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Knowledge in the Proper Sense

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In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Book VII Chapter 3 Aristotle argues that the man of weak will has knowledge in a way, but has not knowledge in the proper sense. In accordance with his understanding of human action in the form of practical syllogism he proposes an analysis of the weakness of will, and concludes that the man of weak will has not a correct minor premiss or knowledge of the last term of a correct practical syllogism. But the last term is a particular thing, namely 'this', and is grasped only by perception. People perceives 'this' particular thing differently, and act differently owing to the difference in perception. Perception controls their action. The correct perception of the particulars is knowledge in the proper sense, in the presence of which weakness of will does not occur. Knowledge in the proper sense is a function of practical wisdom.

I Weakness of Will: A Commentary

1146b8-9 (§ 1) 'First, then, we must examine whether a man of weak will has knowledge or not, and in what way he has it': 'A man of weak will' (*akratēs*) is generally thought to be a man who 'knows that his actions are base, but does them because of his feelings' (1145b12-13). On the other hand, however, 'some say that it cannot be that he has knowledge. For it will be terrible, Socrates thought, for knowledge to be in someone, but mastered by something else, and dragged around like a slave.' (1145b22-24) Throughout Chapter 3 Aristotle engages himself in solving this puzzle. Supposedly a man of weak will has knowledge in a way, but does not have it in another way. Aristotle's business here is to find some explanation how this is possible.

1146b24-1147a24 (§ 5-8): Preliminary observations. Firstly, Aristotle rejects an attempt of explanation by means of the distinction between knowledge and belief (1146b24-31). Then, he presents three possible cases ((i) 1146b31-35 (ii) 1146b35-1147a10 (iii) 1147a10-24) where

a man can be described to know one thing in a way but not to know it in another way. In presenting these cases Aristotle suggests the possibility that a man knows and does not know one and the same thing at the same time, and he also suggests that the three distinctions drawn in these cases between two meanings of 'knowing' are all relevant and applicable to the phenomenon of weakness of will.

1147a24-25 (§ 9) 'Further, we may also look at the cause [of weakness of will] in the following way, in accordance with its actual process.' : Gathering the above three observations Aristotle here proceeds to construct a systematic explanation how an action of weak will actually occurs. When the cause and process become clear, we shall be able to answer the question whether a man of weak will has knowledge or not.

1147a25-31 (§ 9): Weakness of will is a kind of deviation from normal process of action, or is a defective action. Therefore, in order to explain an action of weak will Aristotle at first presents a formation of normal human action. According to his philosophy of action a standard human action is action in accordance with one's own will, or, in other words, deliberately chosen action. Aristotle elucidates 'deliberate choice' (*prohairesis*) in the form of a practical syllogism. When the syllogism is complete, an action is properly performed, and an action of weak will does not occur.

'One belief is universal; the other is about particulars, and because here we come to a belief of judgment about particulars perception controls it. And whenever these two beliefs result in one judgment, it is necessary in purely theoretical judgments for the soul to affirm what has been concluded, and in judgments about action to act at once on what has been concluded. If, e.g., everything sweet must be tasted, and this, some one particular thing, is sweet, it is necessary for some one who is able and unhindered also to act on this at the same time.' (ibid.)

major premiss: Everything sweet must be tasted.

minor premiss: This is sweet.

conclusion: This must be tasted.

action: I taste this.

1147a31-35 (§ 10): In the case of the action of a man of weak

will, however, the practical syllogism is not formed properly. Instead, a quasi-practical syllogism is organized in his soul so as to produce an image of a pleasant thing, and he acts (or rather, he is moved) under the influence of this image because of his appetite.

'Suppose, then, that someone has, on the one hand, the universal belief in him which forbids him to taste; on the other hand, he has the belief, that everything sweet is pleasant and this is sweet, and this belief is active; and he also has appetite. Hence the [first] belief tells him to avoid this, but appetite leads him on, since it is capable of moving each of the [bodily] parts.' (ibid.) We may illustrate this as follows:

<a proper practical syllogism>

major premiss: Anything which belongs to others
must not be tasted.

