A NEO-ARISTOTELIAN THEORY OF EMULATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR CULTIVATING TEACHER CHARACTER THROUGH ROLE MODELLING

by

EMERALD IMOGEN HENDERSON

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues
School of Education
College of Social Sciences
University of Birmingham
September 2024

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

This thesis is dedicated to Jenni, Ann and Arthur,
for their unwavering love and support

ABSTRACT

This thesis expounds a new theory of emulation *qua* moral role modelling and suggests how it could be applied as a method of virtuous character development in the professional context of teaching. Through a synthesis of reconstructed neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, current developmental moral psychology and qualitative empirical insights, it builds upon work by eminent philosophers, psychologists and educationists to enhance the understanding of what emulation is, conceptually speaking, and how it works as a developmental process. My central argument addresses how the methodological tensions surrounding emulation are grounded in a category mistake: the misconceptualisation of emulation as *merely* an emotion, rather than, as I argue, a moral virtue in its own right. Predominantly composed of virtuous emotion and necessarily entailing virtuous action, I thus propose a componential account of the virtue of emulation, which I synthesise with Aristotle's theory of causation: the four causes. Historically revered for their explanatory power, I argue that appeal to the four causes enables one to better understand emulation as a quadripartite causal process. Through doing so, I make visible the importance of *phronesis* to emulation and accordingly introduce a new concept – entangled *phronesis* – as the psycho-moral mechanism which underpins it. As entangled *phronesis* works differently according to a learner's phase of virtuous character development, I also divide emulation into two types: *pre-phronetic* 'habituated emulation' and *phronetically-informed* 'complete emulation'. In the naturalistic spirit of the thesis, I then refine and extend the main concepts pertaining to this philosophical argument by aligning them with insights from developmental moral psychology and neuroscience. The result: a philosophically discerning, psychologically realistic and developmentally adequate theory of emulation. Having expounded the moral philosophy and moral psychology of emulation, the thesis then takes a more applied turn into the professional ethics education of teachers. Here, I build a normative case for *phronimoi* teacher role models, i.e., experienced teachers as role models to more

novice teachers, which I frame as a moral developmental solution to the threshold problem – the issue that many teachers do not meet the *phronetic* standard required to be role models to pupils. This then fuels an empirical case study on teachers who *actually are* moral role models to early carer teachers. The results of the study illuminate the salience of *phronesis* to the emulative process and motivate sustained interest in emulation *qua* role modelling as a method of moral virtue and *phronesis* development in teachers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was funded by the University of Birmingham's College of Social Sciences Doctoral Scholarship. I will forever be grateful for receiving this award as without it such an endeavour simply would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Birmingham's College of Social Sciences, the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain and the Association for Moral Education for financially facilitating paper presentations at numerous conferences.

Wholehearted thanks must go to my two wonderful supervisors: Professor Kristján Kristjánsson and Dr Laura D'Olimpio. Their belief in me as an academic has enabled me to achieve things I never thought possible and imbued me with the motivation to pursue – what I hope will evolve into – a lifetime career in this field. Their guidance and wisdom have made these last three years the best of my life. Kristján is a remarkable mind and true *phronimos*. The precision and care with which he has engaged with my work goes beyond the remit of any supervisor and I feel incredibly lucky for his influence. Laura is a brilliant role model for women in philosophy and certainly one who I am inspired to emulate. Her expertise has been invaluable from this thesis' incarnation to fruition and her enthusiasm towards my work has also instilled in me the self-belief needed to actualise this mammoth task. I cannot thank them enough!

I would also like to thank everyone at the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues for their continued support during this process and in particular Shane McLoughlin for helping this philosopher get up to speed with all things empirical. More broadly, I must further extend this thanks to the following scholars for their encouragement during this early phase of my foray into academia: Verónica Fernández, Wouter Sanderse, Mark Jonas, Kevin Gary, Douglas Yacek, Maria Silvia Vaccarezza, Wojciech Kaftanski, Ben Kotzee, Matthew Post, Claudia Navarini and Nafsika Athanassoulis. Historically, I would also like to thank the Philosophy Department at King's College London – especially MM McCabe, Thomas Pink and Peter

Adamson – for sparking my initial moral and ancient philosophical interest. Further to the Ethics Institute at Utrecht University, particularly, Jos Philips and Sven Nyholm, for fuelling my continued love of applied ethics and for their support when applying for this PhD.

In true Aristotelian style, this endeavour has been made all the better by some friends I have made along the way: Drew Chambers, Yun Chieh Lu, Kristian Guttesen, Martina Piantoni, Elena Ricci, Matilde Liberti, Chiara Palazzolo, Nora Sandmann, Ka Ya Lee, Yuval Dwek, Marah Selim, Danielle Diver and Jeff Standley. I also thank Micah and Txai in my philosophy reading group for keeping me on my analytical toes during our monthly meetings and for their comments on some of the work presented in this thesis.

I am indebted to my team of proof-readers – Philippa, Kevin, Anna, Zoë, mum and Natalie – for accepting my plea without a blink of hesitation and for undertaking their task so diligently. A thousand thanks! On the graphic design front, thank you to Lorenzo for helping me turn my PowerPoint doodles into something considerably more elegant – function follows form! Naturally, these people are also the most brilliant friends and their support during this process has been incredible. On this front, I must also single out (in no particular order): Jessica, Marijke, Stephen, Sheena, Elena, Maria, Sophie, Rena, Celeste, Rudi, Yeri, Thirza, Hess, Emily and Pam. Your cheese boards, motivational texts, voice notes, writing chats and care packages over the course and in final days of this thesis have meant so much, and the many hours we've enjoyed at the beloved 'office' have kept me sane and given me the headspace to write.

I also wish to thank my mum, Jenni, for championing every idea I have, her patience proof-reading much of this thesis and for always encouraging me to pursue what I love. Here I must also thank my 'second parents', Arthur and Ann, for their guidance, generosity and for helping me truly understand the power of relational influences – something which has provided the much of the impetus for this thesis.

Finally, I am grateful to *The Journal of Moral Education*, *Theory and Research in Education* and *On Education* for permission to include material from the following articles that I published over the course of the thesis: 'The educational salience of emulation as a moral virtue', *Journal of Moral Education*, 53(1), 2024; 'Entangled phronesis and the four causes of emulation: Developmental insights into role modelling', *Theory and Research in Education*, 21(3), 2023; 'Special issue on exemplars and emulation in moral education: Guest editorial', *Journal of Moral Education,* 53(1), 2024; 'Beyond admiration: Rethinking the nature of emulation *qua* role modelling', *On Education*, 7(19), 2024.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 13
1.1. The thesis' metaethical and methodological commitments: naturalism 20
1.1.1. The ontological reality of psychological virtue-based naturalism 21
1.1.2. A methodologically naturalist epistemology 25
CHAPTER 2: ROLE MORALITIES ILLUMINATE ROLE MODELLING 29
2.1. Introduction 29
2.2. Why focus on role moralities? 32
2.3. The skill analogy reinterpreted 32
2.4. Situation sensitive role models 41
2.5. Voluntariness and virtue obligation 48
2.6. Research on role sensitivity 49
CHAPTER 3: TOWARDS A THEORY OF EMULATION *QUA* ROLE MODELLING 53
3.1. Introduction 53
3.2. A tripartite account of habituation involving role models as necessary cultivators of emotional dispositions 54
3.3. Emulation: Emotional virtue or virtuous emotion? Perhaps neither? 59
3.4. The third 'horn': Emulation as a moral virtue 65
3.5. Operationalising the moral virtue of emulation 72
3.6. The four causes of emulation 75
3.6.1. The four causes 77
3.6.2. The efficient cause: The moral agent's perception of the role model's virtues as representative of a moral ideal 81
3.6.3. The formal cause: The *phronetically-informed* evaluation that these ideals are worthy of emulation and possible to acquire 85
3.6.4. The material cause: Physically feeling the distress and admiration, associated with one's lack of the desired quality, i.e., the role-model-represented ideal, which induces the motivational state of inspiration 90
3.6.5. The final cause: Virtuous action concerning ends – putting the role-model-represented ideal of virtue into practice 96
CHAPTER 4: A RELATIONAL ACCOUNT OF WHY ORDINARY *PHRONIMOI* ROLE MODELS BEST INSPIRE EMULATION 108
4.1. Introduction 108
4.2. Exemplar research in moral psychology 113
4.3. Ordinary *phronimoi* as role models 118
4.4. Objections to *phronimoi* as role models 125
4.5. Features influencing the strength of emulation 131
CHAPTER 5: THE MORAL PSYCHOLOGY OF EMULATION 135
5.1. Introduction 135

5.2. A neo-Aristotelian model of moral development 138

5.3. Empirical support for hypotheses 1 and 2..140
5.3.1. Hypothesis 1: Emotions are cognitive, i.e., they are infused with thoughts/reason 141
5.3.2. Hypothesis 2: *Phronesis* is implicated in both virtuous emotion and action.......147

5.4. Empirical support for hypotheses 3, 4 and 5..154
5.4.1. Hypothesis 3: *Phronesis* (practical wisdom) can entangle, i.e., it can be shared 154
5.4.2. Hypothesis 4: Entangled *phronesis* is implicated in pre-phronetic habituated emulation...160
5.4.3. Hypothesis 5: Entangled *phronesis* is implicated in phronetically-informed complete emulation...166

5.5. Objections and responses..175

CHAPTER 6: OVERCOMING THE THRESHOLD PROBLEM – A NORMATIVE CASE FOR TEACHER ROLE MODELS 185

6.1. Introduction..185

6.2. Empirical studies on teachers as role models 191

6.3. Existing (as yet) theoretical solutions to the threshold problem................................196

6.4. A weaker problem and simpler solution? 204

CHAPTER 7: QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY ON EXPERIENCED TEACHERS AS MORAL ROLE MODELS TO EARLY CAREER TEACHERS 212

7.1. Introduction..212

7.2. Methodology 214
7.2.1. A methodologically naturalist epistemology 214
7.2.2. Methodological implications for emulation qua role modelling and associated research methods..218

7.3. Method 223
7.3.1. Participants...223
7.3.2. Design 225
7.3.3. Procedure 227
7.3.4. Analysis plan..228
7.3.5. Ethics..229

7.4. Results and discussion 230
7.4.1. To what extent and why are early career teachers (ECTs) influenced by teacher moral role models (TMRMs)? 230
7.4.2. What possible factors and causal processes affect the relationship between ECTs and their TMRMs?..240
7.4.3. To what extent and why do ECTs perceive of themselves as moral role models? 241
7.4.4. To what extent and why do TMRMs perceive of themselves as moral role models? 244

7.5. Conclusion 246

7.6. Strengths, limitations and avenues for further empirical research.............................248

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION 253

8.1. Introduction 253
8.2. Objections and responses 258
8.3. Philosophical avenues for further research 266
REFERENCES 272
APPENDICES 289

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. An extended model of virtue hierarchy 44
Figure 2. The four causes of (complete) emulation 106
Figure 3. The ideal trajectory of emulation-inspired virtuous character development 183
Figure 4. Thematic network map of salient Phase One results (basic and organising themes) related to the question: to what extent and why are early career teachers (ECTs) influenced by teacher moral role models (TMRMs)? 232
Figure 5. Thematic network map of salient Phase Two results (basic and organising themes) related to the question: to what extent and why are early career teachers (ECTs) influenced by teacher moral role models (TMRMs)? 233
Figure 6. Thematic network map of the salient themes resulting from a comparison of Phase One and Two results (organising and global themes) concerning the research question: to what extent and why are early career teachers (ECTs) influenced by teacher moral role models (TMRMs)? 234
Figure 7. Thematic network map of the basic and organising themes supporting global theme two: practical wisdom 238
Figure 8. Factors affecting the relational process of role modelling between TMRMs and ECTs 241
Figure 9. Thematic network map of salient Phase One results (basic and organising themes) related to the question: to what extent and why do ECTs perceive of themselves as moral role models? 242
Figure 10. A thematic network map of salient Phase Two results (basic and organising themes) relating to the research question: to what extent and why do TMRMs perceive of themselves as moral role models? 244

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Participant Demographics...224
Table 2. Phase One Semi-Structured Interview Questions..226
Table 3. Phase Two Semi-Structured Interview Questions..226

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis expounds a new theory of emulation *qua* moral role modelling and suggests how it could be applied as a method of virtuous character development in the professional context of teaching. Through a synthesis of reconstructed neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, current developmental moral psychology and qualitative empirical insights, it builds upon work by eminent philosophers, psychologists and educationists to enhance the understanding of what emulation is, conceptually speaking, and how it works as a developmental process. Intended as a contribution to moral developmental theory, what I propose here is not only meant to be philosophically discerning, due to its deep-rooted virtue ethical foundation, but also psychologically realistic (Flanagan, 1991, p. 32), in the sense that it is *at least* possible to attain for 'creatures like us', and developmentally adequate (Lapsley, 2021, p. 138), in the sense that it sets out a complete trajectory of role-model-inspired moral virtue and *phronesis* acquisition from infancy to moral maturity. Before I propose a roadmap of how the thesis proceeds, and outline the overall methodology undergirding it, it is instructive to make visible the personal, professional and theoretical motivation behind writing it.

I have never had a 'calling' before, or felt something similar to it, but perhaps that is something which evolves over time, a product – much like practical wisdom (*phronesis*) – of teaching *and* experience. This calling, if I dare to term it that, has ultimately compelled me to write this thesis. Whilst I have always pursued a career path which seeks to do good, the sense of meaning – that which is 'subjectively purposeful and objectively valuable' (Kristjánsson, 2020b, p. 11) – I derive from becoming a moral philosopher is something quite new to me. I have truly found my niche. Two central sources of inspiration have led me to this niche and furnished me with the degree of understanding and experience needed to pursue this rather mammoth, and I hope, ongoing, task of understanding better how one learns to become virtuous through the emulation of moral role models. The first is personal and continues to fuel my

enduring captivation with role models in general; whilst the second is professional and affects the importance I place on emulation in the context of teaching in particular. On the personal front, I have been guided, probably largely unconsciously on his part, by a true *phronimos* – the aptly named Arthur Noble – the best friend of my late father. The warmth, generosity and clear sense of justice embodied by both him and his wife have saved me from near oblivion on numerous occasions and helped imbue me with the moral vision and strength needed to flourish in numerous aspects of my life. It is not necessary to divulge too much about my own upbringing, but I will say that it has involved both a degree of moral luck, and a rather large serving of tragedy – the latter made considerably worse by some and infinitely better by others. Arthur is of course a prominent feature of these 'others': he is one of the people I aspire to become like in perception, thought, feeling and action. Always knowing and doing what is right, and retaining a sense of humour even in the face of adversity, he is someone to emulate.

On the professional front, it was my prior, almost decade-long, career as a philosophy teacher and departmental lead at a school in London which led me to neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics – the moral theoretical framework which supports this thesis – and its practical incarnation as neo-Aristotelian character education. Through teaching A-Level Philosophy I became properly acquainted with virtue ethics and realised its potential for enhancing the character development and associated flourishing of the pupils I taught. Dissatisfied with the moral educational provision in the school as a whole, I then developed and implemented a new well-being programme – *Eudaimonia* – unaware that the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues existed. Touted as an initiative with intellectual integrity and pastoral appeal, it sought to inculcate individual and societal 'well-being through well-doing', and was taught by a team of, what I now realise to be, aspiring and experienced *phronimoi* role models. Informally, I had always thought of myself as a kind of role model to pupils, and perhaps also to some teachers, yet it was only upon leaving teaching to pursue an MA in Applied Ethics at Utrecht University

that I understood – from reading various heartfelt cards – that this had literally been the case: I had inspired them in characterologically meaningful ways, beyond merely a love of my subject. Yet I myself had ceased to be inspired morally and professionally by my career and knew I had bigger philosophical fish to fry. The centrality of role modelling to teaching continued to be at the forefront of my academic attention, leading me to write my MA thesis on the topic and to the work of Professor Kristján Kristjánsson, who would later become my PhD supervisor. Primarily, I sought to question how to enable all teachers to become the moral role models pupils require them to be. Fast forward four years and I am still working on this question, albeit in somewhat more depth, and this time with more direct guidance from another true *phronimos* – Kristján. Indeed, the more I learn about emulation, the more I am convinced of its salience as a moral developmental method in both personal and professional contexts. I feel incredibly privileged to have been given the opportunity to dedicate so much time to thinking about it.

Thinking about emulation more formally, then, this thesis is further motivated by the well-founded conviction that emulation is *a*, perhaps even *the*, primary method of moral virtue and *phronesis* development (e.g., see Carr, 2012; Kristjánsson, 2006a; 2015; Miller, 2014; 2017; Sanderse, 2012; 2013; Warnick, 2008; Zagzebski, 2013; 2017). It is also driven by concerns regarding the conceptual and methodological tensions which permeate the discourse (e.g., see Kristjánsson, 2020b; Protasi, 2021; Vaccarezza and Niccoli, 2019; Zagzebski, 2017) – conundrums which are no doubt exacerbated by Aristotle's renowned lack of explicit guidance on the matter. As such, I seek to disambiguate what emulation is and how it potentially operates in different developmental phases. In light of this, as stated at the outset, this thesis expounds a new theory of emulation *qua* moral role modelling and suggests how it could be applied as a method of virtuous character development in the professional context of teaching. Relatedly, the central research question is: *what is emulation and how does it work*

as a method of virtuous character development in different developmental phases? This is supplemented with a secondary, more applied, research question: *to what extent and why is emulation qua role modelling important to the professional ethics education of teachers?* Which is further supplemented by an empirical research question: *to what extent and why are early career teachers (ECTs) influenced by teacher moral role models (TMRMs)?* This empirical element of the thesis will also explore to what extent and why ECTs and TMRMs perceive of themselves as moral role models.

To advance answers to these questions I proceed as follows. In Chapter 2, I provide preliminary normative justification for focusing on role models as a method of virtuous character development, largely through appeal to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics.* I argue that although Aristotle may not explicitly focus on *role models* as much as desired, he does spend considerable time elucidating many aspects of *role moralities* more generally. Thus, broadening one's sphere of analysis to encompass *both* can illuminate more about the importance of roles and role modelling in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. In Chapter 3, I then address – what I argue to be – the misconceptualisation of emulation as a mere emotion, and propose that it is more coherently understood as a moral virtue in its own right. Predominantly composed of virtuous emotion and necessarily entailing virtuous action, I expound a componential account of the virtue of emulation which I synthesise with Aristotle's account of causation: the four causes. Historically revered for their explanatory power, I argue that reconstructing the four causes and synthesising them with emulation enables us to better comprehend it as a quadripartite causal process. Through doing so, I make visible how emulation operates in different ways depending on a learner's degree of *phronetic* development, and accordingly divide emulation into two types: *pre-phronetic* 'habituated emulation' and *phronetically-informed* 'complete emulation'. Here, I also introduce a new concept – 'entangled *phronesis*' – the moral-psychological mechanism which drives emulation

by enabling the morally immature to acquire virtue by sharing in the *phronesis* of a role model. Once a reconstructed four-causal account of the virtue of emulation has been established, in Chapter 4 I then expound why ordinary known *phronimoi* role models are particularly well suited to the task of virtuous character development, by contrasting them to extraordinary exemplars. Using the proceeding arguments as a philosophical springboard, in Chapter 5, I then deepen, refine and extend this emerging theory of emulation through appeal to empirical research in current developmental moral psychology and neuroscience. By illustrating how these, as yet, theoretical ideas 'harmonise with the facts' (Aristotle, 2009, NE 1107a30-35), I argue that entangled *phronesis* works differently according to one's phase of *phronetic* development, it being shared – to differing degrees – through a combination of virtuous action, verbal explanation and non-verbal mind reading. This more nuanced account of entangled *phronesis* then enables me to set out more precisely how it operates in habituated emulation and complete emulation. The result is meant to be a philosophically discerning, psychologically realistic and developmentally adequate theory of emulation *qua* role modelling.

Having expounded the moral philosophy and moral psychology of emulation, in Chapter 6 the thesis takes a more applied turn into the professional ethics education of teachers. Here, I build a normative case for teacher role models, i.e., experienced teachers as role models to more novice teachers, which I frame as a moral developmental solution to the threshold problem – the issue that many teachers do not meet the *phronetic* standard required to be role models to pupils. The results of this theorising then support making a further, distinctly empirical, transition into a qualitative case study on ECTs and those they perceive as their TMRMs in Chapter 7. Indeed, the novelty of this study lies in gaining epistemic access to the teachers who *actually are* considered moral role models to other teachers in order to better understand the phenomenon of emulation *qua* role modelling in this professional context. I found no instances of this having been done before in the literature. To conclude the thesis, I

then add some final remarks, and – to ensure my position is sufficiently motivated and justified – also anticipate and respond to possible objections, before outlining ideas for future research.

Before I proceed, my choice of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics as the moral theory which informs the thesis warrants brief justification. In principle, I could have attempted to further my argument without appeal to him at all, by looking purely to 20th century (e.g., see Nietzsche, 1969; James, 1880) and later (e.g., see Brooks, 2016; Damon and Colby, 2015; Warnick, 2008) accounts of role modelling that do not take Aristotle's authority as given. Relatedly, scepticism regarding the degree to which contemporary philosophers should engage with 'the ancients', or even 'the moderns', has been provocatively raised by Hanno Sauer in a recent article 'The end of history' (2022), and in a somewhat more moderate reply (2023). In the former, he argues that engaging with such influences frustrates the epistemic aims of philosophy because they are neither up to date with the current state-of-the-art in the discourse, nor current empirical evidence, which entails they have a 'very low' probability of being right (2022, p. 12). Making epistemic progress in philosophy thus requires a 'healthy dose of historical amnesia'(ibid., p. 24). Whilst not intended as a direct response to Sauer, I do have two rejoinders which motivate the sustained, admittedly *neo-,* Aristotelian approach adopted in this thesis. First, whilst possible, appealing merely to other accounts of role modelling may have resulted in a pick-n-mix style of emulative theory development, whereby I took appealing elements from different sources and integrated them into a (potentially) conceptually *incohesive* whole. Such a search would have likely bought me back to Aristotle anyway, since the historical pedigree of the concepts integral to my account, such as virtue, emulation, habituation and the four causes, and within which it is situated, such as flourishing and naturalism (soon to be explained), are *together* located within Aristotelianism. Since these concepts add conceptual cohesion to my overall theory of emulation, it would not be as philosophically discerning had I appealed only to more contemporary thought. Second, good ideas often have enduring traction, and whilst

Aristotle is by no means right about everything, much of what he posits stands up fairly well in current debates. As such, revisiting what he espoused about emulation *then*, ideally by interpreting him more accurately, can meaningfully advance the understanding of emulation *now*. Further, his commitment to naturalism entails updating his thought in light of state-of-the-art scientific discoveries, and since I am not doing exegetical philosophical historiography, I adopt this methodology too. Neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics is thus desirable primarily because it helps add conceptual cohesion to the thesis and because it endorses incorporating contemporary empirical influences.

With this in mind, I must also take a moment to clarify the scope of virtuous character development I intend this analysis of emulation *qua* role modelling to encompass. I propose that understanding emulation requires *both* investigating how it would operate in an early-years context (what I term as 'habituated emulation') and how it does once *phronesis* is developing (what I term as 'complete emulation'), and also further down the developmental line in professional ethics educational contexts – specifically that of teaching. I acknowledge that Aristotle was primarily concerned with the former, which is a key sense in which my argument should be considered a neo-Aristotelian *reconstruction*, rather than *exegesis*, since my interest in this thesis goes beyond his. I do, however, maintain that synthesising much of what is to come with Aristotle's ethics and metaphysics can meaningfully augment the understanding of the emulation of moral role models, and further that his endorsement of naturalism both warrants and justifies a reconstructive approach. Taking this fairly broad developmental scope into account, then, my vision for what this thesis might add to the landscape of moral developmental theory is fairly ambitious, yet tempered to the extent that it is applicable to those who do indeed have access to moral role models: those fortunate enough to be on the 'ideal' trajectory of role-model-stimulated emulation.

Taking this into account, it is also my intention that the emulative theory I propose here applies universally – so not just to the WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic) (see Flanagan, 2016, p. 4), but to anyone with a capacity for relational learning, i.e., most humans[1], in light of our shared moral-psychological make-up, which enables us to emulate moral role models in similar ways. 'Similar' here, however, is an important caveat, since I argue that whilst the essential emulative process is shared between individuals, and that – *in order to be a role model* – role models must have certain virtue-relevant qualities, I intend for the precise role models who inspire different learners to both evolve and differ. More precisely, role models are likely to evolve in line with said learners' individual moral progress *and* to be sensitive to the individual differences and situational or cultural contexts which make such role models relatable. This endorsement of the symbiosis between universalism and contextualism chimes well with the universalism and contextualism inherent in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics and is a theme which I shall now explain in relation to the naturalist methodology which underpins the overall thesis.

1.1. The thesis' metaethical and methodological commitments: naturalism

It will be clear from the aforementioned roadmap that this thesis does not follow a standard theoretical nor empirical format, but rather one that synthesises the two. This reflects the overarching methodology and associated metaethical commitments of this moral developmental research: naturalism, broadly the idea that all theorising must be accountable to empirical data. Indeed, as a normative ethical theory, neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics is already

---

[1] I specify 'most' here to denote the exclusion of special cases, which in this instance might concern, for example, people with a disability which obscures their capacity for relational moral learning through the emulation of role models.

laden with metaethical ontological and epistemological commitments, and since my research is embedded within this theoretical context, these commitments apply here too. At its core, virtue ethics is both realist, meaning that moral judgements have a truth value, and cognitivist, meaning said judgements can be known and understood via their cognitive content – features which illuminate its suitability for being studied empirically2. Relatedly, I shall now explain the relevance of both psychological virtue-based naturalism and methodological naturalism to the thesis, and link this to what is arguably their applied ethical counterpart: critical applied ethics. Through doing so, I thus hope to justify the interplay between the theoretical and empirical throughout the thesis. It should be noted that what follows is conceptualised in terms of 'virtue' – a deliberate move since I understand emulation itself to be a moral virtue, moral role models to be those who inspire emulation, and entangled *phronesis* to be a mechanism explicitly and inextricably linked to role-model-driven virtuous character development. As such, the naturalism inherent in 'virtue' concerns the virtue of emulation too.

1.1.1. The ontological reality of psychological virtue-based naturalism

> One may also observe in one's travels to distant countries the feelings of recognition and affiliation that link every human being to every other human being (Aristotle, 2009, NE 1155a21-22).

More or less necessarily, human beings share a common nature and basic experiences, which grounds virtue in an ontologically objective reality. 'Ontology' here refers to the theory of being or existence and originates from the Greek *on* 'being' and *logos* 'knowledge' (Delanty and Strydom, 2003, p. 6). Relatedly, in research methodology terms, an 'ontological position' is understood as 'assumptions about the nature of reality' (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 133), which in social science – of which the present study is a facet – denotes 'the way the social world is

---

2 There is presently a lively discourse on the emerging field of 'virtue science' and for this I direct readers to the following sources: Cokelet, 2022; Cokelet and Fowers, 2019; Fowers et al., 2021; Snow, 2020; Snow et al., 2021; Wright et al., 2020.

seen to be and what can be assumed about the nature and reality of the social phenomena that make up the social world' (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p. 10). In virtue ethics the social phenomenon in question is, naturally, 'virtue', which proponents argue is metaethically realist, meaning, as mentioned, that it has a truth value: mind-independent (objective) moral facts *exist*. Normatively this is important because an objective basis for virtue provides a standard from which to judge, motivate and facilitate moral progress – arguably the r*aison d'être* of most moral philosophers and social scientists (Rosenberg, 2018, p. 31; Nagel, 1962, p. 489). Advocating for ethical realism puts virtue ethics methodologically in the 'ontologically realist' – as opposed to anti-realist – camp. In light of this realism, I broadly define 'virtue' in what follows as an *acquired stable trait of character*, with character conceptualised as the constellation of virtues which are linked to but distinct from personality[3](see Fowers et al., 2023b) .

The ontological reality of virtue is most persuasively grounded in a type of ethical naturalism, specifically psychological virtue-based naturalism. Metaethically speaking, naturalists are realists who maintain, through appeal to biological or psychological facts about human nature, that substantive moral facts exist and are constituted by natural facts (Papineau, 2023). They reject any sharp distinction between facts and values[4] and essentially understand

---

3 Moral psychologists generally agree that both personality traits, such as the Big Five, and character traits, i.e., virtues, are *trait like*, in the sense that they are stable dispositions, and *interactive*, in the sense that they affect each other (see Fowers et al., 2023; Wright et al., 2020, p. 9). However, I am aware of the present debate regarding whether character is situated *within* our broader personality, which is the perspective of Wright et al. (2020), *or* whether character should *not be subsumed* into personality, which is the perspective of Fowers et al. (2023). Regarding the latter, Fowers et al. call this the 'genus-species model', where both virtues and personality are considered similar yet distinct species within the same genus (ibid.). They argue that personality cannot encompass virtuous character because doing so would require *either* adding unappealing elements to personality theory *or* eliminating important elements of virtue theory (ibid.). Since this debate is ongoing, and beyond the purview of this thesis to fully expound, my thoughts on the matter are not yet crystalised. Presently, I am tending towards the Fowers et al. interpretation, yet I look forward to giving this important consideration further attention in the future.

4 I here refer to David Hume's *fact/value distinction*, which proposes that the realm of facts is metaphysically distinct from the realm of values (1984, Book III, Part I, Section I). This is closely related to, although not the same as, the *is/ought gap* – Hume's Law – a logical point concerning what can and cannot be validly deduced from a deductive argument. In its most basic form, Hume states that it is invalid to draw a normative/evaluative conclusion (ought) from premises which are *purely* factual (is) (ibid.). To make a deductive argument with an

normative claims as a particular category of fact. Indeed, there have been numerous attempts to ground morality naturalistically in virtue ethics, for example by defending a version of *biological* teleology which claims that human nature has an intrinsic purpose, or *telos*, and that virtues lead to flourishing for humans as a *biological* species (e.g., see Foot, 2001; Carr, 2012). However, this has been criticised for being more Darwinian than Aristotelian, as it effectively reduces ethics to survival and reproduction, rather than virtue (Sanderse, 2012, p. 112). More convincingly, other neo-Aristotelians have reinvigorated metaethical naturalism by continuing to ground morality in human nature, but non-naively through appeal to *psychology* rather than biology (MacIntyre, 1981; Kristjánsson, 2010; 2018; 2020b; Nussbaum, 1993; 1995; Sanderse, 2012). Psychological virtue-based naturalism proposes that the basis of morality is located in the psychology of humans as rational, emotional, moral and social agents (Nussbaum, 1993). Due to this common psycho-moral makeup, people are unified in basic *experiences* ubiquitous to all human lives, which ultimately commit them to basic virtues that are conducive to and partly also constitutive of human flourishing (*eudaimonia*), understood in virtue ethics as objective well-being. For example, in the sphere of human experience concerning the distribution of limited resources the virtue of justice is required, whereas the management of one's personal property in relation to others calls for generosity (Nussbaum, 1993, p. 246; see also Aristotle, 2009, NE 11.7). Here the ontological objectivity of virtue and single account of human flourishing (see de Ruyter et al., 2022) is justified by 'features of humanness' which

---

evaluative conclusion valid, one must thus include an evaluative statement explicitly in the premises. Despite this, G E Moore, in his famous critique of ethical naturalism, argues that it violates Hume's Law by reductively explaining moral properties in terms of natural properties – an apparent misstep that he terms the naturalistic fallacy (1903). Fortunately, the so-called naturalistic fallacy turns out not to be such a fallacy at all, and if anything is more an objection to reductionism than naturalism (Ridge, 2019). Put simply, this is because naturalists do not explain moral properties *in terms of* natural properties (a reduction) as Moore proposes, but claim that moral properties *literally are* natural properties, meaning that moral properties are simultaneously natural and irreducible. In neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics this naturalism translates as moral facts rooted in our psycho-moral makeup, also known as virtue-based psychological naturalism (e.g., see Sanderse, 2012, p. 188). However, Moore's misunderstanding has led numerous social scientists to draw a wedge between, put bluntly, facts and values, causing them to view the two as mutually exclusive – a move which has justifiably riled many empirically minded moral philosophers who are better versed in the intricacies of Hume's Law.

underpin all life, rather than merely by local traditions and practices, meaning that these features persist regardless of whether said local traditions and practices recognise them (Nussbaum, 1993, p. 243). Virtue ethics thus supports a form of moral universalism, which includes belief in the aforementioned common human nature and in the objective reality of the moral and non-moral properties that comprise this nature. Nevertheless, this sort of moral universalism is compatible with *moral pluralism* (about numerous different ways being available to actualise human flourishing, given different cultures, personalities and social roles). It is also compatible with the sort of *political pluralism* that Aristotle espouses in his *Politics* (Lu, 2024).

Moreover, virtue and flourishing are also inherently contextualist in nature. To add nuance to how universalism and contextualism are compatible, and distinguish the latter from moral relativism and subjectivism, it is instructive to consider the connection between the general and the particular. In essence, basic, or ‘thin’ shared virtues are considered to transcend local traditions and are thus universally applicable, whilst the full, or ‘thick’ practical account of how a virtue should be expressed is contextually sensitive (Nussbaum, 1993, pp. 245-248). The ‘thin’ grounding reference for a virtue term is thus fixed by the common sphere of human experience and concerns what it is to *generally* perceive, think, feel and act well in that sphere. The task of ethics is to furnish this thin definition with *particular* evaluative moral content, thereby evolving it into a ‘thick’ definition. Aristotle writes:

> For among statements about conduct those which are general apply more widely, but those which are particular are more true, since conduct has to do with individual cases, and our statements must harmonise with the facts in these cases (2009, NE 1107a30-35).

Crucially, this indicates that whilst virtue ethics supports a pluralism of ways to imbue the general with the particular – i.e., a pluralism of ways to practice virtue and achieve flourishing – there is still a right way to be virtuous, even in context. Furthermore, Aristotle insists that virtue expression is ‘is not one, nor the same for all’ as the medial virtue should be assessed

'not in the object but relatively to us' (2009, *NE* 1106a32-1106b6). *Relatively* is, however, a misleading translation as it connotes moral relativism which is distinctly *un*-Aristotelian. What Aristotle means is that particular virtue expression is correct when it is attuned to *context*, which according to him includes variables such as individual developmental level, constitution and social position (ibid., 1106b1-5; see also Peterson and Kristjánsson, 2024). Here context-sensitivity does not imply that the virtue expression was correct in a limited subjective sense – it is still right objectively: should another morally relevant situation arise with exactly the same contextual features, including the same contextual features of the agent, the same virtue expression would still be objectively right. As Nussbaum elegantly remarks, 'only when we have duly responded to the complexities of the context, seeing it for the very historical situation it is, will we have any hope of making the right decision' (1993, p. 257). It is in this sense, then, that particularism – expressed as contextual responsiveness – is truth-tracking and objectively grounded in the shared psychology of human nature and experience.

1.1.2. A methodologically naturalist epistemology

Having explained why virtue is ontologically objective through appeal to moral realism and its incarnation as psychological virtue-based naturalism, I will now outline its epistemological objectivity and relatedly a moral epistemology rooted in methodological naturalism. Indeed, whilst it is logically possible to make an epistemologically subjective statement about something which is ontologically objective (see Searle, 1996, p. 7), in virtue ethics moral evaluations *objectively* describe an equally 'objective world of evaluation' and do not simply *subjectively* evaluate an independent 'objective world of description' (see Kristjánsson, 2022c, p. 614). That said, in light of the truism that objectivity comes in degrees (Searle, 1996, p. 7), and the aforementioned endorsement of contextualism, these moral evaluations do not seek to arrive at absolute 'hard facts', but aspire to a context-sensitive knowledge of virtue. In this

thesis, I therefore advocate for a more inclusive and contextual concept of objectivity – one that is sensitive to circumstances whilst retaining a firm hold on reality.

This emphasis reflects Aristotle's commitment to methodological naturalism, which I shall explain further over the course of the thesis – briefly at relevant junctions and in detail in relation to the empirical case study in Chapter 7. What is useful to mention this early in the thesis, however, is that methodological naturalism is essentially the idea that moral principles are justified *if and only if* they satisfy similar criteria as would justify scientific hypotheses (Scott, 1980, p. 267). Aristotle is considered the original methodological naturalist, with his penchant for aligning moral theory and empirical data being central to his overall philosophical method (e.g., see Aristotle, 2009, NE 1179a20-23). It is also worth noting here that as the aim of justifying and extending the theoretical understanding of virtue and its associated concepts and mechanisms using empirical means is to make more accurate *moral evaluations* and thus, arguably also, *moral progress*, methodological naturalism is inherently normative. This relates to what's known as Aristotle's 'axiological teleology' – his unique method for conducting social science (Kristjánsson, 2022c, p. 214). Paying particular attention to the *Politics* (Aristotle, 2014), which is considered to illuminate this method better than the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle, 2009), Kristjánsson suggests that the central project Aristotle is pursuing here is, on a modern understanding, not ethics, as most moral philosophers assume, but social science (2022c, p. 612). What makes this approach 'radically different' from typical forms of social science is primarily the axiological assumption that social science is inescapably normative in that it applies value judgements in the study of (objective) human flourishing (ibid., p. 614). In understanding value judgements as a normative sub-category of factual judgements Aristotle thus assumes the 'axiology of goodness', meaning that he assumes the truth of the nature of goodness (ibid.). In light of this assumption, the Humean distinction between facts and values (1984), which has traditionally been summoned to critique ethical

naturalism (Moore, 1903), is simply not a concern of Aristotle's. For him, the true purpose of social science *just is* normative, implying that any method aimed solely at data collection that does not aspire to moral progress of some kind is a deficient form of social science (Kristjánsson, 2022c, p. 613). I am inclined to agree, and follow a similarly normative understanding of social science, which endorses the axiology of goodness, in this thesis[5].

Aristotle's commitment to naturalism makes his ideas particularly suitable for updating, or in my case, reconstructing, in light of modern developments. However, whilst naturalism endorses such a process, it does not dictate precisely *how and to what extent* the theoretical and empirical should draw upon each other, and to add transparency to this important consideration, I draw upon the method of *critical applied ethics* (CAE). In essence, CAE is a two-way reflexive process which aims to integrate normative theory with empirical data by encouraging each to 'readjust and refine' the other (Leget et al., 2009, pp. 230-233; see also Molewijk et al., 2004). In this way, CAE provides a strong framework with which to support normative theory with empirical data and vice versa, respecting the independence of each, whilst encouraging their dialogue and eventual synthesis (Leget et al., 2009, pp. 230-233). Interestingly, this process compares to the interdisciplinary one that Gulliford and Roberts use to further the understanding of the interconnectedness, or 'unity', between virtues using *both* conceptual analysis and empirical investigation (2018). As regards the ontological distinction between facts and values, CAE does uphold the distinction, but does so non-naively in a way that supports the possibility of their mutual co-determination and integration. In plain English, this means endorsing the reality that normative theory (often construed in value terms) can be truth-tracking, i.e., factual. Metaethically, this represents the *realism* of minimal psychological

---

5 It is worth mentioning that I adopt Aristotle's notion of axiological teleology without endorsing his metaphysical teleology more generally. Like other empirically engaged philosophers, I consider the idea that *all* of nature has an intrinsic telos and *all* organisms have a final cause logically problematic and empirically outdated. The rain does not fall in order to make the crops grow.

realism, and makes CAE particularly well suited to neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, since both are aligned with ethical naturalism. That said, whilst typically in CAE theory is informed by and kept in check by research and vice versa, in this thesis I give priority to philosophical argument which remains the gold standard in terms of what one can aspire to argue for normatively (see also Henderson, 2024b, p. 2). To go beyond the moral developmental and moral educational status quo, I thus use empirical insights to readjust, refine and extend the emulative theory I devise in Chapter 3, and aim through this research to arrive at a form of 'moral fact' relating to the reality of emulation in different developmental phases.

All in all, then, it is primarily this synthesis between the theoretical and empirical which differentiates my theory of emulation from others which have come before it. Having illuminated my motivation for devising it, outlined a roadmap, and delineated the underlying metaethical and methodological commitments, I will now proceed with the more substantive parts of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2: ROLE MORALITIES ILLUMINATE ROLE MODELLING

2.1. Introduction

Respected educationists have long championed role modelling as a method of virtuous character development (e.g., see Carr, 2012; Engelen et al., 2018; Kristjánsson, 2015; 2018; 2020b; Lickona, 1992; Miller, 2014; 2017; Sanderse, 2012; 2013; Vaccarezza and Niccoli, 2019; Warnick, 2008; Zagzebski, 2017). Indeed, the pedagogical appeal of role modelling has made it a prominent feature of neo-Aristotelian character education (ACE), a form of moral education rooted in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. The idea is that through modelling moral virtue, i.e., the combination of both virtuous emotion and action[6], role models inspire others to emulate their character, and thereby cultivate these traits in themselves. In both virtue ethics and ACE, full virtues are overseen by and integrated via *phronesis* – the intellectual (and thus rational) meta-virtue of practical wisdom which, amongst other functions, works to identify the salient features of any situation to enable deliberation and choice regarding the appropriate course of virtuous emotion and action (see Kristjánsson and Fowers, 2024).

