CHAPTER 3

Technê *As a Model for Virtue in Plato*

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I Introduction

One of the most striking features of ancient Greek ethics is the pervasiveness of analogies between virtue or excellence (*aretê*) and *technê*: craft, art, skill or expertise. In Plato's early, Socratic dialogues, it seems that virtue *is* a craft; at any rate, his Socrates is obsessed with the idea that it might be. The Stoics speak of the 'art of living' (*technê biou*) as a craft equivalent to all of moral virtue, and Epictetus makes pervasive use of analogies between this 'greatest craft' (*megistê technê*, *Discourses* I.20.13) and the specialised ones.[1] Aristotle vehemently rejects the idea that either the ethical virtues or practical wisdom (*phronêsis*) could be identified with craft (*EN* II.4, 1105a26–b2; *EN* VI.5, 1140b1–7, 21–25); and yet of all ancient ethics his works are the most saturated with craft analogies. (In *EN* III.3 alone, his account of deliberation is worked out by reference to medicine, money-making, navigation, gymnastics, medicine again, oratory, statesmanship and baking.) If Aristotelian virtue is not a craft, it still comes close enough for virtually every feature of the one to have an illuminating counterpart in the other.[2]

In this chapter, I will discuss this craft model (or *technê* model), using the phrase to cover both the view that virtue *is* a craft and whatever weaker presumption underlies Aristotle's practice. The model is a rich one, with a long and complex history; a wide range of authors use it in diverse ways, and I won't be trying to give a full inventory of them. Rather, my agenda will be to bring out a side of it that has, so far as I know, been somewhat

[1] On the Stoic moral *technê*, see SVF s.v. *technê*, and the contribution of Voula Tsouna to this volume (Chapter 7).

[2] For this ambivalence, see Broadie 1991 and Angier 2010. I will set Aristotle largely aside here, apart from certain moments in which he seems to illuminate Platonic ideas.

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ignored:[3] what I will call the *deontological* dimension of the model, which invites us to think of the life of virtue as involving a norm-imposing function or work (*ergon*). This conception is, I think, of great ethical significance; and it has little or nothing to do with the 'intellectualism' about virtue with which the craft model is usually associated.

The basic concept of craft (*technê*) on which the model depends is reasonably clear and easily grasped: a craft is a specialised kind of knowledge that leads to reliable practical success and provides some benefit.[4] We can add that for Plato and his successors, a craft is a social practice marked by discursive rationality: one that can be reliably taught, learned, systematised and explained.[5] This is already the import of craft in what is probably the earliest (philosophical) text in which we can detect the model at work, Plato's *Apology*. Here Socrates likens the knowledge claimed by anyone who undertakes to teach virtue, as the sophist Evenus does, to the kind involved in training horses; but he also disavows it himself, as requiring superhuman wisdom (19d–21c). Later on, he allows that, alone of the claimants to wisdom he has interrogated, the practitioners of the crafts really did know something (22d). Given the contrast he is drawing with the politicians and the poets, this must mean that they were able to explain and defend their practices in question and answer – able to give a *logos*, an account, of what they do and why. And this turns out to be a definitive feature of craft in Plato's *Gorgias* as well (465a, 501a–b).

This Socratic association of craft with a kind of explanatory knowledge, together with the ubiquitous craft analogies in the early dialogues, leads naturally to what I will call the *intellectualist story* about the craft model.[6]

[3] So my treatment will be very selective, and will not aim to deal in a general way with the huge scholarly literature on *technê* and its ancient ethical uses: in addition to the works on Socrates and Plato noted in n. 11 below, I have especially benefited from Annas 1993: 67–73, 396–405, 442–43; Menn 1995; and the papers on Stoic ethics in Striker 1996a.

[4] For background on the early Greek understanding of *technê* and related concepts, see Schaerer 1930; Heinimann 1961; Kube 1969 and Löbl 1997 as well as ch. 1 of Roochnik 1996.

[5] It is worth contrasting the most famous use of the craft model in the ancient Chinese tradition, in the *Zhuangzi* (discourse 3). As in the Greek tradition, the craftsperson, here an expert chef butchering an ox, is a model for the expert ruler. But this version of the model seems to be *anti*-intellectualist: the emphasis is on the chef's ability – acquired from long meditation and self-training, apparently, rather than instruction – to act without conscious deliberation or even awareness. This suggests that we should see the intellectualism of the Greek version of the model as a contingent feature, and driven from the start by an interest in craft as something *taught*.

[6] This story is an oversimplified composite; no scholar says anything quite as crude as what follows. Still, I take it to stand as a kind of baseline to the various richer, differentiated accounts many modern scholars do offer. (The most important and philosophically sophisticated account of the craft model in early Plato remains Irwin 1977; but Irwin's account is distinctive and controversial in many ways, particularly in its handling of the relation of a craft to its end.) Thus, it is also part of what the

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On this story, the craft model is distinctively Socratic and part of his legacy to the later tradition. (In that light it should come as no surprise that Aristotle is ambivalent about it, while the Stoics are unconditionally Socratic.) It serves as a vehicle for his extreme ethical intellectualism or rationalism (terms I will use interchangeably), embodied in the infamous Socratic paradoxes: all desire is for the good, *akrasia* is impossible, wrongdoing is involuntary and virtue is sufficient for happiness. These are organised around the central thesis that virtue consists in a kind of knowledge; the point of the craft model is to elucidate how this moral knowledge works. Moreover, this intellectualist thesis gains some of its plausibility from reflection on the existing *technai* as sources of reliable practical success: so craft is part of the grounding for Socrates' position as well as a tool for developing it. In short, Socrates starts from a rationalistic conception of craft, which emphasises its susceptibility to expression in *logos*, and leverages this to support an equally rationalistic understanding of virtue. But in this strong version at least (the story continues) the model is short-lived, and for good philosophical reasons: for Socratic intellectualism is highly problematic, most obviously in its sidelining of affective and non-rational motivations as irrelevant to virtue. Plato acknowledges its deficiencies and repudiates it in *Republic* IV (at the latest); once the theory of the tripartite soul is in place, nothing like craft knowledge could be thought sufficient for virtue. Aristotle recognises even more fully that virtue depends on non-rational factors, and motivates in ways that craft does not: this recognition is what ultimately underlies his rejection of the model. And it's because the Stoics revert to a kind of Socratic intellectualism, holding as they do that every desire and impulse involves rational assent to an evaluative proposition, that they revert to it.

Once made explicit in this rather simple-minded way, the intellectualist story should immediately raise doubts. For the craft model is not really an apt tool for ethical rationalism. After all, many of the recognised *technai* depend heavily upon non-rational factors like physical dexterity and self-discipline. Relatedly, to learn almost any craft takes training and rote practice – not just rational instruction.[7] Moreover, craft is *obviously* an odd analogue for virtuous motivation: as Socrates is perfectly well aware, doctors sometimes act as poisoners and guards as thieves, but the just

avowedly revisionist accounts of Roochnik 1996 and Balansard 2001 are arguing against, cf. especially Roochnik 1996: 1–11 (with references) and Balansard 2001: 160–65.