[minor premiss: This (apple) belongs to some other person.]

[conclusion: This (apple) must not be tasted.]

[action: I do not taste this (apple).]

* A man of weak will lacks the square-bracketed parts
in a way. (cf. 1147b9-12)

<a quasi-practical syllogism>

major premiss: Everything sweet is pleasant.

minor premiss: This (apple) is sweet.

conclusion: This (apple) is pleasant.

+ appetite: Everything pleasant must be tasted.

=action: I taste this (apple).

1147b9-12 (§13): In 1147a31-b9 (§ 10, 11, 12) Aristotle has explained the cause and process of the action of weakness of will. As for the problem of this chapter, i.e. whether the man of weak will has knowledge or not, it is already evident that he has at least the major premiss or universal belief in him. Therefore, he has knowledge in a way. Now Aristotle proceeds to say that the man of weak will does not have knowledge in another way.

'And, since the last premiss is a judgment about something perceptible, and controls action, this is what the man of weak will does not have when he is being affected. Or the way he has it is not

knowledge of it, but, as we saw, merely saying the words, as the drunk says the words of Empedocles.' (1147b9-12) Aristotle thus explains in what way the man of weak will does not have knowledge. As I have illustrated above, the man of weak will lacks the minor or last premiss in some or other way. Consequently, although he has the knowledge of the major premiss, his will or deliberate choice is not formed properly, and the proper action does not result. This is the weakness of will. The man of weak will knows the major premiss, but does not know the minor premiss. (Aristotle's explanation here is in accordance with his first (1146b31-35) and second (1146b35-1147a10) preliminary accounts.) Additionally, the man of weak will may sometimes think or even say, e.g., 'This (apple) belongs to some other person', or 'This (apple) must not be tasted.' However, as Aristotle says in his third preliminary account, 'saying the words that comes from knowledge is no sign [of actually knowing it]. For people affected in these ways [i.e. mad or drunk or asleep] even recite demonstrations and verses of Empedocles. Further, those who have just learnt something do not yet know it, though they string the words together; for it must grow into them, and this needs time. Hence we must suppose that men of weak will say the words the way that actors do.' (1147a18-24).

1147b13-19 (§13,14): Aristotle's answer to the question of this chapter is, so far, that the man of weak will has knowledge in a way, but does not have knowledge in another way. But, then, what about Socrates' doctrine? Was he wrong after all in denying that the man of weak will has knowledge, or was he right? At the end of the chapter Aristotle gives an answer in favour of Socrates' view, concluding that the man of weak will does not have knowledge in the proper sense.

'Further, since the last term is not universal, nor seems to be fit for knowledge in the same way as a universal term, the result Socrates was looking for also seems to come about.' (1147b13-15) Aristotle's point here is that, although the man of weak will has the universal knowledge of the major premiss, he is unable to make a correct judgment about the last term of the minor premiss, because he does not know it in the proper sense. By 'the last term' Aristotle means the subject of the last premiss. And, as we have seen in the above example, it is a particular 'this' (*tode, touti*), and is not a universal term.

But one cannot know the particulars in the same way as the universals. Generally speaking, knowledge is about the universals. For example, 'A triangle has its angles equal to two right angles' is a piece of knowledge about 'a triangle', and 'a triangle' here is a universal because it means 'anything which is a triangle'. This piece of knowledge is applicable to a particular thing indicated by the demonstrative 'this' if and only if 'this' is a triangle. In other words, 'this' particular thing is known after and only after it is grasped in some universal term like 'a triangle'. The grasping of 'this' particular thing to be a triangle is not the business of knowledge, but of perception, because one grasps 'this' to be a triangle only when one sees or touches it. It is true that we say one 'knows' it by perception, but one does not know it in the same way as one has the knowledge of the universals. Similarly the judgment in the example above that 'this belongs to some other person' is a judgment about 'this' particular thing, and it is not known in the same way as the universals. The man of weak will has knowledge of the universal premisses, but this knowledge does not enable him to form a correct judgment about the particular thing in front of him. Such kind of knowledge as he has seems to be different from knowledge in the proper sense; therefore, it seems that one must say the man of weak will does not have knowledge. And this is 'the result Socrates was looking for' (1147b14-15). 'For it would be terrible, Socrates thought, for knowledge to be in someone, but mastered by something else, and dragged around like a slave.' (1145b23-24).