Proponents of ACE make the normative claim that teachers specifically ought to be moral role models to pupils, and further that, as important *sources of emulation*, teachers may also benefit from having role models themselves (Sanderse, 2013; Kristjánsson, 2020b, p. 139). Whilst there already exists a lively discourse on emulation (e.g., see Athanassoulis, 2017; Croce and Vaccarezza, 2017; Hampson, 2019; Kristjánsson, 2006a; 2017; Little, 2021; Osman, 2019; 2024; Sanderse, 2013; Vaccarezza and Niccoli, 2022), there remains a, largely methodological, gap in the field. More precisely, despite ACE endorsing emulation *qua* role modelling as a didactic method, a lack of clarity regarding what the emulation of role models

---

[6] It is worth highlighting at this early juncture in the thesis, that Aristotle did not grant virtuous emotions the status of full virtue due to (a) the possible lack of an action element and (b) because he maintained that one was less responsible for their direct onset (e.g., see *NE* 1098b30-1099a6; 1103b20-32; 1106b17-35). I will later expound this position in relation to the debate surrounding the conceptual status of emulation in Chapter 3.

involves persists (Kristjánsson, 2020b, p. 136), and there is little consensus regarding how it works in classroom contexts (Vos, 2018). Ultimately, this methodological issue means that questions regarding how role modelling does or should take place remain open.

In order to ameliorate the aforementioned methodological lacuna, I seek to disambiguate the process of emulation *qua* role modelling and set out how it potentially operates in different developmental phases[7]. This, however, is a complex endeavour which first requires laying the appropriate theoretical groundwork. As such, in order to begin to advance a properly motivated theory of emulation in Chapter 3, in *this* chapter it is instructive to justify a broad focus on moral role models for the purpose of virtuous character development. Indeed, given ACE's roots in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, it should come as no surprise that Aristotle enthusiastically endorses role modelling as a didactic method. However, its practical nuts and bolts are considered an underrepresented aspect of the *Nicomachean Ethics,* which has mystified what the emulation of role models involves. Should neo-Aristotelians look elsewhere for guidance? Or is there more to be learnt from Aristotle than initially meets the eye?

In this chapter, I aim to provide preliminary normative justification for focusing on role models as a method of virtuous character development, largely through appeal to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. I argue that although Aristotle may not explicitly focus on *role models* as much as desired, he does spend considerable time elucidating many aspects of *role moralities* more generally. Specifically, I will argue that shifting one's focus of analysis to encompass *role moralities*, rather than simply *role models,* allows one to understand the broader importance of roles in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics and to make visible other relevant

---

7 As mentioned in the Introduction, whilst my aim in the empirical element of this thesis is to explore role model education in the context of professional ethics education (formal and informal) for novice teachers, my theoretical lens in the thesis as a whole it is much wider.

aspects of role modelling, which a focus on this concept alone neglects. I will also argue that this new perspective can help illuminate the inherent role-relatedness of virtues and consequently motivate sustained interest in role modelling for the purpose of virtue development. It is hoped that through such an exploration, readers will gain a clearer picture of the importance and meaning of role modelling in historical and contemporary philosophical thought. For the purpose of this thesis, role moralities will be conceptualised as roles that are imbued with moral virtue obligations, meaning that one's personal or societal role can exert virtue demands (e.g., see Andre, 1991; Dougherty, 2020; Fowers et al., 2021; Kristjánsson, 2020b; MacIntyre, 1981; Swanton, 2007).

In what follows, I will first clarify my initial line of reasoning in standard form (Section 2.2). I will then advance my thesis by drawing upon three instances of role moralities and their corresponding counter arguments. The first concerns the so-called skill analogy of virtue (Section 2.3). I will defend Matt Dougherty's reinterpretation of the analogy, where being virtuous, rather than being considered *a skill* or *like a skill*, is better analogised as *good skill-role occupancy*. Second, having established the role-relatedness of virtue, I will then consider the extent of this relationship through an analysis of situation-sensitive roles (Section 2.4). I will argue that because all moral situations are approached from the perspective of a particular socio-moral role, the moral expectations one has of a person are to a certain degree reliant on this role. Third, I will assess the voluntariness of roles, and argue that virtue obligation increases according to how voluntary and intrinsically morally-laden a role is (Section 2.5). Here, I will further propose that self-identifying as a role model contributes to *good* role modelling. Finally, I will employ current research into role sensitivity to help further my thesis regarding the implications of role-moralities for role modelling (Section 2.6). It should be noted that the scope of this section does not suffice to cover all objections to my position. My

argument is therefore limited to responding to those stated, although I acknowledge there may be other compelling critiques.

2.2. Why focus on role moralities?

Before I begin exploring what can be learned about role modelling from role moralities, it is important to explain my initial motivation for analysing the *Nicomachean Ethics* in this way. In standard form, my argument can be formulated as follows:

1. Moral role modelling is a key method of moral development in neo-Aristotelian Character Education (ACE).
2. To learn more about moral role modelling proponents of ACE look to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics.*
3. However, despite enthusiastically endorsing role modelling as a didactic method, Aristotle says very little about how it does or should take place.
4. This leaves neo-Aristotelians in the dark about role modelling in ACE.
5. However, Aristotle does spend considerable time elucidating many aspects of role moralities.
6. Through expanding our perspective to encompass role moralities, rather than just role models, the *Nicomachean Ethics* can make visible more aspects of role modelling than previously envisaged.
7. Therefore, illuminating Aristotelian role modelling requires an analysis of role moralities in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

As this is partly an inductive argument, the truth of the premises will *at best* make the conclusion probable. In light of this, I seek to defend the most contentious of these premises in order to maintain that my conclusion (7) is highly probable. Premises 5 and 6 are most in need of further support, I shall thus devote the remainder of this sub-section to defending them.

2.3. The skill analogy reinterpreted

Now that I have clarified my line of reasoning, I will begin to expound how role moralities can help us gain insights into role modelling. First, I appeal to the skill analogy, this traditionally

conceptualises moral virtues as analogous to practical skills and is often used as a tool to facilitate an understanding of virtue (Dougherty, 2020, p. 75). This appeal will be instructive due to the broad significance of the analogy in Aristotelian virtue ethics. If it can be demonstrated that the analogy is more to do with skilled-roles than pure skills, then both roles and role models can be considered even more important to Aristotle than previously thought. Whilst many neo-Aristotelians have employed the analogy to illuminate aspects of virtue, it is to its original proponent, Aristotle, to whom I shall now turn. In book two of his *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle highlights the similarity between learning to be virtuous and learning practical skills. He does, however, uphold the distinction between the two – one central difference being that the excellence of *techné* (i.e., technical skill) concerns specifically the outcome of actions; whilst developing *phronesis* (practical wisdom) concerns not simply the action but also the nuanced deliberation that leads to that action, in order to count it as 'virtuous' (1105a26-33). Furthermore, whilst skills can be misused, the outcome of *phronetic* deliberation is necessarily virtuous (ibid.). That said, Aristotle maintains that, analogously to a skill, cultivating moral virtues requires practicing them (*NE* 1103a30). Much as we 'become builders by building houses…we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts' (*NE* 1103b2-5). It is by doing the good that we become good. Contrast this to those who merely discuss virtue but neglect to practice it. Aristotle likens this to visiting the doctor but failing to do what is prescribed, cautioning his readers that 'that sort of philosophy will no more lead to a healthy state of soul than will the mode of treatment produce a healthy body' (*NE* 1105b15-19). This process of acting as virtue requires, frequently and consistently, can be termed habituation, or *ethismos*, and is how moral virtues, such as compassion, honesty and justice are cultivated8. By contrast the intellectual virtues are acquired through direct teaching,

---

8 In addition to acting frequently and consistently, in Section 3.2. I shall argue in favour of a third element of habituation – virtuous guidance from a role model. It is, however, beyond the present scope to expound this here.

systematic instruction *and* experience (e.g. see Kristjánsson, 2015, p. 100; MacIntyre, 1981, p. 123). Nevertheless, the two are intimately related, largely due to the judicial role the integrative intellectual virtue of practical wisdom (*phronesis*) has in deducing what is morally virtuous. This also implies one cannot have practical wisdom unless one is also morally virtuous, since practical wisdom necessitates, amongst other things, virtuous action (*NE* 1144a37).

In addition to the necessity of virtuous activity, the skill analogy emphasises how this account of virtue is developmental. Neo-Aristotelian philosopher Julia Annas argues that *learning* both skills and virtues requires us to distinguish between experts and learners (2011, p. 17). Learners in elementary stages of development are compelled to trust the more experienced teacher and depend on them for guidance and tuition, gradually with practice the learner becomes more independent, and eventually transitions to the expert themselves. Acquiring independent understanding is crucial to this learning process, simply copying an expert will constitute a failure to learn the skill, thus the emphasis on developing *for oneself* the skills of the teacher should not be underestimated (ibid.). To illustrate the difference between mindless imitation and dedicated emulation Annas gives the example of a budding pianist who desires to play like her role model, Alfred Brendel. Mistakenly, she routinely imitates his exact style and mannerisms, becoming nothing more than a 'clone-like impersonator' (ibid.). Fortunately, the giving of reasons can help mitigate this problem by enabling the learner to understand not only *how* to do X, but also *why*. Reasons function as a medium of explanation which allows the learner to independently transfer the skill to different contexts (ibid., p. 19). For neo-Aristotelians, giving and receiving reasons which are specifically targeted at explaining how a given virtue is conducive to flourishing is thought to contribute to moral development by enhancing cognitive understanding (ibid., Sanderse, 2012; Kristjánsson, 2006a). It is worth noting that there has been some discussion in the context of virtues as to whether reason-giving, in addition to modelling virtues, is too demanding an

expectation for role models to adhere to, yet it is beyond our current purview to discuss this here.

Now that I have explained the skill analogy, I will briefly reflect upon how it represents the relationship between skills and roles, in order to better understand its relevance to role morality. First, we must consider how neither skills nor roles exist in isolation, the two are intrinsically linked. Skills are predominately assigned to particular role contexts, for example, the skill of playing the piano correlates with the role of a pianist, the skill of treating illnesses to a doctor, and the skill of forming logical arguments to a philosopher. Both conceptually and methodologically, it is tricky to disentangle one from the other. In addition, the skill analogy shows that doing a skill, or set of skills, excellently is necessary for excelling in a role and helps one evolve from learner to expert. The 'expert' is thus an inherently role-related position, since the expert, as depicted, is someone who occupies their particular role well and embodies it – they have *become* a pianist, doctor or philosopher. This implies that whilst what neo-Aristotelian's term 'moral virtues'[9] can be acquired in a similar method to skills, i.e., through continual practice and guidance from an expert, to *become a virtuous person* one must embody that role and thoroughly integrate the virtues into the core of one's character. Further, in line with the analogy, fulfilling the role of being a virtuous person could also imply that those with ethical expertise ought to act as a guide for those who do not, by being a role model. Being a role model thus comes with moral educational obligations. Their educational purpose is not to merely cultivate skills, or virtues, but to facilitate virtuous character development in such a

---

9 As previously highlighted, Aristotle did not have any words pertaining to 'moral', as used in modern English, in his linguistic repertoire (see Anscombe, 1958, p. 2). 'Moral', as I and other neo-Aristotelians employ the term, should in this thesis be understood as corresponding to Aristotle's 'ethical', meaning 'characterological', and 'moral virtues' as virtues which concern individual character (*ethos*). Going further, one must also be cautious not to conflate 'moral' with 'prosocial', primarily because prosociality is a psychological construct which relates largely to behaviour (e.g. see Eisenberg et al., 2016, p. 1688). Action untethered from prior *phronetic* deliberation and virtuous emotion is not something that Aristotle, nor his neo-Aristotelian sympathisers, can or want to endorse. In light of this, whilst I will continue to refer to 'moral' and 'ethical' interchangeably, readers should bear in mind this is done in an enlightened neo-Aristotelian and deliberate sense.

way that the moral learner may one day also embody the role of being a virtuous person too. Providing this connection holds, the skill analogy could be considered more to do with roles, and thus role morality, than previously thought.

In light of this analysis, whilst there is much to praise about Annas' depiction of Aristotle's skill analogy, she has been criticised for understanding virtuous people as merely skilled *individuals* rather than as virtuous occupants of skill-involving *roles* (Dougherty, 2020, p. 78). Her argument, whilst acknowledging the importance of role models as possessors of skills to be emulated, perhaps underestimates the importance that roles, and role moralities, play in the equation. I should add that she is not the only one, almost all interpretations of the analogy, which Matt Dougherty takes to be misinterpretations, might be considered to miss the mark. Indeed, in his role-focused argument, Dougherty divides skill analogies into one of two camps. The first is *Virtue as Skill,* which sees the relationship between skill and virtue as sufficiently analogous to *be* a skill (ibid., p. 76) – Annas (2011) falls into this camp (see also Swartwood, 2013; Stichter, 2018a; 2018b; 2021). This is not to say that proponents of this view do not acknowledge there is a difference between virtue and skill, more that analogies structured this way are too dismissive of such a difference. The second camp, *Virtue as Like Skill*, sees the relationship as analogous but insufficiently so to actually constitute a skill (Dougherty, 2020, p. 76) – Aristotle (*NE* 1105a25-35, 1140a1-18) resides here (see also Broadie, 1991, p. 83; Tsai, 2020; Zagzebski, 1996, p. 113). Both these positions face problems, *Virtue as Skill* must overcome Aristotle's own objections which include, but are not limited to, how the virtuous person acts virtuously as an end in itself, whereas the skilled person acts skilfully instrumentally; how the virtuous acts from a stable moral character, whereas character is not part of skill; how virtuous action requires *phronesis* (practical wisdom), skill does not (Dougherty, 2020, pp. 76-77). Plus more contemporary quips such as how this idea of skill is insufficiently nuanced to be comparable to virtue (Vigani, 2021); how failing at a skill does

not usually engender existential anxiety whereas failing at a virtue can (Kristjánsson, 2015, p. 96); or how skill, unlike virtue, does not require a 'correct conception of worthwhile ends' (Hacker-Wright, 2015, p. 984). In addition, *Virtue as Like Skill* can *prima facie* be criticised as, for example, virtue cannot be used to promote negative ends, whereas a skill can; virtue involves a disposition, whereas skill only a capacity to act well (ibid.).

Taking these issues into consideration, Dougherty proposes a revised interpretation of the analogy, where being virtuous is akin to being a 'good occupant of a skill-involving role' (ibid., p. 99). Not only is his position better poised to respond to objections but, relevantly for our purposes, it helps me build a case for the broad, and previously underestimated, importance of roles in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. I now move to his argument proper, in order to make visible the inherent role-relatedness of virtue. Central to Dougherty's thesis is the idea that rather than skill itself being like virtue, it is being a good skill-role occupant. So whilst he concurs that Aristotle was correct to conceive of virtue on the model of practical skills, he convincingly suggests it is better analogised by grasping the centrality of roles too (ibid.). The notion of a good skill-role occupant can therefore be used to enlighten the concept of role model already valued in virtue ethics – the emulation of role models being a key method for the not-yet-virtuous to evolve morally (the motivation for which I shall cover at length in Section 2.2.5.) (ibid., p. 85). As practitioners of skills, good skill-role occupants are not merely individuals skilled at a certain thing, they are experts whose skills are intrinsically intertwined with a position serving a particular function, for example being a good doctor (good skill-role occupant) in contrast to someone who is merely good at treating illnesses (skill possessor) (ibid. p. 86).

The degree of generality in these roles merits further scrutiny, as it is not clear from Dougherty's position whether (a) he intends the virtues associated with, for example, being a good doctor to cross over to other roles a person might inhabit, such as being a good sibling;

or (b) if he intends for good skill-role occupants to embody a precise skill relevant to the role *or* a more general balance of skills. For example, regarding (a) if being a good doctor demanded that one was compassionate, perhaps one would expect for this virtue to also enhance the same person's role as sibling. Likewise for (b), if we appeal to the unity of the virtues thesis, which maintains that virtues are rarely held in isolation but instead form a complex web of complementary virtues within a person's character (Aristotle, *NE* 1145a1-2), it seems reasonable to assert that moral role models (as good skill-role occupants) will also have cultivated numerous virtues, even if the specific context of their roles might exert greater demands on some virtues over others. This notion of situation dependency will be further elaborated upon later in this chapter, so I will not spend too much time on it here. That said, to argue that a good skill-role occupant of moral virtue has cultivated a single virtue well or limited their virtuosity to one single context does not sit well with neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, nor with an understanding of skill more generally which usually involves a multitude of interconnected, and often transferable, talents. I will therefore assume, for the purposes of furthering my argument, that Dougherty intends (a) for there to be a certain degree of transferability from relevant skills to relevant roles, and that (b) good skill-role occupancy is not limited to single traits[10]. For moral role models, this would imply that if someone were a good teacher role model, then they are also likely to be a good parent role model, even if these roles might pull on different virtues to different degrees. Similarly, the good teacher role model is likely to have cultivated numerous virtues relevant to fulfilling their skill-role excellently.

Roles can further be conceptualised in terms of functions, which brings me to another central theme of the *Ethics*: Aristotle's function argument. Here Aristotle maintains that all

---

10 Interestingly, Stichter, a proponent of the *Virtue as Skill* formulation of the analogy, withholds judgement as to whether virtue, *qua phronesis*, 'is a singular skill or requires a set of interrelated skills' (2021, p. 107). To acknowledge the latter, he would need to adjust his argument to *Virtue as Skills* - a revision that would bring his position more in line with my suggestion that skilled roles do not involve single, but numerous, traits.

things have a characteristic activity, derived from our function (*ergon*), and that performing this well makes something good (*NE* 1097b25). He argues that *eudaimonia*, most accurately translated as flourishing or objective well-being, consists of engaging with our human function. *Eudaimonia* is equated to 'living well and faring well' (Aristotle, *NE* 1095a18), it is an end in itself, the good towards which all other goods aim (1097a20-30). As our characteristic function is to reason, and 'the good and the 'well' are thought to reside in the function' (1097b27), reasoning well implies living well. A human's function is 'an activity of the soul which follows or implies reason' (1098a8), with soul here representing our psyche rather than something spiritual. Importantly, cultivating virtues of character are considered to be necessary for living a flourishing human life, i.e., virtues are constitutive of and conducive to *eudaimonia.* It is by employing the integrative intellectual (and thus rational) virtue of practical wisdom, *phronesis*, that we determine a situation's salient features and the corresponding course of virtue i.e. right moral perception, thought, feeling and action (Kristjánsson and Fowers, 2024). *Phronesis* therefore enables us to fulfil our function well by habitually practicing the virtues. In a similar vein, good skill-role occupancy can be understood to demand that we develop a virtuous character in order to fulfil our unique human role well. Consequently, it is plausible to interpret Aristotle as connecting good functioning and flourishing to good skill-role occupancy (Dougherty, 2020, p. 92).

This interpretation could also imply that, analogously to good human beings, good skill-role occupants ought to be noninstrumentally committed to their particular skill or function (ibid., p. 99). In the case of virtuous people, they must embrace 'skill at living' as a deep feature of who they are and do it as an end in itself. Therefore, although their virtuosity may instrumentally contribute to their flourishing, they are virtuous for its own sake (ibid., p. 94). This is important for the concept of role models as it indicates that whilst role modelling is partly an instrumental vehicle or didactic method for developing virtues in others, there is also

a sense in which, in order to be defined as a true role model, the role model must also embrace their role for noninstrumental purposes, because it is good in itself. This could further indicate that role models have a certain degree of self-awareness, since embracing something for non-instrumental reasons requires that one actively acknowledges its worth. In light of this intriguing consideration, further thought will be given to exploring the many facets of role model self-identity in future chapters.

Ultimately, my argument so far can be taken to strongly support Dougherty's position regarding the importance of roles in virtue ethics. Indeed, by shifting the emphasis of the skill analogy from skills to roles, he clarifies how the virtuous should be considered role models in a specific sense – as good occupants of skill involving roles – who are both sensitive to context and, at least in part, noninstrumentally committed to their role. His analytical method also highlights the implausibility of the traditional *Virtue as Skill* interpretation of the skill analogy by demonstrating how virtue is not literally possessing a practical skill. It further makes clear the limitations of the *Virtue as Like Skill* position – whilst virtue is like a practical skill in some respects, it is better analogised as being a good occupant of a skill involving role. The specific implications of this revised interpretation for role models are twofold. First, it highlights the importance of context which compels, for example, teacher role models to be nuanced in their role modelling. They are not just general moral role models, but are role models of virtues most relevant to being a good role model to a pupil or to a less experienced teacher. In addition, the exact context, such as the type of school, will also pull on some teacher-role-relevant-virtues to different degrees than others. For example, a role model to pupils in an inner-city comprehensive might be required to pay particular attention to the virtue of compassion, whereas a role model to pupils at Eton might prioritise humility and generosity. Second, whilst perhaps achieving good examination results for pupils or helping less experienced teachers

develop might be an element of their role, explicitly and consciously acknowledging that being a teacher role model is good in itself is a central aspect of role modelling.

Now that I have outlined what reinterpreting the skill analogy can illuminate about role models, I shall now delve further into the importance of situation sensitivity and role moralities.

2.4. Situation sensitive role models

In line with Dougherty's argument, other notions of role moralities, such as situation-dependant roles (Kristjánsson, 2020b, pp. 80-84) or role sensitivity (Fowers et al., 2021, pp. 14-15), have received renewed attention of late. For example, Kristjánsson proposes that because all moral situations are approached from the perspective of a particular social-moral role the moral expectations we have of a person are also to a large extent reliant on the situation dependant role a person occupies (2020b, p. 81). This position contrasts to that of Annas, who maintains that whilst some situations, such as those in professional ethics, are morally role-laden, it is also possible to occupy a non-role encumbered position, one free of role-related expectations (Annas, 2015, p. 9). Kristjánsson however is highly sceptical of such a stance, arguing that whilst more formal codes of ethics might govern professional roles, such as that of a nurse, less formal but equally role imbued ethical codes relate to other morally relevant situations (2020b, p. 81). He invites us to consider Annas' example the passer-by near a drowning child, arguing, contrary to Annas, that this role of the passer-by is by no means neutral, but infused with the context of a specific passer-by in a specific sort of situation (ibid.). The passer-by might, for example, be a great swimmer, unable to swim, a child themselves or elderly – and each of these *roles,* however informal, clearly exert slightly different moral demands. It is consequently not possible to be 'guided by free-floating virtues only' (ibid.) or be entirely role neutral. In this way, the virtuous person has a duty or obligation to do what is virtuous, not in the Kantian

deontological sense, but because all moral situations are explicitly or implicitly linked to roles, and consequently come with role-relevant virtue requirements (ibid., pp. 82-83).

This said, Kristjánsson's position should be further distinguished from an even more role-relative reading of morality, such as that proposed by Alastair MacIntyre. Facilitated through a discussion of heroic societies, involving stories from Greek tragedies and Icelandic sagas, MacIntyre suggests that the virtues can only be understood in relation to their context in the social structure of such societies (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 111). He even goes as far as to claim that 'morality and social structure are in fact one and the same in heroic society' (ibid.). What this implies is that rules ascribed to societal positions, such as that of a wife, dictate specific virtue obligations in terms of how a person should act, and how others should act towards them. For example, if unity in a household is guaranteed by fidelity, then for a woman, such as Andromache in Homer's *Iliad*, fidelity is the primary virtue (ibid.). I have some sympathy with MacIntyre's position; however, I maintain that he goes too far in claiming that morality *just is* sociality, and that moral facts are so *because* they are social facts. Indeed, his position leads to two problematic outcomes. The first concerns the contention that, once having internalised the demands of a role, the moral agent automatically and without conflict acts exactly in line with its virtue requirements (Kristjansson, 1998, pp. 405-7). Numerous moral heroes in the tragedies and sagas upon which MacIntyre draws are beset with moral conflicts, suggesting that their roles do not fully 'silence'[11] competing moral demands and consequently that MacIntryre overinflates the affective and behavioural pull of roles. Roles may be important to morality, but to claim they are its primary driving force undermines its complexity by turning moral agents into automata.

---

[11] This notion of 'silencing' in virtue theory comes from McDowell (1988).

The second issue relates to the particularist nature of a purely role-related reading of morality which negates the possibility of moral universalism central to neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. Indeed, MacIntyre acknowledges that 'the heroic self does not aspire to universalism' (ibid., p. 114), largely because their moral perspective is confined to the precise nature of their role, making morality objective from their own standpoint (ibid., p. 115). In response, whilst I agree that roles do exert demands on specific virtues, this does not exclude the possibility of moral universalism. This is because, even if the context of the role demands a particularist 'thick' display of a virtue, the role occupier can still acknowledge the broader 'thin' and universally relevant importance of it for all human beings, due to our common moral-psychological nature. In short, a thick ethical concept includes descriptive content and is evaluative; whilst a thin ethical concept is one which is purely evaluative (see Williams, 2011, p. 152; Väyrynen, 2016). The early musings of Nussbaum, which reflect on Aristotle's endorsement of non-relative but contextually sensitive virtues, shed further light on this distinction:

> The 'thin account' of each virtue is that it is whatever it is to be stably disposed to act appropriately in that sphere. There may be, and usually are, various competing specifications of what acting well, in each case, in fact comes to. Aristotle goes on to defend in each case some concrete specification, producing, at the end, a full or 'thick' definition of the virtue (1988, p. 5).

For example, in the sphere of life to do with fear, common to all lives, the moral virtue of courage is required. However, the 'thick' practical account of how a virtue such as courage should be expressed will be dictated by the specific context and role a person is in. Virtues can therefore be considered both universal and 'role-differentiated' because whilst what is demanded by virtue will differ according to roles (Swanton, 2007, p. 208), the morality of a role (and associated virtues) is itself dictated by its place in the good life of a human being (ibid, p. 209). In this sense, then, role morality is derived from 'ordinary' (non-role encumbered) morality, meaning that 'thin' universalist virtues and 'thick' role-virtues need not

exclude the other (ibid.). Like many neo-Aristotelian scholars, I support the notion of a virtue hierarchy (e.g., see Kristjánsson, 2006c, p. 66; Nussbaum, 1988, p. 5; Sanderse, 2012, p. 200; Swanton, 2007, p. 208), but seek to extend existing positions by proposing that a third 'thicker' layer of contextualism is needed to both clarify and give nuance to roles.

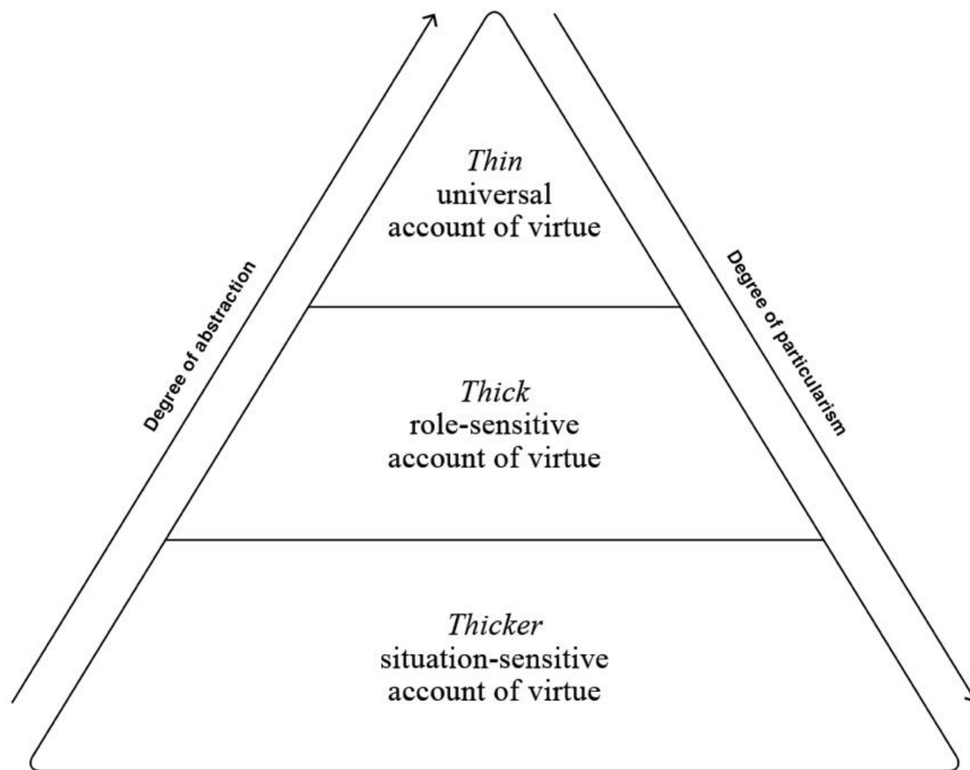

Figure 1. An extended model of virtue hierarchy

In Figure 1 above, I propose that first are universalist 'thin' virtues which exist in a high level of abstraction and contribute to flourishing in all human lives, such as generosity, gratitude, humility and compassion. Second, are the particuarlist 'thick' incarnation of these virtues dictated by roles, for example, research shows that the virtue of fairness is especially poignant for teachers (Arthur et al., 2015a, p. 5). Third, are the 'thicker' manifestations of these thick virtues which are infused with the specific situation of these roles, for example, what is morally demanded by fairness may be different according to the type of school, age of pupil or nature of a potential injustice. My 'thickness hierarchy' is somewhat similar to, and certainty

compatible with, Webber's metaphor of using low-, high-, and higher-resolution images to illuminate the universal and local nature of virtues, although his argument is approached from the perspective of understanding the motivational structures of virtue (2020, p. 67). Returning to my own argument, three interesting insights follow from this hierarchical reading of virtue: first, role morality need not exclude universalist morality; second, morality is partly role-dependant; and third, that roles are themselves further sensitive to the particularities of situations. For role models this indicates that, ideally, they will understand how their role-dependant virtues relate to human flourishing – this is in line with current research in moral psychology which suggests that morally exceptional people have universalist values (a notion I shall expand later in Chapter 3) (Fleeson, 2021). Further, it implies that role modelling of role-relevant virtues requires further situational nuance. Importantly, this includes cultural nuances, allowing the relevance of role modelling to extend beyond the confines of 'WEIRD people' (Flanagan, 2016, p. 4).

Returning to MacIntyre, his dedication to particularism also makes visible a further, more central, consequentialist and deontological critique of virtue ethics which concerns its commitment to partiality. In essence, because virtue ethicists support a role and situation sensitive account of morality, they adjust virtue obligations towards persons according to context and relationship. By contrast, both utilitarians, through the principle of utility maximisation (Mill, 2003), and Kantians, through the humanity formulation of the categorical imperative (Kant, 2018), advocate for treating all persons impartially and equally. They explicitly reject adjusting moral obligations to context, for example by giving preference to one's spouse over strangers when deciding who to save from a burning house. Evidently, MacIntyre's eschewal of universalism is likely to rile these critics further, because it limits moral scope to role-based perspectives and thus narrows the sphere of moral concern to only those encompassed by these roles. A more moderate role-morality relationship, however, may

offer a more persuasive rejoinder by highlighting the compatibility between contextual and universal values. Impartiality need not be the only way to guarantee the fair treatment of persons, a universally applicable but role and situation sensitive account of the virtue of justice, for example, could have a similar effect by acknowledging its applicability to all humans whilst adjusting how it is practiced to context. In light of the above analysis, and in true Aristotelian style, I follow Kristjánsson in occupying a middle path regarding the role-dependant nature of morality and its importance for virtue obligation. Annas underestimates the relevance of roles, whilst MacIntyre occupies the other extreme. I thus maintain that morality is intertwined with roles because roles compel one to take notice of particular virtues already necessary to living a flourishing human life. In this sense, morality is role-sensitive but not purely so. Having clarified my position regarding the extent to which morality is role-related, particularly in terms of the relationship between 'thin' universalist virtues, 'thick' role-relevant virtues and 'thicker' context sensitive role-relevant virtues, and the implications of this for role models, I shall now turn to some illuminating examples.

A particularly clear example of the moral demands of a role can be found in the Aristotelian notion of the *megalopsychos,* a person who, because of their exceptional personality traits and high socio-economic status, is duty bound (in the aforementioned sense) to devote their lives to philanthropy and grand deeds – particularly those that necessitate courage and excessive effort (ibid.,). A combination of greatness and self-knowledge (Curzer, 1990, p. 518), their role is evidently a demanding one, beset by both blessings and burdens. For example, because they are compelled to constantly address the needs of the less fortunate, some virtues such as gratitude or humility are silenced in favour of other virtues better suited to helping actualise their role, such as justice or courage (Kristjánsson, 2020b, p. 83). This means that whilst the *megalopsychoi* have cultivated all moral virtues in abundance, the spectacular actions demanded by their noble societal role compels them to ruthlessly prioritise

some virtues over others, using the intellectual virtue of *phronesis*. This implies that where there are virtue conflicts, one's role will exert a more acute demand on some virtues than others. In addition, one's role can lead one to express virtues in different ways. Aristotle himself emphasises this point when he remarks that medial, i.e., correct, virtue expression 'is not one, nor the same for all' (*NE* 1106a32-33), as the medial virtue should be assessed 'not in the object but relatively to us' (1106b6). Milo the athlete, for example, exercises temperance in eating to a different extent to a more elementary athlete (1106b1-5). Applying these insights to role models more generally indicates that one must not only consider them as general examples of moral excellence, but also imbue their exemplarism with the specific context of their professional or/and societal role. In essence, roles exert context sensitive moral demands. However, critics may object that the extreme virtue demanded by the *megalopsychos'* societal role is too demanding an example for many ordinary role models, such as teachers. In this case, it could lead to moral burnout, where teachers attempt to role model the virtues too much, or conversely apathy, where the sheer demandingness of being a role model leads teachers to give up. Looking to the *megalopsychos'* role to illuminate aspects of more ordinary, as opposed to extraordinary, role modelling might therefore be considered irrelevant12. In response to such a criticism, I offer the following rejoinders. First, Kristjánsson's appeal to the *megalopsychos* is not meant as a direct comparison to any particular type of role model, but more to add clarity to how roles can exert situation-specific moral demands. Second, it should be noted that not all roles of this kind are as burdensome as the *megalopsychoi,* the *phronimoi* for example, as exemplars of more ordinary – albeit full – virtuosity, occupy a more relatable and altogether more attainable societal role. They are only obliged to actualise the virtues that are possible

---

12 I shall return to a discussion of both the *megalopsychoi* and *phronimoi* when I address ordinary and extraordinary exemplars later in this section.

and realistic for them; whilst the *megalopsychoi* are required to prioritise grander virtues at the expense of more normal, perhaps more meaningful, virtues (ibid., p. 82). What both examples do illustrate is the importance of role moralities to Aristotle, and further emphasise the contextual nature of role modelling. For ordinary role models, such as teachers, whilst they are neither *megalopsychoi* nor *phronimoi,* their role demands similarly context-infused role modelling.

2.5. Voluntariness and virtue obligation

Having expounded the importance of context to role modelling, I shall now delve briefly into how the voluntariness of one's role affects moral obligation. This is another way in which a focus on role moralities can enhance an understanding of role modelling. In the case of a teacher for example, the deliberate choice to enter into this profession could be deemed to exert a more binding demand on particular responsibilities, obligations and virtues (Andre, 1991, pp. 74-76). Likewise, a moral role model who is aware of their role and relishes it could be considered, in light of the greater voluntariness, to have a greater responsibility to be virtuous. A role model who is either unaware they are a role model, or who is a reluctant role model, could conversely be deemed to have less of a responsibility to display virtues worthy of emulation. To illuminate this point further, take the contrasting examples of the exemplary Religion and Philosophy teacher and the reluctant Maths teacher. The former entered the profession both for the love of her subject and to 'make a difference' as a moral educator; she delights in this role and is aware that both pupils and teachers look up to her, rising to this challenge by seeking to visibly and consistently display virtues such as honesty, kindness and fairness through personal example in and outside the classroom. By contrast, the reluctant maths teacher confines her responsibilities to purely academic matters, she identifies no moral

dimension in her role and sees her own character as unrelated to achieving good examination results.

However, one may object that that ignorance of a role's demands, as in the case of the reluctant Maths teacher, or reluctance to adhere to them, might not reduce moral obligation even if voluntariness appears less explicit. Certain roles seem to be intrinsically imbued with moral-role-relatedness, regardless of voluntariness, such as being a teacher, nurse or doctor (e.g. see Carr, 2000). In the case of the reluctant maths teacher, it could be argued that moral obligation persists despite the lack of recognition. In light of this critique, it is clear that the criteria for virtue obligation must be revised. Whilst voluntariness might make one a better role model, as with the exemplary Religion and Philosophy teacher, the specific type of role also exerts moral demands regardless of voluntariness. Taking this point further, it seems that whilst how intrinsically morally-infused a role is might initially identify one as a role model, being a *good* role model may well depend partly on voluntariness. This is because if teachers self-identify as a role model, they are more likely to grasp the full implications of their role in terms of context specific virtue modelling and also better understand both the instrumental and non-instrumental importance of it. Where a role is already morally-laden, being a voluntary role model, also conceptualised as self-identifying as a role model, can thus be taken to be conductive to *good* role modelling. This also correlates with the notion of role models as *good* skill-role occupants. As previously mentioned, the idea of professional (e.g., teacher) self-identity as a role model is an intriguing and underarticulated aspect of role modelling, and I will address this idea more fully in Chapter 7.

2.6. Research on role sensitivity

Finally, the importance of roles in neo-Aristotelian ethics can be further strengthened by appealing to research on role sensitivity. In an effort to raise the empirical credibility of virtue in moral psychology, Fowers *et al.* propose a STRIVE-4 model of virtue, which defines them as 'empirically verifiable, acquired scalar traits that are role sensitive, involve Situation × Trait interactions, and relate to important values that partly constitute *eudaimonia* (human flourishing)' (2021, p. 1). They suggest 26 hypotheses to support this claim, which are discussed in light of existing research. Importantly, two of these hypotheses support the inherent role sensitivity of virtue, i.e. how virtue expression differs depending on one's acknowledged normative or social role (ibid., pp. 14-15). Specifically, for acknowledged normative personal, civic or professional roles they predict that *virtue strength* will differ *within persons* according to the context and type of relationship an individual is in (ibid., p. 14). This would imply that, for example, a characteristically generous person may display the virtue of generosity to different degrees depending on whether the recipient is a close relative or more distant person in need, because of the normative demands of the relationship (ibid.). Existing research supports this hypothesis (see Bleidorn and Denissen, 2015; Fowers et al., 2020).

As regards acknowledged social roles, Fowers *et al.* predict that *virtue expression* will vary *between persons* according to social role expectations (2021, pp. 14-15). For example, the virtue of courage is hypothesised to be more important for a firefighter than, perhaps, a teacher. Whilst the aforementioned paper was not explicitly aware of existing research supporting this, there are some reports focusing on virtue in professional contexts, conducted by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, that might. These include teaching (Arthur et al., 2015a), medicine (Arthur et al., 2015b) and the law (Arthur et al., 2014), and could be taken to provide preliminary support for different *between person* virtue expression since they highlight particularly relevant virtues for each profession. In light of this, whilst research which

explicitly compares virtues in different social roles may be limited, the papers cited at least make probable the role sensitivity of virtue and help make a compelling normative case that role models, as good skill-role occupiers, ought also to be sensitive to role specific virtue demands. Arguably, this preliminary research supports adding an extra layer to the contextualism already central to neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that understanding more about role modelling in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* requires expanding the scope of analysis to role moralities. I sought to show that making visible the broad importance of roles, and inherent role-related nature of morality, enables one to uncover previously underdeveloped insights regarding role modelling itself. Firstly, I argued that understanding virtuous people as analogous to good skill-role occupants illuminated the partly non-instrumental nature of role modelling and the idea that role modelling was not limited to single traits, but likely to involve a number of context-relevant complementary virtues. Secondly, through my 'thickness hierarchy', I established that whilst role models may have cultivated numerous virtues, they ought to be sensitive to context - roles exert greater demands on some virtues rather than others, with the specific context of the role also leading to different degrees of virtue expression. Finally, I provided preliminary justification that, where a role is already morally-laden, voluntarily self-identifying as a role model may contribute to being a *good* role model. Many of these insights have gained initial support from empirical research, which confirms how the context of a role effects virtue expression *within* persons, whilst the type of social role effects virtue expression *between* persons. These reflections provide a pro-tanto reason to support using role moralities to learn more about role modelling. However, further theorising, particularly as concerns additional

objections, is required to assess if this is justified all-things-considered. Further, whilst the focus of this chapter has been on role modelling in the context of ACE, it is intended that many of the arguments presented here could apply equally well to other role modelling contexts.

CHAPTER 3: TOWARDS A THEORY OF EMULATION *QUA* ROLE MODELLING

3.1. Introduction

A focus on role moralities has so far been instrumental in emphasising the normative importance of role models to neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics and in adding a degree of conceptual clarity to what role modelling entails. With this foundation in place, I will now further motivate why and how role models are necessary for virtuous character development through a specific focus on emulation *qua* role modelling.

In this chapter, I ultimately seek to disambiguate the process of emulation *qua* role modelling, by unpacking the concept of emulation itself. I argue that the methodological issue surrounding emulation is grounded in, and exacerbated by, a more substantial conceptual issue. More specifically, I suggest that much of the ambiguity surrounding emulation *qua* role modelling lies in a category mistake: the misconceptualisation of emulation as a mere emotion, rather than, as I will argue, a virtue in its own right. Indeed, in both the *Rhetoric* (2001, pp. 75-76) and the *Nicomachean Ethics* (2009, 1105b22) Aristotle defines emulation as an *emotion*, characterised by distress at the realisation that one person has acquired 'good things that are highly valued and are possible', i.e. virtues, that the moral learner lacks, which makes said learner feel deficient and inspired to emulate them (2001, p. 75). This has led many neo-Aristotelians to follow suit in this categorisation (e.g. see Steutel and Spiecker, 2004, p. 545; Kristjánsson, 2006a; 2018; Sanderse, 2013, p. 36; Vos, 2018, p. 6; Osman, 2019, p. 318; Croce, 2019, p. 238). As an emotion, essentially a *phronetically-informed* disposition to medial feeling, emulation would comprise: perception, thought, physical feelings and a *behavioural suggestion* (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 13). However, if emulation is merely an emotion, then this *behavioural suggestion* is not synonymous with full *virtuous action*, which I will argue is a logically necessary element of virtue. Due to emulation's explicit association with virtue development, I maintain that *action* is also essential to being emulous.