[7] Thus Aristotle is being tendentious and unfair at *EE* I.5 1216b4–10. The closest thing to a supporting text in Plato is *Grg.* 460a–c, but this is an ad hominem elenctic context, not necessarily indicative of Socrates' own assumptions.

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person never chooses to act against the demands of justice (see Section IV below). So if the point were to support an intellectualist conception of virtue as wholly rational, acquired purely through instruction, and yet consisting in a knowledge that is motivationally compelling, the model would be strikingly ill-chosen.

The intellectualist story also sits oddly with our texts. It predicts uses of it that we find rarely or never, and fails to predict those we do. We never see Socrates argue that virtue is wholly a matter of rational rather than affective factors, or that learning a craft requires only instruction. We do not see ancient philosophers citing various kinds of craft education to argue for different theories of moral education, or arguing about just *which* craft provides the closest analogue to moral knowledge.[8] It is far from clear that the model really disappears from Plato's post-tripartition work;[9] and Aristotle continues to draw promiscuously on craft analogies despite his firm rejection of intellectualism. And if the Stoics revive the model for the purposes of ethical rationalism, why do their preferred examples of *technai* include dancing, acting, wrestling and volleyball?[10]

I think that the intellectualist story gets at only a small part of what makes the craft model interesting, and gets that part mostly wrong. The rest of this paper is an attempt to supplement and correct it. In Section II, I offer a different picture of the origins of the model; Section III discusses *Republic* Book I, which I take to be the key text for Plato's mature and distinctive version of it. In Section IV, I turn to two related ideas that are needed to defend the model against the most obvious objection ('the motivational objection'), and which together complete it; Section V briefly points out that the model also has a canonical rhetorical function, one that the reading offered here helps to explain. My focus throughout will be on Plato; I will refer only occasionally to Aristotle and to the Stoics (particularly Epictetus and Marcus) for points where their version of the model remains Platonic and can help to illuminate it.

[8] Possible exceptions would be (1) Isocrates' critique of 'technocratic' ethics in the *Against the Sophists* and *Antidosis*, especially if this is aimed at Plato; and (2) the Stoics' emphasis on dancing and acting as paradigms for the art of living, especially if this is aimed at Aristotle.

[9] For the art of living as a theme of the *Philebus*, see Harte forthcoming; and for the art of the *politikos*, obviously, the *Statesman*. If the *technê* model is *less* prominent in Plato's post-*Republic* works, it may be because he has come to doubt that these two can be a *single* art, with the dual scope I discuss in Section II.

[10] Dancing, Cicero *De Fin.* III.24; claimed by Marcus Aurelius to be less apt than wrestling, *Med.* VII.61; acting, Epictetus *Disc.* IV.1.165; volleyball (or at any rate a partially cooperative ball-tossing game), *Disc.* II.5 (and cf. the wrestler of I.2.25–27 and other athlete analogies passim).

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II The Origins of the Craft Model

Let's begin with a look at the indisputable ground zero for the model, at least given the state of our evidence: Plato's early 'Socratic' dialogues.[11] The intellectualist story takes these as depicting a Socrates committed to the thesis that virtue is knowledge, and using the craft model to develop it. But, in fact, the dialogues present a more confusing picture. Socrates does on several occasions argue that some kind of knowledge or wisdom is necessary and sufficient for happiness (*Prt.* 356c–57e; *Men.* 86d–89d; *Euthyd.* 278e–82d; *Chrm.* 173a–74e), sometimes supported with an induction over the crafts (*Euthyd.* 279e–81b); and this does seem to be intended to show that this knowledge is *virtue* (*Euthyd.* 278d, 282e, 292c). However, when Socrates considers intellectualist definitions of particular virtues in the *Euthyphro, Laches* and *Charmides*, and of virtue as such in the *Meno*, the discussion invariably leads to *aporia*. Since acquisition from teaching is taken to be a standard marker of craft (*Grg.* 513e–14b, *Lach.* 186a–87a), Socrates also problematises the model by arguing repeatedly that virtue cannot be taught, or at any rate *is* not taught by those who claim that it can be (*Men.* 89d–96d; *Prt.* 319b–20b; implicitly at *Ap.* 19d–20c). In the *Gorgias*, Socrates claims to be the *only* person of his time to undertake the true *politikê technê* – and he rather pointedly does not claim to succeed (521d).

At the same time, Socrates clearly supposes that his *interlocutors* accept at least some weak form of the craft model; rather than argue for it, he tends to presume it in order to examine their claims. In doing so, he deploys a canonical set of crafts such as shoemaking, horse training and medicine, and applies a checklist of markers he takes them to share. The expert in a craft aims successfully at some good or benefit; he uses a proprietary set of methods and techniques; he can give a *logos*, a rational defense, of his practices; and he can make another like himself by teaching (*Grg.* 464b–66a, 500e–501a). (Thus each craft really has two kinds of 'product', its distinctive work and further experts of the same kind.) The most far-reaching of these markers is the *determinacy criterion*: a real craft must have some determinate and distinctive object – something it is 'set over' and acts upon – which differentiates it from all the other *technai*.

[11] For *technê* in Plato, see Schaerer 1930; Kube 1969; Kato 1986; Cambiano 1991; Isnardi Parente 1996; Roochnik 1996; Irwin 1997 and Balansard 2001. I make the now-customary assumption that we can usefully distinguish a set of 'early' or 'Socratic' dialogues without commitment to any strong claims either about the historical Socrates or about the chronology of Plato's writings; I take the Socrates of these dialogues to be above all the instrument of Platonic philosophical inquiry.

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This point is used by Socrates both to investigate problematic candidates for craft status, such as rhetoric (*Grg.* 453b–54a) and poetic recitation (*Ion* 537e–41b), and to raise puzzles about the putative knowledge which is virtue in the *Laches, Charmides* and *Euthydemus*.

Socrates' complex, ambivalent treatment of the craft model has the look of a provisional, critical engagement with a popular intellectual trend: it invites us to ask, who *did* firmly and unequivocally believe that virtue can be taught? And the answer is obvious: the sophists, including Evenus in the *Apology* (19e–20c), Gorgias in the *Gorgias* (459c–60e) and above all Protagoras in the *Protagoras*.[12] This first and greatest of the sophists is introduced, with some fanfare, as a self-proclaimed teacher of virtue, and this seems to be constitutive of sophistic practice as he understands it.[13] Protagoras promises to make his students better people every day, by teaching them excellence in deliberation (*euboulia*) (318a–19a). This term 'deliberation' has political connotations, and Protagoras is happy to accept Socrates' identification of it with the *politikê technê* (319a4), though he emphasises that it covers both the management of one's private life and the matters of the city.

> What is to be learned is good judgement in private matters, how best to manage one's own household, and in matters of politics – how to be most able [or powerful, *dunatôtatos*] in things to do with the city, both in action and in speech. (*Prt.* 318e5–19a2)[14]

It's unlikely to be a coincidence that the phrasing here is identical to that used by Thucydides to describe the statesman Pericles (I.139): Protagoras (whom we know to have been an associate of Pericles) is offering to make his students effective statesmen along familiar and respectable lines. And that all this is intended to count as a *technê*, in *most* ways just like the others, is then confirmed in Protagoras' 'Great Speech' (*Prt.* 320d–28d). Here, in response to Socrates' arguments that virtue *cannot* be taught, Protagoras represents political or social virtue, justice and shame as collectively a craft, taught by all to all just like the Greek

[12] For a fuller account of the Protagorean *politikê technê*, including some illuminating parallels with the art of medicine, cf. Hussey's chapter in this volume (Chapter 1).