'That is to say if what is thought to be knowledge in the proper sense is present, the affection of weakness of will does not occur, nor is the knowledge dragged about by the feeling; but it is perceptual knowledge [or rather judgment] that is dragged about.' (1147b15-17) Aristotle restates Socrates' view in his own words. He means that Socrates' position does not quarrel with Aristotle's own account of the weakness of will. Rather, Aristotle's analysis proves that Socrates is basically right in asserting nothing is stronger than knowledge (cf. 1145b32-33), because Socrates has in mind knowledge in the proper sense.

It is obvious that the 'knowledge in the proper sense' cannot be identical with the universal knowledge which is supposed to exist in

the man of weak will. For, as we have seen, this knowledge has no control over his action and he is affected by weakness of will in spite of this knowledge. Instead, the knowledge in the proper sense must be knowledge of the last term. For as we have also seen, the man of weak will does not have correct judgment of the last term, and lacks the last premiss, and this is the cause of his action of weak will. If he had the judgment present in his mind against his appetite, the affection of weak will would not have occurred. The knowledge in the proper sense is something which brings about correct judgment about the last term.

However, in this chapter Aristotle does not explain what the knowledge in the proper sense exactly is. Therefore, we are not sure so far why 'the knowledge is not dragged about'. We can only assume that if one has the knowledge, one does not fail to have the judgment of the last premiss, and is not affected by weakness of will. In this respect the knowledge in the proper sense is similar to practical wisdom (*phronēsis*) and virtue of temperance (*sōphrosynē*), because those who have these kinds of virtue are not affected by weakness of will. As for the remark that 'it is perceptual knowledge [or rather judgment] that is dragged about' we may interpret that without the virtue and the knowledge in the proper sense the perceptual judgment about the last term is sometimes dragged about by appetite as it is the case with the man of weak will. He has the judgment before he is affected (cf. 1145b31-32), and indeed it controls him as long as it is present, but it is dragged away the next moment, and easily replaced by another judgment, e. g. 'This is sweet.'

II Perception in Human Action

Aristotle's explanation of weakness of will includes some interesting points which elucidate the structure of human action in general. Especially, his remarks upon the last term of the practical syllogism are relevant to the problem how people act differently even in the same situations; people act differently according to what 'this' particular thing appears to them.

Aristotle says that 'the last term is not universal, nor seems to be fit for knowledge in the same way as a universal term' (1147b13-14) and the last premiss is a judgment about something perceptible, and

controls action' (1147b9-10). As we have seen 'the last term' is a 'this' particular thing, and 'the last premiss' is a judgement about it. Aristotle's view is that a standard human action is action in accordance with his will or deliberate choice (*prohairesis*), which can be formulated into a practical syllogism. When one has a wish, one starts to deliberate how to materialize one's wish. In order to materialize A (one's wish) one should firstly produce B (a means to A), and to produce B one should produce C,, and proceeding in this way one arrives at Z which is a particular 'this' and which one can produce immediately, and this is acted. Also, there can be another way of deliberation in the opposite direction which proceeds from grasping 'this' particular situation or state of affairs backwards to asking what one's own wish is. In the beginning one asks whether one should do 'this' or not, then what will result if one acts in 'this' way, and lastly whether one really wishes that result. In this case one's deliberation and action depends on one's comprehension or grasping of the situation which one encounters. One asks to oneself what 'this' situation is or what 'this' thing is. (Actually, the structure turns out to be the same with the other case where one proceeds from one's wish to one's possible action, for there one has also to ask whether one's action actualizes one's wish or not.)