In what follows, I thus propose a reconstructed neo-Aristotelian account of emulation as a moral virtue. I will first outline and support Steutel and Spiecker's tripartite account of habituation *qua* emulation involving role models as key cultivators of emotional dispositions, before detailing the prevailing understanding of emulation as an emotion (Section 3.2). I will then advance my thesis by proposing that because emulation necessarily entails virtuous action, it is not merely a virtuous emotion nor an emotional virtue (Section 3.3), but better categorised as a virtue in its own right (Section 3.4). Reconceptualising emulation as a virtue then enables me to operationalise it as one would any other virtue, into its component parts and, through doing so, make visible how role models stimulate the perceptual, cognitive, attitudinal (including motivational) *and* behavioural elements of virtue development (Section 3.5). In making this claim, I illuminate how the first three elements comprise virtuous emotion, with virtue distinguished from virtuous emotion by virtuous activity. Having argued for emulation as a virtue, I then add further methodological rigour by systematising this componential account with Aristotle's understanding of causation in his *Physics* (1936, 194b21–194b35) and *Metaphysics* (1999, 1044a32–1044a34): the four causes (Section 3.6). Here, I introduce the concept of *entangled phronesis* – a process that I suggest is unique to the (ultimately) educational virtue of emulation, which enables a moral learner to share in the *phronesis* of the role model and thus also their blueprint of the good life. Ultimately, this reconstructed four-causal account of emulation as a moral virtue provides the philosophical foundations of my more substantial theory of emulation in Chapter 5.

3.2. A tripartite account of habituation involving role models as necessary cultivators of emotional dispositions

The idea that role models help others cultivate moral virtues through inspiring the emulation of their characters can be derived from a classical reading of Aristotle. However, the idea that they are necessary for cultivating *virtuous emotional dispositions* which are constitutive of these moral virtues represents a more progressive interpretation, albeit one of which Aristotle may well approve. More specifically, Steutel and Spiecker, as proponents of this latter account, deviate from the traditional Aristotelian view by reconstructing the concept of habituation, or *ethismos,* to include role models as essential facilitators of sentiments, i.e., feelings and emotions, in all *early-years*[13] moral learning (2004). They maintain that whilst the central aim of moral education is the virtuous person, sentimental education – which for reasons of accessibility I shall refer to as emotional education – is constitutive of moral education. This is because:

> …moral virtues are not only dispositions for choice and action but also dispositions towards feelings. To put it more precisely, a virtuous person is someone who will have and exhibit particular feelings on the right occasions, for the right reasons, towards the right people, with the right strength and in the right manner…if the proper aim of moral education is the virtuous person, and if having proper feelings is partially constitutive of being virtuous, promoting proper sentimental dispositions will be an important task for moral educators (ibid., p. 532).

The question now concerns how best emotional dispositions can be cultivated. Inspired by MacIntyre's emphasis on the centrality of habituation in the development of moral virtues (1988, pp. 113-115), and his idea that affective dispositions are educable (1999, p. 115), Steutel and Spiecker propose that the answer lies in a revised interpretation of habituation.

Using Aristotle's account as a foundation, these scholars suggest that role models are essential to early-years affective development by dividing habitation into three components. First, they suggest that habituation involves *acting* as virtue requires, i.e. developing virtuous

---

13 It is worth emphasising here that Steutel and Spiecker foreground the role of the moral guide in all *early-years* moral learning. This focus on early-years habituation from role models (as primary care givers), thus distinguishes their position from my broader developmental lens.

affective dispositions by doing the related virtuous actions (Steutel and Spiecker, 2004, p. 532). Second, in line with Aristotle's sentiment that 'one swallow does not make a summer' (*NE* 1098a19), and his insistence in *pollakis* (that the virtues must be performed 'many times') (e.g. 1103a29, 1105b4), they maintain that these actions must be done *frequently* and *consistently* (Steutel and Spiecker, 2004, p. 532). The third, more revolutionary, element of habituation concerns how acting virtuously, frequently and consistently, requires the *guidance* of a virtuous tutor (ibid., p. 536). Logically speaking, the three components are considered individually necessary and collectively sufficient for habituation.

On this account, the first two elements of habituation rely on the third – emotional guidance from a role model. Without the third element two problems arise. The first concerns the implication that, if habituation is purely composed of element one, practice, it seems to be more like the training of skills rather than cultivation of emotional dispositions. As I have already argued in the previous section, virtue is not convincingly analogised as *a skill* or *like a skill*, but more as being a good skill-role occupant. As an extension of this argument, Gilbert Ryle also suggests that being virtuous, contrary to being skilled, requires having particular attitudes, feelings, wants, aversions, cares and preferences - in essence, virtuous emotional dispositions (1972, p. 437). Thus, whilst skills may be acquired through practice, because virtues are composed of affective dispositions, the same process will fail on its own to cultivate virtue. For example, imagine a child of an ambitious family who is forced to practice the piano throughout her life to ensure she gets into the Royal College of Music. If she merely practices the skill without feeling, her playing may be competent but will likely remain emotionally flat, and she will fail to embody the role of a great pianist. However, with repeated practice *and* guidance from an expert tutor she might learn to infuse her music with passion and feeling, enabling her to become a good skill-role occupant herself, i.e., an expert pianist rather than just a piano player. In the same way, to become virtuous it is not sufficient to simply practice

virtuous behaviour, this behaviour must be appropriately motivated by the right emotional disposition, which is acquired through the guidance of a role model. In this way, the inclusion of a role model strengthens the original notion of habituation, by facilitating the development of virtuous emotional dispositions.

The second problem, which the addition of role models to an account of habituation overcomes, concerns the circularity of Aristotle's assertion that frequent and consistent virtuous behaviour is needed to develop the emotional dispositions that partly constitute moral virtue. Aristotle anticipates this objection, 'if we do what is just or temperate, we must already be just or temperate' (*NE* 1105a19-22), which implies that being virtuous is a precondition for acting virtuously. This apparent paradox can be better explained in relation to practical wisdom *(phronesis*), the rational integrative intellectual virtue which is needed to determine the appropriate course of virtue in any situation. In essence, 'to become practically wise one needs to act as virtue requires, but in order to know or see what virtue requires one needs to be practically wise' (Steutel and Spiecker, 2004, p. 536). A persuasive rejoinder is offered by Steutel and Spiecker who maintain that to avoid circularity one must look to guidance from virtuous role models (ibid.). By introducing this third element of habituation the not-yet-wise can act as virtue requires – by emulating a virtuous role model who is (ibid.). Therefore, even if someone lacks the practical wisdom needed to guide their moral behaviour, they can still learn to become moral if they have a role model to guide them14. If one now asks: how does a person become practically wise? Circularity can be avoided by responding: by acting as virtue requires, and if one does not already have the practical wisdom to determine how to act as virtue requires, by seeking guidance from a virtuous role model. From this argument, it is clear that whilst Aristotle does not explicitly advocate a tripartite account of habituation, including

14 I shall extend this idea in Section 3.5. when I introduce the concept of entangled *phronesis* to explain more precisely how this 'guidance' might work in terms of both habituated and complete emulation.

guidance from moral role models, the latter's ability to overcome the circularity around virtuous character development can be considered compatible with his position.

Now that I have expounded *why* role models are a necessary part of habituation, I will briefly explain *how* they are thought to stimulate the development of emotional dispositions. It should be noted that I will later argue against an understanding of emulation purely as an emotion, but before I do, it is instructive to expound the prevailing neo-Aristotelian view in order to provide a more substantial springboard for my own position. On this account, not only do moral role models help others become virtuous by developing emotional dispositions, but they motivate this development through emotion itself, specifically the emotion of emulation (*zélos* in Greek) (e.g., see Steutel and Spiecker, 2004, p. 545; Kristjánsson, 2006a; Sanderse, 2013, p. 36; Vos, 2018, p. 6; Osman, 2019, p. 318; Croce, 2019, p. 238). Indeed, emulation, according to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, is an *overall* painful emotion characterised by distress at the realisation that one person has acquired 'good things that are highly valued and are possible', i.e. virtues, that the moral learner lacks (2001, p. 75). This means that as said learner becomes aware that their affective behaviours fall short of the role model's ideal, they will feel anguish at their own deficiency and be motivated to overcome this lack through emulation. Here, it is important to conceptually and morally distinguish distress from envy. The latter has immoral connotations, implying that A has something which gives them an advantage over B, that B wants to remove from A, to gain the advantage for themselves (Kristjánsson, 2006a, p. 42). By contrast, emulation is a distinctly moral emotion, expressing admiration at the thing which A has and B wants, without any intention to deprive or compete with A (ibid.). Therefore, in addition to distress, Aristotle maintains that those who are emulous must, as a matter of logical necessity, consider themselves 'deserving of the goods that they do not have' (2001, p. 75). The ambition experienced by the emulous to acquire these goods has been taken to indicate they are the kind of people capable of actualising them, and consequently, that they deserve

them (Kristjánsson, 2006a, p. 44). Indeed, this self-understanding of desert could be considered a humbler incarnation of the self-knowledge characteristic of the *megalopsychoi.* Overall, this initial understanding of emulation can so far be summarised as involving distress, ambition, and self-understanding of desert.

Now that I have outlined why role models are necessary for habituation, i.e., becoming virtuous, and provided some insights into emulation as an emotion, I will begin to analyse what the latter entails. Before I do, I will clarify that whilst I endorse Steutel and Spiecker's position, my argument will go beyond theirs and is thus more substantial in three central ways: first it will argue that role models are not just necessary for developing virtuous emotional dispositions (virtuous emotions) but also virtues proper; second it will add deeper conceptual nuance to emulation *qua* role modelling by arguing that it is not merely a virtuous emotion (nor an emotional virtue), but is best categorised as moral virtue in its own right; and third it will add methodological nuance to precisely how emulation as a virtue works both *pre-phronesis*, i.e., in young children, and when it is developing, i.e., in young adults. This argument, the foundations of a theory of emulation, will then be given further moral-psychological contours in Chapter 5.

3.3. Emulation: Emotional virtue or virtuous emotion? Perhaps neither?

As it stands emulation needs more nuance if it is to persuasively explain how moral learners come to acquire the affective dispositions and associated virtues embodied by their role models. Ultimately, if they see the role model's virtuous actions and corresponding affective responses as representative of an ideal, and consider themselves deserving of such goods, they will feel deficient and be inspired to emulate them (*NE* 1180b3-8). However, simply feeling deficient is surely not enough to lure moral learners into emulating role models, further methodological

clarity is needed. In order to add such methodological clarity, Kristjánsson has sought to categorise what has so far been termed 'the emotion of emulation' as either (1) a freestanding 'emotional virtue' in its own right (2006a), or (2) a 'virtuous emotion' which is a component of other general virtues (2018). Let me explain the key benefits and pitfalls of both, before offering a third option – albeit one which departs somewhat from a classical reading of Aristotle – that emulation is better categorised as a virtue in its own right. First, understanding emulation as an *emotional virtue* opens up the possibility of illuminating aspects of it as one would any other virtue, for example by dividing it into the affective, conative, cognitive and behavioural (Kristjánsson, 2006a, pp. 44-46). The affective would be the feeling of distress associated with our own absence of a moral quality possessed by another (the role model); the conative is the ambition, or zeal, to acquire the quality for oneself (not at the expense of the emulated other); the cognitive is the self-understanding of why the moral quality is valuable and what reasonable steps are needed to acquire it; and the behavioural is taking action to develop these morally worthy qualities in oneself, i.e. virtues rather than vices (ibid.).

This is very much as I have described emulation thus far. However, in blurring the boundary between emotion and virtue, and suggesting that some emotions *just are* virtues, arguably Kristjánsson goes beyond what an 'emotional virtue' can accomplish. This is because, if some virtues are synonymous with emotion, then one cannot validly include the final behavioural component in the categorisation. More precisely, because emotions are to do with *feeling*, but not necessarily *doing,* they may include a *behavioural suggestion*, but not full *virtuous activity*, which is a necessary component of virtue. This said, Kristjánsson seems to be on the right path in the sense that emulation must include activity for the moral leaner to actually develop virtues, as shown in the aforementioned tripartite account of habituation, yet in classifying emulation as an emotional virtue he claims too much. Kristjánsson himself acknowledges a further problem in blurring the emotion-virtue boundary, which concerns how

virtues cannot simply be emotions in a mean (2018, p. 22). Whilst Aristotle explicitly rejects *episodic* emotions as virtuous in his *Rhetoric,* Kristjánsson extends this claim to *dispositional* emotions too, i.e., to emotions that we express frequently and consistently as opposed to unique episodes (ibid.). This is because, when discussing morally optimal emotions, such as compassion, Aristotle uses the terms 'characteristics of good people' rather than virtues, and 'blameworthy deficiencies' rather than vices (ibid.). Kristjánsson contends that the classical Aristotle ought therefore to be interpreted as supporting that dispositional, morally optimal, emotional traits are elements of virtue, i.e. virtuous emotions, but do not fully constitute virtue (ibid., p. 22); an interpretation which corelates with Aristotle's position supporting a distinction between emotion and virtue (ibid., p. 15). In short, if virtues are not simply emotions in a mean, then the emotion of emulation cannot be a full virtue, but if it is not a virtue, then it cannot include action – which seems essential to being emulous.

Taking these considerations into account, Kristjánsson revises his stance on emulation, preferring instead to term it a 'virtuous emotion' (2018). What this implies is that, as an emotion, emulation is a component of virtue, rather than a full virtue itself. The idea that 'emotional traits are essentially implicated in moral character' (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 23), is supported by Book 2 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* where Aristotle predominately refers to virtues as more than simply medial actions (ibid., p. 22). Importantly, whilst there are numerous ways to define emotion, for example via a Darwinian perspective which conceptualises them as primarily bodily feelings, Kristjánsson proposes an Aristotelian componential view of emotions as essentially cognitions (evaluative thoughts) (ibid., p. 5). More specifically, he argues that emotions involve: perception, thought (cognition), physical feelings and a behavioural suggestion (ibid., p. 13). They are therefore not mere feelings, but evaluative thoughts which require 'epistemic discrimination and discernment' (ibid., p. 5). It should be noted that whilst in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle discusses 12 emotions, including emulation, in terms

of similar elements, he does not present a theory of the structure of emotions (Knuuttila, 2004, p. 31). Kristjánsson therefore aims to ameliorate this gap through presenting a 'reasonably Aristotelian' componential and temporal account of emotion (2018, p. 8), explained in relation to Aristotle's four causes (see *Metaphysics*, 1999). As my present aim is to justify why emulation cannot purely be a virtuous emotion, it is beyond the current scope to expound these causes here. I shall, however, return to them later in this section.

As regards the cognitive core of emotion, Kristjánsson maintains that this is what distinguishes one emotion from another (2018, p. 7). For example, pity concerns a *thought* about the deserved misfortune of another, whilst compassion concerns a *thought* about another's underserved misfortune (ibid.). This largely[15] corresponds to Aristotle's definition of emotions in the *Rhetoric* as 'those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgements [*kriseis*], and that are also attended by pain or pleasure' (2001, p. 55). Cognition, or thought, can therefore reasonably be deduced to be a central component of emotion. In addition, Aristotle posits that whilst each emotion can broadly be categorised as pleasant or painful, almost all encompass both (e.g., see Konstan, 2006, pp. 33-34; Frede, 1996, pp. 258-285). Importantly, pleasant or painful does not denote that an emotion is virtuous or vicious, since all correctly felt emotions are components of virtue, but concerns whether one experiences an emotion, to use Kristjánsson's terms, as 'positively valenced' or 'negatively valenced' (2018, p. 11). Returning to emulation as a virtuous emotion, what this implies is that whilst *overall* it can be categorised, as Aristotle does, as a painful and thus negatively valenced emotion, it is also of mixed valence: 'the pain in emulation, at one's inferiority vis-à-vis an admired exemplar, is partly offset by one's pleasure in cherishing the admired qualities of the exemplar' (ibid., p. 12). That emulation also includes a positive element is further supported by Steutel

---

15 I specify 'largely' as Kristjánsson deliberately avoids the term judgement/*kriseis*, preferring instead 'thoughts' because he deems 'judgements' to make emotions sound too active (2018, p. 7).

and Spiecker, who claim that as the learner comes closer to approximating the ideal embodied by the role model, they may experience feelings such as pride, which could stimulate additional moral development (2004, p. 546).

Returning to the idea that virtuous emotions are, in part, cognitive ingredients of virtues, this entails that, like virtue, they be medially felt ‘at the right times, about the right things, towards the right people, for the right end and in the right way’ (*NE* 1106b17–35). Correspondingly, Kristjánsson proposes that experiencing emotions medially, rather than excessively or deficiently concerns: ‘(a) occasions, (b) objects, (c) people, (d) motive (i.e. goal), and (e) way (i.e. degree)’ (2018, p. 20). If dispositional emotional traits ought to be felt medially in these ways, then this implies that for each emotion there is a morally ‘right’ way to feel, which further supports how virtuous emotions are not purely perceptual but also cognitive. This is because moral accountability and responsibility are usually tied to our cognitions, thus, in order to be morally relevant, emotions must include a cognitive element. In light of this, Kristjánsson suggests that an emotional failing, i.e. experiencing an emotion deficiently or excessively rather than medially, can evidence a moral failing (ibid., p. 2). Furthermore, for obvious reasons, if dispositional emotions have a cognitive core, they are also, like virtue, reason-infused, that is ‘grounded in sound facts and good reason’ (ibid., p. 18). I specify dispositional as one can readily imagine an episodic emotion being driven by impulsive passion, which would not qualify it as rational. Overall, this cognitive componential view of virtuous emotions correlates with Aristotle’s (emotion infused) ‘soft’ rationalist stance (ibid.) and represents a serious departure from the Kantian idea that emotions have no part in ethics (Kant, 2018).

Having explained what is meant by a virtuous emotion, I must now begin the task of evaluating what this means for emulation specifically, before presenting my own revised neo-Aristotelian position as a possible third categorisation. Ultimately, the main contention I have

with defining emulation as a virtuous emotion is similar to that faced when defining it as an emotional virtue, in that it concerns action, or in this case, inaction. Previously, I objected that Kristjánsson, in blurring the emotion-virtue boundary, over-defined the emotion of emulation as a virtue, which negated the possibility of virtuous action, which I maintain is an integral component of virtue. Approached from a different direction, I now make a similar objection to under-defining emulation as a virtuous emotion. If it is a virtuous emotion, then even if it can be helpfully divided into components of perception, thought (cognition), physical feelings and a *behavioural suggestion*, the latter remains a *suggestion* and, as I will argue, does not constitute activity. Explaining why this lack of action is particularly problematic for emulation, in the way it may not be for the other virtuous emotions cited by Kristjánsson (2018), requires first adding clarity by fleshing out this final component – the behavioural suggestion - further. In essence, Kristjánsson conceptualises this as the final cause which concerns a disposition to goal-directed activity (2018, p. 13), and in doing so draws upon Knuuttila's notion of a 'behavioural suggestion' as an 'impulse towards action' (2004, p. 32). Crucially for present purposes, this *behavioural suggestion* is explicitly distinguished from *behaviourism* (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 13), clearly indicating that behavioural activity is not a necessary condition of virtuous emotion and that the emotion could be behaviourally inactive. Take compassion for example, Kristjánsson suggests that feeling compassion towards another's underserved misfortune may compel one to offer help; yet equally, if one is incapacitated from engaging in the activity of help, perhaps due to being in a wheelchair, one can still be considered compassionately 'goal orientated' except the goal lies beyond one's reach (ibid., pp. 13-14). In essence I agree with this point, yet suggest that in the first case one is talking about compassion as a virtue, whilst in the second compassion as a virtuous emotion, with the distinction between the two located in activity.

In light of this, I propose that whilst virtuous emotions can generate an 'activity impulse' or 'behavioural suggestion', this is not synonymous with virtuous activity, with the latter being a logically necessary condition of virtue, and consequently its acquisition and development. For emulation, under-defining it as a virtuous emotion is therefore problematic primarily because in order to acquire virtues, in addition to developing the appropriate sentimental dispositions, one must explicitly and habitually practice them. For example, even if one *perceives* the exemplar's virtues as representative of a moral ideal, *thinks* that they are worthy of emulation and possible to acquire, and *physically feels* the distress and zeal associated with one's lack of the desired quality, unless one is moved to *activity*, i.e., to actually putting the virtue into practice in one's own context, one cannot be considered emulous. Thus, whilst for a virtuous emotion a 'suggestion' towards activity may be enough, for a virtue this is better conceptualised as a motivational element of distress and ambition, with the true final cause involving virtuous activity. In light of this, I argue that activity matters for the efficacy of emulation and that without it the emulation of role models is an impotent form of moral development. Of course, given the persuasiveness of Kristjánsson's position that virtuous emotions are the central ingredients of virtue, I support that they are also the central ingredients of emulation. Yet because emulation – as I will reconceptualise it for the purpose of character developmental theory – must include activity, it cannot be purely a virtuous emotion and is better categorised as a virtue in its own right.

3.4. The third 'horn': Emulation as a moral virtue

Now that I have problematised why emulation is not an emotional virtue, nor a virtuous emotion, I must justify my position regarding why it is better conceptualised as a virtue – albeit one which is predominately composed of virtuous emotion. In making such a move, I

cautiously suggest that Aristotle is guilty of a category mistake when defining emulation purely as an emotion in the *Rhetoric* (2001, pp. 75-76), which could partly account for the historical tensions regarding what the emulation of role models involves. This said, as Nussbaum eloquently observes, whilst Aristotle's support of something does not make it true, it does mark it out as a 'plausible candidate for the truth' (1988, p. 5). Therefore, in making this claim, I will endeavour to raise the credibility of my position by aligning it with other elements of Aristotelian thought as far as possible. In the interests of clarity, I will now proceed to formulate my argument in standard form:

1. Virtuous emotions are components of virtues.
2. Therefore, virtues and virtuous emotions are intrinsically related but distinct.
3. Virtues are distinguished from virtuous emotions by activity, with virtuous activity being a necessary condition of virtue, but not of virtuous emotion.
4. This entails that, in order to become virtuous, one must put virtuous emotions into practice by exercising virtuous activity.
5. The central way to become virtuous is through emulating moral role models.
6. This implies that, in addition to virtuous emotion, the emulation of role models must include activity.
7. If emulation must include activity, it cannot be purely a virtuous emotion.
8. Therefore, emulation is better categorised as a virtue.

Since this is not purely a deductive argument, at best my conclusion (8) can be *highly* probable. In light of this, and to make my argument as persuasive as possible, I shall now proceed to defend the most contentious premises. As I have already appealed to Kristjánsson's (2018) position in support of premises 1 and 2 I shall not reiterate these arguments here and instead focus on defending those which most require further support. In doing so, I shall also acknowledge and respond to possible objections.

Premise 3: 'virtues are distinguished from virtuous emotions by activity, with virtuous activity being a necessary condition of virtue, but not of virtuous emotion', can be supported by appealing to Aristotle and his neo-Aristotelian sympathisers. For example, Aristotle seems to unambiguously imply that virtue includes an explicitly behavioural component:

> …to virtue belongs virtuous activity…one who has the activity will of necessity be acting and acting well. And as in the Olympic Games it is not the most beautiful and the strongest that are crowned but those who compete…so those who act win, and rightly win, the noble and the good things in life (*NE* 1098b30-1099a6).

This insistence is reinforced at multiple other junctures in his writing (e.g., see *NE* 1103a33-1103b1; 1103b20-32; 1104b13-15; 1105b5-10). A move which is supported by contemporary neo-Aristotelian philosophers and moral psychologists who all include a behavioural element in their quadripartite componential accounts of virtue (e.g., see Curren and Kotzee, 2014; Fowers et al., 2021; Morgan et al., 2017; Wright et al., 2020). Interestingly, in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle explains emotions not in four, but in three ways, (2001, p. 55), which could support that the additional component of action is what distinguishes a virtuous emotion from a virtue, a point to which I shall return later in this section.

If we also inspect a definition of virtue that Kristjánsson finds particularly compelling (2018, p. 17), that of Rorty, it is also clear that virtue includes action:

> Virtue (*arete*) is that sort of active disposition (*hexis*) which sets a person to act or react in a mean, in situations involving choice (*prohairesis*), following reason (*logos*) as the person of practical wisdom (*phronimos*) does in matters concerning *pathe* and actions. (1984, p. 535)

Pathe and actions. Rorty can be interpreted as following Aristotle and others in proposing that virtue must include both emotion (*pathe*) and action. As regards the *pathe* element, Rorty makes explicit that to contribute to virtue these emotions must be voluntary, appropriate and appropriately understood, i.e. deliberate, medial and rational (ibid., p. 537). In terms of action, Rorty further emphasises that 'Aristotle characterises each of the virtues as dispositions to typical actions and reactions' (ibid.), whist maintaining there is a relationship between virtuous emotions and virtue (ibid., 538). Overall, these considerations support the link between virtue and action, and therefore Premise 3.

However, the move that full-blown virtue necessarily involves action has been criticised as 'misguided' by Kristjánsson (2018, p. 18). He claims that, where virtues conflict,

phronesis acts as an adjudicator to assess which one takes precedence. This does not mean that the other virtue has not been felt, but that on *phronetic* reflection a different virtue was deemed the most appropriate (ibid.). He cites the example of deciding to tell an upsetting truth to a friend, despite knowing that it will cause them pain, and argues that the virtue of compassion is still there 'in full force' even though it was overridden by the virtue of honesty and did not actively express compassionate behaviour (ibid.). In response to this objection, I offer the following rejoinder which concerns distinguishing between the virtuous emotion of compassion and the virtue of compassion. I contend that, in this example, the *virtuous emotion* has indeed been felt, but that in order to claim the *virtue* of compassion has been displayed 'in full force' it must result in compassionate behaviour. This retort still allows me to maintain that a virtuous emotion can be morally credible, whilst upholding the distinction between virtue and virtuous emotion. In response, critics could further object that a virtue experienced internally still counts as a virtue. However, I argue that, in the case of competing virtues, the person concerned experienced the virtuous emotions associated with compassion, but cannot be credited with the virtue of compassion. Instead, the virtue of honesty was *phronetically* considered the appropriate course of virtuous action, which resulted in honest behaviour that in this case superseded compassion. Ultimately, without behaviour there is very little to distinguish a virtuous emotion from a virtue, I therefore hold strong in preserving the distinction in this way.

Now to a justification of Premise 4: 'in order to become virtuous, one must put virtuous emotions into practice by exercising virtuous activity'. First, that virtuous activity evolves a virtuous emotion into a virtue is a point that appears to gain support from Aristotle himself. Indeed, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* he posits that the 'the virtues are concerned with actions and passions [emotions]' (1104b13-15) which indicates that both action and dispositional emotion are necessary for virtue. The act alone is not sufficient for virtue (1105a28), nor is an

emotion a virtue (1105b29). Therefore, even if acts are in accordance with virtue, to count as virtuous they must be performed when the agent is in 'a certain condition' (1105a30). This 'certain condition' can be interpreted as being largely driven by dispositional medial cognitive emotions, which are informed by practical wisdom, which then enables active choice. To explain how, I appeal to Fortenbaugh who posits that Aristotle treats practical wisdom (*phronesis*) as something which both follows emotion and controls emotion (2003, p. 238). In terms of the latter, he claims that the virtuous person subjects their emotions to reasoned, i.e. *phronetic*, reflection (ibid.). In addition, *phronesis* can be taken to follow emotion in terms of means-end deliberation about virtuous choice (ibid.). I interpret this virtuous choice to concern behavioural activity. This makes visible the dual purpose of practical wisdom – it is involved in medial emotions *and* directs these emotions to the virtue. Importantly, Aristotle claims that 'virtue makes the goal correct, and practical wisdom makes what leads to it correct' (*NE* 1144a8-9). I interpret this as supporting that moral virtue is a perfected disposition to act, driven by *phronetically-informed* emotion. This interpretation allows me to maintain that phronesis is involved in virtuous emotions, and that the transition to fully-fledged virtue requires *phronetically-informed* active choice, driven by *phronetically-informed* virtuous emotions.

A possible objection to this interpretation concerns whether my argument entails that all virtuous emotions have a corresponding virtue which requires action. In short, my response is that they do not. Indeed, to claim otherwise would be too demanding a position and certainly not one I wish to argue for. As previously explained, leading minds in emotion scholarship support how emotions *can* lead to an activity impulse or behavioural suggestion, but avoid the claim that active behaviour *must* result (e.g. see Flanagan, 2016; Fortenbaugh, 2003; Knuuttila, 2004; Kristjánsson, 2018). For example, the emotion of shame could silence one to stop contemplating something disgraceful (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 14). My argument is compatible with this position. That said, in the converse case of virtue, which as I have argued entails

virtuous activity, it is necessary for it to be motivated by virtuous emotion. Thus when Aristotle remarks '…we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts' (NE 1103b1-2), I suggest that these 'acts' must be motivated by virtuous emotions in order to count as just, temperate or brave[16]. A further issue could also be raised regarding how those who have not yet developed *phronesis* might be expected to infuse both emotion and virtuous action with it. The answer lies in the emulation of role models, notably Premise 5 and 6.

Premise 5: 'the central way to become virtuous is through emulating moral role models', I have already argued for at length, as it is the only premise which is inductive and relies on empirical evidence, so I shall not reiterate my position again. Instead, I defend Premise 6: 'in addition to virtuous emotion, the emulation of role models must include activity'. Let us consider two situations, in the first a *pre-phronesis or low-phronesis* moral learner perceives the exemplar's virtues as representative of a moral ideal; *thinks* that they are worthy of emulation, possible to acquire and deserved; *physically feels* the distress and zeal associated with one's lack of the desired quality; and perhaps a *suggestion* to behaviour. In this case the learner may begin to acquire a virtuous emotion but cannot be said to acquire a virtue. This is partly due to the account of habituation previously argued for and prophesised by Steutel and Spiecker (2004) – guided by a role model, virtue must be practiced frequently and consistently to facilitate virtue acquisition. Imagine a second situation involving a similar process but instead the behavioural suggestion motivates the learner to practice virtuous behaviour. As a result, whilst it may be perfectly reasonable to conceive of virtuous emotions without behaviour, because emulation is explicitly associated with virtue development, the same cannot

---

16 Aristotle does make an exception to this in the case of the social-glue virtues: wittiness, agreeableness and truthfulness. These virtues need not be motivated by virtuous emotion, since they concern conflictless encounters in non-personal contexts; for example, conversing with new acquaintances at a party.

be said for virtue. This entails Premise 7, 'if emulation must include activity, it cannot be purely a virtuous emotion', and subsequently the conclusion, that in light of the essential behavioural aspect, it is 'better categorised as a virtue in its own right'. This conclusion can be taken to support that the emulation of role models is essential for both the development of virtuous emotions and for virtues, given that virtues are predominately composed of virtuous emotions.

Finally, before I progress to a deeper analysis of what classifying emulation as a virtue implies, I must respond to the challenge of why I am justified in going slightly against the Aristotelian grain in doing so. Indeed, given that in both the *Rhetoric* (2001, pp. 75-76) and the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1105b22) Aristotle explicitly classifies emulation as an emotion, it may seem bold to suggest otherwise – especially given the clarity of thought with which he approaches all aspects of his philosophy. I especially look to the *Rhetoric* as it was the first time in Greek philosophy that a systematic survey of emotion had been undertaken, and further because the central philosophical themes of emotion appear here before being reflected in Aristotle's subsequent works (Knuuttila, 2004, p. 27). In addition to the arguments previously cited, my reasons for the recategorization are twofold. First, it has been suggested that the purpose of the *Rhetoric* is to convey how an orator may become more skilled in rhetoric by changing the judgements in their audience through emotions (Knuuttila, 2004, p. 32). It is therefore not primarily a doctrine of ethics but of oratorical influence, which could partly explain why emulation is largely depicted as something felt, rather than in the context of explicitly influencing moral development. Secondly, Aristotle does note that emulation 'makes us take steps to secure the good things in question' (2001, p. 75), which I take to provide textual support for extending emulation also to action, since 'taking steps' can reasonably be deduced to involve behaviour. Now that I have justified my argument in favour of the virtue of emulation, I can proceed to add further conceptual and methodological clarity to its components.

3.5. Operationalising the moral virtue of emulation

Having laid the foundations for classifying emulation as a virtue, I must now briefly assess the extent to which, like other moral virtues, it fulfils certain criteria. Once established, I will then begin to expound the main components of virtue in order to further illuminate the process of emulating role models. First, to the Aristotelian criteria for virtue which specifies that a moral virtue must 1) contribute to *eudaimonia* in a sphere of human activity (*NE* 1106a21-22), and 2) in line with the doctrine of the golden mean, allow for extremes of deficiency and excess (1107a1-6). In Kristjánsson's original argument supporting emulation as an emotional virtue, he proposed that it could legitimately satisfy these criteria and therefore be considered a character trait (2006a, p. 45). However, for reasons already explained, classifying it as an emotional virtue is problematic. Despite this, Kristjánsson's argument applies equally well when one recategorises emulation as virtue with virtuous emotional components. For example, as regards *eudaimonia* he suggests that the relevant sphere of human activity is the inferiority we experience in the presence of the role model (ibid., p45). I add to this and suggest that emulation may also have a broader importance for *eudaimonia*. Clearly without emulation moral learners cannot acquire other moral virtues, since emulating role models is a necessary element of habituation, i.e., the process required to develop moral virtue. This means that due to its association with other moral virtues, emulation is also partly constitutive of *eudaimonia* and on a wider scale than purely in the sphere of our perceived inferiority. Furthermore, in justifying emulation as mean, one can argue that the vice of deficiency would involve too little will to emulate others, whilst the vice of excess would involve being too eager to emulate others (ibid.). Interestingly, it is also argued that emulation is specifically a virtue of the young rather than the fully virtuous, since the latter have already cultivated virtue and thus have no need for

emulation (ibid.). That said, as very few people in fact reach this level of virtue, it may be more relevant throughout one's life than Kristjánsson acknowledges, thus illuminating the salience of emulation in both traditional moral education and professional contexts.

Specifically categorising emulation as a moral virtue opens it up to a wealth of illuminating research regarding the constitutive components of virtue. In light of this, I will now appeal to the virtue measurement literature which focuses on examining the structure of virtue. This appeal is instructive because by gaining insights into the structure of virtue, one can begin to understand how emulation *as a virtue* works. In essence, empirically extending our knowledge of virtues such as gratitude or emulation requires operationalising these *stable traits of character* into components which enable measurement (e.g., see Curren and Kotzee, 2014; Fowers et al., 2021; Morgan et al., 2017; Wright et al., 2020). This is made possible due to the ontological reality of virtue which is grounded in naturalism, specifically psychological virtue-based naturalism, which I explained at length in the Introduction to the thesis. Ultimately, grounding virtue in psychological realism can be taken to facilitate its division into empirically measurable categories. These broadly encompass the cognitive, affective, attitudinal (including motivational) and behavioural (Morgan et al., 2017, p. 4). Whilst there is some nuance in the exact categories different scholars support, an analysis of the measurement literature suggests that the majority of elements fall into those cited, indicating that any attempt to measure or explain virtue must acknowledge these.

For example, Morgan, Gulliford and Kristjánsson empirically demonstrate that virtue is comprised of (1) a conceptual element that measures a person's understanding of virtue; (2) an emotional element that measures the extent to which a person experiences virtue-relevant emotions; (3) an attitudinal element that measures a person's motivations and attitudes towards the virtue; and (4) a behavioural element that measures how much a person engages in virtue-relevant behaviours (ibid., pp. 11-12). It should be noted that this measurement tool was

designed to measure a single virtue, gratitude, yet other broader empirical virtue measures share a relevantly similar multi-layered emphasis. For example, Wright, Warren and Snow propose that our social-cognitive system is comprised of interrelated cognitive, affective and motivational elements which interact with our perceptual, rational and behavioural capacities to enable us to cultivate virtue (2020, p. 58). More specifically, they argue that virtue manifests as (1) ‘inputs’ – the perception of virtue-relevant stimuli; (2) ‘intermediates’ – various social-cognitive systems processing these stimuli; and (3) ‘outputs’ – the production of situation-specific virtuous behaviour (ibid., p. 8). These scholars align themselves with ‘modified Aristotelianism’ and situate their account of virtue within Fleeson and Jayawickreme’s Whole Trait Theory (ibid., p. 7), which I shall reserve a more thorough exposition of for Section 2.1b.

The above serves to provide initial guidance as to how the virtue of emulation might be divided. As I am investigating a single virtue, emulation, I shall largely appeal to the components cited by Morgan et al. (2017). This is instructive because they too sought to assess a single virtue, because of the clarity of their measure, and because of the influence it has had in the interdisciplinary field of virtue measurement (e.g. see Fowers et al., 2021; Snow, 2020; Wright et al., 2020). Furthermore, I aim to combine and synthesise this with Kristjánsson’s (2018) Aristotelian componential view of emotions as essentially cognitions comprising *perception, thought, physiological feelings* and *behavioural suggestion*, but will forgo the final element and replace it with *virtuous action*, given my previous argument in favour of emulation as a virtue. Drawing further inspiration from Kristjánsson, who incidentally was also involved in the Morgan et al. study, I will also endeavour to align my componential account of the virtue of emulation with Aristotle’s account of causation, in particular his four causes. Perhaps surprisingly, given that in the *Metaphysics* Aristotle explicitly states that we should strive to investigate all four causes of a thing (1044a32–b20), very few scholars have attempted to integrate his quadripartite explanations with virtue ethics. Indeed, a survey of the literature

highlights just one explicitly Aristotelian ethical endeavour (Kristjánsson, 2018), one non-moral causal account of emotions (Rossi, 2018), one applied to action more generally (Reece, 2019), and one applied to Aquinas' cardinal virtue of temperance (Austin, 2010). As Kristjánsson specifically analyses the four causes of *virtuous* emotions (2018, pp. 8-13), which I have argued largely constitute virtue, my argument will use many of his insights, adapted and applied to the specific context of emulation. However, I shall appeal to only the first three of Kristjánsson's 'causes' because I seek to replace the final cause with virtuous action.

It is my intention that synthesising the aforementioned contemporary insights with Aristotle's four-causal account of causation will enable me to more precisely interrogate the structure of the virtue of emulation and systematically understand the interrelations between its component parts. In doing so, I hope to add further explanatory power, methodological clarity and philosophical vigour to emulation *qua* role modelling. As highlighted at multiple junctures in this thesis already, I also intend to furnish the results of this analysis with specific content from current moral psychology in Chapter 5 and use this to devise a philosophically discerning and psychologically realistic developmental model of emulation.

3.6. The four causes of emulation

Inspired by Aristotle's focus on emulation *qua* role modelling as a method of virtuous character development in both his *Rhetoric* (2001 75-76) and *Nicomachean Ethics* (2009 1180b3-8), but noticing there was something amiss in his and his neo-Aristotelian sympathisers categorisation of it as purely a virtuous emotion (e.g., see Kristjánsson, 2006a; 2018), the previous section reconceptualised it as a moral virtue in its own right. To recap, virtuous emotions – as elements of virtues – comprise: perception, thought (cognition), physical feelings and a *behavioural suggestion* (Kristjánsson, 2018 13). However, as virtue proper must include *virtuous action*

(e.g., see Aristotle, 2009 NE, 1098b30-1099a6; Rorty, 1984 535), and virtuous emotion necessitates only a *suggestion* to said action (Kristjánsson, 2018 13; Knuuttila, 2004 32), as a matter of logical coherence emulation must also include action because it is explicitly associated with *virtue* development. I therefore argued that understanding emulation, or emulousness, as a moral virtue is educationally salient because it provides a conceptual umbrella with which to explain and clarify the *whole process* through which one learns *both* virtuous emotion and virtuous action, i.e., virtue, from moral role models. This conceptual clarity provides the foundations for a more substantial methodological endeavour regarding how emulation potentially works, which I expound in this section.

Assuming my previous argument reconceptualising emulation as a moral virtue is convincing, I can now build a more robust case for how emulation *qua* role modelling works in practice through direct appeal to Aristotle's account of causation: the four causes (Physics, 1936 194b21-35; Metaphysics, 1999 1044a32-4). Historically revered for their explanatory power, I employ the four causes in order to strengthen the foundations of this emerging theory by using them to expound emulation as a quadripartite causal process. Importantly, the account of this process is inherently reconstructive rather than exegetical in nature, since establishing the four causes of emulation requires, first, devising a four-causal account of virtue and, second, assigning each cause a temporal order – neither of which Aristotle did. I argue that emulation is driven by 'entangled *phronesis*' – a mechanism which enables immature moral learners to acquire virtue by sharing in the *phronesis,* i.e., practical wisdom (see Kristjánsson et al., 2021), of a role model and their blueprint of a flourishing life. Essentially a form of rational moral communication, I also argue that the degree of entanglement depends upon a learner's phase of virtuous character development, and accordingly divide emulation into two types: *pre-phronetic* 'habituated emulation' and *phronetically-informed* 'complete emulation'. Since the journey from habituated virtue to full virtue is a lifelong process, my position implies

that a form of emulation could persist, albeit in developmentally sensitive ways, over the course of one's life.