[13] Protagoras' disparagement of Hippias' polymathy suggests that he takes the proper business of a sophist to be teaching virtue and nothing but (317d–e); but his genealogy of crypto-sophistic predecessors (316d–17a) implies this to be recognisable under many guises. I here take Plato's presentation of Protagoras in the *Protagoras* to be broadly historical, setting aside the *Theaetetus* as very much less so (cf. Gomperz 1900–1912: vol. 1: 457–58). Compare, however, Hussey's chapter in this volume (Chapter 1).

[14] All Plato translations are from the various hands in Cooper 1997, sometimes with revisions.

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language. It differs from flute-playing or medicine only in having to be acquired by all members of the community. And this presumption that virtue is a craft is sustained throughout the dialogue. With his presentation of the *metrêtikê technê*, the 'measuring art', Socrates proposes that it must be less closely analogous to flute-playing or language than to kinds of scientific expertise, able to cut through deceptive appearances by establishing the comparative quantities of pleasures and pains (356c–57e).

So, as Plato himself presents it, the impetus for the *technê* model originates not with Socrates, but with the sophistic movement, and, in particular, with the promise of Protagoras that political virtue can be taught.[15] This sophistic project needs to be seen in context for the excitement around it to be understood. As a number of memorable fifth century BCE texts make clear, including Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and Sophocles' *Antigone*, thinkers of the day are already bedazzled (and a little troubled) by the uncanny powers of the recognised crafts, seen as distinctively human, rational, systematic achievements – powerful triumphs over nature and chance, providing the goods on which civilised life and our collective happiness depend.[16] That fascination naturally gives rise to a troubling question: why do we have no such reliable, publicly agreed upon art for the political realm, where we need it the most? (A question all the more urgent given that without it, all the other *technai* may come to naught.) And with that puzzle comes the tantalising speculation that perhaps such a thing *is* within our reach. Perhaps a general art of political decision-making *could* be systematised and passed on from one generation to the next. This is the aspiration Protagoras represents. In fact, we should distinguish two aspirations here, marked by the two halves of Protagoras' boast: one for a *politikê technê* able to produce expert statesmen on a reliable basis, and one for an art of living enabling any agent to pursue his own interests with success. Both take the form of a general art of deliberation, an unspecialised counterpart to the specialised practical wisdom of the craftsperson: indeed, they constitute a *single* 'dual-scope' (as I will term it) deliberative art. That makes Protagoras' *technê* perfectly tailored to the ambitious young men clustered around him, since for them political power is in any case the main constituent of private success.

So if a certain rationalism is built into the Greek version of the craft model (unlike, say, the Chinese one), it's because its allure is from the start that of an educational programme; and teaching, at least at the advanced

[15] Cf. Kamtekar 2006 on the sophistic origins of the idea of politics as a 'profession'.
[16] See Nussbaum 1986, ch. 4.

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level here relevant, is assumed to take the form of explicit instruction and explanation. What exactly the teaching of virtue requires was clearly contested among the sophists. But we have a pair of precious fragments of the real Protagoras on education: 'Teaching requires natural ability and practice', and 'in learning, one must start from early youth'.[17] These sound like bland truisms, but applied to the case of virtue, they imply a substantive position on just this controversial question. At the start of Plato's *Meno*, Meno asks, 'Can you tell me, Socrates, can virtue be taught? Or is it not teachable but the result of practice, or is it neither of these, but men possess it by nature or in some other way?'[18] As both the fragments and the *Protagoras* suggest,[19] Protagoras' own answer was a three-factor account: virtue comes from teaching, but to benefit from that teaching one needs both natural ability and practice or training. And this rather plausible three-factor view seems to have been incorporated into the philosophical tradition, as common ground among otherwise diverse theories. When in the *Republic* we finally get a positive Platonic account of moral education, it turns out that the Guardians require both the right natural ability and education, which in turn subdivides into early non-rational affective training and a higher education involving formal, highly rational instruction. A similar three-factor, two-stage model is accepted by Aristotle: for him, virtue requires the right natural endowment, non-rational habituation (i.e., practice) and completion by practical reason. This somewhat boring pluralistic consensus is just what we would expect given a widespread acceptance of the craft model; for it seems obvious that all three factors have their role to play in mastering most of the canonical crafts.[20]

In sum, Socrates' invocations of the craft model in the early dialogues are exploratory and critical in spirit: they're Plato's way of taking the Protagorean promise seriously, *au pied de la lettre*, and using the recognised crafts to elaborate and assess it. His purpose is to bring out what virtue *would have to be like* if it really were a craft: and this turns out to be far beyond anything Protagoras could have imagined. The prospective and

[17] *Anecdota Parisiensia* I.171, 31; translation from Dillon and Gergel 2003.

[18] *Men.* 70a; for the popularity of the *topos* cf. *Dissoi Logoi* 6 as well as the opening arguments of the *Protagoras* itself.

[19] Plato's Protagoras is strikingly vague about what he himself provides as a higher education, given that his students will already have mastered the civic virtue taught by all to all (328c–d). But the language of *technê* quietly evaporates from the latter part of the Great Speech, perhaps hinting that what ordinary people acquire from their moral education falls short of being a *technê* in the full sense. That makes good sense of his role: by teaching deliberative wisdom, he converts rudimentary civic virtue (in the appropriately gifted and trained person) into the full political craft.

[20] Cf. Hutchinson 1998: 29–32.

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aspirational character of the model, and the critical character of his engagement with it, is resounding in passages like *Protagoras* 356c–57e, *Euthydemus* 291b–93a, *Meno* 99e–100a and *Charmides* 173a–77e: to me it suggests that we would do well to think of the craft model as a kind of gigantic multi-author *thought-experiment*.[21] Let us postulate a dual-scope craft of deliberation, one that is constitutive of political virtue and also guarantees private success – but which is otherwise just like the other crafts. What follows? What do the features of the recognised crafts look like when transferred to the case of the *politikos* and the virtuous man? And what further difference do its stipulated distinctive features turn out to make? The craft that is virtue will be special, to be sure; but does it turn out to be special in ways that exclude it from being a craft at all?[22] What, if anything, does our thought-experiment reveal to us about the nature of craft as such? We will look at Platonic answers to these questions in Sections III and IV.

If all this is on the right track, the intellectualist story is wrong on at least three counts. The craft model is essentially a sophistic aspiration – not a Socratic dogma. It is first and foremost political, and only by extension ethical. And it is not a vehicle for rationalism or intellectualism, at least not in any form stronger than is required for virtue to be teachable along Protagorean three-factor lines. In its original and most basic form, the idea of virtue as a craft is just the optimistic vision of a generalised deliberative skill, sufficient for private happiness as well as the skillful exercise of power, which could somehow be taught.