Anyway, whenever one acts, one encounters 'this' something. And there is no knowledge of 'this' as long as knowledge means universal knowledge. For example, such judgments as 'This belongs to some other person' and 'This is a triangle' are not pieces of universal knowledge, because one cannot rightly affirm these same propositions about everything designated by 'this', while a piece of knowledge like 'A triangle has its angles equal to two right angles' is applicable to every 'triangle'. 'This' something is something which one encounters or comes across; there is hardly any knowledge of 'everything which one encounters'. On every occasion of 'this' particular thing, one has to use one's own perception in order to judge what 'this' is. (cf. Met. Z. 15. 1139b26 ff.)

Perception varies with the individual. Different persons see different things, and the same things often appear differently to different persons. Imagine you are walking a path in the woods, and also imagine what you will see at a particular corner of the path. If

you are a weekend painter, you will see a lovely frame of scene with an exquisite shading at the corner of the lane. But if you are there with the purpose of collecting mushrooms, you will see at the same corner some fallen leaves, some pebbles, and perhaps a cluster of mushrooms; but you will not see the scenery. Or, again, you might be a philosopher taking a walk in that woods engaged in solving some philosophical problems; then you will see neither mushrooms nor scenery nor anything special at the same corner of the path except the path itself and your inner thought. The same corner of the same path appears differently to different person (or differently disposed person). Some people see what other people do not see, and some do not see what others see. It seems that perception is common to every person, and in fact sky looks blue and snow looks white to everyone's eye. However, in some other way than this (cf. 1142a30) a perceptible thing often appears differently to different persons.

Moreover, the differences in perception sometimes result in morally different actions. In our example of the path in the woods none of the appearances seems to be more virtuous than another, nor which-ever person more base. But in some occasions one appearance to a person differs in respect of moral quality from another appearance of another (or the same) person. The case which we have seen concerning the weakness of will is just this; one appearance, i. e. 'This belongs to some other person,' leads to a virtuous act, and the other appearance, i. e. 'This is sweet,' leads to an action of weak will. Though, presumably, neither of these appearances is virtuous or wrong by itself, each appearance or perception decides the course of action, and 'the judgment about something perceptible controls action.' In one appearance in this case 'this (apple)' appears to be a bad thing which should be avoided, and in another 'this (same apple)' appears to be a pleasant and good thing which should be pursued; and of these two opposite appearances one tends to be morally right and the other wrong. Thus the two appearances are morally different from each other, and different appearances influence people's action.

These are the implications of Aristotle's two minor premisses in the example of the weakness of will.

III Virtue and Appearance

We have been arguing so far that the last term 'this' is not known, but is only perceptible, that it appears differently to different persons, and that it controls people's action. So, it may seem that people are tossed about by unprincipled fate if they act without any knowledge about what they do. It seems that one cannot but be passive in one's perception of things, and also that one encounters 'this' particular things only by chance. However, this is not the case. How 'this' particular thing appears to a person depends largely upon what kind of person he is. In the first place the fact that 'this' same thing appears differently to different people suggests that the appearance depends on the personalities of the people whom it appears to. We remember that the things at the corner of the path in the woods appeared to you differently in accordance with your occupation and interest. Secondly, when we look at the last premiss of the practical syllogism of a virtuous person, e. g. 'This belongs to some other person', we see that it has some connection with his major premiss, i. e. 'Anything which belongs to others must not be tasted'. But this major premiss exists in the soul of the virtuous person forming an essential part of his virtuousness. So, we may reasonably suppose that the minor premiss has appeared to the man of virtue not by pure chance but with some necessity. At least, the minor premiss would not have appeared to him if he did not have the major premiss in him as a result of moral training.