In what follows, I first motivate the suitability of applying the four causes identified by Aristotle to virtue, before using insights, predominantly from Kristjánsson (2018) and Reece (2019), to assess what each cause could entail for the virtue of emulation (Section 3.6.1.). I then advance my four-causal account of the virtue of emulation by proposing that the 'efficient cause' – the catalyst of virtue acquisition – entails the moral agent's perception of the role model's virtues as representative of a moral ideal (Section 3.6.2.). From this follows the 'formal cause' as the *phronetically-informed* evaluation that these ideals are worthy of emulation and possible to acquire (Section 3.6.3.). This in turn leads to the 'material cause', *physically feeling* the distress *and* admiration associated with one's lack of the desired quality, i.e., the role-model-represented ideal, which induces the motivational state of inspiration (Section 3.6.4.). Appropriately, this culminates in the 'final cause': virtuous action concerning ends – putting the role-model-represented ideal of virtue into practice (Section 3.6.5.). In constructing this argument, I also develop the aforementioned concepts of entangled *phronesis*, 'habituated emulation' and 'complete emulation'. As before, to ensure my position is sufficiently motivated and justified, throughout the section I also anticipate and respond to possible objections.

3.6.1. The four causes

Traditionally, Aristotle's Four Causes, understood as four kinds of explanations, have been employed to explain substances, such as artefacts (Falcon, 2022). Yet Aristotle also identifies four causes of natural changes, such as respiration (Evnine, 2016). Until recently, intentional human action, also a natural change, has been treated as an exception to a four-causal explanation (Reece, 2019). For example, Aristotle's position was standardly taken to support

an ordinary causalist theory of action, where intentional actions were distinguished from accidental combinations of movements because the former are bought about by the psychological attitudes of the agent, such as a desire or belief (e.g. see Davidson, 1963, p. 693). However, Aristotelian scholar Bryan Reece, who focuses largely on the philosophy of action, argues that the natural change of human action can also be powerfully illuminated with reference to Aristotle's four cause procedure (2019, p. 213). Given my previous arguments supporting the necessity of action for virtue, this is a promising development, and relevantly analogous to my present aim of aligning the components of emulation to the four causes. Like Reece's interest in action more generally, I too seek to understand more about what virtuous action, a form of intentional action, is and how it is caused in the specific context of emulation.

In essence, the four causes, as discussed in Aristotle's *Physics* (194b21–35), and *Metaphysics* (1044a32–4), can be described as:

- the material cause: 'that out of which' something comes to exist;
- the formal cause: 'the form' that distinguishes one thing from another, and acts as a paradigm for something becoming that thing;
- the efficient cause: the catalyst or primary source of change;
- the final cause: the end 'for the sake of which' something comes about.

Take Aristotle's famous example of a bronze statue, the artefact's material cause constitutes the bronze, the formal the planned-for shape, the efficient the action of the sculptor and the final the purpose of production (1013b6-9). In the *Metaphysics* especially, Aristotle posits that since substances and natural changes are not the same, the four causes apply to them in different ways (1001b29–32). In the case of natural changes, he maintains that whilst most will ordinarily have all four causes, and that citing all four causes is necessary for adequately explaining a thing, some will have less (1044a32–b20). Further, he suggests that the material cause in particular will be different in substances and natural changes – consider the bronze of a statue as opposed to the human body. Given that action is a change, Reece thinks it poignant that Aristotle seeks to give natural changes a four causal explanation, and therefore maintains

that, in principle, Aristotle would support a four causal account of action (2019, p. 215).

Systematising the four causes with other elements of Aristotle's philosophy of action enables Reece to suggest that for intentional human action:

> …agents' bodies are material causes, underlying substrata, of their self-movements. Their active psychological attitudes are formal causes, giving actions their identity conditions and providing paradigms for coming to be as the actions that they are. The agents themselves, qualified as self-movers in activity, are efficient causes, bringing about actions. Agents' goals are final causes, those things for the sake of which actions are performed (ibid., p. 214).

This analysis of action is insightful, particularly due to the precision with which Reece subsequently justifies each cause with reference to numerous Aristotelian insights, many of which are also relevant to virtuous action. However, virtuous action is more complicated than intentional non-moral human action, particularly because it is composed of virtuous emotion, which is itself componential. I will therefore need to look beyond this analysis of action to establish how the four causes could apply to virtue.

Furthermore, as I am specifically interested in understanding how *the process* of emulating role models enables us to acquire moral virtue, it is also supremely important to get the order of these causes right. For this I look to Kristjánsson who, in the case of virtuous emotions, adds a potential temporal[17] order: 1) efficient, 2) formal, 3) material, and 4) final (2018, pp. 8-13). It should be noted that Kristjánsson does not offer this account as an exegesis of Aristotle, who arguably made uncharacteristic missteps in his treatment of emotion, but rather as a neo-Aristotelian reconstruction to make it more coherent and compatible with his metaphysics (ibid., p. 3). Reimagined, Kristjánsson's four causes of virtuous emotion thus encompass:

- the efficient cause: the 'source' of an emotion – perception

---

[17] By 'temporal' Kristjánsson is making more of a logical than empirical point. In order to develop a thought about S one must first have perceived S, yet each step could happen in such a rapid order as to *feel* psychologically simultaneous.

- the formal cause: the 'intentional object' of an emotion – thought (cognition)
- the material cause: the 'physiological valence' of an emotion – physical feelings
- the final cause: the 'goal directed activity' of an emotion - behavioural suggestion (ibid.).

For example, in the case of the virtuous emotion of gratitude, the efficient cause or 'source' would be the 'perceived benefit to oneself provided by a benefactor'; the formal object 'cognised benevolently intended benefaction from a benefactor'; the material cause or valence[18] would be 'more pleasant than painful'; and the final cause the 'acknowledgment and return of benefit' (ibid., p. 186). As mentioned, in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle states that we should explain emotions in three ways, or as he puts it 'under three heads' (2001, p. 55). For example, in the case of anger he suggests that one must discover 1) the state of mind of the angry person. 2) who the anger is directed towards; and 3) the reasons for the anger. Whilst not directly analogous to Kristjánsson's causes, and not temporally ordered, these could be perceived as relevantly similar in the sense that the efficient cause would be the source of anger and who it is directed towards, the formal cause the reasons for the anger, and the material cause the state of mind. This tripartite account could support my own argument in favour of virtuous emotions as components of virtue, with virtuous action providing the final cause. Inspired by this, I shall now offer a similarly temporal account of the virtue of emulation. I will do so by first expounding what is meant by each cause as a component of virtue, before applying this to the

---

18 As mentioned in my previous discussion of virtuous emotions, Kristjánsson employs the terms 'positively valenced' and 'negatively valenced' to illuminate how Aristotle, in proposing that all emotions were accompanied by feelings of pleasure or pain, was not a pure cognitivist about emotion (2018, p. 12). Importantly, this does not mean morally positive or negative, since all virtuous emotions and virtues are in essence 'positive', but refers to how they feel (ibid.). Compassion, for example, denotes a negatively valenced emotion; whilst schadenfreude a positively valenced emotion (ibid.). Going further, there is some debate regarding whether Aristotle thought most emotions could be categorised either as pleasant or painful - as seems to be the case in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, or if they contained a mixture of both - as emphasised in the *Rhetoric* (e.g., see Frede, 1996). Like, Frede (1996) and Kristjánsson (2018, p. 12), I am persuaded by the mixed-valence assumption, which suggests that even if overall Aristotle categorises an emotion as pleasant or painful, the 'majority incorporate a mixture of pains/disturbance/frustration and pleasure/restoration/gratification' (ibid.). Whilst this position convincingly overcomes the discrepancies in the two Aristotelian accounts of emotions, as my theory of emulation (of which the four causes are part) is an Aristotelian reconstruction rather than exegesis, it is beyond the purview of this thesis to defend this further.

virtue of emulation specifically. Before we proceed, I ask the reader to bear in mind that since virtuous emotions largely comprise virtue, the first three causes – the efficient, formal and material – are also intended to apply to virtuous emotion. This means that the final cause, virtuous action, is reserved purely for virtue.

3.6.2. The efficient cause: The moral agent's perception of the role model's virtues as representative of a moral ideal

The first step in reaching explanatory adequacy for the virtue of emulation, requires investigating its efficient cause. To recap, according to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* the efficient cause is the primary source of change (1044a32–4), which in the case of virtuous emotion Kristjánsson conceptualises as *perception* (2018, p. 186). This is equivalent to the 'inputs' - the perception of virtue-relevant stimuli - involved in Wright et al.'s explanation of virtuous traits (2020, p. 35), which further supports perception as the catalyst of virtue acquisition. However, it is worth mentioning here that Aristotle denotes *choice* as the efficient cause of action (NE 1139a31), and further explains this choice as either 'desiderative reason' or 'ratiocinative desire', which originate in a man (1139b5). Here, rational and ratiocinitive both imply that they are *phronetically-informed* by the rational intellectual virtue of practical wisdom, which is cognitive. However, if we refer back to Kristjánsson's 'reasonably Aristotelian' argument that virtuous emotions are essentially cognitions, we will see that these cognitions are first caused by perception (2018, p. 8). One does not simply jump straight to a cognition, understood as an evaluative thought, the moral situation must first be perceived. In this sense, if the *origin* of an evaluative thought is the perceiver, the source of a virtuous emotion is perception – which I have argued also entails it is the source of virtue. In a similar vein, one does not jump straight from choice to virtuous action, it must first be perceived, cognised and physiologically felt before, on further *phronetic* reflection, a medial choice to

virtuous action can be made. As regards Aristotle's position that choice is the efficient cause of action, I therefore suggest that *temporally,* choice, informed by ratiocinative desire and desiderative reason, is better understood as an element of the final cause, a point upon which I shall elaborate later in this section. Returning to Kristjánsson's account of perception, he suggests that how something appears, or is perceived, is informed by the 'who, what and where' of the perceiver, i.e., their context (ibid.). Perception then causes an evaluative thought, a *krisis*, indicating that perception is logically prior to cognition, and as such is a plausible efficient cause (ibid.). This position is also compatible with Reece's argument that agents themselves are the efficient causes of actions (2019, p. 217), yet in the case of virtuous activity this requires reconceptualising as the perception of the agents themselves.

Now let us consider what this implies for emulation. Ultimately, I suggest that the efficient cause is the moral agent's perception of the role model's virtues as representative of a moral ideal. I argue that this necessitates a role model as an 'evoker' or prime mover to stimulate perception, and the move from moral potentiality to actuality. In terms of the 'immediate target', understood as the 'broad ontological object at which the emotion is primarily directed' (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 9), Kristjánsson proposes that emulation is *other-directed* towards the role model (2020b, p. 148). However, I argue that whilst the *immediate target* is the role model, as the aim is to emulate the ideals represented by the role model, the *ultimate target* is better conceptualised as being *ideal-directed.* This is perhaps more in line with Kristjánsson's position, as he also argues that ideals rather than persons *ought* to be the source of emulation – '*exemplarity* rather than *individual exemplars*' (2020b, p. 138). That said, my position is slightly more moderate. This is because, whilst Kristjánsson claims that it is theoretically possible to be directly attracted to 'transpersonal ideals', meaning the virtue itself, through what he terms 'elevation' (ibid., p. 153), my account of emulation maintains that the role model is psychologically necessary for perceiving these ideals. Going further, I also

suggest that even if it were theoretically possible to perceive ideals without a role model, this would be limited to the universalist 'thin' version of the virtue, meaning that a role model would still be required to furnish this perception with role and context sensitive 'thick' and 'thicker' incarnations of it19. In light of this, whilst I agree that role models *represent* rather than *constitute* virtue, and that the aim is to emulate the represented ideal, my reconstructive neo-Aristotelian position requires a role model as a facilitator. Furthermore, I add that two interrelated factors affect the strength with which an ideal is perceived: the first concerns the degree to which the role model represents these ideals, which will vary according to their virtuous character development; and second the extent to which the represented ideal is perceived to be of relevance to the moral learner, which will largely depend on the perceived relatability of the role model. In Chapter 4. these considerations will contribute to my argument that more 'ordinary', i.e., relatable and attainable, role models best inspire emulation.

Before I move on to a defence of the formal cause of emulation, I will further motivate my focus on the perception and thus emulation of ideals, rather than the direct role model. In essence, a common objection to role modelling concerns conflating emulation with mere imitation: commonly been problematised as the idea that, in holding up *persons* as models of virtue, moral learners will be tempted to uncritically imitate or copy them, regardless of flaws, resulting in blind hero-worship (Kristjánsson, 2006a, p. 41; 2020b, p. 139; Sanderse, 2013, p. 36; Vos, 2018, p. 6). If moral learners are conditioned to literally imitate a role model, they may well become 'like a role model' and be motivated to replicate how they react and behave (Sanderse, 2013, p. 36); however, they will fail to gain the knowledge and understanding of how this relates to their own sense of self and therefore fail to truly become moral. Therefore,

---

19 Later in this section I will provide a more thorough defence of this exemplar-ideal relationship and further distance myself from the Platonic 'pure ideal' view. For this reason, I shall resist expounding my argument further here.

to impart in moral learners the importance of 'becoming like what the role model exemplifies', rather than their carbon copy, it is important to distinguish imitation from emulation (ibid.). In essence, imitation is primarily of the *person* themselves, whereas emulation concerns the *ideals* that a person represents (Kristjánsson, 2020b, p. 141). This issue has been creatively reconceptualised by Kristjánsson through Plato's *Euthyphro* dilemma (2006a, p. 41). Here Socrates asks, 'is the holy loved by the gods because it is holy, or is it holy because it is loved?' (Plato, 2017, p. 55). Socrates sides with the first horn, that the gods appeal to an objective standard which they acknowledge as good, indicating that goodness is not relative to the gods. In a similar way, to overcome the issue of imitation, moral learners must recognise that role models represent rather than constitute virtue, and whilst inspiring, are subordinate to the ideals of virtue.

Yet, if the emulation of ideals is the aim, one may question whether role models are superfluous? Why not remove the middleman and direct moral educational efforts towards the ideals themselves? In response, Pieter Vos contends that in order to emulate what role models exemplify a concrete moral exemplar is needed to enable moral learners to perceive ideals, thus indicating that appeal to abstract moral truths alone is not a sufficient stimulus (2018, p. 7). This point supports my previous argument in favour of the perception of ideals as the efficient cause of emulation and further corresponds to Kristjánsson's claim that whist pedagogically becoming virtuous requires the emulation of role models, virtues are justifiable independently of them (Kristjánsson, 2006a, p. 47). Taking this into account, I maintain that role models act as a bridge between the ideal and the real[20]: they facilitate a thin understanding of ideals as objective standards of virtue; a thick understanding of how these relate to roles; and a thicker

---

[20] Whether this bridge is necessary remains a matter of debate. Whilst I am not ruling out the possibility that all virtue cultivation requires a role model as a facilitator, convincingly arguing for this deserves considerable attention, which lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

understanding of how role-specific virtues relate to particular cultures, contexts and complexities, and through doing so eventually enable learners to cultivate their own moral self. Importantly, because perception is logically prior to understanding, this cognitive process begins with the perception of these ideals, hence perception as the efficient cause of emulation. As perceiving the role model's virtues as representative of a moral ideal causes the evaluative thought that the ideal is morally valuable and possible to acquire, I shall now move on to the cognitive element of emulation – the formal cause.

3.6.3. The formal cause: The *phronetically-informed* evaluation that these ideals are worthy of emulation and possible to acquire

The formal cause can perhaps be considered, along with the final cause, the most important explanation of moral virtue, primarily due to its association with *phronesis*. Explaining why requires first appealing to Aristotle, before expounding the formal cause as *phronetically-informed* evaluative thought (cognition). Indeed, in the *Metaphysics* Aristotle conceptualises the formal cause as 'the form' that distinguishes one thing from another and acts as a paradigm for something becoming that thing (1044a32–4). For virtuous emotions, Kristjánsson reconstructs this as their 'intentional object', which is specifically to do with evaluative thought, i.e., cognition (2018, pp. 8-13). In the case of pity, for example, it entails the 'cognised deserved misfortune of another person' (ibid., p. 15). This corresponds to Aristotle's cognised theory of emotions, which entails 'feeling one's thoughts and thinking one's feelings' (2006a, p. 43). In light of this, Kristjánsson proposes that an evaluative thought develops and interprets the initial perception (the efficient cause) (2018, p. 12). Again, this is compatible with Wright et al.'s 'intermediaries': specifically, the social-cognitive processes which enable one to *interpret* the perceived trait relevant stimuli (2020, p. 35). It is also relevantly analogous to the conceptual/cognitive element of Morgan et al.'s multi-component gratitude measure, which

seeks to understand precisely what distinguishes, in their case gratitude, from other similar virtues (2017, p. 181).

While it is decidedly Aristotelian to posit the formal cause as that what gives something its identity conditions, extending this specifically to *cognition* in the case of virtue requires further justification. First recall Fortenbaugh, who maintains that for Aristotle *phronesis* has a dual purpose: to control emotion and follow emotion (2003, p. 238). For clarity, I shall term the element of *phronesis* that works to control[21] emotion P1, and the element that follows emotion P2. Furthermore, as I will argue P2 evolves a virtuous emotion into a virtue, by facilitating virtuous action, I shall reserve expounding this until my discussion of the final cause. As regards P1, this entails that in order for an emotion to be a *virtuous emotion*, it must be subject to *phronetic* reflection (ibid., p. 238). Appealing back to Kristjánsson, this means it must be experienced medially, rather than excessively or deficiently, in terms of: '(a) occasions, (b) objects, (c) people, (d) motive (i.e. goal), and (e) way (i.e. degree)' (2018, p. 20). In addition to being medial, a virtuous emotion is a dispositional trait (ibid., p. 22) - contrast someone who frequently and consistently evaluates what they perceive medially, say in response to witnessing an injustice, to a fleeting one-off episode of doing so. Ultimately, P1 provides the cognition necessary for emotions to be morally relevant, and in doing so enables us to be accountable and responsible for them. Is the link between *phronesis*, emotion control and identity conditions clear? In short, *phronesis* (P1) constitutes evaluative thought, which 'controls' an emotion in the sense that it enables it to be experienced medially, whilst also illuminating it as a distinct type of virtuous emotion, thus providing its identity conditions. In terms of the latter, this is associated with the intentional object, which is unique to each virtuous

---

21 In the sense of infusing emotion with reason, somewhat like poaching a pear in red wine. Perhaps this would be better termed 'emotion regulation' as Kristjánsson et al. do, than 'control', to avoid the misunderstanding that non-cognitive emotions are policed or suppressed by cognition, as is often proposed in psychology (2021, p. 246). To remain true to Fortenbaugh, I will, however, stick to his terminology for now, whilst remembering that, for Aristotle, there is no dichotomy between reason and emotion.

emotion. For example, Kristjánsson suggests that shame entails ‘cognised disgracefulness of one’s own (re)action’, and jealousy the ‘cognised undeservingness of the relative favouring of a rival’ (ibid., p. 186).

On the assumption that the formal cause of virtuous emotion, and thus virtue, can be reasonably conceptualised as cognition, i.e., P1 informed evaluative thought, I will now consider what this means for the virtue of emulation. Stimulated by the efficient cause, the perception of the exemplar’s virtues as representative of a moral ideal, I argue that the formal cause involves the evaluation that these ideals are worthy of emulation and possible to acquire. This is in line with Aristotle’s definition of emulation in the *Rhetoric,* which concerns ‘good things that are highly valuable and are possible’ (2001, p. 75). It is also directly inspired by Kristjánsson’s account of the cognitive element of emulation: one must understand why the virtue displayed by the role model is morally worthy of being valued, before considering what reasonable steps are required to acquire it for oneself (2006a, p. 45). Acknowledging these influences, I aim to extend and deepen the cognitive aspect of emulation by specifically aligning it with *phronesis* (P1).

Now reimagined as the formal cause, I propose that P1 first works to identify the intentional object of emulation, which is best understood as the *cognised worthiness of role-model represented ideals*. By ‘worthy’ I mean morally worthy, which in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics entails recognising that the ideal contributes to flourishing, or *eudaimonia*. In identifying this intentional object, P1 defines the paradigm of emulation, thus distinguishing it from, for example, favourable but non-moral characteristics a role model might represent. From this cognition, flows a second round of P1 concerning reflection upon whether and how these represented ideals can be acquired given one’s capabilities. That P1 identifies the represented ideals as *possible* to acquire is an important caveat, since it is at this point that one might fail to be emulous if the ideals are deemed to be beyond one’s reach. This echoes Aristotle’s claim

that nobody aspires to things they consider impossible (2001, p. 75). Also known as the issue of moral inertia, unattainable ideals can disempower the learner and result in moral paralysis (e.g. see Kristjánsson, 2020b, p. 139; Swanton, 2003, p. 212). I propose that this problem is specifically linked to the formal cause of emulation and further that it can be mitigated by the prior perception that the role model is relatable – a point to which I shall eventually return in Chapter 4.

We now arrive at a specious paradox. First consider how emulation is a virtue of the young, or the continent (self-controlled), but not of the fully-virtuous, since the latter have no need for emulation having already cultivated *phronesis* which enables them to autonomously deduce the virtuous response in any given situation. However, if the purpose of emulation is to facilitate virtuous character development in the young or continent, and *phronesis* is required for this to take place, as the those cited have not yet developed full *phronesis,* they cannot emulate, thus negating the purpose of emulation. Indeed, the idea that moral goodness 'in the strict sense' requires practical wisdom (*phronesis*), and practical wisdom requires moral virtue, is reinforced by Aristotle at numerous junctures in his writing (e.g. see NE 1144b30-23). In absence of *phronesis,* appealing to emulation as a method of virtue development may therefore appear misguided. To this claim I have two rejoinders. The first is the *entangled phronesis rejoinder*, which involves proposing the role model as a substitute for *phronesis*, thus enabling the learner – by virtue of association – to be emulous. This echoes Kristjánsson's point that an Aristotelian account of reason assumes different forms depending on our developmental level (2021a, p. 5). Initially we share in the reason of our role models (pre-*phronesis*), then progress to reasoning with them (developing-*phronesis*), before finally we independently apply *phronesis* (ibid.).

Going further, I propose the *varieties of entangled phronesis rejoinder,* which concerns how emulation operates in different ways depending on one's degree of *phronetic*

development. I suggest that illuminating the emulative process requires dividing it into two types: 'habituated emulation' and 'complete emulation' – a point which I substantiate in light of current research from developmental psychology in Chapter 5. At this point in the thesis, however, what I will say is that habituated emulation is pre-phronetic and guided by the role model's *phronesis*, whilst complete emulation is informed by the learner's own *developing phronesis*. However, given the Aristotelian truism that pre-phronetic, i.e. non-rational, habituation is insufficient for full-virtue, since virtue entails one is in a certain - *phronetically-informed* – state (NE 1105a30-32; 1144a17-21; see also Kristjánsson, 2021a, p. 6), one may question the extent to which, particularly habituated, emulation can be considered virtuous. I argue that the role model's substituted *phronesis* means that habituated emulation can be considered virtuous in a very weak and indirect sense22. The virtuosity of complete emulation is slightly more complicated, partly because once *phronesis* is fully developed, emulation becomes superfluous, since *fully-developed phronesis* enables a person to autonomously practice virtue, rather than doing so via the emulation of role models. In light of this, and going beyond Aristotle's own texts, I propose that 'true' emulation should be understood as a virtue which, unlike other virtues, requires only *developing*, rather than *fully-developed phronesis*, because of its entangled association with the role model's *phronesis*. This point also entails that the moral virtue of emulation is essentially educational, and as such prior to all other moral virtues. Ultimately, in my dual account of emulation, habituated emulation evolves into complete emulation as *phronesis* develops. Whilst I realise this is, so far, unchartered territory for emulation, as mentioned, the precise moral psychological account of this two-phase process

---

22 This somewhat echoes Steutel and Spiecker's position that the word virtuous can be used in a 'thick' or 'thin' sense (2004, p. 536). The former is more substantial as the action must 'spring from the choices and dispositional make up that are typical of a virtuous person'; whereas the latter simply 'registers the fact that the action is right…or the thing to be done under the circumstances' (ibid.). The weak use aligns with habituated emulation.

will be expounded in Chapter 5. Presently, I thus request the reader's patience with this deliberately brief mention as I return the focus to the four causes.

3.6.4. The material cause: Physically feeling the distress and admiration, associated with one's lack of the desired quality, i.e., the role-model-represented ideal, which induces the motivational state of inspiration

So far, I have argued that the formal cause of virtue is cognition, i.e., P1 informed evaluative thought, which for emulation concerns the evaluation that role-model-represented ideals are worthy of emulation and possible to acquire. Temporally, in this account of the four causes of virtue, the formal cause informs the material cause, which I shall now explain. Ultimately, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* specifies the material cause to be 'that out of which' something comes to exist (1044a32–4). For natural changes, such as self-movement, he claims that this is the body, since the body is the physiological substratum that undergoes the change (ibid., 1044b7–20). Justifiably, for the natural change of intentional action, Reece proposes agents' bodies as the material cause (2019, p. 214). Whilst I acknowledge the integral physicality of the material cause, virtuous action is more complicated and cannot be adequately explained purely by agents' bodies. To add further nuance, it is thus instructive to also appeal to the material cause of virtuous emotion. Importantly, despite the overarching cognitive emphasis, Aristotle saw emotion, to use Kristjánsson's terms, as 'necessarily embodied and concretized in the flesh' (2018, p. 15). Aristotle's material cause of emotion is thus rooted in our physiological substratum, yet rather than mere 'bodies', specifically concerns feelings associated with pain or pleasure (2001, p. 55). Mapping onto this, Kristjánsson has proposed the material cause of virtuous emotion to be the 'physiological valence' – the tangible experience of pleasant or

painful physical feelings (2018, p. 13). For example, gratitude is *overall*[23] more pleasant than painful, whereas shame is more painful than pleasant. This account entails that the physical feelings associated with each virtuous emotion are necessarily caused by the prior formal cause (evaluative thought), a point which further entails that Aristotle should be interpreted neither as a pure cognitivist (e.g. see Nussbaum, 2001), nor a pure sensationalist, when it comes to emotion (e.g. see Fortenbaugh, 2002, p. 12). These physical feelings arise, differ and are medially felt in the right ways, then, primarily because of the influence of *phronetically-informed* thought: the formal cause.

Turning our attention to emulation, in line with Aristotle (2001, p. 75), one may posit that whilst overall it is classified as negatively valenced, it is also largely mixed. Recall Kristjánsson's explanation that 'the pain in emulation, at one's inferiority vis-à-vis an admired exemplar, is partly offset by one's pleasure in cherishing the admired qualities of the exemplar' (2018, p. 12). More specifically, he suggests that this pain is experienced as *distress* that the role model has characteristics which one lacks, in addition to *admiration* for these characteristics, which gives rise to the desire to cultivate these characteristics in oneself (2018, p. 47). The pain of distress is thus tempered by the possibility of a cure (see Frede, 1996, p. 269). If we understand this distress as a kind of benign, rather than malicious, envy, there is some, admittedly non-moral, empirical evidence to support that this motivates one to improve by emulating a role model, in particular those that are perceived to be relatable (Van de Ven et al., 2011). An additional neuroscientific study established that admiration, specifically for virtue, also inspired and motivated 'a strong desire to lead better lives and to accomplish noble deeds' (Immordino-Yang and Sylvan, 2010, p. 112). Interestingly, this motivational state was

---

23 The 'overall' caveat is important since it reflects my sympathy with the aforementioned mixed valence assumption (Frede, 1996). In addition, the idea of physiological valence endorsed here must be distinguished from contemporary psychological accounts. The latter, in categorising emotions as either positively or negatively valenced, negates the possibility of internal 'mixing' within the same emotion; whereas, for the neo-Aristotelian account, that potentially all emotions are *also* mixed is a central factor (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 13).

found to be experienced viscerally (i.e., in the 'gut'), and cognitive in origin, leading the authors to assert a 'dynamic interrelation' between the mind and body which motivates both thought and action (ibid.). Taken together, I suggest that these studies could provide preliminary support that this combination of positive (admiration) and negative (distress) feeling are powerfully motivational, and influenced cognitively by the formal cause.

Before I delve deeper into the intricacies of motivation, particularly as concerns its link to *phronesis*, it is important to further define what I understand by 'distress' and 'admiration'. Couched in Aristotelian terms, the pain of emulation is felt 'not because others have these goods, but because we have not got them ourselves' – an evaluation which equates to the feeling of distress (2001, p. 75). Importantly, whilst painful, this distress is not felt at the expense of the emulated role model, and is thus, according to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, 'a good feeling felt by good persons', as opposed to envy which conversely is 'a bad feeling felt by bad persons' (ibid.). In addition, I interpret admiration, which Aristotle considers the opposite of contempt (ibid., p. 76), to be distinctly pleasurable and elicited by the appreciation of moral excellence as represented by the role model – a feeling which is ultimately motivational. In light of this, I propose that the material cause of emulation can be summarised to concern *physically feeling* the distress *and* admiration, associated with one's lack of the desired quality, i.e., the role-model-represented ideal.

That this understanding involves two distinct but interrelated *feelings* is important, since it helps overcome a criticism levelled at Aristotle by Zagzebski (2015, pp. 210-211). She objects that Aristotle was mistaken to combine within *zēlos* (emulation) two different emotions concerning (a) the pejorative conception of oneself given the role model's relative excellence *and* (b) the positive conception of the role model, combined with the striving to become like them. Zagzebski adds that Aristotle confusedly calls both these *emotions* 'emulation', when in her view it is predominantly the latter, the positive emotion of 'admiration', that leads to

emulation (2015, p. 210). In this sense, Zagzebski focuses almost entirely on admiration, which she takes to be an emotion, in an attempt to explain emulation, another emotion (e.g. see 2017, pp. 135-139). In response, I defend Aristotle by arguing that Zagzebski overinflates the role of admiration in emulation and suggest this is primarily because she miscategorises admiration as an emotion, rather than, as I do, a physiological feeling[24]. Notably, Aristotle does not call distress nor admiration an emotion in the *Rhetoric*, perhaps because he wanted to avoid the logically problematic implications of trying to grapple with the concept of emotions within emotions, leading to further emotions. In contrast to Zagzebski's position which champions admiration as (a) an emotion and (b) the sole cause of emulation, I therefore propose that admiration is better understood as an important, but comparatively minor part of emulation – it being a physiological feeling associated with just the material cause. Going further, my argument that emulation is a virtue allows me to accommodate the feelings of distress *and* admiration within the material cause, without needing to elevate them to the realm of separate emotions (which on this componential account would then also require an efficient, formal and material cause) – a position which has Occam's razor on its side. Of course, I have argued that Aristotle is guilty of a category mistake when defining emulation merely as an emotion, rather than a virtue, which could partly account for Zagzebski's overemphasis on admiration. Despite this, I maintain that this was, in essence, a mistake, that his account of emulation is largely sound, and that he was thus correct to claim it is *overall* negatively valenced, but mixed. In short, as Zagzebski's focus on admiration does not sufficiently explain the mechanisms integral to the virtue of emulation, I feel justified in giving her position such a short airing here.

Delving deeper into the material cause, one must now assess the extent to which it is compatible with other componential accounts of virtue. I suggest that the material cause, as

---

24 Zagzebski's overemphasis on admiration has also been critiqued by other scholars including Irwin, 2015, p. 247, Kaftanski, 2022; Vaccarezza and Niccoli, 2019, p. 333.

described, can be meaningfully integrated with Wright et al.'s 'intermediates', the social-cognitive systems that process trait-relevant stimuli and produce trait-appropriate responses (2020, p. 36). Indeed, according to Whole Trait Theory (WTT), the model of character traits which Wright et al. endorse, social-cognitive systems can be organised into five sub-types: interpretative, motivational, stability-inducing, temporal, and random processes (ibid., p. 43). The first two, the interpretive and motivational, comprise the 'core' intermediates, which prompts me to include them in this four-causal account of virtue. As the formal cause, P1 informed evaluative thought, can reasonably be considered to comprise the interpretative element, I suggest that the motivational aspect applies to the material cause. This seems compatible because WTT claims that all personality traits, of which they argue virtuous character traits are a subset[25], necessitate activating the motivational system (ibid., p. 47). This motivational system is associated with 'desired and feared trait-relevant end-states', the desires, values and goals which WTT claims creates the 'directional impetus for trait manifestation' (ibid.), something that sounds relevantly similar to the motivational state which I will argue is partly induced by the material cause. Furthermore, if I can demonstrate that the physiological valence of an emotion is motivational, then it is also possible to integrate this account with Morgan et al.'s attitudinal (including motivational) element of the multi-component gratitude measure (2017), thus imbuing the four causes of virtue with further empirical credibility.

Now turning to the challenging task of explaining how the material cause includes the motivational state of inspiration, which when integrated with *phronesis* (P2), will help negotiate the transition to the final cause: virtuous action. Psychologists Thrash et al.

---

25 As mentioned in the Introduction, Whole Trait Theory obliterates the distinction between personality traits and character traits by subsuming the latter into the former – a move which is criticised by Fowers et al. (2023). Whilst at the moment, I am tending towards the Fowers et al. interpretation, this does not negate the point I make here, since it is likely that – aside from the subsumption debate – character traits are still activate the motivational system, because they are still 'trait like' in many ways.

persuasively argue that inspiration is a motivational state involving, amongst other things, approach motivation, which concerns feeling 'compelled to bring one's new idea or vision into fruition' (2014, p. 497). This is similar to the neuroscientific account of motivation which is 'a state that appears to involve the body and the mind in a dynamic interaction that produces alertness, arousal, and a profound readiness to engage in meaningful action' (Immordino-Yang and Sylvan, 2010, p. 114). I suggest that the cumulative effect of the efficient, formal and material cause ultimately leads to the motivational state of inspiration. Temporally speaking, as this state arises at the end of the material cause, I shall restate the material cause of emulation as *physically feeling* the distress *and* admiration, associated with one's lack of the desired quality, i.e., the role-model-represented ideal, which induces the motivational state of inspiration. Yet there is more to it than this. Recall how Aristotle states that the 'origin of action…is choice', and that the origin of choice is 'desire and reasoning with a view to an end' (*NE* 1139a31-32). Until now, I have largely glossed over this significant point. This was a deliberate move, since I seek to argue that the motivational state of inspiration which arises largely as a result of the physiological feelings associated with the material cause, effectively amounts to Aristotelian 'desire'. Importantly, as these feelings are themselves *phronetically-informed* by the formal cause, the desire which results is 'raciocinative' (1139b5), meaning that it is informed by practical wisdom. Now, if the efficient, formal and material cause constitute virtuous emotion, and desire/inspiration emerges as a result of this, then having the right desire reflects having a virtuous emotional disposition. This is important since, to use Kristjánsson's explanation, it 'enables the occurrent emotion to be reason-receptive, and so, friendly to wise deliberations that will issue in moral judgement and action' (2021a, p. 10). Right desire can therefore be taken to reflect a correct 'moral state' (1139a34), thus distinguishing non-rational habituated desires from rational *phronetically-informed* ones. As for the other element which motivates choice, 'reasoning with a view to an end', I will argue

that this constitutes the element of *phronesis* that 'follows' emotion, by evolving a virtuous emotion into a virtue, thereby facilitating the choice of a particular virtuous action. Whilst temporally this process works to synthesise the material with the final cause, I shall explain it within the final cause.

3.6.5. The final cause: Virtuous action concerning ends – putting the role-model-represented ideal of virtue into practice

Before explaining the final cause as virtuous action, it is necessary for me to expound how inspiration (desire) and action are connected. Doing so requires championing *phronesis,* specifically the element of it which 'follows emotion' by facilitating means-end deliberation about virtuous choice (see Fortenbaugh, 2003, p. 238), as the rational process which bridges the gap between raciocinative desire and virtuous activity. To add clarity, I will first outline how Aristotle's account of virtuous action can be systematised with my account of the four causes of virtue, before adding further conceptual and methodological contours. In essence, for Aristotle:

Desire + Reason = Choice* → Virtuous Action *also conceptualised as 'decision'

Which corresponds to:

(Efficient/Formal/Material Cause) Inspiration + *Phronetic* Reasoning = Choice → Final Cause

Put another way:

(Perception/Thought/Feeling) Desire + *Phronetic* Reasoning = Choice → Virtuous Action

And finally:

(Virtuous Emotions + *Phronetic* Reasoning = Choice → Virtuous Action) = Virtue

Explaining *phronesis* as the mechanism which links the efficient, formal and material cause, i.e., virtuous emotion, to the final cause, virtuous action, is important, since it helps overcome a key issue in moral psychology and moral education: the knowledge-action gap. In

short, this concerns how knowing the good does not necessarily entail doing the good (Darnell et al., 2019; see also Blasi, 1980). Applied to virtue ethics, as *virtuous emotions* have a cognitive component, this entails they are reason-responsive, thus committing virtue ethicists to a form of soft-rationalism[26], which constitutes a form of moral knowledge. One could, at this point, simply suggest that the motivational factor of virtuous emotions is enough to overcome the knowledge-action gap, thus linking, in our case, virtuous emotions to virtuous action. However, whilst there is some empirical evidence to suggest that moral emotions do play a motivational role in moral behaviour, this influence is at best small to moderate (Malti and Krettenauer, 2013). I therefore concede that virtuous emotions (comprising the efficient, formal and final cause) do motivate inspiration/desire, but maintain that this is not enough to facilitate virtuous action. In light of this, I follow Darnell et al. in suggesting that virtuous emotions alone cannot provide a sufficient answer to the 'gappiness problem' and support *phronesis* as a motivational solution (2019, p. 20). Aristotle seems also to be aware of this issue, which he similarly overcomes through appeal to *phronesis*. Whilst he claims that 'intellect alone moves nothing', he qualifies this by adding 'only the intellect which aims at an end and is practical' (*NE* 1139a35-7). What this means is that practical intellect, i.e., *phronesis*, can move one to action which supports its ability to synthesise the material cause (physical feelings/inspiration) with the final cause (virtuous action). This is partly because *phronesis* concerns reasoning about the contingent sphere of human action, one in which things can be otherwise, or as Aristotle puts it 'variable things' (1139a9). At its core, *phronesis* can thus be

---

26 Soft moral rationalism, as a theory of moral epistemology, is committed to the position that both reason and emotion have a place in ethics, in the sense that emotions are reason-infused and thus a proper part of moral functioning (see Kristjánsson, 2018, pp. 34-5). This contrasts to hard moral rationalism, a position best exemplified by Plato, which posits that reason alone is capable of deducing moral facts – emotions are considered intrinsically irrational (ibid.).

taken to concern practical deliberation about actions, which results in choices to *do* these actions.

Expounding the precise way in which *phronesis* is motivationally action-guiding requires appealing to a neo-Aristotelian, rather than a strictly Aristotelian, account of *phronesis* – in particular that proposed by Darnell et al. (2019), developed by Kristjánsson et al. (2021) and further extended by Kristjánsson and Fowers (2024). In short, they define *phronesis* as 'an intellectual meta-virtue of holistic, integrative, contextual, practical reflection and adjudication about moral issues, leading to moral action' (Kristjánsson et al., 2021, pp. 240-241). It is virtuous because it concerns excellence in ethical deliberation and choice-making. These choices are made in line with Aristotle's doctrine of the golden mean, which entails they are medial, rather than excessive or deficient extremes (*NE* 1107a1-7). For example, emulation is not the excess of copying every characteristic of the role model in a clone-like manner, nor the failure to notice the role model as worthy of emulation, but medially emulating the ideals represented by them in way that is sensitive to roles and context. *Phronesis* is also a meta-virtue because it involves meta-cognitively considering the prescriptions of various moral virtues, particularly when they conflict, to reach an all-things-considered decision regarding which gains priority (Darnell et al., 2019, p. 39; Kristjánsson et al., 2021, p. 241; Schwartz and Sharpe, 2010, p. 21). Further, this metacognition entails that those who have cultivated *phronesis* consider and analyse virtuous emotions and actions in light of their respective 'wisdom, desirability and harmony' (Kristjánsson et al., 2021, p. 241). Rather than being purely a philosophical construct, this model of *phronesis* also appeals to a psychological audience because it can be operationalised into its component functions. These are fourfold and comprise: (1) the constitutive function, which enables the *phronimos,* or aspiring *phronimos,* to 'perceive the ethically salient aspects of a situation and to appreciate these as calling for specific kinds of responses'; (2) the integrative function, which primarily adjudicates between

conflicting virtues in morally dilemmic situations by either synchronising two virtues or by giving one priority; (3) the blueprint function, which comprises a person's overall understanding of what it means to flourish; and (4) the emotion regulation function, which, as previously explained, controls emotion by 'infusing it with reason' thus enabling it to be reason-responsive (ibid., pp. 246-247; see also Kristjánsson and Fowers, 2024, Ch. 2.).