III The Platonic Model

I turn now to the shape the model assumes once Plato takes it over: for the critical explorations of the early dialogues are preliminary to a full appropriation. This is most visible in Book I of the *Republic*, where, more than

[21] Less anachronistically, we might say that it is a hypothesis, in very much the manner envisaged by the 'method of hypothesis' of *Phd.* 100a and 101c–2a, and that the early dialogues are in large part devoting to working out and testing its consequences. It is striking that Julia Annas' influential contemporary revival of the craft model (Annas 2011) also proceeds in a 'holistic' way (2–3, 7), as she puts it, working out the implications of the model rather than arguing directly for it either point by point or on the basis of one central similarity.

[22] This is Aristotle's answer, I take it: the postulated craft turns out to be a combination of things – *phronêsis*, the ethical virtues, *politikê* – each of them rather different from a craft strictly speaking. (Notably, the adjective *politikê* standardly goes nounless in Aristotle; but while it would be problematic to supply *technê*, given his official rejection of the model, the same is true for any alternative feminine noun. So perhaps the ambiguity is deliberate.)

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anywhere else, Plato most fully expounds his own constructive vision of the craft model and uses it to do load-bearing work.[23] Here the model is common ground between Socrates and Thrasymachus, who uses it to explicate his conception of the 'ruler in the strict sense'. He claims that the true ruler is the practitioner of a *technê*: for he unerringly practises injustice in his own interest, and this inerrancy is characteristic of any craft practitioner correctly conceived:

> No craftsman, expert, or ruler makes an error at the moment when he is ruling, even though everyone will say that a physician or a ruler makes errors. It's in this loose way that you must also take the answer I gave earlier. But the most precise answer is this. A ruler, *insofar as he is a ruler,* never makes errors and unerringly decrees what is best for himself. (340d–41a, trans. Grube-Reeve)

The craft model is here being flagged as sophistic in origin and political in orientation, as we should expect given its Protagorean lineage.[24] Socrates takes it up and responds with a suite of four arguments. First, the *argument from ends* (341c–47d) shows that each craft has the characteristic work or function of benefiting the object it is set over, rather than itself. So, contra Thrasymachus, the expert ruler exercises justice – 'the good of another', as he himself says – not injustice. Second, the *argument from action* (349b–50c) shows that just action resembles expert action in aiming at a uniform right amount,[25] rather than at any kind of maximisation or self-interested outdoing. Socrates infers from this formal similarity a kind of identity: justice must be a craft and therefore (since craft makes its possessor 'wise and good' in its domain) a kind of virtue. So Thrasymachus was wrong to class injustice with virtue and justice with vice. Third, the *dunamis argument* (351b–52b) spells out the characteristic causal power, the *dunamis*, of injustice: it is to cause disunity and dysfunction wherever it is found, be it in a city, a gang of thieves or an individual soul. So Thrasymachus was wrong to celebrate injustice as 'more powerful' than justice. The closing *ergon argument* (352b–54a)

[23] I here assume that *Republic* I is not a false start but a foundation for the *Republic* as a whole; the rest of Sections III–IV should provide some support for that presumption (cf. also Barney 2006). On *Rep.* I, cf. also Nawar's chapter in this volume (Chapter 2), which gives a more detailed account of the argumentation than I can do here.

[24] As Kato 1986 notes – though the evidence for presenting Thrasymachus' view as *the* 'sophistische Konzept der *Technê*' is thin (28). Thrasymachus also thereby contributes the more abstract point that agents act under descriptions, *qua* this or that. This insight too probably has its origins in sophistic thought, as a tool for disambiguation in eristic arguments, and is likewise crucial to Plato's development of his own position.

[25] A thought developed more fully at *Plt.* 283b–5c.

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exploits this relocation to the level of the individual soul: it argues that justice must be what enables the soul to perform its function, *ergon*, of deliberating and managing things, thereby enabling a person to live well. So, against Thrasymachus' most important and alarming claim, it is not the unjust person but the just one who lives happily.

I cannot here work through these extraordinarily rich arguments in the detail they deserve. But it is worth noting that they are more tightly unified than they might appear, both with each other and with the subsequent argument of the *Republic* – and that the craft model is in play throughout. Craft is explicitly discussed only in the first two; but crafts are individuated by their powers,[26] so that the *dunamis* argument pursues the contrast between justice and injustice as candidate crafts. The *ergon* argument proceeds without explicit allusion to the *erga* of crafts, instead using an induction over animals, instruments and parts of the body. But the fact that its central concept is shared with the initial argument from ends is enough by way of ring-composition to suggest that the two, and thereby the whole chain of arguments, are to be read as a unity. And the connections are not hard to see. The argument from ends establishes that crafts have *erga*; the argument from actions tells us that justice is a craft. The *dunamis* argument offers an indirect suggestion as to what its *ergon* might be – for if the power of injustice is to generate disunity and dysfunction, justice must do the opposite, and do it likewise *within* the soul of the just person. This suggestion is left as a placeholder or promissory note for the account to be developed in Book IV. In the meantime, the *ergon* argument establishes a more basic and abstract point: the function of justice is to bring about good deliberation (just like the original Protagorean version of the craft), and with it happiness itself. And in Book II, though it is in some ways marked as a new beginning, Glaucon's challenge will be presented as a demand to substantiate just this point: *by doing what* in the soul itself does justice accomplish this (366e, 367a–b, e)? What he wants to be shown, in effect, is the connection between the *dunamis* argument and the *ergon* one: how exactly is it that justice's distinctive power within the soul enables us to live well?

For our purposes, the key features of the craft model are those brought out right at the start, in the argument from ends. Here Socrates emphasises that, as he puts it in a striking personification, no craft seeks out what is to its own advantage, but provides for the good of the object it is 'set over'

[26] *Grg.* 447c2, 509e1–10a4; *Hp. Mi.* 376a; and cf. *Rep.* 332d10, e4.

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(341c–42e).[27] Here and elsewhere Socrates speaks interchangeably of the craft and its practitioner: the latter – the 'doctor qua doctor' – is simply the art operationalised. What the art of medicine seeks is the health of the patient. In response, Thrasymachus offers a rather effective counterexample: shepherds, surely, do not do their work in order to benefit the sheep (340c–41a, 343b–44c). Socrates' defense is to object that Thrasymachus has not identified the shepherd as such, but only a further activity all craft-practitioners have in common – the additional craft, as Socrates presents it, of wage-earning.[28] After all, the doctor can perform his craft, and confer the benefits distinctive of medicine, whether he earns anything from it or not; and likewise the shepherd, if his work really deserves the name of craft.[29]

In the course of this rebuttal, Socrates clarifies that the other-benefiting results of craft have to do with their each having a distinctive power (*dunamis*) (346a2, b1) – thus setting the stage for the third, *dunamis* argument. He eventually identifies this with its constitutive function or work: 'each craft accomplishes its own work [*ergon ergazetai*] and benefits what it is set over' (346d5). (This language of 'accomplishing a work' is a flag for the craft model even when the term *technê* isn't present: it is also pervasive in the *ergon* argument [353a11, c1, c7, c10].) So the idea that craft is ordered to an end or function emerges here as a result of conceptual clarification, starting from the familiar and uncontroversial understanding of it as involving a distinctive, beneficial, other-oriented specialisation. And Socrates' principal concern is to insist that, on this teleological understanding, craft can be seen to be *disinterested*. That is, the end for which the craftsperson acts is unrelated to his own advantage. Even if the doctor heals herself, or the navigator saves his own life along with the ship, it is strictly speaking qua patient or passenger; and it's a matter of accident that the situation makes this exercise of their craft appropriate.