Presumably the fact is that the personality or the state of virtue of a person, on the one hand, finds its expression, at least partly, in the major premiss of a syllogism; and, on the other hand, the appearance of 'this' particular thing is expressed in the minor premiss; and the appearance of the minor premiss in some way depends on the appearance of the major premiss. Thus we can understand how the personality controls the appearance of 'this' particular thing. In terms of the action the major premiss is the expression of the end of an action, and it expresses the wish. If a person has the major premiss, e. g. 'Anything which belongs to others must not be tasted', it means that he has not-tasting of things belonging to others as his end, and does not wish to taste it. Besides, everyone wishes a thing

which appears to him to be good, and the wish or the end of the action is the token of his character. Aristotle says, 'each state of character has its own special view of what is fine and pleasant' (1113a31), and 'according as what kind of person one is, such kind of end appears to one' (1114a32-b1). Therefore, the appearance of the major term, and consequently that of the minor term, depends on one's character and personality. Or, we should rather say that one's character or personality is composed of all the major premisses which one possesses, and the composition influences the appearance of 'this' particular things. It seems that a good person has a system of true major premisses concerning human good, and has knowledge of them. From moral point of view one's personal character consists in one's virtue and vice, and, perhaps, strongness and weakness of will. But, as Aristotle says, 'virtue preserves the origin, while vice corrupts it; and in action the end we act for is the origin.' (1151a15-16) In practical syllogism the origin or the end we act for is expressed in the major premiss. Therefore, virtue preserves the major premiss correct, while vice corrupts it. The virtuous person has true major premisses. Aristotle says elsewhere that 'the excellent person judges each sort of thing correctly, and in each case what is true appears to him.' (1113a29-31) Consequently, the virtuous person has the knowledge of the major premiss.

It seems that we can almost say this knowledge of the virtuous person is knowledge in the proper sense as Aristotle means in Book VII Chapter 3. If a person has virtue, esp. of temperance, he is not affected by the weakness of will; therefore, it seems, his knowledge has power over his action. His knowledge controls the appearance of the major premiss, and thus the appearance of the minor premiss as well. However, we should develop our argument a little further so as to make sure the last step, namely the appearance of the minor premiss.

For, someone might reasonably ask the following question: the man of virtue has knowledge of the major premiss, and the knowledge controls the appearance of the minor premiss; but, while the man of weak will also seemed to have knowledge of the major premiss, his knowledge had no power over the appearance of the minor premiss and his action, but yielded to appetite; then, what

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makes this difference?

Probably our answer will be that the man of weak will has the belief of the major premiss indeed, and thus he has knowledge in a sense, but he does not know it in the proper sense. He is just like a person who 'has just learnt something, but does not know it, though he strings the word together' (cf. 1147a21-22). On the other hand, the man of virtue has knowledge in the proper sense, and on account of this he knows the correct minor premiss as well as the correct major premiss. We have seen that virtue preserves the major premiss. But this does not imply that virtue has nothing to do with the minor premiss. Rather, virtue includes practical wisdom which is the knowledge of the particulars. Aristotle says that 'virtue in the proper sense cannot be acquired without practical wisdom (*phronēsis*),' (1144b16-17) that 'a person cannot be good in the proper sense without practical wisdom' (1144b31) and that 'all the virtues require practical wisdom.' (1144b20). He also says, 'Practical wisdom is not about universals only. It must also come to know particulars, since it is concerned with action and action is about particulars,' (1141b14-16) and again that 'since practical wisdom is concerned with action, it must possess both the universal and the particular knowledge or the particular more than the universal.' (1141b21-22). In short a truly virtuous person has practical wisdom, and the practical wisdom knows the particulars. Thus the knowledge of major premiss in the virtuous person controls the appearance of the minor premiss.

IV Knowledge in the Proper Sense

The practically wise person knows how to act on every particular occasions. That is to say he can grasp 'this' particular thing correctly everytime he acts, and 'this' correctly appears to him. Therefore he does not fail to have knowledge in the proper sense. But is this knowledge identical with the practical wisdom?