For present purposes, this componential division is instructive because it enables us to more precisely illuminate *phronesis*' motivational potency. As I have previously argued that (1) and (4) are the aspects of *phronesis* that predominantly concern virtuous emotion (which as a part of virtue is motivational but insufficiently so), I shall focus my attention mainly on (2) and (3), in order to better understand how these aspects can provide a substantial motivation for action. First, following Kristjánsson et al., I agree that the 'immediate motivation' to act is derived from the underlying moral virtue deduced by *phronesis* to be the medially required choice in a specific context – a process largely linked to the integrative function, and party also the constitutive (ibid., p. 245). Here a specific virtue works to guide action in a particular way – for example, if honesty is deduced to be the appropriate response, this necessitates that one acts to tell the truth. Second, I agree that an agent's blueprint of the good life provides an internal, albeit more general and background, motivation to act – which evidently links to the blueprint function (ibid.). Importantly, the motivational force of this blueprint necessitates that *phronesis* also involves understanding and aiming at ends, a point which Aristotle emphasises numerous times (e.g. *NE* 1139a31-36, 1140a23-30). More precisely, the focus on ends entails that the moral agent has a blueprint of the good life, *eudaimonia*, to which deliberation must contribute. Darnell et al. propose that this blueprint causes *phronetic* persons to adapt their moral identity in accordance with it, thus imbuing *phronesis* with further motivational strength (2019, p. 35). They qualify this by adding that the blueprint, which both informs and is informed by *phronesis*, need not equate to the grand ends envisaged by philosophers (a position

represented by Kraut, 1993, p. 361), and is better understood as encompassing ends that are accessible to the 'ordinary well brought up individual and reflected in ordinary acts' (Darnell et al., 2019, p. 35). On this account, 'excellence' thus consists in deliberation about the mean that is in accordance with our blueprint of the good life, something which seems intrinsically imbued with motivational and prescriptive force. Having made reasonable the suggestion that *phronesis* can overcome the thought-action gap, I shall now progress to the final cause.

Based on the assumption that *phronesis* unifies the efficient, formal and material with the final cause, it is now time to attend to the latter. I shall begin by outlining the final cause itself, before relating it to virtue, and finally the virtue of emulation. In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle postulates that the final cause is that 'for the sake of which' something comes about (1044a32–4), indicating that it unambiguously concerns ends. For virtuous emotions, Kristjánsson reconceptualises this as their 'goal directed activity', which he understands to be a 'behavioural suggestion' (2018, p. 8) – a term borrowed from Knuuttila (2004, p, 31). Given my previous argument that virtues, unlike virtuous emotions, as a matter of necessity entail activity, I propose that the final cause of virtue is explicitly behavioural: virtuous action. This position gains empirical support from similar componential accounts of virtue. For example, Wright et al.'s 'outputs' – 'the production of situation-specific virtue-appropriate behaviours' (2020, p. 8) – strongly correlates with the final cause as virtuous action in that they consider outputs to be the culmination of trait manifestation and necessarily behavioural (ibid., p. 55). Similarly analogous is the behavioural aspect of Morgan et al.'s multi-component gratitude measure, however, it should be noted that what these authors count as behaviour is somewhat broader27 than that which might be encompassed by my account of the final cause (2017, p. 181).

---

27 For example, Morgan et al. include here noticing and reflecting on (in their case) gratitude, in addition to expressions of gratitude, whereas my position is more aligned with the latter (2017, p. 181). Noticing and

In order to more closely integrate my position with Aristotle, I add that the final cause, virtuous action, is (1) the product of *phronetic* means-end deliberation, (2) an end in itself and (3) further aims at and contributes to the 'final' end of *eudaimonia*. Each of these end-related clauses require further nuance. Regarding (1), let me start by drawing attention to Aristotle's claim that 'the work of man is achieved only in accordance with practical wisdom as well as with moral virtue; for virtue makes the goal correct and practical wisdom makes what leads to it correct' (*NE* 1144a6-9). I interpret 'work' as virtuous activity, and consider *phronesis* necessary for both deducing, prescribing and facilitating the goal, i.e., the medial action or choice. In addition, regarding (2), it is clear that Aristotle intends that virtuous action perfects *phronetic* means-end deliberation by actualising it, thus making the 'goal correct' (ibid.) or, synonymously, the 'choice right' (1144a20). This supports a further claim made by Aristotle, that 'good action is itself an end' (1140b7), indicating that it is intrinsically rather than instrumentally good. However, there is another level to this talk of goals or ends which I am yet to expound, which concerns (3). Indeed, Aristotle begins Book 1 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* by highlighting how 'all human activities aim at some good: some goods subordinate to others' (1094a). This hints to a hierarchy of ends, and thus a final end to which all goods aim (1097a25-35). In light of this, whilst virtuous actions are ends in themselves, the *final end* to which these virtuous actions aim at and contribute to is *eudaimonia* (ibid.). Understood as flourishing, or objective well-being, it is 'activity in accordance with virtue', or more specifically, the 'highest virtue' (1177a13-15). Given my previous support of Darnell et al.'s argument that a more accessible conception of the good life, a blueprint, is sufficient as a goal[28], I too suggest that

---

reflecting might be encompassed within a virtuous emotion, but would not sufficiently comprise the final cause of virtue.

28 I am aware of Snow et al.'s (2021) objection to Darnell et al.'s (2019) blueprint proposal which argues that even this is too demanding as an end vision. Their reasons are twofold: first, they claim it does not allow a role for *phronesis* for those without a fully developed blueprint; second, they wish it to be applicable also to those who have not been 'raised well' – those who have developed vices yet nonetheless later acquire virtue by reflecting on the sort of person they wish to be (Snow et al., 2021, pp. 73-75). These are valid concerns, to which I have two

virtuous action contributes to and ought to align with this. Taking these interrelated aspects of ends into account, I shall thus extend my definition of the final cause of virtue to be: *virtuous action concerning ends*.

Applied to the final cause of emulation, I will now suggest that *virtuous action concerning ends* involves: *putting the role-model-represented ideal of virtue into practice*. Indeed, despite Aristotle's arguably incorrect classification of emulation as merely an emotion, which I maintain excludes virtuous action, the idea that emulation does indeed entail action is perhaps the most intuitive aspect of this multi-component account. Zagzebski, for example, understands emulation as 'a form of behaviour' (2015, p. 210), yet in doing so limits its scope to merely this. Whilst I agree that emulation must include behaviour, I argue that embracing emulation as a virtue in its own right is a conceptually and methodologically richer endeavour, because it enables us to dedicate just the final cause to virtuous activity. Importantly, this activity, as emphasised above, must be *phronetically-informed* and concern ends, yet because the moral learner, by definition, has not fully developed their *phronesis*, in emulation this will take a unique form. As before in the formal cause, I term this *entangled phronesis* – something which enables the learner to share in the *phronesis* of the role model and thus also their blueprint of the good life. Indeed, the possibility of sharing in the practical wisdom of another corresponds to the neo-Aristotelian model of *phronetic* decision-making, which further supports how one can act on the reasoning of another (e.g. see Kristjánsson, 2021a, p. 8). For habituated emulation, I suggest that the role model's *phronesis* directly substitutes the

---

rejoinders. First, if we accept my entangled *phronesis* proposal, then we can argue that *phronetic* reflection is accessible even to those whose *phronesis* is developing, through association with the role model's blueprint. Second, I suggest that developing from a place of incontinence (vice) to continence (self-control) by reflecting on who they 'want to become' (ibid. p. 75) is made possible by the role model's *entangled* phronesis, and thus their blueprint of the good life, because it can inspire a learner to adjust their moral self accordingly. I thus consider the reduction of the blueprint to 'reflections on one's life as a whole' (ibid., p. 73) a superfluous neo-Aristotelian concession. For additional rejoinders to the blueprint objection see Annas (2011, p. 110) and Kristjánsson (2015, pp. 100-101). However, it is beyond our present scope to explore this further.

learner's, which entails the role model must be present when the action is done. If the learner is eating Maltesers for example, the role model could encourage her to share them, explain why, and praise her for it, thus jointly engaging in the act of generosity. This reflects Steutel and Spiecker's position that guidance and coaching from *phronetically* developed tutors enables a child to act as virtue requires, even before their own *phronesis* has developed (2004, p. 536). As regards complete emulation, I suggest that as *phronesis* begins to develop the learner shares in the reasoning of the role model by applying it in the same context with the role model present. This time the role model might exercise generosity by donating to the Red Cross' Ukraine Crisis Appeal, which then inspires the learner to do so too. As the learner's *phronesis* evolves further, it becomes less entangled with the role model's, which enables the learner to exercise it more independently and in slightly broader contexts. In this case, the role model's generous gift to the Red Cross inspires the learner to consider other ways they might help, such as donating warm clothes and, importantly, to do it! Eventually, in the course of moral development, *phronesis* will disentangle to such an extent to enable the learner to apply it independently, thus marking the transition from, in this case, the emulation of generosity to the true virtue of generosity.

An important implication of entangled *phronesis* concerns how it enables the learner to also share the role model's blueprint of the good life and adjust their behaviour to accord with it. Indeed, without such a blueprint, the virtuous actions embodied by the final cause would be unable to 'aim at ends' at all, thus negating a fundamental component of *phronesis.* Actualising the good life, or at least coming closer to its ideal, therefore requires that a blueprint is already in place (Kristjánsson, 2021a, p. 7). For habituated emulation, I suggest that this blueprint is adopted non-deliberately by learners – largely through behavioural conditioning by the role model; whereas complete emulation is more deliberate as leaners become increasingly aware of how the role-model-represented ideals fit into the bigger picture of the good life –

eudaimonia. The role model's *phronesis* therefore entangles to promote *both* virtuous action and to convey a blueprint. This further adds to the notion of the role model as a prime mover, in that they facilitate the learner's journey from moral potentiality to actuality, partly through their motivational vision of the good life to which virtuous action contributes. This vision similarly motivates the learner to adjust their behaviour to correspond to this blueprint, and as a result they begin to develop their own moral identity. In essence, the role model's blueprint enables the learner's virtuous actions to aim at and contribute to the 'final end' of *eudaimonia* – an essential element of Aristotelian virtue.

Given the complexity of this reconstructed four-causal account of emulation, at the close of this section, it is worth reflecting on the extent to which it represents a novel contribution to the literature. As such, I shall highlight four insights which significantly advance the current discourse. First, the robust conceptual foundation – of emulation as a moral virtue – upon which this argument is built ultimately provides me with a unique framework with which to extend the debate on the precise methodology of emulation. Second, synthesising what is empirically known about the quadripartite nature of virtue, and thus the virtue of emulation, with Aristotle's four causes has made visible the causal nature of this process and imbued it with explanatory power. Third, understanding better the motivational forces at work in emulation enables me to account for how it might operate during different developmental phases, something which has been alluded to in the literature (e.g., see Burnyeat, 1980), but rarely analysed in this depth or in the language of emulation specifically. Finally, the introduction of the concept of 'entangled *phronesis*'[29] serves to highlight the centrality of

---

29 Going further, it should be noted that my concept of entangled *phronesis* bears some resemblance to philosopher Bryan Warnick's proposal that role modelling is a form of rational moral communication, whereby the role model grants the learner 'epistemic access' into the ideals they exemplify, in order to help cultivate their 'normative future self' (2008, p. 36). This access involves the role model acting as a specific point of reference for a virtuous ideal, such as generosity, in order to convey what this entails to the learner (ibid.). Warnick contends that exposing learners to a role model's moral reasoning enables them to develop their own moral reasoning (ibid., p. 124), a process which serves to initiate them into the moral community of which they are part (ibid., p. 125).

phronesis to the emulative process – in order to be a role model, and thus the subject of emulation, an individual is required to have cultivated a sufficient degree of *phronesis*, which when entangled stimulates both the practice of virtue and cultivation of *phronesis* in the novice. Admittedly, this implication was left implicit, as I will shortly add more detailed contours to the necessity of *phronesis* to role modelling in Chapter 4 and the process of entangled *phronesis* in both habituated emulation and complete emulation in Chapter 5. Taking these insights into account, then, in plain English, my argument has demystified what emulation is and what it potentially involves.

Conclusion

This chapter delineated a reconstructed four-causal account of emulation as a moral virtue and, through doing so, added methodological clarity and philosophical depth to the understanding of how role models stimulate moral virtue and *phronesis* development. I argued that (complete) emulation should be understood to comprise the following elements, illustrated in Figure 2:

In this sense, emulation (or in his terms, 'imitation') is a collective endeavour which takes place within and through 'communities of learning' (ibid., p. 105). It is important for the moral development of the individual *and* for the moral community, because it helps to construct and regulate their way of seeing (ibid.). Applied to my argument, this extends the concept of entangled *phronesis* by illuminating it as a form of rational moral communication between the learner and role model, where epistemic access takes the form of sharing the latter's practical wisdom and blueprint of the good life. Furthermore, emphasising how this process takes place within communities makes visible the context sensitive nature of emulation – role models facilitate an understanding of virtuous ideals, but do so in a way which is attuned to particular situations.

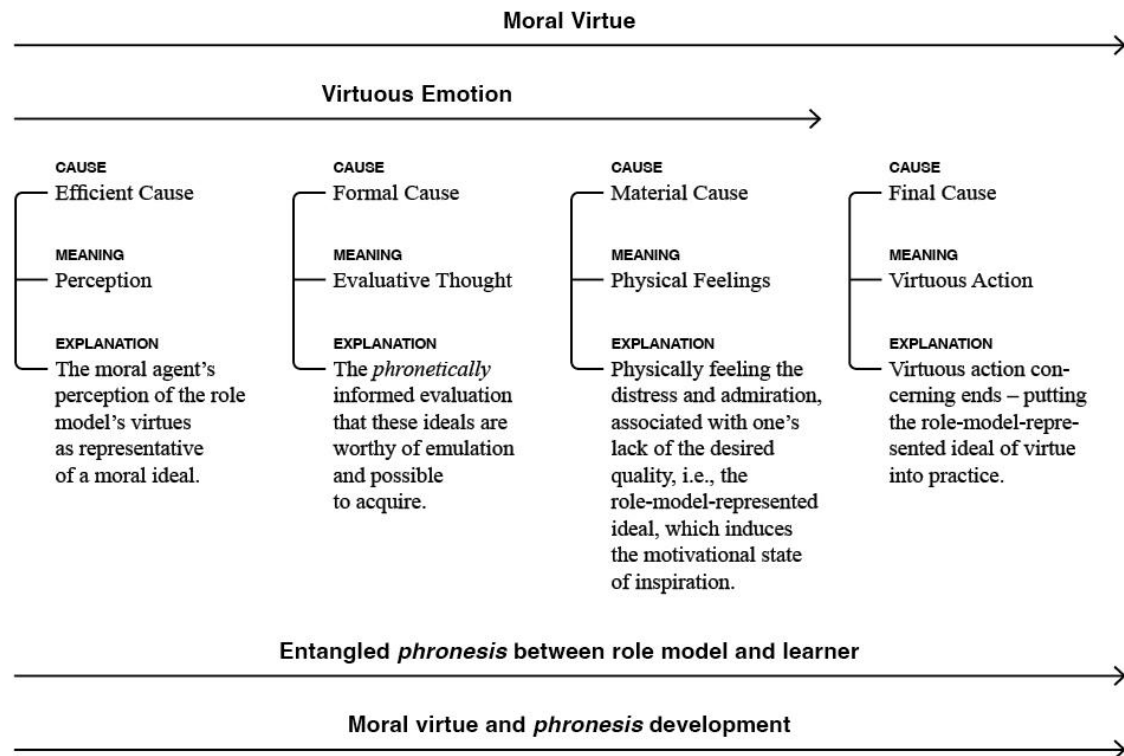

Figure 2. The four causes of (complete) emulation

Expounding this process involved introducing three original concepts. Entangled *phronesis*: the moral-psychological mechanism which drives emulation by enabling a role model to rationally communicate with a learner in developmentally sensitive ways; habituated emulation: a form of emulation in which the role model's *phronesis* directly supports very elementary learners in the practice of 'virtue' even before their *phronesis* has begun to develop; and complete emulation: a form of emulation where the role model's *phronesis* and the learner's emerging *phronesis* combine to stimulate virtuous action. Reconstructing Aristotle's four causes and applying them to the virtue of emulation has a number of benefits. It clarifies how emulation can be *phronetically-informed* and aim at ends whilst the learner's practical wisdom is developing. It also highlights the normative salience of role models by making visible how emulation, as an inherently educational virtue, is required for the acquisition of other moral virtues. Further, in acknowledging elements from both Zagzebski's account of

admiration and Kristjánsson's account of elevation, I provided a simpler and arguably more operationalisable account of emulation *qua* role modelling. Finally, as establishing the four causes of emulation necessitates first expounding the four causes of virtue, my account enables us to better comprehend how virtue comes about in a way that can be considered both sympathetic to Aristotle's metaphysics and an extension of contemporary neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. As a final takeaway, I suggest that together the four causes, as described, can be considered individually necessary and collectively sufficient for adding explanatory adequacy to the virtue of emulation.

Before I add moral psychological contours regarding the two-step process of habituated and complete emulation in Chapter 5, I will now progress to Chapter 4 where I draw out the implications of entangled *phronesis* for the type of role model best suited to facilitating emulation in immature learners.

CHAPTER 4: A RELATIONAL ACCOUNT OF WHY ORDINARY *PHRONIMOI* ROLE MODELS BEST INSPIRE EMULATION

4.1. Introduction

Assuming my argument expounding a reconstructed neo-Aristotelian four-causal account of emulation as a moral virtue is convincing, it is now time to attend to the important consideration of who, precisely, is *best suited* to stimulating emulation. Yet as both parties involved in emulation – namely learners and role models – cover a broad developmental spectrum, it is important to acknowledge the caveat that who counts as *best suited* will differ and evolve according to the former's moral needs. For example, it is no good for an aspiring Grand Prix Level dressage rider to look to their local riding school instructor for guidance, nor will it be particularly helpful for a beginner to look to the 2024 Olympic champion Jessica von Bredow-Werndl – meaning that the instructor's degree of expertise must match the skill of the rider. Likewise, in order to provide a sufficient degree of moral challenge, a role model must be suited to, and adapt with, a learner's degree of virtuous character development – meaning that the role model who is *best suited* to inspiring emulation will change for each individual over time. That said, ideal role models share common features and in this chapter I will attempt to draw them out. Furthermore, given how at all levels emulation is inherently relational in nature (Kindeberg, 2013, p. 100), in that it is a '*communicative* relationship' between the role model and learner (Warnick, 2008, p. 37), I have chosen to frame what follows in explicitly relational terms. Perhaps surprisingly, whilst the relational aspect of emulation has been implicitly alluded to many times in the literature, to my knowledge there have been no attempts to articulate this specifically. To ameliorate this lacuna, I will thus extend my argument in Chapter 3 by examining which type of role model best inspires emulation through the lens of relationality.

Adding nuance to my position first requires clarifying the nature of relational perspectives by dividing them into two camps: causal relationality and constitutive relationality

(Elzinga, 2019, p. 23). Whilst both are kinds of explanation, they are metaphysically distinct the sense that they relate to different types of dependencies (Ylikoski, 2013, p. 277). Causal relationality primarily addresses processes, behaviours and events, for example, if one considers the fragility of a glass, and asks how it became fragile or why it broke, these are both *causal* questions (ibid., p. 281). Constitutive relationality concerns causal capacities or properties, returning to the glass example, if one now questions what makes it fragile, one is clearly referring to the *properties* of the glass which give it the capacity of being fragile (ibid., p. 281). Importantly, whilst causal and constitutive relationality are conceptually and ontologically distinct, they can also be interrelated forms of explanation – a point to which I shall shortly return (ibid., p. 289). Having explained causal and constitutive relationality, I will now outline why the distinction is useful for present purposes.

It is worth noting that whilst applying causal and constitutive *relational* explanations to the context of emulation *qua* role modelling is novel, their use in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics itself is not. Take the well-supported neo-Aristotelian notion that 'virtue traits are conducive to, possibly partially constitutive of, *Eudaimonia*' (Cokelet and Fowers, 2019, p. 20; see also Kristjánsson, 2020b, p. 17; Wright et al., 2020, p. 109). In plain English, this clearly means that virtues lead to (cause) and partly comprise (constitute) *eudaimonia*. Much like Aristotle's notion that what is 'proportionate' both 'produces and increases and preserves' health (2009, *NE* 1104a12-26). In a relevantly similar way, the – in this case social – relationship between role model and learner can be construed in causal and constitutive terms. Indeed, my argument in the previous section implies that collectively the four causes of perception, thought, physical feelings and virtuous activity *cause*, and *partially constitute*, emulation. As regards the causal element, since the relationship between the role model and learner facilitates the four causes of emulation, largely through entangled *phronesis*, this

represents causal relationality[30]. Furthermore, as emulation represents virtuous character development, which is a form of moral progress, i.e., moral change, it can meaningfully be conceptualised in causally relational terms because it represents a process. As regards the constitutive element, as each of the four causes are necessary to emulation, they can be conceptualised as properties which give emulation the causal capacities it has. Yet as I also want to argue that a particular type of role model is best suited to stimulating emulation during different character developmental phases, I suggest that the four causes are only *partially* constitutive of it, with the other *partially* constitutive element arising from specific features of the role model themselves. This brings me to the question: what constitutive features of a role model best inspire emulation?

To begin to answer this question, it is first helpful to outline my argument so far. In essence, I propose that:

A. Collectively the four causes = causally salient for emulation
B. Individually the four causes = partially constitutive of emulation (i.e., individually necessary)
C. Specific features of the role model = partially constitutive of emulation (i.e., individually necessary)

This entails that:

A = sufficient for a causally relational account of emulation
B+C = sufficient for a constitutively relational account of emulation
A+B+C = sufficient for a full relational account of emulation

A full relational account of emulation therefore involves commitment to both the causal salience of the relationship between role model and learner (represented by A); commitment to the conceptual necessity of each of the four causes for emulation (represented by B); and commitment to the conceptual necessity of specific features of the role model for emulation

---

30 Since I have already expounded the intricacies of this argument at length in the previous section, I shall not reiterate it here.

(represented by C)31. In this sense, causal and constitutive forms of explanation are interrelated. Since support for A and B is entailed by my argument in the previous section, I shall not repeat it here, and instead progress to a defence of C, that is, an analysis of which features of the role model are partially constitutive of and, as such, *best* inspire emulation. Notably, my use of *best* here is deliberate, and intended to denote how I am outlining the features which the *ideal* role model will possess, while leaving room for the possibility that other types of role model may also inspire emulation, albeit to a lesser extent.

Using this constitutively relational emphasis as an argumentative springboard, in this chapter I will illuminate why the features usually ascribed to ordinary role models are best suited to stimulating both habituated emulation and complete emulation. To advance my thesis, I suggest that whilst examining extraordinary role models can enhance knowledge about the morally exceptional, ordinary role models better inspire emulation and therefore virtuous character development. More specifically, I will argue that as paragons of ordinary virtue, *phronimoi* who are *at least* moderately *phronetically* developed, and who are 'known' to the learner, are necessary for the process of entangled *phronesis* – the central mechanism in emulation. This entails that entangled *phronesis* be understood as a 'satis concept', meaning that a role model need only be sufficiently virtuous to inspire emulation – an aspiring *phronimos,* rather than a fully virtuous *phronimos* or *megalopsychos.* Drawing upon current research in moral psychology, I also argue that a role model who is *relatable* – meaning similar in cultural or societal background, i.e., related to the specific context of the learner's life – and

31 As there has been little written about relational accounts of role modelling, to equip myself with the conceptual and linguistic repertoire needed to meaningfully articulate my position, I have appealed to the language of relational accounts of other things in which persons are socially embedded. In particular, I draw upon relational accounts of autonomous agency (e.g., see Elzinga, 2019, p. 23; Mackenzie and Stoljar, 2000, p. 22). There are some parallels between the two, for example in both 'agents' identities are formed 'within the context of social relationships' (ibid., p. 4), and both acknowledge how these social relationships can 'impede or enhance' agents' capabilities (ibid., p. 22), albeit for different things – autonomy and virtuous character development. Given the two are broadly analogous, I feel justified in translating the way contextual and constitutive relationality has been used in relational accounts of autonomous agency, to the present context.

accessible – meaning their degree of virtue and blueprint of the good life are possible for the learner – best inspires emulation. It should be noted that whilst the majority of my argument will focus on the role models best suited to inspiring habituated and complete emulation in immature learners (i.e., *non-phronimoi*), in light of the caveat that role model requirements evolve in parallel with one's character development, I also intend to leave room for the possibility that the aforementioned features could lead aspiring but-not-yet-perfect *phronimoi* to be guided by more experienced *phronimoi,* such as the fully virtuous. Potentially, even fully virtuous *phronimoi* could be guided by those closer in virtue to *megalopsychoi* – a point which further entails that complete emulation could extend well into adulthood.

In what follows, I begin by briefly outlining what is understood about extraordinary and ordinary role models based on the empirical and theoretical literature (Section 4.2.). I then expound my own argument in favour of ordinary known aspiring *phronimoi* as ideal role models for the morally immature (Section 4.3.), before responding to possible objections (Section 4.4.). I then make visible how specific features of a role model are partially constitutive of emulation and how these features illuminate different types of role model as *best suited* to emulation during different developmental phases (Section 4.5.). Staying true to this thesis' naturalistic underpinnings, it is also worth noting that this relational account will be informed by both normative theory and empirical research32. Which presently entails justifying which type of role model is best suited to emulation though appeal to my four-causal account of emulation as a moral virtue, other relevant theoretical considerations *and* some empirical research in moral psychology (although it is in the next chapter that I full expound the moral psychology of emulation). Of course, I can, and do, deduce much of what follows *a priori* from the previous chapter, yet incorporating empirical concerns encourages me to refine

32 I here direct the reader to this thesis' Introduction where a more thorough exposition of critical applied ethics as a method of theoretical and empirical integration can be found.

and clarify it *in light of available scientific data* to increase its credibility. Having framed my argument in relational terms, outlined my thesis, and highlighted my method, I am now in a position to advance my argument proper – a process which begins with an examination of existing exemplar research.

4.2. Exemplar research in moral psychology

Exemplar research in moral psychology can generally be divided into two camps: one which focuses on extraordinary examples of moral excellence, such as the German climate activist Luisa Neubauer (e.g. see Čehajić-Clancy and Bilewicz, 2021; Colby and Damon, 1992; Fleeson, 2021; Frimer et al., 2012; Han, 2016; Matsuba and Walker, 2004; 2005; Walker and Frimer, 2007); and another which focuses on more ordinary, that is more relatable, accessible and realistic exemplars, such as teachers and parents (e.g. see Gartzia et al., 2021; Han et al., 2017; 2022; Osman, 2019; Rushton, 1975; Rushton and Campbell, 1977; Timmerman, 2009)[33]. Whilst it is beyond this chapter's scope to expound either of the following in any depth, I will also mention the growing interest in the possibility of negative role models to positively influence virtuous character (e.g. see Athanassoulis, 2022, p. 8; Matheson and Archer, 2021), and further how one can admire non-moral role models, such as football players (e.g. see Bush et al., 2004; Lockwood and Kunda, 1997) or celebrities more generally (e.g. see Archer and Sie, 2022).

The exceptional as exemplars

33 I should add that as the majority of the insights are derived from moral personality research in moral psychology, the distinction between 'pro-social' and 'moral', as previously noted, can be somewhat blurred. That said, as moral personality is considered by some to be the 'modern psychological reincarnation of moral character and virtue' (Matsuba and Walker, 2005, p. 277), such research remains highly relevant to this thesis.

As regards exceptional exemplars, they are considered role models due their extraordinarily ethical lives or for singular noble actions (Miller, 2017, p. 199). One such example is Suzie Valadez who, aged 66, ‘spends her days handing out sandwiches and building medical clinics for families that forage in the nearby garbage dump’ in Juarez, Mexico (Colby and Damon, 1992, p. xi) – actions which put her firmly in the extraordinary camp. As it is instructive to understand more about role models through an exploration of the morally exceptional, I will now draw attention to a number of central findings from the empirical literature. Generally speaking, these studies first work to identify participants to interview by deriving a criteria for ethical excellence; either through consultation with ‘experts’ such as moral philosophers and moral psychologists (e.g. see Colby and Damon, 1992, p. 313; Wright et al., 2020, p. 112); or by appealing to a broader ‘folk’ conception of morality, for example by asking ‘lay’ directors of social organisations to nominate employees who had shown ‘extraordinary moral excellence’ (e.g. see Matsuba and Walker, 2005, p. 323), or even on the basis of awards won for moral virtues (e.g. see Walker and Frimer, 2007). For example, the seminal study by Colby and Damon (1992) found that exemplars consistently acted according to their moral convictions because of their strong sense of *moral identity*, meaning that they perceived themselves as moral people *and* moral exemplars, with their moral beliefs and actions consciously forming a central part of their character. Another study found that, compared to comparison individuals, the personality of young adult moral exemplars (18-30 year-olds) was more advanced in moral reasoning and the formulation of their adult identity, more agreeable and more willing to forge close relationships (Matsuba and Walker, 2004, pp. 426-430). Additional studies also found that exceptional exemplars are more likely to report secure childhood attachments, identify helpers rather than enemies in their early lives, overcome

challenges and have a greater sense of moral agency – thus suggesting that these characteristics may be central features of moral personality (Walker and Frimer, 2007, p. 854).

Further insights into the morally exceptional can be gathered from moral psychologist Will Fleeson, who cites factors such as: high-level, universalised moral reasoning; coming from healthy families who promote universalist values; personality traits such as empathy, a sense of adventure and identification with humanity; and supportive leadership as important indicators of moral excellence (Fleeson, 2021). In addition, he draws attention to another compelling factor: that these exceptional people more evenly balance self-serving and other-serving motivations, compared to less exceptional individuals who tend to either prioritise self-serving needs, or overdo other-serving needs at the expense of their own well-being (ibid.). In plain English, what this means is that, for the morally exceptional, their concern for the needs of others has become 'deep and strong enough' to interact with an almost equally 'deep and strong' concern for their own needs, to the mutual benefit of both (ibid.)[34]. In the context of moral motivation, it is therefore clear that whilst complete self-sacrifice for the needs of others may at first sight appear virtuous, due to issues such as burn-out, excessive risk taking, and unsustainability, it may no better lead to moral improvement than a life of self-indulgence. Whilst by no means exhaustive, the findings cited make visible what is unique about the moral personalities of the morally exceptional and I will explore whether more ordinary exemplars share some of these features in the empirical element of this thesis (Chapter 7).

The ordinary as exemplars

---

34 This emphasis on balance can persuasively be taken to reflect the importance of the medial in virtue ethics (e.g., see Aristotle *NE* 1106b36-1107a1).

Now to a brief examination of the empirical and theoretical literature regarding ordinary exemplars – ultimately an instructive move which will later facilitate my argument in favour of them as cultivators of habituated and complete emulation. Indeed, recent empirical findings support how *specific features* of exemplars and their associated actions inspire others to emulation. For example, a study by Han et al. (2022) demonstrated that feelings of moral inspiration35 in undergraduate students increased the more *relatable*, i.e., similar, an exemplar's cultural or social background was, and the more *accessible*, i.e., possible, their actions were perceived to be. Their most significant finding concerned *relatability* as the factor most likely to inspire prosocial emotions and behaviour associated with volunteering or donating to charity (ibid., p. 21). However, as this research specifically compared the direct use of stories of 'everyday' and 'exceptional' exemplars (ibid., p. 4), their results do not show that a more indirect strategy using physically present role models would have the same effect, but does serve to highlight the broad importance of relatability and accessibility to role modelling. Inversely, a different study found that the grand moral deeds of extraordinary figures in history, such as Nelson Mandela or Marie Curie, whilst admirable, are unlikely to be considered relatable or attainable (Frimer et al., 2012). In addition, numerous large scale studies highlight how people from a young person's36 own 'social neighbourhood' (Bucher, 1998, p. 21), i.e., parents, grandparents, siblings and teachers, are most likely to be considered role models37, largely because they are more relatable (e.g. see ibid., Yancey et al., 2002, p. 58; 2011, p. 38), emotionally close (Johnson et al., 2016, pp. 133-134), or considered 'worthy enough to be emulated' (Bucher, 1998, pp. 620-21; see also Yancey et al., 2011). Whilst not

---

35 Understood as feeling 'uplifted', 'moved', 'optimistic about humanity', wanting to 'help', 'be a better person' etc. (Han et al., 2022, p5).

36 Broadly, 10–18 year olds.

37 It should be noted that some of these studies do not explicitly focus on moral role models, but more those who young people 'look up to' more generally. That said, as my present purpose is to illuminate relatability and contextual relevance as an important motivational factor in role modelling, citing this research remans important.

intended to be an exhaustive assessment, the insights derived from the aforementioned research can be taken to support the ordinary as role models.

The idea that ordinary role models enable us to engage with the moral 'phenomenology of our ordinary life' (Chappell, 2013, p. 168), i.e., how ordinary moral life is experienced, has also been met with enthusiasm in more theoretically-minded literature (e.g. see Athanassoulis, 2022; Stangl, 2020; Vos, 2018). Vos, for example, posits that the method of role modelling is pedagogically relevant *if and only if* those exemplified reflect the ambiguities and complexities of a full life (Vos, 2018, p. 18). He suggests that 'attainable and relevant'38, i.e., ordinary, exemplarism is largely a case of 'embodying the virtues needed to realise the internal goods' related to a specific professional or social *role*, like a teacher or parent (ibid., p. 23). Since these ordinary exemplars are 'experientially available' we are able to encounter the virtues they represent, and through emulation, eventually acquire them for ourselves. Citing examples from theology, he also adds that 'saints' are not to be conceived of as 'examples *for us'*, because the gap between them and the ordinary is considered too vast to inspire emulation (ibid., p. 20). Exceptional exemplars, the moral saints and heroes from history and literature, are thus so because they exceed what is demanded, in virtue ethical terms, from their roles (ibid.). They place a demand on our 'ideal' rather than our 'ordinary' moral selves and become 'existential exemplars' by illuminating new perspectives and deeper meanings regarding 'what it is to be a human being and to be a human being with and for others' (ibid.). I have much sympathy with Vos' overall conception of role and existential exemplarity. Not only does it align well with my previous emphasis on role moralities in Chapter 2, but also serves to highlight how ordinary role models are best suited to facilitating 'thick' and 'thicker' understandings of

38 By which, though his appeal to Han et al. (2017), Vos likely means possible and feasible for their degree of moral development (attainable) and similar in background or context (relevant) – although in both papers these adjectives are underdefined.

virtue, because they are related to our own specific situations. By definition, they are intrinsically engaged with, and entangled in, the context of the learner, which is particularly helpful for learning to be virtuous in that context, i.e., the context of ordinary life. That said, given the breadth of the developmental spectrum, Vos' position could be strengthened by acknowledging how the degree of virtuosity exemplified by exceptional saints and heroes may well be attainable and relevant enough to inspire emulation in those much closer in virtue, such as aspiring *phronimoi* who still have some character building to do, or even full *phronimoi* who seek to become more like the *megalopsychoi*. *For them*, even if not *for us,* using exceptional role models to understand how to exceed what is ordinarily demanded of a role may be indeed be helpful, even if *non-phronimoi* moral learners are better served by more ordinary exemplarity.

4.3. Ordinary *phronimoi* as role models

I will now build a bridge between our discussion of the extraordinary and ordinary by revisiting two Aristotelian examples of moral excellence: *megalopsychoi* and *phronimoi*. Beginning with the former, Howard Curzer can be credited with reviving interest in the meta-virtue of *megalopsychia*, which is understood as 'greatness of soul' or magnanimity (1990, p. 517). As previously mentioned, Aristotle considers the *megalopsychoi* as paragons of 'superhuman virtue' (*NE* 1145a18-26) and great honour (1123b26-29), who devote their lives to spectacular philanthropic deeds. Importantly, Curzer emphasises how the *megalopsychoi*, in addition to their greatness of virtue, also possess great self-knowledge, in that they understand their own degree of virtuosity and how they are 'worthy of great things' (1990, p. 520). This seems to align with some of the findings regarding exceptional exemplars mentioned above. However, the idea of divine or superhuman virtue, as supported by Curzer and Aristotle, has been

challenged by Kristjánsson who suggests that the *megalopsychoi's* virtue is better understood as a non-divine but high level *phronetic* virtue - one which remains super-virtuous, but at the same time distinctly human (Vasalou, 2019, p. 278). If this reading holds, this brings the *megalopsychoi* more closely in line with our understanding of exceptional exemplars, who exemplify virtue and are usually blessed with at least a degree of moral luck[39]. Yet if this is the case, ought one also to draw a comparison between ordinary exemplars and *phronimoi*? In short, yes. In what follows, I will add nuance to this response by making clear how the degree of virtuosity exhibited by many *phronimoi* is sufficiently ordinary to be of educational interest in the context of habituated and complete emulation and, through doing so, illuminate the constitutive features which make them ideal role models. Yet since the character developmental spectrum is notoriously broad, it is intended that these features will pick out different *phronimoi* as 'ideal' depending on individual needs. In this subsection, however, I will predominately focus on the ideal role models of immature learners, i.e., *non-phronimoi,* although my argument can be extended to more mature learners too.

To recap, then, in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics a *phronimos* is a person with the 'moral perception, moral imagination, affective sensibilities, moral judgement and practical know-how that make up virtue' (Athanassoulis, 2022, p. 2). Aristotle considers their right reason to be partly constitutive of virtue (*NE* 1106b35), which has been interpreted as his endorsement of the *phronimos* as a role model (Athanassoulis, 2022, p. 3), which has further led others to advocate for the *phronimos* as a role model (e.g. Annas, 2011; Hursthouse, 1999). The virtuosity exemplified by the *phronimoi* can be considered ordinary because it is a product of an ordinary well-brought-up life and cultivated in the context of ordinary life (Hursthouse,

39 I do not mean to imply that exceptional moral exemplars are *megalopsychoi,* since this would entail the latter are compelled to be *perfectly* virtuous without exception and be *constantly* on the look-out for opportunities to develop their virtues, leaving them little time for anything else. The comparison is, however, intended to illuminate how morally demanding and unique it is to be an exceptional exemplar.

2006, p. 308; Foot, 1978, p. 6). Whilst some people may progress to the level of heroic virtue, such as the *megalopsychoi,* a *phronimos* is simply a person with *phronesis*-infused (i.e., reason-infused) virtues – with the right moral education, cultivating this reason is a real developmental possibility for most people. In light of this, whilst there may be more novice or more advanced *phronimoi*, ultimately their virtuous emotions and actions are a product of, and related to, ordinary life (Curzer, 2005).

As I shall soon argue for a particular kind of *phronimos* as the role model best suited to facilitating emulation in the morally immature, it is now instructive to briefly distinguish between three different types of ordinary role model based broadly on Aristotle. These are either (a) distant, in the sense that they are virtuous characters from literature, film or the news; (b) known to the emulator as someone whom they look up to – for example, an experienced teacher could be a role model for a more novice teacher; or (c) known to the emulator but as an 'equal character friend' – for example, said novice teacher might seek to emulate *one or two* traits from another similarly novice teacher, such as the way in which they foster fairness in the classroom and, likewise, this emulated teacher might seek to emulate her peer in other ways (Kristjánsson, 2022b, ch.5)[40]. Given my focus is to argue for the features of a role model which make them *best suited* to facilitating habituated and complete emulation, and further my argument, in Chapter 3, that entangled *phronesis* requires a physically present role model, I shall discount (a) on the grounds of distance. As regards the known, and thus experientially available, options it is perhaps self-evident that (c) can be of no use in habituated emulation since the 'equal' caveat would mean both they and the learner were engaged in this early process of *pre-phronetic* virtue development, which negates the possibility of their *phronesis*

---

[40] I am also aware that other possible sources of moral inspiration exist in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, such as unequal character friends (e.g., see Hoyos-Valdés, 2018; Kristjánsson, 2020a) and mentors (e.g., see Nakamura and Condren, 2018; Pennanen et al., 2020; Shaw, 2021). However, since my focus in this thesis is to unpack the mechanisms involved in habituated and complete emulation, my scope is limited to those I deem most suitable for facilitating this in the specific context of neo-Aristotelian character education.

entangling (since they do not yet have it) – a process essential to emulation. That said, I concede that (c) could partially influence complete emulation, but maintain that this would not constitute a '*role* model' since the traits available for emulation will be limited.

Let me explain my reasoning more thoroughly. If we understand that the concept of a *role* model entails that a person has cultivated numerous virtues relevant to their specific societal and/or social role, *and* that cultivating virtues requires *phronesis*, then it follows that a role model who has cultivated numerous virtues, must also have *phronesis*. However, since habituated emulation is pre-phronetic, this entails that the *phronesis* of a more experienced role model is required to substitute the learner's lack of *phronesis*. This means that if an equal character friend is also in a pre-phronetic phase of virtuous character development, they do not yet have *phronesis* and as a result cannot act as a role model in habituated emulation. That said, if an equal character friend is beginning to develop their *phronetic* capabilities, it is possible they may be skilled at particular components of *phronesis,* such as emotion regulation, and correspondingly may have cultivated elements of particular virtues. In theory, this means one equal character friend might provide some moral guidance to another equal character friend who is it yet to cultivate this aspect of *phronesis*, and as a result may partly contribute to complete emulation. However, as the limits of their *phronetic* development will place limits on the extent of this guidance, they can neither be considered a full role model, nor an ideal role model. In essence, then, equal character friends may be skilled at particular components of *phronesis*, but are possibly too elementary to deserve the title of *phronimos* yet. Conversely, since the degree of moral expertise encompassed by (b) implies that they have cultivated numerous role-relevant virtues and thus all aspects of *phronesis*, they must be *phronimoi*. I shall therefore focus my argument on (b) – ordinary known *phronimoi* – as the ideal role models for emulation. Even more specifically, I will suggest that the constitutive features of known *aspiring phronimoi*, rather than known *full phronimoi,* best enable *phronesis* to entangle

in immature learners. By *aspiring phronimoi,* I mean those who are moderately *phronetically* developed. By immature learners, I mean very elementary learners engaged in *pre-phronetic* habituated emulation, to those learners whose *phronesis* is developing and who are engaged in complete emulation and about to cross the *phronimoi* threshold.

