allow for the existence of people (like Aristotle's auditors, but unlike the Spartans) who lack practical wisdom, but love virtue for its own sake and would try, if able, to foster it in the whole body of citizens. There are

many possible explanations and I shall mention only two that seem worth more consideration. First, it might be the case that although well-brought individuals can develop the right attitude towards virtue without practical wisdom, this attitude will not persist throughout life unless the individuals come to acquire practical wisdom. So rulers who are fully mature adults will tend to have had their attachment to virtue undermined and will tend to come to think that training and educating the citizens to virtue is not as important as they once did.

A second possibility adds to this that practical wisdom and the virtues of character cannot be fully realized unless their possessor is aware that there is something of even greater value, that is, philosophic contemplation.³³ (Such awareness may not, however, necessitate that the individual will try lead a philosophic life.) In this case, the practical wisdom of the rulers expressed in their political activity will require that their political decisions and educational policies aim to foster such a recognition of contemplation's value in the other citizens.

Whether Aristotle holds either of these views and, if so, what his reasons are needs further inquiry. Such inquiry is thus, I think, necessary in order to understand fully what sort of knowledge Aristotle requires in rulers and citizens in a just or good city and what relation such knowledge has to philosophic wisdom. If this is right, then the question of what Aristotle's attitude is towards the claims of Plato in the *Republic* with which we began has not been full answered.

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* I thank Fred Miller, Jr., the Social Philosophy and Policy Center and the Liberty Fund for organizing the colloquium at which this paper was first presented. For comments and discussion, I thank the participants in the colloquium, as well as Aditi Iyer and Rachana Kamtekar.

¹ Translations from Plato draw on those in John Cooper, ed., *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

² Whether Plato's arguments in the *Republic* give sufficient reason for philosophers to rule is a matter of standing scholarly dispute; for worries about the persuadability of the non-philosophic classes, see, e.g., Josiah Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 236-40.

³ For a general background, see Raphael Sealey, *The Athenian Republic* (University Park: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1987), 32-52 and Richard Bodéüs, *The Political Dimensions of Aristotle's Ethics* (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1993), 63-6.

⁴ Chris Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia Recast* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 42-6.

⁵ Plato claims that a person can acquire knowledge of the Form of the Good only after acquiring knowledge of some other Forms (*Rep.* VII.517bc and VII.532ab) and *Rep.* 517b7-9 and 532a5-b2 may suggest that knowledge of all other Forms is required. But is the necessity of knowing some or all Forms, if one knows the Form of the Good more than just a psychological necessity? I cannot discuss this question here and I think that my other claims are consistent with either answer to this question. For argument that it is more than just a psychological necessity

and that what is required is knowledge of all other Forms, see Gail Fine, *Plato on Knowledge and Forms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 95-116 (which includes references to other views); on the need to know the Forms of the virtues, see Terry Irwin, *Plato's Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 272-3.

⁶ The dialectical argument at the end of Republic Book 5 (474c-480a) does not seem to require that the opponent ever acquire true beliefs as to the content of the definition of any Form. (Whether it is possible to have any beliefs about Forms is controversial; for some discussion, with references, see Bobonich, *Utopia*, 58-66.) Plato does not say that this dialectical argument should be presented to the non-philosophic citizens of the just city. Indeed, it is unclear whether Plato thinks that most people could accept the distinction between Forms and sensible particulars; at VI.493e2-494a1 he seems to deny that most people could

"in any way tolerate or accept the reality of the fine itself, as opposed to many fine things, or the reality of each thing itself, as opposed to the corresponding many." What he may think most effective at persuading most people to accept the rule of philosophers is not any epistemological argument, but rather the thought that philosophers, as Plato describes them, are properly motivated: they are "neither harsh nor envious" (*Rep.* VI.500a4-5, cf. *Tim.* 29d7-30a7). Socrates concludes his argument about whether most people can be persuaded to accept philosophers' rule only by expressing the hope (in the face of Adeimantus' greater skepticism) that "they will be shamed into agreeing with us, if nothing else" (*Rep.* VI. 501e6-502a2).

⁷ It is worth noting that, even with respect to the mathematically-laden topic of the appropriate rhythms to use in the music that forms part of the education in the just city, Plato does not think that a philosopher's

knowledge is needed to reach a correct determination: at *Rep.* III.400bc, Socrates defers to the judgment of Damon on this question.

⁸ See Bobonich, *Utopia*, 206-9 on Plato's views. On the great importance for political purposes that the Neo-Platonists attribute to the philosopher's (i) mathematical and astronomical knowledge, and (ii) the knowledge, alluded to at *Rep.* VI.500e, of what good characters are and of how they are produced, see Dominic O'Meara, *Platonopolis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 87-105, 135.

⁹ Plotinus, *Ennead* Book 1, Chapter 2, section 7, "On the Virtues". I quote, with slight modification, the translation in A. H. Armstrong, ed., *Plotinus I* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1989); to facilitate reference, I use the section numbers in Armstrong's edition. For related discussion, see John Dillon, "An Ethic for the Late Antique

Sage," in Lloyd Gerson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 313-35, and David Sedley, "The Ideal of Godlikeness," in Gail Fine, ed., *Oxford Readings in Philosophy: Plato 2* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 309-28.