To begin with it seems that we cannot identify the knowledge in the proper sense with practical wisdom, though they seem very similar to each other. Firstly, the knowledge in the proper sense concerns only with particulars, and, secondly, it is knowledge in its actuality. In Book VII chapter 3 Aristotle clearly means by the 'knowledge in the proper sense' the knowledge of the last term, i. e.

the knowledge of 'this' particular perceptible thing. And, when he says there that it 'is present (*parousēs* 1134b16)', he seems to mean that it is actually at work. Also, when he says in his *De Anima*, explaining the knowledge in its actuality, that '[one knows a thing actually] when one is already seeing it, being in the perfect state of knowledge and knowing in the proper sense (*kyriōs epistamenos*) [e. g.] this letter A' (417a28-29), he means particular and actual knowledge of a particular thing. (cf. *Metaph. M* 10 1087a16-25) In contrast with this actual knowledge practical wisdom is 'a state (*hexis*) grasping the truth, involving reason, concerned with action about what is good or bad for a human being' (1140b5-6.)

Therefore, firstly, it differs from the knowledge in the proper sense in that a person can at the same time have practical wisdom and does not actually use it, e. g. when he is asleep, while he cannot but actually use the knowledge in the proper sense whenever he has this knowledge. Secondly, as we have seen, practical wisdom concerns with both universals and particulars. And thirdly, while there is also knowledge in the proper sense about theoretical truths as we have seen in the example in *De Anima*, practical wisdom concerns only with human action.

Nevertheless, it is equally certain that we cannot identify knowledge in the proper sense with mere judgment of the particulars, either. For, while 'the knowledge is not dragged about by the feeling [of appetite]' (1147b16-17), the judgment of the man of weak will is in fact dragged away when appetite affects him. (Though, probably, he had the judgment just before he was affected. cf. 1145b30-31) Admittedly, the judgment controls him as long as it is present, but it is dragged away the next moment, and easily ousted by another judgment, e. g. 'This is sweet.' 'It is perceptual [judgment] that is dragged about.' (1147b17) The knowledge in the proper sense cannot be mere judgment or belief, but it must be knowledge in the proper sense.

We know that only practical wisdom has control over the appearance of particulars (cf. 1141b14-22, 1142a11-30, 1143a25-b5), and, at least in the field of human action, only this ability grasps particulars correctly. Therefore, we should probably say that the practical wisdom includes knowledge in the proper sense, and in the field of

human action this knowledge cannot exist without practical wisdom. Or, knowledge in the proper sense is an essential function of the practical wisdom.

In our text Aristotle says that 'if what is thought to be knowledge in the proper sense is present, the affection of weakness of will does not occur, nor is the knowledge dragged about by the feeling', but perhaps he should have said instead that 'if *practical wisdom* is in someone, the affection of weakness of will does not occur, etc..'. Elsewhere Aristotle says that 'the same person cannot have at once both practical wisdom and weakness of will.' (1152a6-7) Presumably, however, the truth is that Aristotle understated the fact because he intended to retain Socrates' diction and give his endorsement to the Socratic position. Socrates said that 'it will be terrible for knowledge to be in someone, but mastered by something else, and dragged around like a slave.' (1145b22-24) Aristotle retained the word 'knowledge (*epistēmē*)', but changed another word 'in someone (*enousēs*)' into 'present (*parousēs*)' so that 'knowledge' may accord better with his own wording and his analysis of the weakness of will. As we have seen above, knowledge in the proper sense is, in Aristotle's wording, the knowledge which not only exists in someone, but necessarily presents itself. In Aristotle's theory of the weakness of will, the knowledge controls action when it is not only in someone, but is present at the time of action.

V Practical Wisdom and Perception

Aristotle's explanation of the weakness of will through two minor premisses and different appearances of 'this' particular thing illuminates an aspect of the practical wisdom. We have seen that knowledge in the proper sense grasps 'this' particular thing correctly, and practical wisdom includes knowledge in the proper sense. Therefore, we may conclude that to the man of practical wisdom every particular 'this' always appears correctly.