Known aspiring phronimoi as ideal role models for the morally immature

In the spirit of a constitutively relational account, my argument in favour of known aspiring *phronimoi* as ideal role models for immature moral learners works by uncovering which features give them the causal capacity to inspire emulation. Corresponding to my componential account of emulation as a virtue, i.e., the four causes, this argument is also fourfold.

I begin with the efficient cause – the moral agent's perception of the exemplar's virtues as representative of a moral ideal. Ultimately, to be perceived in the first place, I propose that the efficient cause requires a physically present role model, which entails that the role model must, quite literally, be experientially available, i.e., 'known', to the learner[41]. I further suggest that the strength of this perception is affected by two interrelated factors: the degree to which the exemplar represents these ideals and the extent to which the represented ideal is relatable to the learner. I argue that whilst it is important that the virtuous ideal is represented enough to be perceived, it is also important that these ideals are relatable, which I understand as meaning that they relate to the specific context of the learner's life. Since an immature learner is in a

---

41 It may be objected that simply presenting a role model to learners on a television screen, perhaps through a film or documentary, could satisfy this perceptual element of emulation, thus undermining the importance of the 'known' criteria. In response, I highlight how an ideal role model will be perceived as relatable to the learner, which is more likely if they exist within the specific context of their life. A documentary about the undeniably exceptional life of Nelson Mandela, for example, whilst scoring high on the degree to which virtuous ideals are represented, will lack perceptual clout due to the acute difference in context. Further, even if it were possible to find a contextually relevant 'distant' source of inspiration, the relatability element will still be more likely 'in situ', which again supports my argument that 'known' *phronimoi* are *best suited* to emulation.

fairly elementary stage of virtue development, perfectly represented virtue will likely be perceived to be unrelatable. Conversely, a known aspiring *phronimos,* who is representative of a sufficient degree of virtue and situated in the learner's context, will likely be perceived as most relatable.

As for the formal cause, the *phronetically-informed* evaluation that role-model-represented ideals are worthy of emulation and possible to acquire, here the learner must ultimately *think* that the represented ideals ought to be emulated which again entails that the role model must embody a sufficient degree of virtue. At the same time, the learner must not consider these ideals to be inaccessible, in the sense of being impossible or out of reach, to them, since this could have a demotivating effect. This cognition ultimately influences the material cause, *physically feeling* the distress *and* admiration associated with one's lack of the desired quality, i.e., the role-model-represented ideal. Since the material cause partly motivates the move to the final cause, I propose that these feelings must also be felt to a required degree in order to be effective - an imbalance of either may disenchant the learner or lead to hero worship. Eliciting a *phronetically-informed*, and thus medial, degree of each feeling is again most probable by models of accessible virtue – known aspiring *phronimoi* – since the degree of virtue they exemplify is sufficient to cause distress but not enough to cause infatuation. These specific *phronimoi* are also important in the final cause of emulation, virtuous action concerning ends, for two reasons. First because their entangled *phronesis* facilitates the move from virtuous emotion (the efficient, formal and material cause) to virtuous action (the final cause), which necessitates that the virtuous actions aspiring *phronimoi* do are accessible, i.e., possible, for the learner. Second because they must enable the learner to share in their blueprint of the good life, i.e., ends, which further requires that their conception of flourishing is relatable and accessible to ordinary individuals and concerned with ordinary life. To summarise, then, the four causes of emulation entail that role models who are physically present (known), who

have cultivated a sufficient degree of *phronesis*, and who represent relatable and accessible virtue, are best suited to emulation – constitutive features which distinguish known aspiring *phronimoi* as ideal role models for morally immature *non-phronimoi*.

Before considering possible objections to my argument, it is important to draw the reader's attention to why the central mechanism underpinning my four-causal account of the virtue of emulation, entangled *phronesis,* requires *at least*[42] known aspiring *phronimoi* as role models. Indeed, as argued for in Chapter 3, emulation consists of two phases and works differently according to one's degree of *phronetic* development. I suggest that a sufficiently-virtuous, understood as a sufficiently *phronetically* developed role model, is necessary for both habituated and complete emulation. In early-years habituated emulation, the *phronesis* of a physically present and sufficiently-virtuous role model reasons for the learner, largely by encouraging or discouraging them to be virtuous or vicious. Whilst in complete emulation, the *phronesis* of the sufficiently-virtuous role model more actively entangles with the learner's developing *phronesis* to enable them to perceive, think, feel and act virtuously in relevantly similar contexts. I propose that in both cases the *phronetic* ability of the role model must be enough to enable *phronesis* to entangle, what I call the 'sufficiency caveat', while also remaining at a degree which is accessible to, in this case, immature moral learners. Entangled *phronesis* can therefore be understood as a 'satis-concept', meaning that a role model need only be sufficiently virtuous to inspire habituated and complete emulation. When considering *phronimoi* on a scale from moderately virtuous to fully virtuous, my argument ought thus to make visible why the former are better role models for the morally immature, while leaving room for the possibility that more advanced *phronimoi* could be role models for aspiring

42 I specify 'at least' because whilst the degree of virtue represented by aspiring *phronimoi* is attainable for the morally immature, my argument can also be extended to the morally mature, where attainable virtue will be represented by more advanced *phronimoi*.

phronimoi. Having clarified my line of argument, it is now time to consider possible objections to it.

4.4. Objections to *phronimoi* as role models

A primary challenge to my position favouring aspiring, moderately virtuous, *phronimoi* as ideal role models, derives from the work of philosopher Nafiska Athanassoulis (2022), who champions the less-than-virtuous, i.e., those lacking in *phronesis*, as more effective role models. In essence, she suggests that two objections befall the idea of the *phronimos* as an exemplar (ibid., pp. 3-7). First, is the 'perspective objection' which depicts the *phronimos* as an unsuitable exemplar because their privileged fully-virtuous perspective is inaccessible to the learner, in terms of being neither shared nor understood, which negates the possibility of them perceiving a situation as morally relevant when the role model does (ibid., p. 4). Put another way, because a *phronimos* has the discriminative ability to hone in on only the salient features of a situation, but does not need to actively deliberate about each possible option, this process is particularly opaque to the learner who will need time to perceive and deduce what is or is not morally relevant (ibid.). In response, I propose that this objection rests on a misconception of the *phronimoi* as *always* fully virtuous, a retort which limits its argumentative force to full *phronimoi*, but fails to damage my position supporting aspiring, and thus moderately virtuous, *phronimoi* as role models. I concede that *if* a role model is fully virtuous, *then* sharing and understanding their perspective may be challenging for an immature moral learner, for whom it would be better to learn from someone representing a more attainable degree of virtue. However, as becoming a *phronimoi* is developmental in nature, their virtuosity emits of nuance, which enables me to defend aspiring *phronimoi* as accessible, and thus ideal role models.

Second is Athanassoulis' 'context objection', which essentially concerns how the experiences and challenges faced by an immature moral learner contrast so significantly to those of the perfectly virtuous *phronimos,* that the latter cannot act as a moral guide (ibid., p. 5). Using the *phronimoi* to help navigate the ordinary moral trials and tribulations faced by the learner is therefore not possible, since the *phronimoi,* being mature moral agents, simply do not encounter these issues (ibid.). Building on the success of my previous rejoinder which supports how the virtuosity of *phronimoi* can differ in degree, it is clear that Athanassoulis' objection again rests on two misconceptions – that all *phronimoi* are fully virtuous and that they are somehow detached from ordinary life. Whilst I ultimately agree that relatable role models will be more effective, I again disagree that this excludes all *phronimoi*. More precisely, if one understands the *phronimoi* as paragons of ordinary virtue, as I do, one can maintain that their virtue has been cultivated in a similarly ordinary manner which enables moral learners to relate to them. Aspiring *phronimoi* who still have some character building to do ought thus to be considered ideal role models for a learner. On a related point, since a central aim of neo-Aristotelian character education is to cultivate *phronimoi*, is it necessary that the role models of these very elementary budding *phronimoi* also have *phronesis,* in order for it to entangle. Unfortunately for Athanassoulis' argument, this excludes those who do not meet the threshold for *phronetic* development, such as the continent or incontinent.

Despite this, as a response to her objections, Athanassoulis proposes the less-than-virtuous as role models (2022, p. 7). Extending Aristotle's famous analogy of an arrow hitting a target in archery, which is used to convey how virtue must similarly hit the mark (e.g. *NE* 1094a23-4), she argues that arrows that aim at but fall short of the centre, i.e., perfect virtue, are nonetheless 'entirely appropriate pedagogic role models' (Athanassoulis, 2022, p. 7). Numerous possible 'character states on the road to virtue' are cited, including continent

agents[43], incontinent agents[44] and agents who have learnt from their mistakes (ibid., pp. 7-8). As regards the continent, the main focus of her argument, she proposes that they:

> …might not do the right thing perfectly, as they are fighting against contrary desires but they win the fight, so they are still a good example of kind, courageous, liberal, truthful, or temperate actions. At the same time, the continent's reasoning process into action is not easy and effortless and is more likely to be similar to the difficulties the student of virtue faces (ibid, p. 8).

Whilst I am sympathetic to Athanassoulis' hostility towards the *perfectly* virtuous as role models for the morally immature, I strongly object to her list of less-than-virtuous possibilities for moral improvement. Consequently, I shall now propose three of my own objections to her position.

Objections to the less-than-virtuous as role models

My first objection can be termed the 'lack of *phronesis* objection', which questions how a role model might inculcate virtue in a learner if they themselves are not virtuous. Recall Aristotle's insistence that *phronesis* is necessary for virtue (*NE* 1144b30-32), and further how one must be in a certain – *phronetially* informed – state for an action to count as virtuous (1139a34). The action alone, detached from the proceeding state of virtuous emotion, is not enough. For example, even if a continent agent performs a courageous *action*, as it is a product of self-control, and therefore not motivated by correct, i.e., *phronetically-informed* , perception, thought and feeling, it is not virtuous. Moreover, as developing *phronesis* is essential for developing virtue, a role model with a sufficient degree of *phronesis* is required to facilitate

---

43 The self-controlled (possessing *enkrateia*). She knows what she ought to do and typically does it, but acts '*contrary* to her desires' (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 92). This contrasts to the fully-virtuous, who acts in harmony with what she desires to do (ibid.). Hence, virtuous acts are pleasant 'to the lover of virtue' (Aristotle, *NE* 1099a12).

44 The weak-willed (exhibiting *akrasia*). She knows what she ought to do, but unlike the continent, frequently fails to do it (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 107). Although neither are praiseworthy, the incontinent should not be confused with vicious, since the latter has wrong reasoning, desires and actions (e.g., see Curzer, 1997, p. 23).

this development – their entangled *phronesis* will enable a learner to not only perform virtuous actions, but also cultivate virtuous emotions. Devoid of *phronesis,* the continent ultimately rely on Kantian rules and methods of external reinforcements to keep themselves in check, a process which a young potential *phronimos* ought not emulate. Sure, if the aim is to cultivate continent agents, then a continent agent may offer guidance, but since our aim is more substantial than this – cultivating *phronimoi* – continence cannot be the starting point. In short, the continent cannot be role models primarily because they lack *phronesis*.

Going deeper, my second objection is the 'stage theory objection', which argues that virtue does not progress in stages, i.e., from incontinence, to continence, to virtue, but along different tracks. To illustrate this, I appeal to the neo-Aristotelian model of moral development, as conceptualised by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues[45] (2022, p. 21). On this account, the best option – Plan A – prepares one for a life of virtue from one's early years, largely through good upbringing involving virtuous role models, which enables one to internalise virtuous habits and enjoy being good – the ideal way to become a *phronimos* (ibid.). Becoming continent is thus a Plan B, or what Aristotle calls a 'second-best-tack' (*NE*, 1109a34), for those who perhaps lacked *phronetically-informed* role models early on, but nonetheless encountered some sources of moral inspiration which enabled them, albeit under non-ideal moral conditions, to develop self-control (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p. 21). It is indeed possible to move from continence to virtue, but this is neither usual nor developmentally ideal, since a person who has the relevant upbringing may sidestep continence or incontinence altogether. Assuming this interpretation holds, then not all continent agents are progressing towards *phronesis*, a point which Athanassoulis' endorsement of the less-than-virtuous as role

---

45 As I shall fully explain this model in Chapter 3, for present purposes I mention it only briefly in order to further my objection.

models seems to overlook. Consequently, unless her aim is to cultivate only continent agents, appealing to the continent as role models is developmentally problematic.

My position ought further to be distinguished from Athanassoulis' in terms of how we understand emulation, hence the 'emulation objection'. Indeed, like most other scholars Athanassoulis takes emulation to be an emotion, yet unlike most other scholars attributes this emotion to the morally mature rather than immature. She proposes that this 'virtuous feeling' is elicited by the recognition of full virtue stemming from fully virtuous *phronimoi* (ibid., p. 6). In doing so, she explicitly proposes the *phronimos* to be 'an object of emulation…not a direct model' and an aspirational 'embodiment of virtue' (ibid., pp. 6-7). Importantly, she maintains that (1) only the fully-virtuous provoke the *feeling* of emulation, and (2) that emulation is only *felt* by those who are morally advanced enough to recognise the fully-virtuous as such. In contrast, I suggest that both these points undermine the ability of emulation to methodologically explain how immature moral agents *become* virtuous. More precisely, the *virtue of emulation* as I understand and have argued for it, is explicitly tied to role models, because the virtue of emulation facilitates role modelling. Whilst this might, at first sight, sound like begging the question, I direct readers to Chapter 3, where I demonstrate how is it not. If we now examine Athanassoulis' account of emulation and contrast it with my own, the disparity is striking. Whilst she considers it to be (a) purely an emotion, (b) experienced by the morally mature and (c) elicited only by full *phronimoi.* I propose it to be (d) an explicitly educational virtue (comprising virtuous emotion and virtuous action), (e) experienced predominantly by the morally immature, and (f) elicited initially by aspiring *phronimoi* and only later by more experienced *phronimoi*. Whilst Athanassoulis is certainly on to something important regarding the place of emulation in more advanced phases of virtuous character development, my understanding of how emulation is implicated in role modelling spans a much broader spectrum and, importantly, is nuanced to an individual's moral needs. In light of this,

I consider myself justified in continuing to use emulation to disambiguate the methodology of role modelling in this thesis.

Back to known aspiring phronimoi as role models

As further fodder for my argumentative cannon, I will now demonstrate how focusing on known aspiring *phronimoi* for the purposes of emulation *qua* role modelling can convincingly overcome three classic role modelling issues: hero worship, moral inertia and moral over-stretching[46]. Hero worship concerns how, in blindly idolising role models, they are copied, ‘warts and all’ (Kristjánsson, 2020b, p. 139; Sanderse, 2013, p. 36; Vos, 2018, p. 6); moral inertia how the modelled degree of virtue is perceived to be too demanding and thus disempowering to an increasingly resentful learner (Athanassoulis, 2022, p. 13; Han et al., 2017, p. 2; Kristjánsson, 2020b, p. 139; Monin, 2007; Monin et al., 2008); and moral over-stretching how, in attempting to emulate a role model, a learner aims too high, tries to accomplish what the role model does, yet lacking in moral maturity, encounters obstacles and temptations that the role model overcomes (Kristjánsson, 2020b, p. 139). In response to these issues, I suggest three rejoinders relating to anti-perfectionism, sufficiency and relatability.

The ‘anti-perfectionist rejoinder’ concerns how, by specifically championing *aspiring phronimoi*, I endorse a role model who is, by definition, not *fully* virtuous. This will serve to reduce the likelihood of hero worship and enable learners to emulate the attainable virtues these role models represent - a position which, from the perspective of the role model, also makes the method less demanding. The ‘sufficiency rejoinder’ relates to how, if role models need only

---

46 It should be noted that a lot of the exceptional exemplar empirical literature demonstrates awareness of these issues, yet it is beyond the scope of this section to expound this. Instead, I here aim to demonstrate how convincingly ordinary exemplars overcome these objections, particularly through appeal to my account of emulation.

have a sufficient degree of virtuosity to enable entangled *phronesis,* the virtues they display are accessible, i.e., possible, for the learner to acquire, which in theory will serve to inspire rather than disempower those on the path of character development[47]. This response is supported by empirical studies which demonstrate that extreme, i.e., exceptional exemplars, can trigger pejorative emotional and behavioural responses, because they cause moral learners to feel overwhelmed, inferior, threatened and resentful (Monin, 2007; Monin et al., 2008). Less discrepancy between the virtuosity of ordinary learners and exemplars is thus more likely inspire a learner to action, because their behaviour will be an attainable option (Athanassoulis, 2022, p. 15). This brings me to the 'relatability rejoinder', which in essence supports how, if the path to virtue is beset with challenges, it will be helpful for the immature to learn how to overcome these by emulating someone who has meandered down a relatable path. More specifically, a known role model from a similar context is likely to be best help learners aim at and accomplish a degree of virtue which is possible for them. Taken together, these rejoinders support known aspiring *phronimoi* as ideal role models for the morally immature.

4.5. Features influencing the strength of emulation

Returning to our discussion of constitutive relationality at the beginning of this section, I hope to have made clear that the following specific features of a role model *best* inspire emulation:

- **sufficient degree of *phronesis***: enough *phronesis* to enable entanglement, while remaining nuanced to a learner's degree of virtuous character development;
- **known**: physically present and thus experientially available;
- **relatable:** similar in cultural or societal background, i.e., related to the specific context of the learner's life; and
- **accessible**: how possible a role model's virtues and blueprint of the good life are for the learner.

---

47 Evidently, what is considered possible will depend on an individual's place on the developmental spectrum – with this being different for very elementary learners being inculcated to virtue via habituated emulation and those engaged in complete emulation lying closer to the *phronimoi* threshold.

Notably, the last two constitutive features align with Han's empirical work on exemplars (see Han et al., 2017; Han et al., 2022; Han and Dawson, 2023). However, whilst partly inspired by his work, my account goes beyond it in three central ways. First, it is primarily a product of philosophical argument, an extension of my theory of emulation, rather than purely based on quantitative empirical insights. As such, the conclusions Han comes to empirically, I have come to *largely* theoretically, which could be interpreted as a strength of the account. Second, my account is more encompassing, in that it illustrates how the constitutive features of role models are important for eliciting moral virtue and *phronesis* development, whilst Han's focuses on how stories of exemplars elicit just prosocial emotion. Relatedly, a third distinction is my firm emphasis on *known* role models, those who exist in reality for learners to experience, whilst Han's work employs realistic, yet ultimately fictional, *stories* of exemplars, which on my account have a limited influence on *virtue* development specifically. This brings me to the main distinguishing feature: the salience of *phronesis.* Ultimately, that role models must have at least a sufficient degree of *phronesis* to enable entangled *phronesis* adds considerable explanatory power to *why* role models are potentially able to stimulate emulation. Taking these differences into account, the argument I have presented in this chapter can be taken to extend the understanding of the constitutive features necessary for stimulating emulation.

Indeed, framed in constitutively relational terms, I have argued that these features *most* enhance a role model's capacity to influence emulation. Although I have focused my argument on how these features illuminate ordinary known aspiring *phronimoi* as ideal role models for the morally immature, it is again important to emphasise the caveat that for those in more advanced phases of moral development, these features will illuminate more advanced *phronimoi* as ideal, such as the fully virtuous. Taking aspiring *phronimoi* as an example, even though they have crossed *phronesis* threshold, they still have some character building to do, which entails that they can still engage in an advanced form of complete emulation. As before,

the degree of *phronesis,* and thus virtue, exemplified by their role models will again be *best suited* to stimulating advanced forms of complete emulation if it is accessible. Again, I propose that the strength of emulation will further be enhanced if a role model is also relatable, which is more likely if they are known. In all cases, though, who counts as an immature or a mature learner emits of nuance, and it is important to acknowledge that even within the parameters described, different people will require slightly different 'dance partners'.

Before I conclude, I must give some thought to how other kinds of less ideal role model might also contribute to emulation. So, what explains exceptions from the rule? How might non-ideal role models, such as the distant, still inspire emulation? Is there is place for exceptional role models? In short, I propose that the degree to which a role model embodies each of the features defined above affects the strength of emulation. To be of use to emulation, role models must therefore score highly on at least one factor – for example, a distant exemplar may still inspire emulation *in some way* if they scored highly on other features, such as sufficient degree of *phronesis*, accessibility and relatability. Likewise, an exceptional exemplar may also exert a limited influence on immature learners if they are known and thus related to the context of the learner's life. However, their fully virtuous nature will reduce their ability to be accessible, thus lowering the overall strength of emulation. The picture is somewhat different for a mature learner, such as the immatures' ideal role models the aspiring *phronimoi*. As previously argued, for them an exceptional exemplar may well be an ideal role model, because their degree of *phronetic* development will be closer to theirs and thus accessible. In essence, this means that there is indeed scope for the exceptional as ideal exemplars, if only for those in more advanced phases of virtuous character development.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the constitutive features ascribed to ordinary known aspiring *phronimoi* make them the kind of role model *best suited* to facilitating habituated and complete emulation in the morally immature. Justifying this position required synthesising insights derived from my own four causal account of the virtue of emulation, with content from the empirical and theoretical exemplar literature. Through framing my argument in constitutively relational terms I hope to have convincingly demonstrated how role models who are at least sufficiently *phronetically* developed, known, accessible, and relatable, best inspire emulation. Importantly, I consider these specific features to be partially constitutive of, meaning they are individually necessary for, emulation. As mentioned in the Introduction, combined with the other partially constitutive features – the individually necessary four causes – these components are sufficient for a full constitutively relational account of emulation. As this chapter draws to a close, I am thus in a position to assert that, taken together, the four causes of emulation and the features of the ideal role model are individually necessary and collectively sufficient for emulation. If we further combine this with the previous section's, admittedly implicit, causally relational account of emulation, we arrive at a full relational account of emulation *qua* role modelling. Put another way, I can now propose that the four causes of emulation and the features ascribed to ideal role models, are conductive to and constitutive of emulation. Having at least made reasonable this position, I will now progress to Chapter 5, where I substantiate this emerging theory of emulation with empirical research from experimental moral psychology.

CHAPTER 5: THE MORAL PSYCHOLOGY OF EMULATION

5.1. Introduction

It is not sufficient for a moral developmental theory to be purely a product of philosophical argument. Nor is it sufficient for a moral developmental theory to be untethered from such argument, and purely a product of scientific investigation. To have any interdisciplinary credibility, and potential clout in real-world contexts, a moral developmental theory must therefore satisfy both the requirements of moral philosophers on the one hand and those of moral psychologists on the other – in short, theory must be answerable to empirical evidence. This important maxim is eloquently reflected in Flanagan's metaethical Principle of Minimal Psychological Realism (PMPR), whereby one must ensure that:

> when constructing a moral theory or projecting a moral ideal that the character, decision processing, and behaviour prescribed are possible, or are perceived to be possible, for creatures like us (1991, p. 32).

Taken as a prescription, the PMPR provides a criterion by which to assess whether a moral theory is psychologically realistic (ibid., p. 33), which in actuality entails evaluating the degree to which it accords with developments in empirical fields such as experimental moral psychology and neuroscience. Of course, I hope my character developmental theory of emulation *qua* role modelling goes beyond the minimally possible into the realm of the downright plausible. However, not wanting to appear too bold, let us here be content with appealing to the PMPR as a benchmark, whilst bearing in mind that the aim is ideally something more ambitious. To accommodate this aspiration explicitly, I thus add the qualification 'at least' to the concept of minimal psychological realism when applying it in this chapter. In cultivating a dialogue between normative theory and empirical research I am also embedding the method of critical applied ethics (CAE), arguably the applied ethical counterpart to naturalism, both of which I expounded in the Introduction.

A renowned proponent of naturalism, and arguably the original catalyst for the empirical turn in ethics, Aristotle writes:

> We must therefore survey what we have already said, bringing it to the test of the facts of life, and if it harmonises with the facts we must accept it, but if it clashes with them we must suppose it to be mere theory (2009, *NE* 1179a20-23).

In light of this, in this chapter I appeal to the empirical in order to evaluate and fine-tune my existing philosophical argument concerning the nature of emulation *qua* role modelling. In doing so, I address whether the following hypotheses – derived from the aforementioned argument – satisfy the condition of being *at least* minimally psychologically realistic:

1. Emotions are cognitive, i.e., they are infused with thoughts/reason (*phronesis*)
2. *Phronesis* (practical wisdom) is implicated in both virtuous emotion and action
3. *Phronesis* (practical wisdom) can entangle, i.e., it can be shared
4. Entangled *phronesis* is implicated in *pre-phronetic* habituated emulation
5. Entangled *phronesis* is implicated in *phronetically-informed* complete emulation

By demonstrating how each 'harmonises with the facts', I thus aim to build an empirical case for my theory of emulation and, through doing so, further illuminate how the morally immature come to acquire virtue and *phronesis* from moral role models. Readers will no doubt recognise hypotheses 1 and 2 as well-known neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical constructs. Hypothesis 1 is important for my overall account of emulation, because *even if* emulation is a virtue, its central elements comprise virtuous emotion, which is cognitive. Making credible that they are infused with thoughts/reason – or, in Aristotelian terms, *phronesis* – will thus add substance to the efficient, formal and material causes of emulation[48]. Hypothesis 2 is also important to at least briefly allude to, because on a neo-Aristotelian componential account of virtue, the motivational force of *phronesis* helps turn said virtuous emotions into virtues by driving action,

---

48 To recap, I have argued that the four causes of emulation comprise: the efficient cause – the moral agent's perception of the exemplar's virtues as representative of a moral ideal; the formal cause – the *phronetically-informed* evaluation that these ideals are worthy of emulation, possible to acquire and deserved; the material cause – physically feeling the distress and admiration, associated with one's lack of the desired quality, i.e., the role model-represented-ideal; the final cause – virtuous action concerning ends, putting the role model-represented-ideal of virtue into practice.

and in my account of emulation as a virtue this applies too. In addition, virtuous action enables the largely tacit understanding of virtue held by role models to emerge, making it available for emulation. Hypothesis 3 refers to entangled *phronesis* – the central mechanism which I have previously theorised to underpin emulation. That *phronesis* can be shared has fleetingly been suggested in the literature (e.g. see Kristjánsson, 2021a, p. 5), but to my knowledge never analysed empirically in this context. Hypotheses 4 and 5 are unique to my thesis. By establishing their minimal psychological realism, I hope to make a meaningful and original contribution to character developmental theory by demonstrating how emulation can plausibly be understood as is a two-step psycho-moral process in which habituated emulation evolves into complete emulation in line with a learner's *phronetic* development. At the close of this chapter, I ultimately hope to have strengthened my theory of emulation by imbuing my philosophical argument with empirical force.

This chapter has four parts. In the first part (Section 5.2), I outline the prevailing understanding of the ideal and non-ideal paths to virtue and, through doing so, distinguish multi-linear from unilinear 'stage theory' accounts of virtue development. I then proceed to build an empirical case for hypotheses 1 and 2 – the neo-Aristotelian constructs which underpin my conception of emulation as a virtue (Section 5.3). To advance my own contribution to character developmental theory, I then expound a psychologically realistic account of entangled *phronesis*, habituated emulation and complete emulation, thus addressing hypotheses 3, 4 and 5 (Section 5.4). Finally, I acknowledge and respond to potential objections (Section 5.5). As regards the scope of virtuous character development that I intend this empirical evaluation to encompass, it should be noted that my focus is limited to the moral trajectory of the 'well brought up', i.e., those blessed with the company of good-enough role models in their early upbringing, and consequently their journey from habituated to full virtue. I am, unsurprisingly, also interested in understanding how those dealt a less-than-ideal hand in

life, such as the continent and incontinent, might make individual moral progress – yet as this resides beyond the purview of this chapter, I shall quell my curiosity for now, and instead streamline our discussion to include only that considered relevant for advancing our present agenda[49].

5.2. A neo-Aristotelian model of moral development

Evolving my own developmental theory of emulation first requires situating the discussion within the current landscape of more general neo-Aristotelian moral developmental theory. Although primarily devised as a simplified explanation of Aristotle's developmental account for practitioners, one leading model comes from the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (2022, p. 21). I shall now briefly distinguish this account from the standard 'stage theory' interpretation of Aristotle, before expounding the model itself.

Exemplified by Curzer (2012, chap. 15; see also Sanderse, 2015), the stage-theory interpretation understands virtue acquisition to advance 'along a single developmental path' (Curzer, 2012, p. 359). This path is composed of successive stages, which Curzer, extending Aristotle, proposes to encompass the many (*hoi polloi*), the generous minded (*eleutherios*), the incontinent (*akrates*), the continent (*enkrates*) and finally the virtuous (*phronimos*) (ibid., p. 332). Wary of Curzer's addition of the generous minded – the only category not derived from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (2009) – but ultimately in a similar vein, Sanderse proposes a four-stage developmental path which includes the many, the incontinent, the continent and the virtuous (2015, pp. 387-394). Here, each stage is defined as a character type representing different 'levels of alignment between reason, desire and action and the sort of pleasure that

49 That said, I will address the possibility of adults being 'rehabituated' in the virtues when I discuss emulation in the professional context of teaching (Chapter 4).

accompanies it' (ibid., p. 387). Importantly, neither account assumes that everyone must progress through each stage in the same order, nor at the same speed, nor indeed each stage at all, thus leaving open the possibility that a person could traverse two stages, skip stages or even regress to lower ones – points which contrast it significantly with the Kohlbergian conception of stages[50] (ibid., p. 387). Despite this concession, the emphasis on the *single* path is a position which many neo-Aristotelians no longer consider to be tenable.

Representing a departure from the 'Aristotelian stage theory' interpretation, the Jubilee Centre model (depicted shortly) divides moral development into two separate trajectories[51] (2022). It is inspired both by Aristotelian thought and broadly aligned with up-to-date research in moral psychology – although the specifics of its empirical influences are not made explicit. Since I explained this model in a Chapter 4, I will not reiterate it here and instead direct readers back to it. What is worth emphasising again, however, is that the nature of development depicted here is explicitly *multilinear*, meaning that it represents progress from, in this case, one phase to another though gradual and constant change and along two separate routes (Kallio, 2020, p. 11). By contrast, the stage theory interpretation of Aristotle (Curzer, 2012; Sanderse, 2015), along with Kohlberg's theory of moral development (1981), are *unilinear*, meaning that progress follows a single route of universal stages. Since I do not subscribe to a stage theory interpretation, as this thesis progresses, I will therefore refer to *phases* of development, rather than stages, to convey my support of a multilinear interpretation. That said, whilst I do find

---

50 Popular for over two decades, Kohlberg's trailblazing theory of moral development conceptualised stages as a fixed consecutive hierarchical sequence that each person can universally traverse (1981). Yet many theorists and educators have since questioned its efficacy, and the psychological and philosophical assumptions that ground it. Objections include its overemphasis on moral reasoning and justice at the expense of the emotional dimension of morality (see Gilligan, 2003; also, Burnyeat, 1980, p. 260); its mistrust of habituation (Jonas and Nakazawa, 2021, p. 13); and the assumption that individuals are 'only at one stage at a time, do not skip stages or relapse into lower ones' (Sanderse, 2015, p. 386). These reservations justify me in giving Kohlberg such a short airing here.

51 Even Curzer, once a key proponent of the single path view, has since abandoned it in favour of a less idealistic reading of moral development which acknowledges a multitude of routes to virtue (Curzer, 2016; see also Kristjánsson 2021, p. 13).

significant aspects of the Jubilee Centre model compelling, I intend for my developmental theory of emulation to be able to stand on its own two – theoretical and empirical – feet. By systematising it with current developmental psychology I ultimately hope for it to be even more sophisticated than the Jubilee Centre model, as skeletally sketched out in its Framework (2022), and, unlike that model, specifically related to emulation.

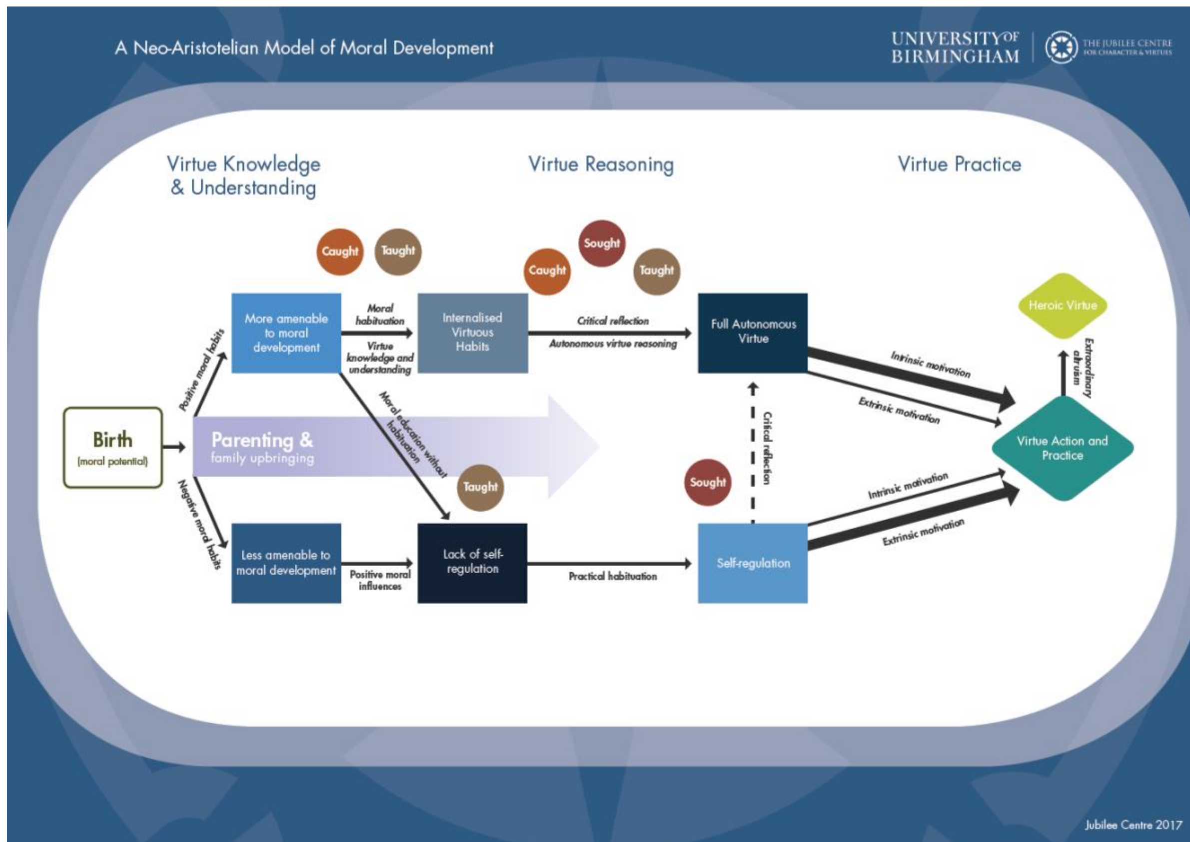

Figure 1: A Neo-Aristotelian Model of Moral Development (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p. 21)

5.3. Empirical support for hypotheses 1 and 2

Having outlined the current landscape of neo-Aristotelian developmental theory, in this section I begin to expound my own developmental account of emulation. Specifically, I will draw upon research relevant to assessing whether hypotheses 1 and 2 are *at least* minimally psychologically realistic. To help justify my selection of material, at the beginning of each subsection I will reiterate the significance of a particular hypothesis for advancing my overall account of emulation *qua* role modelling. First up: cognitive emotions.

5.3.1. Hypothesis 1: Emotions are cognitive, i.e., they are infused with thoughts/reason

Whether conceptualised as cognitive emotions, educated emotions, virtuous emotions or educated intuitions, there can little doubt that we are in the midst of a revival of interest in the interrelationship between reason and emotion in moral judgement and cognition (e.g., see Kristjánsson, 2021a; Labouvie-Vief, 1990; 2015; Sauer, 2012; 2017; Snow et al., 2021). In moral philosophy and moral psychology, endorsing the idea that reason regulates emotions without suppressing them equates to a form of soft-rationalism as a theory of moral epistemology, meaning that moral judgements are a product of *both* reason and emotion (e.g., see Jackson, 2021, p. 21; Kristjánsson, 2021a, p. 3; Sauer, 2017, p. 8). This contrasts to hard-rationalism, the idea that moral judgements are caused by reason alone and devoid of emotional content (Kant, 2018), and the so-called 'new sentimentalism' where moral judgements are purely a product of non-reason-encumbered automatic emotional intuition, with rational justification for such judgement being merely a post-hoc construction (Haidt, 2001; 2013). Whilst there have been several attempts by psychologists to draft Aristotle into the new sentimentalist camp, other scholars have argued this reading to be 'insufficiently motivated' and 'empirically outdated' (Kristjánsson, 2021a, pp. 3-12). More persuasively, then, Aristotle should be considered a soft-rationalist about moral judgement, an interpretation which closely aligns with recent research in fields such as cognitive neuroscience (e.g. see Gross, 2015; Ochsner et al., 2004; Ochsner, 2007; Railton, 2016a). By exploring the empirical credibility of this soft-rationalist stance in more depth, in this subsection I therefore aim to demonstrate how the following hypothesis is *at least* minimally psychologically realistic: *emotions are cognitive, i.e., they are infused with thoughts/reason*. Recall the importance of this for my overall account of emulation – *even if* emulation is a virtue, its central elements comprise virtuous emotion,

which are cognitive because they are infused with thoughts/reason[52]. Providing empirical support for cognitive emotions will thus add substance to the efficient, formal and material causes of emulation. Having made the relevance of virtuous emotions clear, I will now situate this soft-rationalist perspective within major psychological accounts of moral judgement, before elucidating what I mean by 'infused' in more depth.

Historically Piaget's (1972) and Kohlberg's (1987) intellectualist focus on post-conventional reasoning dominated the landscape of moral psychology, but more recently the field has witnessed an emotional turn (e.g., see Greene et al., 2001; Greene and Haidt, 2002; Haidt, 2001; 2007; 2012; 2013). According to experimental psychologist Joshua Greene's influential dual process theory of moral judgement (Greene et al., 2001), the neural basis of moral cognition can be divided into two *distinct* systems: system-one is an *automatic*, unconscious, non-cognitive, emotional process; whilst system-two is a *controlled*, conscious, cognitive and thus rational process. Using moral dilemmas – variations of the famous 'trolley problem' – as stimuli, Greene et al.'s study found people's judgments of said dilemmas are affected by the different ways the brain processes them (ibid., p. 2105). In moral-impersonal dilemmas, like the original trolley problem, they suggest that the reason why 'nearly everyone' is content to pull the leaver, thus sacrificing one to save five, is because it elicits the controlled rationality of system-two. Conversely, in more emotionally salient, or moral-personal, dilemmas, such as the 'footbridge' or 'organ donation' variations, the reason why people opt *not* to push the obese person or harvest someone's organs *to also save five* is because it engages system-one, i.e., people's emotions (ibid., p. 2106). By observing patterns of neural activity in emotion-related brain areas in addition to patterns in reaction time, they conclude that

---

52 Given this thesis' explicitly neo-Aristotelian leaning, I am evidently referring here to *phronesis.* Yet since the studies I draw upon in this section are predominately derived from fields either unfamiliar with this term, or/and non-moral in emphasis, or not neo-Aristotelian, I have also chosen to adopt 'thoughts/reason' or 'reason' so as to align with them more closely. That said, I intend the insights gained to apply equally well to *phronesis* and the concept of virtuous emotions.

differences in moral judgement are due to differences in emotional engagement (ibid., p. 2107). Greene's dual process model thus claims that rational and emotional neurological systems work separately. On the back of this research, it has been proposed that moral reasoning is predominantly concerned with *automatic* emotion and affective intuition rather than explicit reasoning, although reasoning does play a limited role (Greene and Haidt, 2002). In addition, it has been argued that the role reasoning does play is confabulatory, meaning that – *if it happens at all* – it is after the initial automatic emotional intuitive judgement has been made in order to justify it post-hoc (Haidt, 2001). If correct, this is not good news for the potential psychological realism of *phronetically*-infused virtuous emotions – the central components of the virtue of emulation.