This picture of craft as essentially teleological and disinterested is at the heart of the Platonic craft model, or at any rate of the dimension of it that I hope to articulate here. It is reaffirmed in a text whose importance as

[27] For puzzles about this good-directedness, see also Nawar (Chapter 2) in this volume.

[28] A problematic solution since wage-earning itself seems *not* to fit the other-oriented conception of *technê* that it is introduced to support; and it is not obvious why it should count as a craft at all. But Plato does sometimes use 'technê' very loosely – for instance, in the *Sophist* for the activity of the sophist (cf. *Soph.* 265a–68d, and for discussion Brown 2010).

[29] Socrates need not assume that the shepherd's aim must be to make his sheep happy: craft always aims at making something *better*, but that betterness needn't be construed in terms of the *welfare* of its object. Given the hierarchy of crafts (see Section IV), what makes a sheep better is likely its suitability for use by the crafts of cooking, weaving, tanning, etc.

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evidence for the model (and for its continuation in late Plato) is often underappreciated: Plato's account of God as the craftsperson par excellence – literally, the Demiurge or Artisan – in the *Timaeus*.[30] What interests Plato most in introducing the Demiurge is his motivation: he creates the *kosmos* because he is good, and what is good is never 'jealous', but wants other things also to be good insofar as possible (*Tim.* 29d–30b, cf. 28a–29a). Now in the case of ordinary craft-agency, we can ask two very distinct questions: why did *the doctor* act as he did, choosing such and such a treatment in this particular case? And why did *that person* choose to act *as* a (qua) doctor? The first question is properly medical, asking for the rationale of the doctor's procedures in a particular case. Socrates emphasises in the *Gorgias* that the doctor himself will be able to answer it – to give a *logos* of what he does, an answer ultimately relating his action to the end of medicine, health (*Grg.* 465a, 501a–b). The second is a question about the contingent motivations of the person who adopts that medical role, and Socrates' talk of wage-earning in the *Republic* is an acknowledgement that it is a question calling for an answer of a different kind. The *perfect* craftsperson, though – aka divine Nous, the agent who is *nothing but* pure practical reason (*Tim.* 47e–48a) –needs no wages: his reasons for action, both in adopting his craft and in practising it, form a single continuum of ungrudging beneficence. This motivation is not exactly our familiar benevolence or altruism; for those standardly aim at the welfare of other sentient beings, and there are none of those around when the Demiurge takes up his work. What he seeks from the start is simply to *make things better*. This then is the nature or orientation proper to craft itself, here visible in a uniquely pure form: disinterested beneficent teleological rationality.

Returning to the arguments of *Republic* I, Plato here means to show that our conception of craft – for Plato thinks that Socrates can win this argument, that our practices and preconceptions side with him and not Thrasymachus – is essentially *functionalist*. Each craft has a distinctive function or work proper to it, and to be a doctor is simply to act as the art requires. Such functionalist categories are inherently normative, in a slippery-slope sort of way: the *good* doctor is one who instantiates the art correctly and well, while one who does so badly enough may fall out of the category altogether.[31] In the case of craft, this functional normativity has a

[30] On the complexities of this passage cf. Johansen 2014, as well as his contribution to this volume (Chapter 4).

[31] I take this to be the corrected Platonic version of Thrasymachus' claim that the craftsperson as such is infallible, discussed by Nawar in this volume (Chapter 2). Note also that (as I hope to show in 'Platonic Predication', ms) Platonic claims about agency-qua are primarily causal; and

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social dimension: a craft is something an agent undertakes, and this undertaking is both a social performance and a psychological stance. In undertaking the role of doctor, I present myself to the world under that description and, unless something fraudulent is going on, resolve to adopt the medical standpoint in my deliberations.

So while the doctor qua doctor is in the first instance a norm and a metaphysical abstraction, it is also a role that an agent can choose to instantiate. And to genuinely undertake the art of medicine means not only acquiring the relevant base of knowledge, but adopting the deliberative standpoint of medicine in the relevant contexts ('locally', as I will put it): internalising its end, treating the reasons it provides as sufficient and aspiring to meet its norms. This entails that the doctor, properly speaking, is an agent who not only knows certain things but is motivated in a certain way: and these motivations are *insulated* from considerations external to medicine, including whatever external motivations may have initially led her to undertake it. Imagine, for instance, the doctor propelled to take up medicine by greed – or a naïve teenager who undertakes to become a firefighter just because it sounds so exciting. For her *really* to act as a firefighter will involve internalising the ends and norms of the art of firefighting, and being guided exclusively by them when deliberating in the relevant contexts. And 'because it would be exciting' is not an acceptable reason for action in firefighting. This kind of motivational transformation through the internalisation of a new deliberative standpoint is routine, familiar and itself part of the norms belonging to every craft: it's something we expect a correctly educated firefighter or doctor to do. Our evaluative practices would be unintelligible otherwise: even Thrasymachus does not try to claim that 'good doctor' means 'doctor who *could* promote the health of the patient, if he ever felt like it', or 'doctor who is super-efficient at making money out of medicine'.

The disinterestedness of craft has some implications worth exploring. It has been much debated whether we *ever* find genuinely disinterested or non-egoistic motivations in ancient philosophy, equivalent to the motives of duty and altruism we find in modern ethical theories.[32] The question arises because in ancient ethics the *eudaimonia* of the agent – his happiness or well-being, taken to be the human good – seems to be assumed as the

Thrasymachus is right that it is not *because of* his medical expertise that the doctor-loosely-speaking makes a mistake.

[32] For a starter-kit of relevant arguments, see e.g., Irwin 1977; Kraut 1989; Annas 1993: chs. 10–12 with references and White 2002.

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natural and necessary starting point of ethical reflection. The worry is that this eudaimonist orientation renders all his motives ultimately egoistic: if the *ultimate* reason for an agent's actions is always his own good, then surely his virtuous motivations are always merely instrumental in relation to ultimately egoistic ones, and his practice of virtue as a whole is reducible to the pursuit of self-interest. I can't properly address this controversy here, but I would suggest that the craft model is the place to look for a solution to the problem – or, more accurately, for an explanation of why it never looks like a problem to Plato himself (or to Aristotle, or the Stoics). For in the humble and familiar context of craft, the alleged prison of egoistic motivation starts to look illusory: even the humble shoemaker steps out of it daily, every time he deliberates about how to make a good shoe, without consideration of his profit margins or career goals. More deeply, the everyday insulation found in the practice of the crafts shows, contra Thrasymachus et al., that there is nothing inherently or by default self-interested about successful practical rationality – quite the opposite, in fact, in the cases of it which we understand the best.