¹⁰ Albert Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin, *The Abuse of Casuistry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 190-191.

¹¹ For a contemporary defense of such a position, see Jonathan Dancy, *Ethics without Principles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); for defenses of such a position both in itself and as an interpretation of Aristotle, see John McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," *The Monist* 62 (1979): 13-29 and Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 54-105.

¹² Samuel Scheffler, *Human Morality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 12. Although as I shall note in

section III, even if it were the case that general ethical or moral principles can be stated, it might be that they cannot be understood or applied without sophisticated theoretical or philosophic knowledge.

¹³ D.S. Hutchinson and Monte Johnson, "Authenticating Aristotle's *Protrepticus*," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 19 (2005): 193-294. I do not mean to endorse all of their claims, but this article is an extremely valuable contribution. At any rate, I find it very plausible that at least substantial parts of chapters 6-12 of Iamblichus give us reliable evidence for Aristotle's *Protrepticus*. Much more research is needed, and this includes the analysis of the text's arguments.

¹⁴ Translations from the *Protrepticus* draw on Ingemar Düring, ed., *Aristotle's Protrepticus* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1961) and the forthcoming translation by D.S. Hutchinson and Monte Johnson. I cite the text of the

Protrepticus first, e.g. 84.11-86.4 above, by the page and line numbers of Iamblichus, *Jamblique Protreptique*, ed. Édouard des Places (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1989) and then by fragments numbers assigned by Düring, e.g. B46-51 above. These Düring numbers are used in what is currently the most accessible translation of Iamblichus into English, Jonathan Barnes, ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 2404-16. Whether the words following the ellipsis at the end of the above quotation can be attributed to Aristotle is controversial, but the sense is clear: what has just been said to be true of sight is true of this contemplative knowledge.

¹⁵ At 74.4 (B70), Düring emends, without any manuscript support, "virtue" (*aretês*) to "soul" (*psuchês*). I retain *aretês*, for the phrase, see *E.E.* II.1.1219a19-20.

¹⁶ Translations from Aristotle, other than from the *Protrepticus*, draw on those in Jonathan Barnes, ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (2 vols.) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

¹⁷ See, e.g., *Ap.* 29e-30b, 30e-31a, 36cd, 38a, *Chrm.* 175d-176c, *Cr.* 46b, and *La.* 184e-185a, 187e-188b, 200e-201b.

¹⁸ Text in C.A. Patrides, *The Cambridge Platonists* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), 47. I have kept his capitalization, but not his use of italics and have modernized some spelling. My discussion of these modern thinkers is deeply indebted to Jerome Schneewind's seminal *The Invention of Autonomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹⁹ Patrides, *Cambridge Platonists*, 46-7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 73-4, cf. 49-52.

²¹ Hugo Grotius, *The Law of War and Peace*, tr. Francis Kelsey (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1925), 23.

²² As noted in section II, the difficulty of codifying general principles in laws is one of the reasons that Plato gives in the *Statesman* for thinking that philosophic knowledge is needed to deal well with novel circumstances.

²³ Grotius, *Law* 557, cf. pp. 25, 57.

²⁴ Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 174. The exception are the rules of justice which are precise, but are restricted in scope, e.g., "if I owe a man ten pounds, justice requires that I should pay him precisely ten pounds, either at the time agreed upon, or when he demands it" (p. 175). Thus as Schneewind, *Invention*, 395) points out, "jurisprudence, then, [is] the only part of moral philosophy capable of systematic rational development, [but it] is not philosophical."

²⁵ Smith, *Theory*, 327.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 328-9.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 339.

²⁸ See, e.g., Richard Kraut, *Aristotle*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 427-70 and Fred Miller, *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's Politics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 276-308.

²⁹ E.g. by arguing that people will typically go wrong unless they possess practical intelligence (*nous*) of ethical first principles or an understanding of happiness based on a theory of human nature.

³⁰ Aristotle's view of Crete is similar to his view of Sparta, although it is somewhat less favorable, see René Gauthier and Jean Jolif, eds., *L'Éthique a Nicomaque*, tome 2 (Louvain: Publications Universitaires), 903-4.

³¹ On the Spartans, see *E.E.* 7.15 and *Pol.* 2.9 and 7.15. For a more sanguine view of Sparta, see Sarah Broadie, "Virtue and beyond in Plato and Aristotle," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 43 (2005): 97-114, especially 98-100,

who holds that in the *Eudemian Ethics*, at any rate, Aristotle thinks that the Spartans are genuinely "good" and "virtuous" although they value virtue just for the sake of goods such as wealth, health, and power.

³² Crete, however, did not have such worries about serf rebellions, e.g. *Pol.* II.9.1269a34-b5, II.10.1272b15-23.

³³ For an influential discussion see John Cooper, "Plato and Aristotle on 'Finality' and '(Self-)Sufficiency,'" in John Cooper, *Knowledge, Nature, and the Good* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 270-308, especially 302-8.