Fortunately, soft-rationalists, as the name suggests, see a more integrated role for reason and emotion in moral judgements and challenge this new sentimentalist position (e.g., see Kristjánsson, 2021a; Sauer, 2012; 2017). Framed as the *anti-rationalist challenge,* Hanno Sauer argues that it is fallacious to claim reason and reasoning play no *significant* part in moral judgement (Sauer, 2017, p. 4). This is because, whilst he agrees that '*particular* moral judgements made on *particular* occasions are typically made on the basis of emotionally charged automatic intuitions', he considers it a mistake to conflate the fact that they are experienced automatically and unconsciously with the idea that they are non-rational (ibid., p. 11). Let me explain. In short, if one observes a single automatic moral judgement, the 'judgement' element will be hard to pin-point making it appear isolated from reasoning – a 'cognitively unpenetrated gut-reaction' (ibid.). However, if one broadens one's perspective to encompass a moral agent's whole history of moral judgement making, it becomes clear that this single exercise of moral agency has been informed by their educated 'repertoire of intuitions about what is morally acceptable' (ibid.). Combined with more explicit opportunities for rational moral reflection, such as conversations with others about complex moral conflicts,

this creates a moral feedback loop[53] which *educates* our intuitions, thus enabling them to be simultaneously a product of reason *and* emotion (ibid.). This argument maps others in the field who similarly emphasise how intuitive responses come to the 'prepared mind', meaning that they are a product of a reflexive process which continually digests, stores and updates information, enabling it to consider a multitude of possible reactions and select the most appropriate (Railton, 2016a, p. 45). Much like a Google search engine, the brain can make 'billions of synaptic connections' a second, which enables it to implicitly process a huge amount of complex information in a short time (ibid.). This 'informational beehive full of activity' may sometimes appear latent but is in fact consistently hard at work, which is often why one can seemingly come up with solutions to problems by '*not* thinking about them', or 'sleeping on it' (ibid., p. 46). Current neuroscience also supports how consciousness is not a necessary condition for the brain's processing of complex information (ibid., p. 58). In light of this, Sauer seems justified in arguing that Haidt 'grossly misrepresents the relationship between automatic intuitions and conscious reasoning' (2017, p. 8).

In advocating a cognitive foundation for emotionally charged automatic intuitions, Sauer's position thus calls into question the plausibility of a strict dichotomy between different normative processing systems, i.e., dual process theory[54], and, in turn, also undermines the central tenets of new sentimentalism. Sauer cites numerous empirical studies to support this idea of a *single* integrated system of moral judgement – one which combines reason *and* emotion – thus heralding a 'soft-rationalist turn' in moral psychology (2017). He demonstrates how developments in cognitive science support an interaction between affective and reflective processes, and uses this to argue that for a moral judgement to be a *genuine* moral judgement,

---

53 Sauer states that *typically* moral judgements are made on the basis of educated emotional intuition, but does not say that all are, thus leaving room for conscious – but still emotionally infused – moral deliberation too.

54 Sauer is not the only one to question the conclusions of Green's dual process model, recent advances in cognitive psychology suggest this scepticism is fairly widespread (e.g., see Craigie, 2011; Evans, 2018; Gerrans and Kennett, 2010; Kahane, 2012).

rather than simply an episodic expression of approval or disapproval, it must be reason responsive, i.e., open to rational reflection (ibid., p. 252; see also Craigie, 2011). He further demonstrates how metacognition is a central element of moral judgement, because it facilitates 'critically reflecting on one's immediate affectively charged intuitions, to reconsider them if necessary, or to back them up with appropriate further grounding' (Sauer, 2017p. 252; see also Gerrans and Kennett, 2010; Jones, 2006; Railton, 2016a). This cognitive process effectively amounts to a kind of emotion regulation. In metaethical terms, whilst Sauer aligns himself with 'intuitionism', as these intuitions are a product of one's *educated* and *integrated* rational and emotional psycho-moral makeup, his argument indirectly makes credible a neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical account of moral judgement, and thus, perhaps ironically, ethical naturalism55. For Aristotelians, whilst few speak of moral intuition *per se*, many emphasise how – particularly for experienced *phronimoi* – moral judgements can appear automatic and unconscious, because they arise from a huge body of experience, education, and tacit knowledge, meaning that the *phronetically*-infused emotional deliberation involved is extremely fast (e.g., see Kristjánsson, 2021a, p. 9). As this is conceptually very similar to Sauer's educated intuitions, the same empirical evidence can reasonably be taken to support both.

But what of *infusion*? To give further credence to the specific relationship between reason and emotion that I seek to make minimally psychologically realistic, it is instructive to consider other empirical research which supports the integrative role of reason in emotion regulation (e.g., see Gross, 2015; Jackson, 2021; Kral et al., 2018; McRae and Gross, 2020; Ochsner, 2007; Ochsner et al., 2004; Ochsner and Gross, 2005; 2008; 2014; Snow, 2013; Snow et al., 2021). Of particular interest is work on the cognitive reappraisal of emotions by social

---

55 I specify *ironically* because Sauer shuns any connection to neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, a point emphasised by Kristjánsson (2021, p. 11).

neuroscientists such as Kevin Ochsner and James Gross. A form of cognitive change, cognitive reappraisal concerns the ability to adjust how one conceives of a situation, which in turn enables us to modify the emotional effect it has on us accordingly (Gross, 2015, p. 9). When exposed to negative emotional stimuli, they found that cognitive reappraisal enables us to both increase, or up-regulate, emotion and decrease, or down-regulate, emotion (Ochsner et al., 2004, p. 483; Ochsner, 2007, p. 119). For example, in the case of witnessing animal abuse, this could take the form of increased compassion towards the injured animal and decreased disgust towards their wounds. Importantly, cognitive up and down reappraisal applies to both overall positively and negatively valenced emotions (Ochsner and Gross, 2005), and is equally effective in both self and situation focussed contexts (Ochsner, 2007, p. 120). Snow et al. (2021, pp. 82-83) have already highlighted the salience of cognitive reappraisal research for a neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical account of emotion regulation. As a function of *phronesis,* they suggest that cognitive reappraisal enables us to discern ‘what is reasonable and appropriate’, ‘take another’s perspective in reasoning and deliberation’, and modify one’s virtuous emotions accordingly (ibid.).

As for the effect emotions have on action, recall my argument in Chapter 2 that virtuous emotions are distinguished from full-blown virtues by *activity*, with the former providing *at most* a behavioural suggestion. This philosophical claim is corroborated by Baumeister et al. (2007), who draw upon a wealth of empirical findings to assert that the effect emotion has on behaviour is usually indirect. Rather than directly causing action, these authors propose a ‘feedback’ theory of emotion, in which emotions primarily work to stimulate cognitive analysis (ibid., p. 174). Conscious emotions enable us to reflect on behaviour by giving feedback, they help us learn from success or mistakes by rewarding or punishing us through the feelings they elicit, and, through doing so, promote the reassessment of possible future if/then reactions to external stimuli (ibid., p. 175). For example, the feeling of shame could stimulate the

consideration of different counterfactual scenarios about how one could have avoided this feeling, which then contributes to how one reacts to similar events in the future. Lessons drawn from this kind of evaluation can then be expressed as automatic emotional intuitions, which, when deliberating about how to act, help us both anticipate and simulate what the right decision out of various options might be (ibid., p. 176; , see also Railton, 2016b, p. 241-3). In this sense, reason-infused emotion, or even reason-stimulating emotion, can be said to *indirectly* affect behaviour.

Taken together, the research cited strongly supports a soft-rationalist position on moral judgement and cognition and thus the minimal psychological realism of hypothesis 1: *emotions are cognitive, i.e., they are infused with thought/reason.* This is important for my argument, since it helps strengthen my four-causal account of the virtue of emulation, of which the first three elements comprise virtuous – by which I mean *phronetically*-infused – emotion. In particular, it gives initial empirical plausibility to the formal cause: the *phronetically-informed evaluation* that role-model-represented virtuous ideals are worthy of emulation, possible to acquire and deserved, because it enables *phronesis* to be integrated in this ultimately emotional process. In the material cause, the research also makes reasonable how *phronesis* helps elicit the appropriate degree of distress and admiration by up-regulating or down-regulating these feelings. The nod to perspective taking in emotion regulation may also be important, since it could help a learner to engage better with their role model's virtuous emotions, and the role model to adjust their modelling to appropriately engage a learner in the process of emulation. That said, if Baumeister et al.'s feedback theory of emotion is correct, we are still left with the task of empirically supporting how *phronesis* also works to bridge the gap between virtuous emotion and virtuous action – an important mechanism in my argument for emulation as a virtue.

5.3.2. Hypothesis 2: *Phronesis* is implicated in both virtuous emotion and action

Recall how – on a neo-Aristotelian componential account of virtue – the motivational force of *phronesis* helps evolve virtuous emotions into virtues by driving action, linking said action with an agent's overall blueprint of a flourishing life. Likewise, in my four-causal account of the virtue of emulation, *phronesis* helps unify the material with the final cause, hence the relevance of hypothesis 2*: phronesis (practical wisdom) is implicated in both virtuous emotion and action.* Since Section 2.1 demonstrated that *phronesis* is indeed implicated in virtuous emotion, albeit using the language of thought/reason, I shall not restate this argument here and assume it suffices for the present section too. In light of this, what follows will predominately focus on furthering the idea that practical wisdom also involves virtuous action. This is important for my overall argument for two reasons. First, because *phronesis* facilitates the final cause of emulation: *virtuous action concerning ends: putting the role-model-represented ideal of virtue into action*. Second, because entangled *phronesis* is initially shared – and thus emulation stimulated – through the perception of a model's virtuous actions.

As *phronesis* is ultimately a form of 'wise' adult cognition, I will first consider a dominant *psychological* theory relating to this which depicts adult cognitive development as contextual integrative thinking. Having made visible the similarity between these philosophical and psychological accounts of wise thinking, I will then briefly hone in on other empirically-informed accounts of wisdom, in particular those which support emotion regulation *and* action as integral components. Often conceptualised in terms of having 'right ends' or a 'blueprint of the good life', I also emphasise how true wisdom must be morally motivated. Likewise, I also uphold how emulation should be morally motivated.

Contextual integrative thinking

In modern developmental psychology, adult cognition is conceptualised as contextual integrative thinking (Kallio, 2020; 2011). As a type of wise-reasoning, contextual integrative thinking is also understood as an element of the psychological construct of wisdom (ibid., p. 9). *Cognition* encompasses 'all phenomena that are related to acquiring, assimilating, and processing knowledge', which includes such things as perception, logical thinking, intuition and decision-making (ibid.). It is fundamentally intrapersonal in nature, because it concerns an individual's mind and brain, but is also social, shared and collective (Resnick, 1991) – much like the neo-Aristotelian concept of *phronesis*.

Synthesising a plethora of cutting-edge research, Eeva Kallio proposes that contextual understanding is a 'necessary condition of adult knowledge formation' (2020, p. 22). Adult thinking is *contextual* in acknowledgement of the fact that humans are hermeneutically situated within specific and diverse cultural communities, meaning that one's thinking does not take place within a vacuum (Kallio, 2020, p. 20). The ability to take into account the rich and complex domain in which one's thinking is conducted is thus central to adult cognition, contrasting Kallio's account with scholars who frame cognitive development as purely advancements in logical reasoning, such as Piaget (1972). This contextual turn in learning research has also been emphasised by Illeris (2018), who highlights the field's expansion away from mere knowledge and skills towards the emotional and societal dimensions of learning. In addition to being contextual, Kallio proposes adult thinking is *integrative,* which she defines as 'the capacity to integrate distinct and diverse elements into one's own cognitive, emotional and action systems or perspectives' (2020, p. 209). By this she does not mean merely joining things together mechanically, but rather the rational and intuitive ability to 'fuse' potentially contradictory factors within domains such as 'emotions, volition, social processes, existential meanings, and other contexts' (ibid., 2020, p. 25). It involves both deep understanding of the multitude and plurality of perspectives *and* the ability to reconcile this into an integrative whole

(ibid., p. 26). Crucially, it does not require one to acknowledge all beliefs as true, nor equally valid, since this would amount to epistemological relativism, but more the capacity to comprehend, even empathise with, the perspective, emotional state and background of another, whilst forming an all-things-considered perspective of one's own (ibid.). Of further significance is how Kallio avoids talk of contextual integrative thinking as a 'stage', but rather comprehends it as something which evolves – gradually and continually – from youth to adulthood to old age, i.e., as a learning curve which covers a whole lifespan (ibid.). This supports appealing to *phases* in my own account of emulation as a method of moral development.

As wisdom is seen as the pinnacle of developmental goals, is it perhaps no wonder that contextual integrative thinking, or a relevantly similar conceptual notion, is considered a component (e.g., see Grossmann, 2017; Kallio, 2015; 2020; Kristjánsson et al., 2021). To illustrate what mature, i.e., 'wise', integrative thinking might look like, Kallio invites us to consider an emotionally complex situation involving multiple perspectives on immigration ranging from 'highly restrictive' to 'highly positive' (Kallio, 2020, p. 220). Here, wise integration requires one to recognise and consider the plurality of viewpoints and associated emotions, to perhaps find some common ground, whilst upholding the need to reject those that fall short of 'general ethical standards or principles' (ibid., p. 221). This nod to objectivity distances integrative thinking from both epistemological and ethical relativism (ibid.). It supports respecting others *as persons with feelings*, but does not require one to regard all positions as true (ibid.). At its core, *integration* thus concerns both reason *and* emotion (Kallio, 2020, p. 221; see also Labouvie-Vief, 1990). Given the clear parallels between this leading psychological theory and a neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical account of what mature adult thinking involves, we are already making steps towards minimal psychological realism.

However, in addition to wise thinking, I am particularly interested in how this contributes to wise *doing*, and it is to this aspect of wisdom that I shall now briefly turn.

Practical Wisdom

Kallio (2020, p. 23) highlights how 'wisdom research is in the midst of an obvious pluralism'. There are dozens of competing psychological models in existence, both within virtue ethics (e.g., see Darnell et al., 2022; De Caro et al., 2021), and outside of it (e.g., see Ardelt, 2003; Baltes and Staudinger, 2000; Grossmann et al., 2020; Lees and Young, 2020; Sternberg, 2022), and the numbers are rising. Whilst all models put an emphasis on wise cognition, there is considerable nuance in what each proposes. Given the sheer quantity of options, and the present task of evaluating whether *phronesis*, as practical wisdom, is implicated in both virtuous emotion *and* action, it is instructive to very broadly group the most relevant[56] models into three main categories: those that underspecify the emotional component of wisdom (e.g., see Grossmann et al., 2020); those that acknowledge the importance of the emotional component of wisdom but underspecify wise action (e.g., see Ardelt, 2003; Lees and Young, 2020); and those that emphasise the centrality of *both* emotion and action in wisdom (e.g., see Darnell et al., 2022; Kallio, 2020; Yang, 2017). Support for the latter category can be taken to bolster the minimal psychological realism of hypothesis 4: *phronesis (practical wisdom) is implicated in both virtuous emotion and action.* This is important in my account of the virtue of emulation

56 I specify 'most relevant' here since the aforementioned academics do not all understand wisdom in the same way. Grossmann et al. (2020), for example, want to move the concept of wisdom under discussion in psychology closer to the Aristotelian one of practical wisdom in philosophy; whereas other psychologists such as Staudinger and Glück (2011), and Sternberg (2022), resent that move and want to hold onto the more encompassing concept that has been on psychological agendas since the 1990s: a concept that is intended to accommodate *phronesis* (practical wisdom), *sophia* (philosophical wisdom) and an element of *deinotes* (cleverness). These substantial conceptual differences mean that extra care must be taken when comparing wisdom models. In what follows, I thus streamline the discussion to include only those wisdom constructs most relevant to the present agenda.

for two reasons. First, from the perspective of the learner, the motivational force of practical wisdom helps evolve a virtuous emotion into a virtue by driving virtuous action – which is a necessary emulative step in the cultivation of virtue. Second, from the perspective of the role model, virtuous action is required to help make the role-model-represented ideal of virtue visible to the learner and available for emulation.

Of the cited wisdom models, the Aristotelian *Phronesis* Model (APM), expounded in Chapter 3, is arguably the most philosophically informed and is also an empirically supported concept (see Darnell et al., 2022; see also Kristjánsson and Fowers, 2024). It is compatible with Kallio's (2020) account of adult cognition as contextual integrative thinking, directly inspired by neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, and – perhaps most importantly – an empirically viable concept (Darnell et al., 2022). That practical wisdom is action guiding is a key feature of the APM, which understands moral action as partly constitutive of *phronesis*, rather than as a separate outcome (ibid., p. 3). Part of the integrative function involves the ability to choose the best option, or action, when there is a conflict (ibid.). In addition, the blueprint function concerns the overall understanding of how moral actions contribute to a flourishing life, it being 'a general understanding of living well which motivates and guides a person's actions' (ibid.). The moral philosophers and moral psychologists involved in the APM assessed the empirical viability of these functions using numerous existing psychological measures: the integrative function was assessed through five different measures, the blueprint through three, the emotion regulation though two and the constitutive though three (ibid., p. 5). These assessments were then amalgamated with the results supporting a 'proof of concept' (ibid., p. 9). Whilst the APM is in its infancy, these promising results highlight it as being empirically viable, this can be considered a more substantial claim than psychological realism, which further justifies me in using it to strengthen the empirical credibility of hypothesis 2.

Another benefit of this model is the weight it allots to moral motivation. Indeed, many leading wisdom scholars emphasise how wisdom must be morally motivated, meaning that for one's thoughts, feelings and actions to be truly wise, they must be attuned to the common good and one's blueprint of a morally good life (Kristjánsson et al., 2021, p. 240; see also Lees and Young, 2020). Whilst commendable in many ways, one prominent model, the Common Wisdom Model (Grossmann et al., 2020), has been criticised for 'the vagueness of its depiction of the morality inherent in wisdom' (Kristjánsson et al., 2021, p. 240; see also Lees and Young, 2020; Sternberg, 2020). By contrast, the APM acknowledges wisdom as an essential ingredient in ethics – it is key to living a flourishing human life because its exercise enables us to choose – and thus live – well (Darnell et al., 2022, p. 5). Given that I have argued emulation to be itself a *moral* virtue intimately connected with *moral* education, my thesis also requires that wisdom is morally motivated. This is because, on a neo-Aristotelian conception of virtue, in order to be virtuous, one must be practically wise, which entails that the two are interlinked. The empirical viability of the APM supports the inherent morality in practical wisdom and thus also strengthens hypothesis 2.

As this subsection draws to a close, I hope to have demonstrated the minimal psychological realism of hypothesis 2: *phronesis (practical wisdom) is implicated in both virtuous emotion and action.* That practical wisdom involves *virtuous* action is important for the empirical plausibility of the final cause of emulation – virtuous action concerning ends: putting the role-model-represented ideal of virtue into action – because *phronesis* helps facilitate this active element of the virtue of emulation, thus unifying virtuous emotion with virtuous action. It is by emulating virtuous emotion *and* virtuous action that a learner cultivates virtue. Again, I will emphasise that this active element is further salient for emulation because it helps the largely tacit understanding of virtue held by role models emerge and become

available for emulation. Without virtuous action a learner's ability to emulate a role model would be undermined.

5.4. Empirical support for hypotheses 3, 4 and 5

Having provided considerable empirical support for hypotheses 1 and 2 – the neo-Aristotelian constructs connected to the moral virtue of emulation – it is now time to move on to those hypotheses unique to my thesis. As before, my aim in this section is to demonstrate how each hypothesis is *at least* psychologically realistic. I begin with the central mechanism which I have argued to underpin emulation: entangled *phronesis*, before extending my accounts of habituated emulation and complete emulation with insights from current developmental psychology.

5.4.1. Hypothesis 3: *Phronesis* (practical wisdom) can entangle, i.e., it can be shared

A central tenet of my thesis concerns the mechanism of entangled *phronesis*. Essentially a form of rational moral communication between a role model and learner, I argue that entangled *phronesis* is required for emulation because it enables the latter to engage in the practise of virtue whilst their own *phronesis* is developing. Remember that in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics *phronesis* is necessary for practising virtue because it enables us to decipher and act upon the golden mean (Aristotle, 2009, *NE* 1106b35-1107a6). Put bluntly, to learn to be virtuous, one must learn to perceive, think, feel and act as a role model does. Yet as the morally immature are just this, *immature*, they are not yet able to practice virtue *qua* full virtue and must instead engage in the educational virtue of emulation, which uniquely does not require fully developed *phronesis* because of its entangled association with the role model's *phronesis*. I also propose that *phronesis* entangles to greater or lesser extents in line with a person's phase

of virtuous character development. As I will flesh out this dual psycho-moral process in the following sections, I will presently focus on adding empirical clout to the concept of entangled *phronesis* itself. I begin by distinguishing entangled *phronesis* from other similar expressions of *phronesis,* before building a case for its empirical credibility.

At first sight, shared, i.e., entangled *phronesis*, may appear semantically similar to the concept of collective *phronesis*, yet on closer inspection the two are distinct. The outcome may be aligned – *phronetically-informed* reasoning, decisions and actions stemming from more than one person – but they differ in both method and purpose. Regarding method, collective *phronesis* generally concerns truly joint decision-making between *phronimoi*, where those involved 'look forwards, towards the same moral vision, and try and achieve it collaboratively' (Kristjánsson, 2022a, p. 53). By contrast, entangled *phronesis*, as I intend it to be understood, typically involves the one-directional[57] transfer of practical wisdom between two people of unequal moral character: one who has already cultivated *phronesis* sufficiently and another who has not[58]. That said, I do not mean to rule out the possibility of picking up *phronesis* from peers, or equal character friends; one can in a limited sense, but I hold strong in proposing that *usually* entangled *phronesis* will take the aforementioned form. This represents a departure from Aristotle who was more optimistic about the possibility of learning from equal character friends in youth. Again, I reiterate that I do not rule this out completely, but maintain it is only useful once each party has something *phronetically* valuable to share, meaning that learning

57 One-directional in terms of the rational moral communication of *phronesis* between role model and learner. That said, in addition to perhaps gratitude, I intend for entangled *phronesis* to also benefit the role model as the process of 'teaching *phronesis*' may encourage them to reflect, refine and enhance their own *phronetic* capabilities.

58 As noted at length in Chapter 2, I do not rule out the possibility of learning from more equal character friends, but do maintain that the opportunity for virtue development will here be limited in accordance with the limits of each party's *phronetic* development. As my concept of entangled *phronesis* is reliant on one party having cultivated a sufficient degree of *phronesis* to enable it to entangle, it is more prevalent in unequal character friendships, such as those between a role model/learner or mentor/mentee. In one's formative years especially, these sorts of relationships create fertile ground for moral learning to occur.

from equal character friends will likely gain more traction in later life. The second difference relates to the purpose of decision-making, in collective *phronesis* this seems to concern collaboration and the fusion of already held practical wisdom, hence its prominence in the managerial and business ethics literature (e.g. see Kristjánsson, 2022a). Whereas in entangled *phronesis* the purpose is specifically tied to moral education and *learning* to be virtuous through the emulation of role models.

Having distanced entangled *phronesis* from collective *phronesis,* we are finally at a point to evaluate its potential psychological realism. However, a survey of the literature uncovers nothing on 'shared *phronesis*' or 'shared practical wisdom'. This is a surprising outcome given the considerable theoretical attention *phronesis* has received in moral character education, which one would expect to translate into empirical educational studies exploring *phronesis* interventions (Kristjánsson, 2021b, p. 1319). Yet all is not lost, inspired by Aristotle's remarks that intellectual virtues, like *phronesis*, are learnt through teaching and experience (2009, 1103a14-16), Kristjánsson has hypothesised that it is at least possible to empirically test the hypothesis '*phronesis* is partly learned through teaching' (2021b, p. 1315). If we understand, as I do, role modelling to be predominantly an indirect form of moral education, emulation to be a virtue explicitly associated with moral education, and entangled *phronesis* as required for emulation, then it should be clear that the mere possibility of testing this hypothesis lends support to the present cause. More precisely, as the mechanism of entangled *phronesis* is associated with *learning* to be virtuous, then any moral educational study relating to Kristjánsson's hypothesis will effectively be aiming to measure whether it has been successfully entangled/shared. That said, we are clearly somewhat ahead of the empirical game here, indicating that more research needs to be conducted in this area.

Or are we? Perhaps if we broaden the scope beyond the language of *phronesis*/practical wisdom there may be existing conceptually similar, psychologically familiar, and empirically

viable concepts which can indirectly support the notion of entangled *phronesis*. Take tacit knowledge-sharing for example. Tacit knowledge is a well-researched concept and understood to be 'a gradually accumulated knowledge base which an individual expert can access' (Toom and Husu, 2020, p. 141). Whilst a novice mainly possesses explicit knowledge, which is largely dependent on learnt rules, though experience experts supplement this with implicit, i.e., *tacit*, knowledge (Tynjälä et al., 2020, p. 156). Usually associated with professional expertise, tacit knowledge is explicitly relational, in addition to being context and situation sensitive, because it is situated within communities, organisations and networks (Toom and Husu, 2020, p. 141). It is also integrated with the cognitive and emotional elements of an expert's thought and action – marking it out as similar to practical wisdom (ibid., p. 142). Imagine an experienced teacher's seemingly automatic decision-making during challenging classroom interactions or a skilled researcher's intuitive ability to ask just the right questions during an interview on a sensitive topic (ibid., p. 144). However, from the perspective of the knower, tacit knowledge can be difficult to articulate and is famously characterised by the phrase: *we know more than we can tell* (Polanyi, 1983, p. 4). This is because, through practice, the skills that experts exhibit become increasingly automatic and routinised, making them only partly anchored in consciousness (Eraut, 1994, pp. 111-112). This raises the question of how tacit knowledge can be shared in order that others might learn to acquire this expertise?

Drawing upon a wealth of educational research, Fenstermacher (1994, pp. 33-34) suggests that in order for tacit knowledge to be shared, *concrete actions* are required which enable it to emerge and become 'available for argumentation'. Expert action therefore acts as the medium of perception for tacit knowledge, with the accompanying reasoning ideally working to show the behaviour is 'the reasonable thing to do, the obvious thing to do, or the only thing one could do under the circumstances' (ibid., p. 47). Importantly, more current research into cognitive development supports how one learns the kind of expertise associated

with tacit knowledge 'through action and reflection on action during long periods of time' (Toom and Husu, 2020, p. 147). The idea that tacit knowledge is conveyed, i.e., externalised, primarily through action is also corroborated by other studies into tacit knowledge-sharing (e.g., see Kucharska and Erickson, 2023). Furthermore, it is now known that tacit knowledge is acquired both through 'learning by interaction' and through 'learning by doing' (Kucharska and Erickson, 2023, p. 17) – methods which sound relevantly similar to Aristotle's assertion that practical wisdom is acquired through teaching and experience. Perhaps, then, this famously vague claim is not such a platitude after all. Although practical wisdom is arguably even more complex than standard accounts of tacit knowledge, it being distinctly morally motivated and embedded in virtuous character, the aforementioned research highlights clear parallels between the two, for example, both concern: experts, a gradually accumulated knowledge base, practical know-how, action as a central element, that which is known implicitly and thus hard to articulate, cognition and emotion and that which is context and situation sensitive. These parallels strengthen the analogy between tacit knowledge sharing and entangled *phronesis*, and make reasonable how *phronesis* may also be primarily *shared* through, in this case, *virtuous* action and the accompanying verbal reflection.

In emulation, that *phronesis* primarily entangles through a combination of virtuous action and verbal reflection has important implications for both role model (the expert) and learner (the novice). I suggest that it is a role model's virtuous actions which initially enable a learner to perceive them as representing a moral ideal (the efficient cause). This emphasis on action also bolsters my argument that role models – as the action makers – are required to facilitate this perception, reinforcing a point made in Chapter 2 that appeal to virtuous ideals alone are insufficient stimuli for emulation. Perception of virtuous action can thus be thought to kick-start the emulative process, as it is here that *phronesis* begins to entangle. So, with action framed as the catalyst for entangled *phronesis,* what role is there for explicit reflections

about these actions, i.e., explanation? In line with the research on tacit knowledge sharing, I support that there is also a substantial role for reflection and explanation to play in entangled, i.e., shared, *phronesis.* However, I maintain that the perception of the action itself remains the primary method of *phronetic* entanglement, that untethered from such action the emulative process will be stunted, and thus that reflection alone is not enough. Yet, I also maintain that being privy to a role model's reflections on their actions becomes increasingly important the more *phronetically* advanced a learner becomes, because it enables the latter to understand how the action is largely motivated by virtuous emotion and grasp how the various functions of *phronesis* are integrated in the decision-making process. Given the complex quadripartite nature of *phronesis* and how the purpose of entangled *phronesis* is to communicate this to a learner to enable them to engage in the practice of virtue whilst their *phronesis* is developing, supplementing action with explanation is required to convey this complexity.

This focus on explanation chimes well with what is known about *phronesis* as metacognition – the ability to reflect upon one's own reasoning processes and actions – so inviting a learner into this process can be considered important for their own developing metacognitive skills. More precisely, metacognition is traditionally considered to consist of two intertwined elements: 'knowledge of cognitive matters' and 'regulation of cognitive processes' (Mikkilä-Erdmann and Liskala, 2020, p. 124; see also Brown, 1987; Flavel, 1976; 2000; Flavel et al., 1993). The former is propositional and could, for example, concern one's understanding that the human mind is fallible which can lead people – including oneself – to construe things correctly or incorrectly (Flavel et al., 1993). The latter is procedural (e.g., see Efklides, 2006) and works to regulate one's cognitive activities, for example, by enabling one to reflect on and control one's learning or reasoning strategies – 'what degree of progress have I made?', 'have I adjudicated successfully?' (e.g., see Brown and DeLoache, 1983). Importantly, both propositional knowledge of cognitive matters and the procedural ability to

regulate cognitive processes are required for learning (Mikkilä-Erdmann and Liskala, 2020, p. 124), of which moral learning is a facet. Put simply, then, *meta*cognitive ability denotes 'cognition about cognition' and involves regulating and monitoring cognition to ensure cognitive goals are met (ibid.; see also Flavel et al., 1993). Since *phronesis* is understood to be a distinctly moral form of metacognition intertwined with one's blueprint of the good life, it should be clear from this brief outline of general metacognition that learning *phronesis* – at least in part – requires being privy to the (particularly procedural) reasoning *qua* explanations of a role model. Combined with what is known about how tacit knowledge is shared, it seems that actions and explaining these actions can overcome the potential ineffability of *phronesis,* which enables it to be communicated and shared with others in less advanced phases of virtuous character development.

In this section, I hope to have made clear how hypothesis 3 – *phronesis (practical wisdom) can entangle, i.e., it can be shared* – is psychologically realistic. Particularly illuminating are the insights gained from research into tacit knowledge sharing and metacognition, which enables me to extend the concept of entangled *phronesis* and demonstrate how it is predominantly made visible though virtuous action and comprehendible through explanation. Adding empirical vigour to the methodology of entangled *phronesis* has also served to justify why it should be viewed as the central mechanism in emulation *qua* role modelling. In the next two sections, I will flesh out more precisely how entangled *phronesis* operates in the dual psycho-moral process of habituated emulation and complete emulation.

5.4.2. Hypothesis 4: Entangled *phronesis* is implicated in pre-phronetic habituated emulation

This section has two main aims. First, I seek to extend the concept of habituated emulation by substantiating it with current research from developmental psychology. Second, I seek to

expound how entangled *phronesis* facilitates this early emulative process primarily through a focus on virtuous action.

Before embarking on this empirical endeavour, I will recap what I mean by 'habituated emulation'. Habituated emulation, as I intend it to be understood, takes place in early childhood before *phronesis* has begun to develop – it is *'pre-phronetic',* but aligned with virtue because it is directly guided by the role model's *phronesis.* Here, the role model's *phronesis* entangles to substitute the learner's lack of *phronesis* by encouraging virtuous actions and discouraging vicious ones – a process which through practice and repetition enables the latter to internalise beliefs about particular cases of virtue, e.g., that an act was courageous. The purpose of habituated emulation is thus to accustom children to virtue, to lay moral foundations by introducing them to what virtue is even before they understand why it is important. In short, it concerns the early phase of an upbringing in good habits. This reflects Aristotle's insistence that being first habituated in the virtues is a prerequisite for developing virtue, whereby 'the soul of the student must first have been cultivated by means of habits for noble joy and noble hatred' (2009, *NE* 1179b25). It is only after grasping 'the that' that a student of virtue can later comprehend 'the because' and become receptive to arguments in favour of virtue (Burnyeat, 1980) – a point which is reflected to different degrees in other virtue ethical accounts of habituation (e.g., see Burnyeat, 1980; Kristjánsson, 2021b; Sherman, 1989; Sanderse, 2013; Steutel and Spiecker, 2004). What makes my account unique is the focus on the methodology of this early form of emulation, which places a greater emphasis on emulating action, with this action being a product of entangled *phronesis*. As in Chapter 2, I propose that habituated emulation requires that a role model be experientially present – this enables their virtuous actions to be perceived and facilitates encouraging a child to 'do as they do'. This behavioural conditioning is therefore just this: *behavioural*, however because these actions are a product of entangled *phronesis* they are not merely pro-social, i.e., untethered from virtuous

emotion/character, and can serve to sow the seeds of *phronesis*. In this sense, I straddle a middle ground between prior accounts of Aristotelian habituation which either a) emphasise conditioning virtuous action but separate it from *phronesis* development (Aristotle, 2009, *NE* 1098a33-b2; Burnyeat, 1980, p. 263), or b) propose that habituation is primarily driven by reason and argument even in very early childhood (Kristjánsson, 2021b, p. 1312; Sherman, 1989, pp. 177-178). In my account of habituated emulation, actions are guided by the role model's entangled *phronesis*, and it is through this process that the first seeds of *phronesis* are planted. As before, entangled *phronesis* represents a form of rational moral communication between the role model and learner, yet as in their very early years children are too young to understand reasons, in habituated emulation this communication is primarily through action. I therefore reserve the necessity of explaining the reasoning accompanying actions – however basic – for the first instances of complete emulation, whilst acknowledging there will be a significant period of overlap and transition. So, to clarify, I lean closer to Burnyeat in maintaining that virtue development is essentially a two-step moral-psychological process; but lean more towards Sherman in contending that the groundwork for *phronesis* development starts in early childhood.

Adding psychological realism to this developmental picture first requires sketching the time-frame of habituated emulation. According to current developmental psychology, the propensity for collaborative communication between an expert (usually a parent) and a novice (usually their child) emerges in early childhood where skills can be demonstrated and taught with the use of pantomiming gestures and informative pointing (O'Madagain and Tomasello, 2022, p. 3). At one year old, children are typically capable of pointing and joint attention, and by two this is supplemented with iconic gestures (ibid.). Importantly, this kind of collaborative communication and learning requires that the task at hand be immediately observable to both parties (ibid.) – a point which adds credence to my claim that *especially in habituated*

emulation a role model must be experientially present in order for their *phronesis* to entangle. Since habituated emulation, as described, can be considered a form of collaborative communication, this research could also support that modelling, e.g., generosity through sharing, and encouraging children to share through informative pointing and gestures, is important even before the age of two. This is further supported by the wealth of research which demonstrates that infants begin to socially learn and imitate the actions of others from around their first birthday (Tomasello, 2020, p. 6). As for the point that habituated emulation concerns actions which instil beliefs about particular cases of virtue, but not yet an understanding how this is generalisable to other contexts, this can also be supported by the developmental literature on the effects of instruction giving (e.g., see Csibra and Gergely, 2006). Unlike gestural communication, it is thought that when reasons are added to the equation, and instructions are explained verbally, this enables children to understand how something can be generalised beyond the confines of a concrete situation to other contexts (Csibra and Gergely, 2006; Butler and Tomasello, 2016; O'Madagain and Tomasello, 2022). Yet research suggests that children only learn this way from around their third birthday (Butler and Tomasello, 2016). This makes reasonable how before the age of three, it is primarily action that should be the focus of habituated emulation, with reasons for these actions only becoming relevant later. Of course, I do not mean to suggest that role models attempt to entangle their *phronesis* in silence, but more that the focus ought to be on the action, with language primarily operating to encourage, discourage, praise or reward – e.g., ‘thank you’, ‘that was kind’, ‘it’s good to share’, ‘don’t snatch’ — rather than to explain. That said, after the age of three, children begin to flexibly combine different sources of ‘culturally relevant information’ from those around them – of which normative information is an example – to make generic inferences, but only in so far as this is accompanied by language *qua* explanation (Butler and Tomasello, 2016, p. 76). Again, this could support the rationale that supplementing action with verbal explanation becomes

important after the age of three – with such receptivity to reasons further suggesting this could be the *very* early beginnings of complete emulation. Taking individual developmental differences into account[59], I therefore suggest that habituated emulation typically concerns children *below the age of three, maybe four*.

Having made reasonable that habituated emulation takes place typically below the age of three or four, I now want to add empirical credibility to how the mechanism of entangled *phronesis* works during this time. In short, I suggest the role model's *phronesis* directly substitutes the learner's lack of *phronesis*, to encourage and enable them to perform, through association, virtuous actions. I also suggest that this process plants the first seeds of *phronesis*. The literature on tacit knowledge sharing, which proposes that expert knowledge is *initially* made visible and shared through concrete actions, is again useful here (e.g., see Fenstermacher, 1994, pp. 33-34; Toom and Husu, 2020, p. 147). Since practical wisdom can reasonably be understood as a form of expert tacit knowledge, this can be used to support how *phronesis* primarily entangles, i.e., is shared, through *action* in habituated emulation, with the explanation for action coming later. Furthermore, if one conceptualises the process of entangled *phronesis* as one in which the moral-psychological state of the role model interacts with that of the novice, then there is more research from current developmental psychology which could support it. Tomasello[60] (2020, p. 3) highlights how an infant's skills of social cognition, social learning and collaboration, which he calls 'shared intentionality', develop particularly fast between the ages of two and three. Indeed, between the ages of two and four an infant's brain grows from 50% to 75% of their eventual adult size (ibid.). During this period of accelerated development, it is thought that an infant's ability to cooperatively communicate with adults, e.g., through

---

59 For example, those arising from the 'big five' personality traits, which are known to affect the formation of moral character traits (e.g., see Fowers et al., 2021, pp. 123-12; Wright et al., 2020, pp. 181-182).

60 I take no stand here on Tomasello's evolutionary hypothesis that children's early skills of shared intentionality are adaptations to sociological challenges which result from 'a cooperative breeding regime of childcare' (2020, p. 4), but do maintain that his findings are relevant and useful when applied to the present context.

emotion sharing, attitude sharing and attention sharing, works to 'align the psychological states of infant and adult' (ibid.; see also Tomasello and Gonzalez-Cabrera, 2017). Importantly, this aligning of psychological states can also happen behaviourally, for example through imitation and cooperation (Tomasello, 2020, pp. 3-6; see also Tomasello, 2019). In addition, aligned psychological states are known to promote social bonding and relational closeness (Tomasello, 2020, p. 3; Wolf et al., 2016). Translated to the language of virtue, aligned psychological states support the concept of entangled *phronesis* as a process in which normative information is shared between an adult and infant. That behaviour can work to align psychological states also supports virtuous action as the medium of normative information sharing in habituated emulation. The link to social bonding also gives weight to the idea that known role models are most effective in stimulating emulation. But that is not all. Since shared intentionality and cooperative communication are social skills, Tomasello also argues that social skills should be understood to precede the development of more sophisticated cognitive skills (Tomasello, 2020, p. 3). Since virtuous actions can be conceived as social 'skills', which enable one to act and live well in relation to others, this evidence also supports the idea that role-model-assisted virtuous action could lay the groundwork for the development of the more complex cognitive 'skill' of practical wisdom, i.e., *phronesis*. This illuminates how aligning psychological states, as in entangled *phronesis*, is important for preparing infants for adulthood *and* how this process starts in early infancy. As a final piece of empirical support for habituated emulation, it is known that under the age of three the kind of social learning and psychological state alignment described above is mainly an interaction that occurs with adults rather than peers (Tomasello, 2020, p. 4; see also Brownell and Carriger, 1990; Kachel et al., 2018). This demonstrates how habituated emulation occurs more naturally between unequal character friends rather than equal character friends.

Through appeal to developmental psychology, in this section I sought to illustrate that hypothesis 4 – *entangled phronesis is implicated in pre-phronetic habituated emulation* – is at least minimally psychologically realistic. Encouragingly, multiple empirical sources support how habituated emulation can be reasonably understood to concern the following:

- infants under three, maybe four;
- a role model who is experientially present, i.e., known;
- entangled *phronesis* between an infant and adult;
- beliefs about particular cases of virtue conditioned primarily through action; and
- the very first social seeds of *phronesis* which act as preparation for the development of its full cognitive complexity later on.

In short, habituated emulation plants the seeds of *phronesis* in infancy by modelling and encouraging virtuous actions. Entangled *phronesis* aligns these actions with *phronesis* and facilitates their practice and repetition. Cumulatively, this process builds an infant's initial belief of what virtue is. Before we move on to hypothesis 5, I will take a moment to emphasise that I intend for the transition between habituated emulation and complete emulation to be incremental, meaning that there will be a potentially fairly significant phase of overlap between the two. During this transitional period, I suggest that the 'conditioning' of virtuous actions be supplemented with basic reasons *qua* explanations, with these reasons growing in sophistication in line with a child's ability to understand them. In true Aristotelian style, I also intend for this transition to be contextually sympathetic to the individual developmental trajectory of each child, thereby allowing for individual differences in progress.

5.4.3. Hypothesis 5: Entangled *phronesis* is implicated in *phronetically-informed* complete emulation

This section has three main aims. First, I seek to flesh out the nature of the transitional period between habituated and complete emulation. Second, I seek to extend the concept of complete emulation by substantiating it with current research from developmental psychology. Third, I

seek to empirically illustrate how entangled *phronesis* operates primarily through virtuous action, reason-giving, i.e., explanation, and 'mind reading' during complete emulation.