This is more than to say that the man of practical wisdom always correctly judges the means to his end. For, while the man of technical art also knows the means to his end, he is not identical with the man of practical wisdom. Again, the base person and the man of weak will also sometimes know the means to their end, but it is obvious that

they do not have practical wisdom. Their end is limited and provisional, and consequently the correctness in their deliberation is different from that of the man of practical wisdom. Aristotle says, 'Our deliberation may be unconditionally good or good only to the extent that it promotes some [limited] end. Hence unconditionally good deliberation is the sort that correctly promotes the unconditional end [i. e. the human good], while the [limited] sort is the sort that correctly promotes some [limited] end. Hence, if having deliberated well is proper to a practically wise person, good deliberation will be the type of correctness that expresses what is expedient for promoting the [unconditional] end about which practical wisdom is true supposition.' (1142b28-33) 'Since correctness has several types, clearly good deliberation will not be every type. For the man of weak will or the base person will use rational calculation to reach what he proposes to see, and so will have deliberated correctly, but will have got himself a great evil. Having deliberated well seems, on the contrary, to be some sort of good; for the sort of correctness on deliberation that makes it good deliberation is the sort that reaches a good.' (1142b17-22) 'It seems proper, then, to a man of practical wisdom to be able to deliberate finely about what is good and beneficial for himself, not about some restricted area —e.g. about what promotes health or strength—but about what promotes living well in general.' (1140a25-28)

The difficulty of moral action exactly lies here. In grasping 'this' particular thing one is not allowed to rely entirely on technical or whatever any special knowledge. Although, e.g., the knowledge of medicine tells us how to recover health, it does not tell us whether we should aim at this end or some other end which might be more valuable here and now as a way of 'living well'. When Aristotle says that 'the last term is not universal, nor fit for knowledge in the same way as the universals', he seems to have this difficulty in mind. The last term of a practical or moral syllogism is grasped correctly only by practical wisdom which has the good of human being in view. Neither technical knowledge or knowledge in the base person or in the man of weak will do not see the human good, and consequently they do not see 'this' particular thing properly in the general view

of the good action.

Aristotle sometimes calls the practical wisdom 'the eye of the soul' (1144a30) and describes its function as a kind of perception. The reason which he gives for these expressions is evidently that the practical wisdom concerns the particulars. 'Practical wisdom is not scientific knowledge; for, as we said, it concerns the last thing[i.e. the particular], since this is what is done in action. This is not the perception of qualities peculiar to one sense, but the sort by which we perceive in mathematics that the last object before us is a triangle, for it will stop here too; though this [perception in mathematics] is rather perception than practical wisdom, it is another kind of perception [than that of qualities peculiar to each sense.]' (1142a23-30)

So far as these descriptions go, the practical wisdom might not seem quite different from technical knowledge, because the man of technical arts also has perception of the particulars. For example, an agriculturist knows by perception that 'this (apple)' is affected by powdery mildew. However, the particular things which the practical wisdom grasps are, as we have seen, particulars without any special qualifications, and the perception which the practical wisdom employs is perception without preconception. In technical arts and sciences the particulars are observed from a specially restricted point of view corresponding to each special art or science. For example, when an agriculturist makes a judgment that 'this (apple)' is mildewed, he judges from agricultural point of view, and 'this' particular thing is conditioned and qualified in advance as an agricultural object before he starts to judge. But the practical wisdom is free from such outlook and precondition. Generally speaking, a particular 'this' can actually be innumerable things at the same time. For example, 'this (apple)' is mildewed, is sweet, belongs to some other person, costs 50 p, and so on *ad infinitum*. The infinity of the qualifications, or the indefiniteness, is the nature of the particulars in the proper sense. Properly speaking, people have these indefinite particulars before them when they are about to act. But in actuality 'this' particular thing mostly appears as one definite thing to each person, and this appearance controls his action. The man of practical wisdom enjoys an unconditioned and vast outlook of things, and consequently one cor-

rect thing appears to his eye every time. Although every perception of every person seems to be correct, the fact is that different people have different perceptions, and that some perceptions are correct and others are wrong in relation to good action.