On the conception of virtue informed by the craft model, then, to become virtuous is to take on the motivations provided by the virtues in the same way as the well-trained doctor or firefighter. Firefighting really *is* exciting; and committing to the life of virtue is indeed the key to obtaining your own happiness. But part of what it means for firefighting or virtue to be a craft is that undertaking it involves committing to a genuinely new motivational standpoint, one internal to the craft itself and providing reasons for action that are insulated from any external ones. So read, the principal import of the craft model is deontological rather than epistemological; its point is to provide a way of construing the demands of morality as categorical.[33] For what is demanded of a craft-practitioner in any given situation is quite independent of the agent's inclinations and self-interest, including the motivations that led him to adopt that identity; the adoption of the identity consists precisely in grasping those demands and committing to them as authoritative. The obvious problem with this as a model for moral motivation is, of course, that the adoption of any craft-identity in the first place is only ever optional. I turn in Section IV to ask whether the craft model can accommodate this disanalogy.

It might be objected that this emphasis on craft as disinterested is at war with the eudaimonistic stance, and most vividly with the picture of virtue

[33] This is not to say that the reasons provided by craft are never *defeasible*: see Section IV (also Barney 2008b) on normative insufficiency and the hierarchy of crafts.

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we get from the early Socratic dialogues. For there the end of the craft of virtue is straightforwardly the agent's own good[34] – just as we should expect, given the origins of the model in Protagorean careerist self-help. Moreover, there is no reason to think that Plato's mature version of the model is any different in that regard: in *Republic* I too, the conclusion of the *ergon* argument is that the just person himself will live well, and so be blessed and happy (354a). However, this does not necessarily conflict with the claim that craft is disinterested in its structure. It implies only that the virtuous person's pursuit of his happiness involves commitment to a strategy of indirection – like that of the adventure-seeker who genuinely commits to the norms of firefighting, or the shoemaker who, persuaded by the myths of capitalism, never doubts that his best strategy for personal profit is to make the best shoes he can.

The starkest evidence for this strategy of motivational indirection is the infamous 'Return to the Cave' in *Republic* VII. This is where the rulers in the strict sense as Plato conceives them, the masters of the craft of political virtue, formally undertake to adopt that role. Not by coincidence, it's a moment heavily foreshadowed in the deployment of the craft model in Book I (345d–47e). Just as Socrates argues there, the Guardians, as we discover in Book VII, will rule 'unwillingly'; for as true rulers, they benefit not themselves but those they rule. In fact, they rule at massive cost to their own happiness, which would be maximised by a life of philosophical study.[35] Yet they will reliably undertake this political role, we are told, simply because they are just people, and the demand that they do so is just (520e). Recent scholarship has found this maddeningly unsatisfactory, and sought for more complicated reasons;[36] but Plato's whole point is that nothing more needs to be said. To be a just person is to be committed to a deliberative standpoint from which the demands of justice are unconditionally authoritative, insulated from any considerations about one's own interest. Agents come to adopt that standpoint, of course, on the basis of

[34] E.g., *Euthyd.* 278e–82d; cf. Irwin 1977 for a reading taking this as central.

[35] To be clear, the world in which a true Guardian decides to act as a free-rider is internally contradictory and thus impossible. So there is in a sense no answer to the question whether a free-riding Guardian would *really* be happier; and a pseudo- or proto-Guardian who unjustly free-rides cannot be happier overall than his just counterparts. What remains true, though, is that each Guardian would be much happier in a society that (though otherwise like the *kallipolis* in the relevant respects) exempted him from political responsibilities, so that he could avoid them with his justice unimpaired. (This is the magical possibility represented by the divinely governed Isles of the Blessed [519c].) He thus rules 'unwillingly' inasmuch as doing so is not for him a good; his life would be better without it, if only all else were equal.

[36] See, e.g., Kraut 1991 and Brown 2000.

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some motivation external and antecedent to it, standardly their ongoing desire for their own happiness. In fact, Plato thinks, a rational agent will recognise it as the only strategy for the pursuit of happiness that has any chance of working. But that does not change the structure of virtue as a craft, or the force of its demands.

What is most striking about the craft model in *Republic* I, then, is that craft is here conceived as a vehicle for the demands and norms of a disinterested practical reason. Seen in this deontological light, the recognised crafts are important to Plato not as special kinds of knowledge (and so not as grounding any particularly intellectualist conception of virtue) but as instances of a broader category of reason-giving, norm-imposing identities. These are what Christine Korsgaard calls *practical identities*; and her argument that they ground normativity seems to me a kind of recovery of this side of the ancient craft model. According to Korsgaard, a practical identity is

> a description under which you value yourself and find your life worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking. Conceptions of practical identity include such things as roles and relationships, citizenship, membership in ethnic or religious groups, causes, vocations, professions, and offices . . .. Our conceptions of our practical identity govern our choice of actions, for to value yourself in a certain role or under a certain description is at the same time to find it worthwhile to do certain acts for the sake of certain ends, and impossible, even unthinkable to do others.[37]

We might compare here Epictetus' claim that to discover my *kathêkonta*, the duties or actions appropriate to me, I need only look at the 'names' I am called, such as human being, citizen, son, brother, city councillor and youth. For each of these, he says, has its own proper function or work (*Disc.* II.10.1–12; cf. Cicero, *De Off.* I.107–17). That is, just like craft-identities, roles like 'brother' and 'city councillor' are norm-imposing, and (as I will argue in Section IV) vehicles for the more general norms binding on us as human beings. Indeed, to think of other identities in this way amounts to thinking of them as craft-like: as jobs to be done, with all the expertise we can muster. This suggests that the ethical significance of craft, for Plato and his successors, is as the species of practical identity whose normative and motivational structure is most

[37] Korsgaard 1996: 100–2 and Korsgaard 2009: 20–24, 42–44. Korsgaard's emphasis on the voluntary adoption and construction of such identities is perhaps distinctively modern (not to mention Kantian, and American). But she too grounds the authority of virtue in an identity that is *not* optional: 'our identity as rational or human beings' (2009: 22).

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transparent to us, because its connection to a work or function is most obvious.[38] I will have more to say about the relation of *technê* to *ergon* in Section IV.

IV The Motivational Objection and the Completion of the Model

I now want to consider the most powerful objection to the craft model, and what I take to be Plato's rejoinder to it: doing so will help to bring out some other key features of the model. The objection is one raised by Plato himself in the *Hippias Minor*.[39] A *technê* can be abused: that is, the person who has acquired it can choose to use its methods for purposes opposed to the good that it standardly provides. In fact, the doctor will be the *best*, most expert poisoner or torturer. If virtue is like *technê*, then, it must be a body of knowledge that the agent can choose to deploy for good *or* for harm. Socrates concludes:

> Therefore, it belongs to the good man to do injustice voluntarily, and the bad man to do it involuntarily; that is, if the good man has a good soul . . . . So the one who voluntarily misses the mark and does what is shameful and unjust, Hippias – that is, if there is such a person – would be no other than the good man. (Hip. Mi. 376b)

This is a paradox, and clearly unacceptable to Socrates himself[40] – hence, as many scholars have noted, the crucial stipulation 'if there is such a person', which we are presumably meant to see is counterfactual. For the just person is one who will never choose to do injustice *at all*. Again, that was the simple solution to the problem of 'the return to the Cave': 'we'll be giving just orders to just people' (520e1). Because the Guardians are just, all non-moral considerations will be silenced for them in cases of prima facie conflict, including considerations about their own happiness. But the

[38] Craft names do not appear in Epictetus' list here; but they come in immediately after, when he reproaches the person who fails to live up to his roles as being like a smith who forgets he is a smith and uses his hammer incorrectly, or like someone who loses the use of language or of music (*Disc.* II.10.13–16).

[39] T. Nawar's essay in this volume (Chapter 2) discusses this under the heading, 'two-way skills'.

[40] This is not to say that it is an impossible view. The springboard for the discussion, occupying the first part of the *Hippias Minor*, is the question of whether truth-telling and lying should be seen as a single bivalent power; and the traditional Greek answer, immortalised in the boast of the Muses at the start of Hesiod's *Theogony*, is yes. Still, in the case of the virtues, and justice in particular, the parallel answer seems wrong. It is not an unintelligible conception of justice so much as a clearly corrupt one – the view of someone like Odysseus in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, who boasts that nobody is better at justice than him, whenever circumstances make it to his advantage (83–85, 1049–52).

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existence of doctor-poisoners and the like shows that no *technê* is motivationally compelling in this way; therefore virtue (or at any rate the key virtue of justice) must not be a *technê*.

Now the motivational objection is recalled in *Republic* I itself during the discussion between Polemarchus and Socrates: as part of a whole barrage of eristic paradoxes, Socrates here uses craft analogies to show that the just person, as a skilled guardian, 'turns out to be a kind of thief' (333e–34a). That the teleological, deontological conception of craft discussed in Section IV is wheeled out by Socrates against Thrasymachus immediately *after* this passage, and used to ground the craft model, strongly suggests that Plato thinks that this conception enables the model to exclude or withstand the objection. And it is easy to see how it provides at least a first line of response. According to the argument from ends, a craft properly understood is *not*, as the objection implies, an instrumental collection of techniques used for whatever purpose the person trained in it might choose; rather, it is inherently structured around a beneficial end. So the doctor may be best *able* to produce disease; but the doctor strictly speaking can never choose to do so. And so the craft analogy does not imply, disastrously, that the just person ever *is* a thief. (This is not just a matter of terminological fiat: Plato can plausibly argue that the person who thinks of his craft as merely a grab-bag of techniques, without seeing how they are organised around an end, does not possess the art in full; and whatever he does grasp of it will not by itself guide him to act in *any* particular way [*Phdr.* 268a–9c].)

Still, the objection survives this first line of response. For it does not address the central charge that, be the nature of the craft itself what it may, the knowledge it gives is evidently not motivationally compelling, as any knowledge constitutive of virtue must be. Even if the medically knowledgeable poisoner is not strictly speaking a doctor, the fact that such a person is possible suffices to show that there is a deep motivational disanalogy here. Moreover, Socrates' invocation of wage-earning in the argument from ends seems to admit the point: the just person surely practises justice without requiring any such 'wage'.

I think we can see why Plato might nonetheless presume the craft model to be immune to the objection, precisely on the basis of his teleological or deontological conception of crafts as practical identities. To begin with, we need to see that on this conception, the crafts *do* motivate, not as magically powerful kinds of knowledge but in the way that all our practical identities do: by providing a deliberative standpoint that imposes authoritative norms and demands on those who commit to it. This is less visible than

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it should be because the motivational force of craft-identities is inherently *weaker* than that of virtue: the objection is right that there is a real difference here. But this difference is not as deep as the objection claims; and far from invalidating the craft model, it is explained by it. To see how, we need to turn to two ideas that I take to represent a kind of necessary extension or completion of the model.

The first is Plato's conception of the political craft as *architectonic*: that is, as having the function of managing and integrating the work of the specialised crafts. The single text in which this vision is worked out in the fullest detail is the opening of the *Nicomachean Ethics*; but Aristotle is here clearly picking up on themes that we also see developed in the *Charmides*, *Euthydemus* and *Republic* (both in the conception of the role of the Guardians and in more abstract terms in *Rep.* X 601b–e). The point of departure for these discussions is the pervasive pattern of organisation by which one craft is related to another: one craft provides the tools or materials that are used by another craft, and so is practised under its supervision as subordinate. If we ask where these chains of hierarchy end, and how they are integrated into a social and economic unity, the obvious answer is that they rest in the hands of the *politikos*. For the wholly general art of deliberation that he possesses is the perfect qualification for this supervisory task – for adjudicating and harmonising the diverse claims and contributions of farmer and sailor, general and trader, doctor and cook. If we ask what the distinctive end of such an art consists in (the determinacy criterion again), the answer must be: the good of the community as such, that is, the human good writ large.

Moreover, we can now see that the regular crafts *require* the existence of a craft that has this distinctive end and special status. For only if there is such a thing can they hope to be reliably beneficial in the way they are standardly assumed to be – an assumption built into the very conception of craft, and so into the model from the outset. As I argued earlier, the demands of medicine must be insulated from the extra-medical motivations of the doctor; but it's a familiar modern observation that this insulation can be a bad thing. We are perturbed by the doctor who cares only about the body part he specialises in and not about the patient's health overall, and the rocket scientist indifferent to where his bombs come down. In short, due to their local or specialised character, the crafts are incomplete or *normatively insufficient* in a number of ways.[41] That is, the reasons they give are defeasible, and there are situations in which the

[41] Cf. Barney 2008b: 297–300.

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pursuit of their end ought to be curtailed as no longer beneficial all things considered. And the craft itself can tell you nothing about these. Plato is acutely aware of this shortcoming: the case that worries him is the art of medicine, which cannot tell you about cases in which a patient would be better off dead (*Lach.* 195c–d; *Grg.* 511e–12b). His solution is that medicine and the other ordinary crafts need to be supervised by a higher art possessed of a more encompassing vision of the good and able to give rationally non-defeasible commands; by, ultimately, the art of the *politikos*. Without it playing this authoritative role, the normative standing of the other crafts would be deeply compromised (cf. *Chrm.* 171d–75d). On this account, the *politikê technê* is a special kind of craft in the same way that a general is a special kind of soldier: while squarely belonging to the broader genus, it plays a distinctive role that the rest of the genus (arguably, at least) requires.

To see how this becomes an answer to the motivational objection, we need to turn to the private counterpart of *politikê*, which has its own version of this architectonic function and special authority. For instance, Epictetus' *Discourses* begin by asking what human ability (*dunamis*, here clearly including the crafts) studies itself and so knows how to employ itself (I.1.1–6, cf. I.20.1–6). Grammar and music will tell you *how* to write your friend or play the lyre; but not *whether* it is appropriate to do so, and when. That calls for a higher deliberative capacity, one able to address questions about 'what is to be done' in a perfectly general and regress-ending way. This conception of the craft that is virtue as involving use of the other crafts can be found already in the *Euthydemus* and *Charmides*.[42] So the virtuous person, just as we would expect from the original Protagorean 'dual-scope' conception of the craft, is a small-scale version of the *politikos*. And so he must know the small-scale, private version of the human good: that is, his own *ergon* and flourishing as a human being.

This private version of the art also adds something new. The art of politics is especially authoritative; but from the perspective of the practitioner, it is still like all the other crafts in providing a merely optional practical identity. The craft that fulfils the human *ergon* is not like that. Its end is unique in being universally non-optional; for it corresponds to our inalienable identity as human beings, which is prior to and independent of

[42] It is striking that both dialogues temporarily shift the focus to the political level, with the *basilikê technê* in the former (289c–92e) and the dystopian city of all the sciences in the latter (171d–74d). The dual scope of the craft in question makes this unproblematic; and as in the *Republic*, the 'large letters' of the *polis* can reveal principles that are also present, but less visible, in the case of individual human beings.

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the more specialised identities we may choose to adopt. Virtue is special as a craft, then, not only because there is no higher craft on the basis of which its reasons might prove defeasible, but because I cannot refuse to adopt the practical identity that makes its end an end *for me*.

This individualised version of the *politikê technê* also allows us to see why, though defeasible, practical identities such as crafts can be genuinely normative. For as was already apparent from Epictetus' emphasis on 'names' or roles as the key to our duties (*kathêkonta*), the craft that realises the human *ergon* operates to a great extent *through* our more specialised practical identities.[43] Our duties are incumbent on us as human beings; but an action often *becomes* a duty for us on the basis of a more specific role. You cannot be a good human being if you are an abusive son or a negligent citizen. And elsewhere Epictetus argues along the same lines with craft identities explicitly in the picture:

> There is, besides, a particular end and a general end. First of all, I must act as a human being. What does that involve? That one shouldn't act like a sheep, even if one is gentle in one's behaviour, and one shouldn't act injuriously like a wild beast. The particular end relates to each person's specific occupation and moral choice. The lyre-player must act as a lyre-player, the carpenter as a carpenter, the philosopher as a philosopher, the orator as an orator. (*Disc.* III.23.4, trans. R. Hard)

If the duties of that abstract figure, the lyre-player qua lyre-player, ever become real duties for the person who *is* a lyre-player, it must be because being a lyre-player becomes part of her job as a human being, so that the normativity of her role is grounded in that of the human *ergon* as such.[44]

In short, the motivational objection misrepresents as a deep difference in kind what is just a necessary complementarity built into the craft model itself. On the Platonic conception, craft *does* motivate, in the way of any practical identity: for to practice a craft is just to understand its demands and embrace them as sufficient reasons for action. Where ordinary crafts fall short is that such craft-identities are only ever local, defeasible and optional. The craft that is virtue is the necessary complement to them: authoritative in the reasons it provides, it grounds in turn their weaker

[43] I discuss this thought as the 'realisation reading' of the Aristotelian function argument in Barney 2008a: 309–18.

[44] Thus in the *Republic*, the justice of the *kallipolis* depends on its fulfilling the diverse natures [*phuseis*] of its citizens: Plato seems to have an almost Leibnizian optimism that the professions that will enable practitioners to do work appropriate to their natures are *also* just the ones that will contribute to the good of the city. For a just and happy city to be possible, the twin perspectives of the architectonic art and of the *ergon* argument must deliver the same roster of *technai*.

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form of normativity. This picture also explains why virtue, so understood, is necessarily motivationally compelling. For the possessor of this craft must grasp that the reasons for action it gives are non-optional and non-defeasible; and – and this is where it at last becomes important that virtue is not just a practical identity, but a kind of wisdom or rational perfection – in such a person what is irrational is also impossible.

So the idea of a human *ergon*, on the one hand, and the architectonic hierarchy of the crafts, on the other, are pathways to the same conclusion: that there is – there *must* be – a craft of deliberation that has for its end the human good as such, both at the individual level and the political one, and which therefore has an authoritative relation to all the others. To pursue the craft model further would mean exploring the grounding of our *ergon* in human nature (*phusis*): for we would need an account of human nature in all its complexity and diversity in order to see not only what the human *ergon* is in general, and how virtue enables us to attain it, but how it relates to its large-scale counterpart, the good of a political community and to the particular *erga* of the crafts within it. In short, we would need something very much like *Republic* II–IX. And this suggests that if the craft model seems to evanesce from the *Republic* after Book I, it is because for the rest of the argument we are deeply *inside* it. It is only from the perspective of the craft model that the vindication of justice would naturally take the form of an account of the happy city as one in which the right jobs are assigned to the right natures – including, above all, the assignment of political power to rulers with a craft-like grasp of and commitment to the common good.

V Conclusions

I've argued that the craft model enters ancient ethics when Protagoras promises to teach excellence in deliberation – the virtue of the *politikos* – as a craft that is also sufficient for private happiness. Plato thinks that Protagoras himself has no hope of making good on this; but he too is mesmerised by the very idea of an all-encompassing deliberative craft, and thinks that by taking a serious look at the existing crafts we can discover a lot about how it would have to work. In doing so, though, what he comes to find striking about the crafts is less their epistemic content than their normative structure. So the craft model comes to be used by Plato (and at least some of his successors, some of the time) to spell out a conception of virtuous action as structured by practical identities oriented to disinterested ends. And this deontological dimension of the model points in two

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further directions. First, it calls for an account of the political craft that will suit it for an essentially architectonic role, supervising the web of crafts and other practical identities that make up a community. Second, it calls for a theory of human nature that will show how the human *ergon* grounds the norms imposed by our specialised practical identities.

In all this, the *technê* model is an exercise in what Aristotle calls reasoning from what is more familiar, or better known to us, to what is less so. We are familiar with the idea that the carpenter has a job to do – much less so with the idea that a human being does (cf. *Rep.* 406c–7a). And this form of reasoning is not just a theoretical exercise: it also has a psychagogic and rhetorical function. As used by Socrates, Plato and the Stoics, the craft model often performs a shaming of the presumed audience, leisured gentlemen with a halfhearted aspiration to virtue or philosophy.[45] The message to them is simple and abrupt: do your job! Put real care and effort into that virtue you claim to be committed to, the way the lowly carpenter over there does with his lesser task. And this rhetorical dimension of the craft model is useful confirmation for the deontological reading I've been presenting, for it has nothing to do with rationalism or intellectualism in ethics. When Socrates, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius hold up the shoemaker, carpenter or athlete as a role model, it is not for their systematic knowledge but their dedication and commitment. Indeed, the lower and less intellectual the *métier*, the stronger the reproach.

So the craft model in ancient ethics is not just an analytical tool but a mode of exhortation – a strikingly egalitarian one, for the ancient world – and a prompt to our moral imagination. Imagine understanding human happiness as fully as a carpenter understands buildings. Imagine making political decisions as reliably as an expert shoemaker makes shoes. Imagine taking the demands of justice as seriously as an obsessive athlete takes his sport. *That's* what it would be like to be a virtuous person: now *get on with it*, say Plato and the Stoics, the way the athlete and the shoemaker do.[46]

[45] Cf., e.g., *Rep.* 406c–7a; Marcus Aurelius, *Med.* V.1.3; Epictetus, *Disc.* II.13.15, III.23, IV.5.22, IV.8, IV.12.14, etc.; I discuss *Rep.* 406c–7a briefly in Barney 2008a: 315–16.

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