Before I proceed, as a reminder, I will briefly summarise my understanding of complete emulation, with an emphasis on the 'briefly' since I have already dedicated the majority of this thesis so far to explaining it. Let me start with its etymology. I term it 'complete' emulation to denote how, in order to qualify as a moral virtue, it must be somehow *phronetically*-informed. The 'somehow' caveat is important, since in emulation this takes a unique form which involves supplementing the novice's developing *phronesis* with the role model's *phronesis* – a mechanism which I term entangled *phronesis*. So, unlike other virtues, emulation only requires developing rather than fully-developed *phronesis*. In Chapter 3 I argued that understanding emulation as a moral virtue in its own right is educationally salient because it provides a conceptual umbrella with which to explain and clarify the *whole process* through which one develops *both* virtuous emotion and action, i.e., virtue, from moral exemplars. There, I also distinguished emulation as a special kind of virtue: one associated specifically with moral education, that is practised prior to other virtues in order to acquire them. I also argued that, like other virtues, emulation – or emulousness – is predominately composed of virtuous emotion (the efficient, formal and material cause) and virtuous action (the final cause). Following Aristotle (2009, *NE* 1105b5-17), I support how purely theoretical knowledge of virtue, detached from *doing* virtuous actions, will not facilitate becoming good. This is why my account of emulation *qua* role modelling involves both virtuous emotion and virtuous action – I intend that through emulation a person might eventually become someone who perceives, thinks, feels and acts not merely in line with virtue, but from a stable virtuous character. Having sketched its essential elements, it is now time to add empirical contours to my account of complete emulation.

The timespan of complete emulation

Ultimately, complete emulation builds upon the moral foundations set by habituated emulation. It tracks an individual's moral progress from merely knowing what virtue is to understanding why it is important. It is expected that learners will become progressively more receptive to reasons during complete emulation. Like Burnyeat (1980, p. 266), I thus support how habituated emulation gives 'character a kinship to virtue and a receptiveness to arguments directed to encouraging virtue'. However, it is in complete emulation that a learner's own *phronesis* begins to develop and entangle with a role model's – a process which enables this form of emulation to count as virtuous, albeit in a limited way. I have already cited research from developmental psychology suggesting that habituated emulation typically concerns infants *below the age of three, maybe four*. I now want to make reasonable how there will be a transitional period to complete emulation, marked by the habituated 'emulation' of virtuous actions *and* basic reason-giving for these actions. Ideally this will prepare young children for the onset of increasingly sophisticated reasons *qua* explanations for a role model's virtuous actions in complete emulation.

Let me start by proposing that the transitional period lasts from *around three or four years old, until around six years old*, bearing in mind individual genetic and social differences which may reduce or elongate the process. Justifying this general timeframe requires an understanding of when the kind of cognitive faculties associated with *phronesis* might begin to develop, which invites investigation into better-researched concepts such as metacognition. First recall how children become receptive to verbal explanations from around the age of three (Butler and Tomasello, 2016, p. 76). If we add to this how usually by the age of six children can compare their own actions with those of their community (Tomasello, 2019), this emergence of an evaluative attitude could represent the beginnings of metacognition

(Kristjánsson and Fowers, 2024, p. 250). As *phronesis* is a complex and morally motivated form of metacognition, this could also symbolise the emergence of very elementary elements of *phronesis* and thus the end of the transitional phase.

As for complete emulation, since I have argued this to be '*phronetically*-informed', it requires a learner's own *phronesis* to have at least begun to emerge, in order to entangle with the role model's *phronesis*. I suggest the emergence of the early signs of *phronesis* are important because they enable a learner to comprehend more sophisticated reasons accompanying a role model's actions, which, based on the tacit knowledge sharing literature (e.g., see Toom and Husu, 2020), is how I have suggested *phronesis* is fully entangled. Due to entanglement with the role model's *phronesis*, a learner's *phronesis* does not need to be particularly well developed for complete emulation to be effective. Yet in order to know how to pitch emulation, we still need to ask what age complete emulation might be feasibly considered to begin? Synthesising Aristotle's somewhat vague remarks about *phronesis* development in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (2009, 1142a12-16), with current knowledge about, e.g., the development of adult contextual integrative thinking (a form of metacognition) (e.g., see Kallio, 2020), many neo-Aristotelian theorists presume that *phronesis* 'takes off' in late adolescence to early adulthood (e.g., see Kristjánsson, 2021b, p. 1311). Whilst this is undoubtedly a useful insight, I am not so concerned about when it takes off, but more with when it begins to emerge. Indeed, research confirms that metacognitive development is particularly pronounced between early adolescence and late adolescence (Weil et al., 2013), which if combined with the aforementioned insights about the initial emergence of basic metacognition at around six (Tomasello, 2019), could give grounds to argue that complete emulation begins around this time. However, this is extremely speculative, indicating that more research – especially concerning distinctly moral forms of complex metacognition – is

required. In light of this, I propose that *complete emulation probably begins after the age of six*.

As for the duration of complete emulation, it is possible to claim that due to the accelerated degree of metacognitive development in early to late adolescence, it is particularly important during this time, and even in early adulthood (Kallio, 2020; Weil et al., 2013). However, since virtuous character development is a lifelong process, it is probable that a form of emulation could persist, albeit in developmentally sensitive ways, over the course of one's life. Whilst it is beyond the scope of the present chapter to expound this further, I will dedicate considerable thought to how emulation might operate in adulthood in Chapter 4.

Complete emulation and entangled phronesis

Now that I have sketched a possible timeframe for complete emulation, I will move on to empirical justification of its central tenets. I begin with the driving force of emulation – entangled *phronesis*. It appears that far from being an esoteric notion or idealistic metaphor, there is considerable support for it, or at least something conceptually very similar to it. For example, according to the 'cultural origins' hypothesis some forms of metacognition have a social origin and depend on cultural learning – the idea that traits are acquired from others who already possess such a trait – rather than being genetic (Heyes et al., 2020). Evidence suggests that a number of cognitive mechanisms are shaped by a cultural selection process (as opposed to a genetic selection process), including imitation and 'mind reading', indicating there could even be evolutionary support for something like *phronesis* and the way in which it is acquired (ibid., p. 349). Relevantly for these particular purposes, cultural learning of acquired traits typically involves teaching, language, imitation, or 'mind reading', and is 'a process specialised for high fidelity transfer of information' (ibid. , p. 350). A la Aristotle, it is essentially thought

to be a product of teaching and experience (ibid., p. 351). In addition, as a form of cultural learning, it involves a social interaction between a receiver and sender, where the transfer of complex information is causally dependent on what the sender knows, which can be conveyed through both verbal and non-verbal communication (ibid.). Whilst the nod to imitation, which could plausibly mean emulation, is clearly useful in supporting how *phronesis*, and thus moral virtue, comes about, it is the emphasis on mind reading which I find particularly compelling. What developmental psychologists seem to mean by this is 'the ability to understand the thoughts of others, their feelings, and other mental states' (ibid., p. 350), which sounds a lot like Tomasello's 'aligned psychological states' (2020, p. 3). Numerous other studies also support mind reading as a method of inferring the mental and affective states of others, i.e., learning what they are thinking and feeling (e.g., see Heyes and Frith, 2014; Meinhardt-Injac et al., 2020). Whether we call it 'mind reading' or 'aligned psychological states', the fact that information can be shared in this way supports how entangled *phronesis* might be possible, and further that it can convey more than just behavioural information, but also specific emotion states. Combined with the research on tacit knowledge-sharing and metacognition which I have mentioned several times, I can now add additional clarity to the mechanism of entangled *phronesis* by proposing that it is primarily shared through action, explanation, and mind reading. In essence it represents the aligned moral-psychological states of learner and role model, which stimulates emulation.

Having highlighted entangled *phronesis* as a psychologically realistic concept, I will now delve into other important aspects of complete emulation. I mentioned in Section 3.1 that a role model's virtuous actions initially enable a learner to perceive them as representing a moral ideal (the efficient cause). Perception of virtuous action can thus be thought to kick-start the emulative process, as it is here that *phronesis* begins to entangle. As for the formal, material and final cause, in line with research that suggests metacognition can be communicated/shared

both verbally and non-verbally (Heyes et al., 2020, p. 351), I propose that this is primarily fuelled through both verbal reason-giving and non-verbal mind reading. As before, reason-giving helps instil in learners the complexity of moral decision-making, i.e., the integrative, constitutive, emotion regulation and blueprint functions of *phronesis*. However, as a lot of role modelling is indirect, my account also leaves room for the possibility that mind reading could also help learners understand better, in particular, the virtuous emotions of the role model – an important skill since virtuous emotions are the central components of moral virtue. There are limits to this though, as it is possible a learner could interpret/mind read incorrectly, in addition to the reality that more complex decision-making requires explanation if its intricacies are to be fully understood.

Generally speaking, that people do learn to become virtuous by emulating role models is also fairly well researched, even though the precise emulative process is not. Han, for example, has published a wealth of moral psychological research which supports emulation as a method of moral development (2017; 2022; 2023). More specifically, his research supports how motivation to participate in voluntary service is better stimulated by relevant and attainable exemplars than irrelevant and unattainable exemplars (Han et al., 2017), with follow up studies further indicating that it is primarily the relatability of exemplars that inspires acts of prosociality (Han et al., 2022). Tentatively, he also suggests that the neuroscience of moral learning supports a neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical approach to moral education, particularly in terms of the developmental processes involved in the cultivation of moral virtues and *phronesis*[61] (Han, 2023). These studies confirm I am on an empirically supported track when

---

61 Drawing upon insights from neuroimaging, experimental studies and the Bayesian Learning Mechanism, Han suggests that this research on moral psychology and development supports a neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical account of moral education (2023). However, since many of the studies and processes cited address general psychological functioning rather than moral functioning explicitly, Han acknowledges that this support is indirect and that more research is needed specifically into virtue habituation and *phronesis* development (ibid., p15). That said, whilst radical, Han's claims in this paper are *at least* promising.

it comes to using role models to stimulate virtue and *phronesis* development. Additionally, advances in neurobiology support how brain development is reliant on social-emotional experience (Immordino-Yang et al., 2019). Especially for the novice, emulation *qua* role modelling can be construed as a social-emotional experience, which indicates that the quality of this kind of interaction is also important for cognitive, i.e., brain, development (ibid., p. 185). For example, it is known that when children and adolescents persistently experience adversity, the brain responds by reinforcing circuits that encourage anxiety and aggression to the detriment of circuits which promote memory, cognition and reasoning (ibid., p. 188; see also Briggs-Gowan et al., 2015; Harris, 2018; McLaughlin et al., 2015). This highlights the connection between optimal brain functioning and positive social-emotional experiences. Since positive role models stimulate positive social-emotional experiences, this can also give credence to the part they play in cognitive development, of which moral development is a facet. Finally, as social-emotional *experiences* occur predominately 'in the home, community, school and workplace' (Immordino-Yang et al., 2019, p. 188), this research also encourages my focus on *known* ordinary role models.

Before I conclude this section, I will take a moment to review a number of studies which lend support to emulation as mixed-valence, by which I mean its propensity to be physically felt as *both* positively experienced admiration and negatively experienced distress. As before, this refers to the material cause: *physically feeling* the distress *and* admiration associated with one's lack of the desired quality, i.e., the role-model-represented ideal. Although couched in the language of full-blown emotions, rather than mere physiological feelings, Protasi (2021, p. 49) has argued that both admiration and 'benign envy' (conceptually similar to my reading of distress) motivate emulation-type self-improvement, albeit in distinct ways. Indeed, whilst earlier studies have led researchers to favour either admiration (e.g., see Schindler et al., 2013; Schindler et al., 2015) or benign envy (e.g., see Lange and Crusius, 2015; Van de Ven et al.,

2011) as more effectively motivational, I agree with Protasi that the most plausible hypothesis is that both are important (2021, p. 49). Protasi's position draws upon a more recent study by Van de Ven (2017, p. 197), which suggests that positively experienced admiration could be connected to *long-term improvement* by inspiring a commitment to abstract ideals (see also, Schindler et al., 2015), whilst negatively experienced benign envy could be connected to *short-term improvement* by inspiring the more immediate acquisition of a lacked good. Whilst I do not support that feelings and emotions *in themselves* lead to moral action, this remains a relevant finding because it supports how the feelings elicited by distress *and* admiration might plausibly contribute to the motivational potency of the material cause, which, as I have previously argued, culminates in the motivational state of inspiration. Contra Zagzebski (2015; 2017), it also supports how admiration is not the only motivational force at work in emulation. All this said, further studies are needed to confirm whether these findings hold true in the context of emulating moral virtue specifically.

Primarily through appeal to developmental psychology, in this section I sought to show that hypothesis 5 – *entangled phronesis is implicated in phronetically-informed complete emulation* – is *at least* minimally psychologically realistic. By synthesising my four-causal account of emulation as a moral virtue with the aforementioned empirical literature, complete emulation can now be feasibly understood to concern:

- an extended transitional period – marked by the habituated 'emulation' of virtuous actions *and* basic reason-giving for these actions – typically spanning from around the age of three or four to six;
- a probable time span starting around the age of six, which accelerates during mid to late adolescence, and extends to early adulthood (and likely throughout life in developmentally sensitive forms);
- entangled *phronesis* between role model and learner, shared both verbally and non-verbally through a combination of virtuous action, explanation and mind reading;
- the giving of increasingly sophisticated reasons *qua* explanations for virtuous actions in line with a learner's *phronetic* development, which work to instil an understanding of the complexity of moral decision-making, i.e., the four central functions of *phronesis*;

- physical feelings of positively experienced admiration *and* negatively experienced distress.

In short, complete emulation builds upon the moral foundations set by habituated emulation. The moral-psychological mechanism of entangled *phronesis* enables the novice to practise the virtue of emulation while their *phronesis* is developing – a process which is initially made visible by perceiving a role model's virtuous actions, and further conveyed through verbal explanations and non-verbal mind reading. This serves to align the psychological states of novice and role model, resulting in feelings of distress *and* admiration, which in combination with entangled *phronesis* motivates the novice to practise virtuous actions. Gradually, as the novice becomes more advanced and independent in their *phronetic* ability, their *phronesis* will disentangle to such an extent to enable the practice of full virtue, i.e., of virtuous actions informed by virtuous emotions. This marks the transition from, e.g., the emulation of generosity, to the full virtue of generosity. That said, since the road to full *phronetically-informed* virtue is long, complex and scalar – meaning that one can always improve one's character – it is likely that forms of emulation will persist throughout life. To further enhance the credibility of my position, in the final section of this chapter I outline and respond to four possible objections.

5.5. Objections and responses

The redundancy thesis about phronesis

This chapter sought to demonstrate that each of my hypotheses *at least* pass Flanigan's metaethical Principle of Minimal Psychological Realism (PMPR) (1991, p. 32). However, some moral psychologists deny that neo-Aristotelian developmental theory passes this test, largely due to scepticism regarding the concept of *phronesis* (Lapsley, 2021) – an objection

which has been termed 'the redundancy thesis' (Kristjánsson and Fowers, 2022). Since the reality of *phronesis* is crucial to the position I further in this chapter – and my thesis as a whole – this objection warrants further scrutiny. According to Lapsley's '*principle of developmental adequacy'* (a more explicitly developmental version of the PMPR), a philosophical concept cannot be fully understood until a scientifically credible story regarding how it reaches mature adult form has been explained (Lapsley, 2021, p. 138). Despite the attempts of neo-Aristotelians to construct such a story (e.g., see Darnell et al., 2022; Kristjánsson et al., 2021), he thinks *phronesis* fails this principle, that it is essentially superfluous, and that the various functions it is meant to perform can be explained by *discrete* constructs and mechanisms from better researched social-cognitive theories of personality and development (Lapsley, 2021, pp. 154-155). For example, he proposes that two established social-cognitive approaches to personality coherence – the 'knowledge and appraisal personality architecture' (KAPA) and 'cognitive-affective personality system' (CAPS) models – can explain away the constitutive function (moral perception), because they provide a metatheoretical framework by which we perceive, identify and discern salient ethical features of social situations (ibid., p. 151). Like *phronesis*, these systems are cognitive-affective in nature and situated within a person's 'central, top-down cognition of plans' (ibid.). Constructs like KAPA and CAPS lead Lapsley to conclude that 'the role of *phronesis* in Aristotelian virtue ethics is much like the role of ether in physics, once thought crucial but now expendable' (ibid., p. 155).

Whilst Lapsley can be credited for the precision with which he attempts to replace three of the four functions of *phronesis* with better-known social-cognitive processes, his strategy does not necessarily render *phronesis* redundant. As Kristjánsson and Fowers argue (2022, p. 6), appeal to social-cognitive processes is compatible with a componential understanding of *phronesis,* as demonstrated by Whole Trait Theory (Jayawickreme and Fleeson, 2017) which appeals to similar processes *and* requires *phronesis* (see Snow et al., 2021). Kristjánsson and

Fowers also note that social-cognitive processes cannot sufficiently explain the entirety of personality expression or moral behaviour, which enables them to argue that *phronesis* does add value to the neo-Aristotelian developmental story (2022, p. 6). Indeed, by drawing an analogy with a decathlon, they illuminate why *phronesis* cannot be reduced to each of its individual components, but must be understood as an integrative whole (ibid.). The strength of this analogy ultimately serves to shift the burden of proof from proponents of *phronesis* to its critics (ibid., p. 15). The argument I have presented in this chapter can extend this persuasive rejoinder by adding even more developmental rigour to the understanding of how *phronesis* is ideally acquired from infancy to early adulthood – something which directly engages with Lapsley's 'principle of developmental adequacy'. Substantiating my position with robust empirical insights, I make credible how the seeds of *phronesis* are planted in infancy by entangled *phronesis* via the habituated emulation of a role model's virtuous actions. In my account of complete emulation, I then expound how entangled *phronesis* is shared through a combination of virtuous actions, reason-giving and mind reading, which through emulation enables the cultivation of both *phronesis* and, relatedly, moral virtue. Contra to Lapsley, the complexity of the practical wisdom shared in entangled *phronesis* cannot be reduced to four *discrete* functions, meaning that what is shared reflects the integration of these functions in a cohesive whole. If the argument I present in this chapter is persuasive, it bolsters the case for *phronesis* by empirically demonstrating how it is acquired through emulation *qua* role modelling. Arguably, the burden of proof now rests even more firmly on Lapsley[62].

---

[62] It should be noted that the philosopher Christian Miller has also proposed a version of the so-called 'redundancy thesis' (2021). Metaphysically speaking, he posits that practical wisdom does not exist because either 1) each distinct moral virtue contains a practical wisdom component specific to that virtue which serves the same functions as practical wisdom proper, e.g., honesty would have an honesty-specific practical wisdom component ('The Fragmentation Model') (ibid., p. 54); *or* 2) each of the functions of practical wisdom is performed by discrete psychological processes, rather than by one master intellectual virtue ('Practical Wisdom Eliminitivism') (ibid., p. 65). Miller remains sceptical about the first option particularly because, if *phronesis* is virtue specific, it cannot account for the 'Handling Conflicts Function' – or moral adjudication between virtues – which he acknowledges to be an important element of moral deliberation (ibid.). His eliminative call to 'jettison practical wisdom altogether', i.e., 'Practical Wisdom Eliminitivism', and replace it with distinct intellectual capacities for each

The paradox of moral education

Peters' so-called 'paradox of moral education' (1981), questions how Aristotle's early arational and uncritical method of moral habituation can prepare moral learners for the distinctly rational, reflective and autonomous practice of virtue (see also Kristjánsson, 2021b, p. 1304; Kristjánsson and Fowers, 2024, pp. 8-9). Indeed, a typical exegesis of Aristotelian developmental theory has standardly been taken to imply that early virtue-trait habituation is completely separate from the later formation of *phronesis* – an interpretation which clearly encourages Peters' famous paradox (Kristjánsson, 2021b, p. 1312; Burnyeat, 1980). Neo-Aristotelians, in particular Sherman (1989, pp. 177-178) and Kristjánsson (2021b, p. 1312), have attempted to diffuse the paradox by proposing that *even before an infant can comprehend moral reasons,* such reasons should accompany early years virtue-trait habituation in order to cultivate reason-responsiveness – a process which is intended to link habituation with *phronesis* development. However, as the latter notes, devoid of any substantial empirical backing this hypothesis is 'merely armchair psychology' (ibid.).

Whilst I agree that reason-giving is an important element of *phronesis* cultivation, I question the logic of attempting to instil reason-responsiveness before an understanding of reasons is developmentally possible. My response to the paradox thus employs a different cognitive mechanism to unify habituated virtue with *phronesis*: entangled *phronesis*. As explained at length in Section 3.2, in habituated emulation an infant's actions are guided by the

---

function, should thus be understood as his central stance (ibid., p. 66). Miller's taxonomy of options for what practical wisdom may or may not be is characteristically systematic and thorough. His central thesis – whilst a product of philosophy rather than psychology – is also very close to Lapsley's. However, unlike Lapsley, Miller fails to substantiate empirically what the distinct 'intellectual capacities' comprising each function of *phronesis* might be, rendering his account somewhat underdeveloped. As such, I feel justified in giving his position just this brief explanation, since my response to Lapsley applies to him equally well.

role model's entangled *phronesis*, and it is through this process that the first seeds of *phronesis* are planted. The developmental literature supports how *before the age of three, maybe four* virtue adjacent actions should be encouraged by informative pointing and gestures, with language operating primarily to praise and reward (see Butler and Tomasello, 2016; O'Madagain and Tomasello, 2022; Tomasello, 2020). However, because these virtue adjacent actions are facilitated by the role model's entangled *phronesis*, they are still connected to *phronesis*, meaning that moral habituation is not totally devoid of rational input. Since I have demonstrated entangled *phronesis* to be a scientifically plausible mechanism (e.g., see Heyes et al., 2020; Tomasello, 2020), I am justified in proposing that a role model's *phronesis* can be rationally communicated in this way. To further unify the journey from habituated emulation, to complete emulation, I add a transitional phase which in addition to action involves very basic reason-giving. I then propose that the journey from complete emulation to the fully autonomous practice of virtue involves action, increasingly complex reasons and mind reading. Whilst Aristotle did not have the concept of entangled *phronesis* at his fingertips, as Burnyeat notes, 'practice has cognitive powers', because it is the method by which we initially learn what virtue is (1980, p. 263). If this holds, it is perhaps not truly exegetical to consider Aristotle or Burnyeat's account of moral habituation entirely devoid of reason, nor the development of autonomous virtue from this starting point paradoxical. Peters' 'paradox' is thus diffused to the extent that entangled *phronesis* enables even habituated emulation to be infused with reason, albeit that of the role model. Further, as this early-years process works to lay the groundwork for the development of *phronesis* proper (cultivated largely through complete emulation), it also enables me to argue that even habituated emulation helps to prepare the novice for the reflective and autonomous practice of virtue in later life.

Paternalism

One might object that because habituated emulation requires that a role model effectively 'condition' a child into good habits, it is paternalistic. In response, I contend that in this context it is not problematic, because a degree of paternalism can be considered necessary for guiding children to the right ends. A lack of agency, then, is not such a problem for children in the way it is for adults, particularly because it aims to foster greater agency – by sowing the seeds of *phronesis* – in the future.

Hope for those dealt a less than ideal hand?

At the start of this chapter, I made clear that my focus would be on the trajectory of the 'well brought up', by which I mean those with good enough role models to inspire emulation. Importantly, as emphasised at length in Chapter 4, I define good enough role models as ordinary aspiring *phronimoi* who possess a sufficient amount of *phronesis* to enable entanglement and, consequently, virtuous character development. But what about those who were not blessed with such a favourable upbringing? Is it possible for them to progress beyond continence to *phronetically-informed* virtue? On a non-stage theory interpretation of Aristotle, which I support, virtue development is multilinear, meaning that not everyone follows the same trajectory. On this account, without good enough role models, a person is highly unlikely to develop *phronesis*, and will thus – at best – stagnate at the continence phase. Remember here that reason, desire and action are misaligned for the continent, or *enkratic*, meaning that even if they have the strength of will to perform prosocial actions which are in accordance with virtue, because these actions do not stem from a 'firm and unchanging character' (Aristotle, 2009, *NE* 1105a30), they are not virtuous. As regards emulation, let us imagine a scenario where, from infancy to early adulthood, a person is only exposed *at best* to continent 'role

models'. As none of these people would have cultivated a sufficient degree of *phronesis* to enable entanglement, entangled *phronesis* will not be possible and thus neither the development of *phronetically-informed* virtue. Exposure only to the content will thus *typically* put an upper limit of continence on one's degree of virtuous character development. Not a totally terrible outcome, since the continent are still capable of pro-sociality, but also not virtuous because the action will not be motivated and informed by *phronetically-infused* virtuous emotion (or the efficient, formal and material cause of virtue). From a virtue ethical perspective, the practice of prosocial actions alone are also much less likely to contribute to living a flourishing life – or in plain English contribute to one's objective (potentially also subjective) well-being – meaning that those who are merely continent are more likely to flounder than flourish.

Rather than resign to this somewhat depressing reality, I see two central opportunities for reinvigorating the less-than-ideal trajectory in the context of character education. The first solution aims to mitigate the possibility of a lack of good enough role models from pre-school age onwards, by reinstating the centrality of teachers as role models. Whilst one cannot control for children having good enough role models at home, both pre-service and in-service teachers are just this – *in service* – and I interpret *moral service* as an unambiguously important element of the role. However, since not all teachers are 'good enough' aspiring *phronimoi,* and more likely exist within the continent trajectory, they may not have cultivated the *phronesis* needed for inspiring emulation in pupils. This is problematic because a key ambition of neo-Aristotelian character education is that *all* pupils, regardless of moral luck, have the opportunity to become *phronimoi* and live flourishing lives (Kristjánsson, 2015). As such, the central solution to this objection necessitates enabling ordinary teachers to become 'good enough' aspiring *phronimoi* in order that all pupils are given the opportunity of living a *phronetically-informed* flourishing life. This leads me to the second possible solution. Indeed,

recent work by Yacek and Jonas (2023; see also Yacek et al., 2023) queries how teachers lacking a prior and thorough education in the virtues can be adequate, i.e., *phronetically*-informed, role models to their pupils. To navigate this issue, they propose that the *phronetic* model be extended to include 'epiphanies' (Yacek and Jonas, 2023). As transformative experiences, epiphanies have the power to 'jumpstart the habituation process' to enable teachers to be 'rehabituated' in the virtues, something that – given the right conditions and mindset – can set them on the path to *phronesis,* and thus moral virtue, development. Whilst it is beyond the purview of the present chapter to evaluate the strength of this response, I do so at length in the next chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter strengthened my theory of emulation by imbuing my previous philosophical argument with empirical force. In doing so, I hope to have demonstrated how each of the five hypotheses are *at least* minimally psychologically realistic:

1. Emotions are cognitive, i.e., they are infused with thoughts/reason (*phronesis*)
2. *Phronesis* (practical wisdom) is implicated in both virtuous emotion and action
3. *Phronesis* (practical wisdom) can entangle, i.e., it can be shared
4. Entangled *phronesis* is implicated in *pre-phronetic* habituated emulation
5. Entangled *phronesis* is implicated in *phronetically-informed* complete emulation

By fleshing out a probable but precise account of how entangled *phronesis* operates in the dual moral-psychological process of habituated emulation and complete emulation, I have extended neo-Aristotelian developmental theory by adding to our understanding of the nature of emulation in different developmental phases. This decidedly methodological contribution served to highlight the centrality of *phronesis* to the emulative process – in order to be a role model, and thus the subject of emulation, an individual is required to have cultivated a sufficient degree of *phronesis*, which when entangled stimulates both the practice of virtue and

cultivation of *phronesis* in the novice. Appeal to current research in developmental psychology – especially that pertaining to tacit knowledge-sharing, metacognition, shared psychological states and mind reading – enabled me to empirically extend the concept of entangled *phronesis* and demonstrate how it is predominantly made visible though virtuous action and comprehendible through verbal explanation and non-verbal mind reading. In essence, as the central mechanism in emulation *qua* role modelling, entangled *phronesis* should thus be taken to represent the aligned moral-psychological states of learner and role model, which stimulates emulation in developmentally sensitive ways. *Figure 3*, below, represents the central elements of the argument expounded in this chapter:

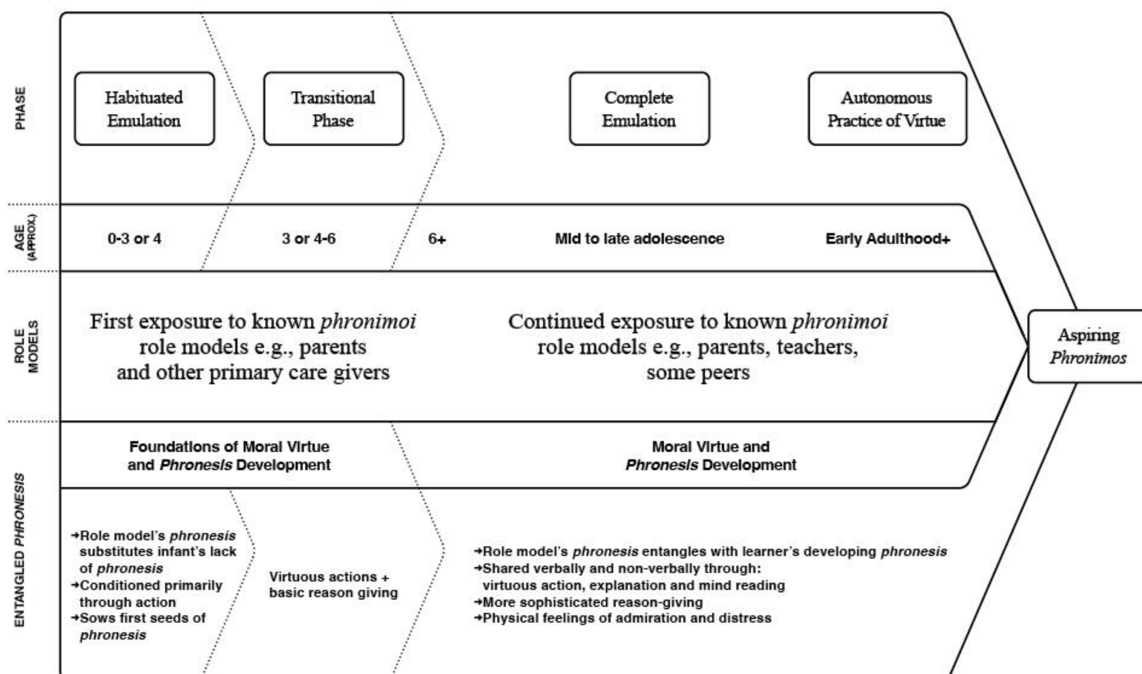

Figure 3. The ideal trajectory of emulation-inspired virtuous character development

Notably this figure represents the moral trajectory of the well brought up, i.e., those fortunate to be blessed with good enough *phronimoi* as role models who stimulate emulation through entangled *phronesis*. This implies that a person does not automatically become practically wise as a matter of course. However, if becoming practically wise – and thus virtuous – to a significant extent depends upon having moral role models, as this is somewhat

dependent on moral luck, not all children will have the same opportunities. Whilst a reality, this disparity in exposure to moral role models could be conceptualised as a case of developmental unluck, which arguably creates a normative obligation to level the moral developmental playing field. So, what of those not blessed with such a fortunate upbringing? Ought one leave them to languish somewhere between continence and incontinence? Or, can something be done about it? As alluded to in the final objection, it is here that the attention in this thesis turns to the idea of teachers as moral role models, and, more specifically, emulation in the professional context of teaching. Since – inevitably and unavoidably – teachers *just are* in the lives of *all* children, they are experientially available to them, something which marks them out as potential sources of moral inspiration. However, as many teachers will not reach the moral threshold required for being a *phronimoi* (and thus role model), this leads to the question of how they might be somehow become *phronetically* advanced enough to transform into role models for pupils? Responding to this question will be the primary focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: OVERCOMING THE THRESHOLD PROBLEM – A NORMATIVE CASE FOR TEACHER ROLE MODELS

6.1. Introduction

The preceding chapter refined and extended my previous philosophical account of emulation by imbuing it with empirical force. By integrating research from developmental moral psychology and neuroscience I was able to demonstrate that the central elements of this developmentally sensitive two-step account of emulation are psychologically realistic (Flanagan, 2016, p. 32) and that the trajectory of role-model-facilitated *phronesis* development proposed is potentially also developmentally adequate (Lapsley, 2021, p. 138). Paying homage to Aristotle's methodological naturalism, I thus ensured this evolving emulative theory 'harmonised with the facts'(Aristotle, 2009, *NE* 1179a20-23). Having established said harmony, and equipped with a deeper understanding of how emulation ideally operates from infancy to early adulthood, this chapter builds upon this philosophical and psychological foundation by illuminating the salience of emulation *qua* role modelling to teaching. A central aim of this chapter is, therefore, to bridge the gap between my account of emulation in general and my account of emulation in the professional context of teaching in particular. Such a bridge will primarily be created by expounding how developmentally necessary it is for teachers to act as moral role models to pupils in order to overcome the moral developmental disadvantage caused by a possible lack of these sources of moral inspiration at home. In short, I will argue that this requires that teachers meet a minimum threshold of *phronesis,* and, that those who do not – those who fall foul of the threshold – are supported in their own virtuous character development by experienced teacher *phronimoi* who also serve as role models to emulate.

To motivate this endeavour, let me start by reflecting on how exposure to moral role models is, but ought not be, a matter of moral luck[63]. Moral luck, in neo-Aristotelian terms, can be conceptualised partly as developmental luck[64], whereby the quality and availability of characterological influences – such as the presence of moral role models or character friendships between peers – affect an agent's moral development (Athanassoulis, 2019, p. 75; 2005). Good developmental luck results from exposure to positive moral influences which, put simply, encourage virtue and discourage vice; whereas bad developmental luck results from negative moral influences which encourage vice and discourage virtue (ibid., p. 76). Ultimately, the contingency of these developmental influences, coupled with the vulnerability of character to them, makes them important factors in moral luck and in the broader actualisation of character development. However, for Aristotle, it is not luck but the *phronetically-motivated* choice to cultivate a virtuous character which is conducive to and partly constitutive of *eudaimonia* (Aristotle, 2009, *NE* 1100b4-10), with such character offering a degree of protection against luck, in the sense that, once cultivated, it enables a moral agent to perceive, think, feel and respond to adversity in the right way (1106b20-24). Indeed, someone 'truly good and wise…bears all the chances of life becomingly and always makes the best of circumstances' (1100b35-1101a1). At the same time, Aristotle maintains how the

---

63 The contemporary discourse on the *seemingly* oxymoronic nature of moral luck – in that it highlights the apparent tension between moral responsibility and agency *and* a lack of moral responsibility and control – is shaped by the debate between Williams (1993) and Nagel (1993), and expounded in a neo-Aristotelian context by, for example, Athanassoulis (2005; 2019) and Johnson (2015). Luck for Aristotle is, however, hugely complex, and it is unfortunately beyond the purview of the present chapter to expound it in depth.

64 Synthesising Aristotle's definition of luck in the *Physics* (1936, Book II.5) with his account of the influence of luck on morality 'dotted around' the *Nicomachean Ethics* (2009, Book 1.9-11) and the *Eudemian Ethics* (1992, Book VII.14), Athanassoulis argues his ethical theory is 'steeped in luck' (2005, p. 15-16). Her tripartite neo-Aristotelian account of moral luck is divided into the constitutive, developmental and resultant: constitutive luck concerns natural personality traits we are born with, such as agreeableness or disagreeableness on the 'Big 5' scale, which are conducive or inconducive to developing character traits such as compassion; developmental luck, as before, concerns the factors in our environment which affect moral development, which includes relational influences, such as role models, but also things like education and opportunities for virtue expression; and resultant luck concerns the results of an agent's actions, imagine Oedipus' escapades with his mother as a case of moral unluck (Athanassoulis 2005; 2019). Whilst all three elements of moral luck are relevant to moral functioning, the literature on them is vast, thus for reasons for space and scope I will focus on that most concerned with relational learning and living a flourishing life: developmental moral luck.

enabling factors, preconditions and influences which make virtuous character possible are highly sensitive to luck, or 'chance' (ibid., Book 1.9). Thus, whilst independent deliberation and choice are valuable and praiseworthy, since this choice is predominantly first made possible by one's upbringing, which is undeniably luck-based, caution and empathy ought to be exercised when disentangling one from the other. This interconnection is reflected in Aristotle's description of the *megalopsychoi*, whose external fortunes of circumstance obligate them to perform magnificent philanthropic deeds (ibid., 1123a1-3). The degree of virtue expression expected of an agent is therefore relative to the agent, meaning one can expect more, morally speaking, from the privileged than the underprivileged. Equally, where an agent exceeds what is expected of them based on their luck-dependent moral developmental circumstances, i.e., is virtuous despite the odds stacked against them, one can consider this especially praiseworthy.

This understanding of developmental moral luck has important implications for emulation *qua* role modelling, in particular as regards its contribution to the *eudaimon*, or flourishing, life, which I shall now elucidate. Recall how, in the context of the present theory of emulation, in one's early years especially, role models are required to facilitate habituated emulation, and inculcate in learners an appreciation of the good, even before they understand why it is important. This early process is the catalyst for the 'ideal' moral developmental trajectory. Then, in later childhood onwards, once *phronesis* has begun to develop, role models are further required to facilitate complete emulation, and thus stimulate the full acquisition and practice of virtue proper. An important and moral-luck-relevant concern here is that if learners are not blessed with moral role models in their childhood, it is incredibly difficult for them to cultivate a virtuous character, meaning that they will likely stagnate at the *enkratic* (continent

or strong-willed), or, worse, *akratic* (incontinent or weak-willed) phases of development[65], or somewhere even lower down the developmental order[66]. Given the centrality of moral role models to specifically *virtuous* character development, one may therefore construe any lack of these emulative figures in the lives of children as a case of developmental moral unluck. This is because, if we understand the presence of role models to give learners a moral developmental advantage, their absence equates to a moral developmental disadvantage. Going further, if we understand the cultivation of a virtuous character to be conducive to and partly constitutive of *eudaimonia,* i.e., flourishing or objective well-being, and the emulation of role models to be at least necessary for virtuous character development, then a lack of moral role models will also adversely affect one's ability to flourish. In this sense, then, the moral disadvantage, as described, leads to a flourishing disadvantage. Since this developmental moral unluck often, although not always, affects those in the more disadvantaged echelons of society the most, it may also potentially be construed as a form of social injustice. Take, for example, the insight that a lack of role models in disadvantaged or deprived neighbourhoods negatively affects child behaviour (Flouri et al., 2020), or the known effects of parental imprisonment on intergenerational crime (PACT, 2023). By making visible the link between developmental moral luck, emulation *qua* role modelling, and flourishing, it should be clear that providing children with the capabilities – in the form of a more opportune upbringing – necessary for proper moral functioning in later life is of primary moral educational concern.

Indeed, the enhanced understanding of emulation *qua* role modelling reflected in this thesis so far, makes it possible to argue that improving access to moral role models in the most morally formative phases of one's life may, at least in part, help reduce the moral disadvantage

---

65 It is worth recalling here Aristotle's lengthy discussion of *enkrateia* (continence) and *akrasia* (incontinence) in Book VII. 1-10 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (2009) – this is where he thought most people typically languished.

66 Further recall how, for Aristotle, becoming *akratic* and especially *enkratic* are actually moral accomplishments. Thus, it cannot be taken for granted that those deprived of role models ever reach this far.

caused by a bad, or even just not good, upbringing. Whilst it might be considered too paternalistic to control the kind of role model children are exposed to at home, and thus hard to alleviate the disadvantage caused by inadequate role models through appeal to, e.g., parents, alone, appealing to other adults who have a more formalised professional role in a child's overall development is less contentious. Since teachers *just are* in the lives of all children fortunate enough to be in school[67], and are quite literally *in-service* to them, they arguably have a moral obligation to be moral role models[68]. This marks them out as ideal candidates for levelling the moral playing field by enhancing access to good role models in childhood, regardless of moral luck. For clarity, I shall now present this argument in standard form:

1. A central aim of neo-Aristotelian character education is to enable *all* children to become a *phronimos* and, relatedly, live a flourishing life.
2. Becoming a *phronimos* is at least partly dependant on having moral role models.
3. Having moral role models is a matter of developmental moral luck.
4. This developmental moral luck creates a moral advantage and, in turn, a flourishing advantage.
5. Conversely, moral developmental unluck creates a moral disadvantage and, in turn, a flourishing disadvantage.
6. To help mitigate the disadvantage caused by developmental moral unluck, all children need a reliable source of moral role models.
7. Most children have teachers in their lives.
8. In virtue of being in their lives, consciously or unconsciously, children *just are* influenced by their teachers.
9. This influence entails that, in addition to imparting subject knowledge, their role encompasses a moral-educational dimension, which includes alleviating developmental moral unluck through role modelling.

---

67 My argument assumes that children are in a society which upholds the human right to education and thus that they have access to teachers – it therefore does not extend to the poorest communities and cultures who may lack such a privilege. However, my position could indirectly help put additional pressure on global institutions, such as the OECD or UN, to uphold education as a basic need through a focus on teacher role models. Indeed, since flourishing has recently been heralded as a new global aim of education by the OECD (see Kristjánsson, 2023), if role models are required to stimulate the moral developmental conditions necessary for flourishing, then one could also make a more global case for teachers as role models to pupils, although addressing this formally is not the present focus.

68 One could here make that case that other more distant 'role models', such as celebrities, are also theoretically 'in' the lives of children and thus also have a responsibility to be moral role models to them. To this point I have three central rejoinders. First, their 'role' is not explicitly tied to the education of children, which makes it harder to argue that they *ought* to act as role models. Second, whilst they may exert some kind of influence, the distance makes this indirect and thus less effective for stimulating emulation. Third, as I have made visible at multiple times during the course of this thesis already, experientially available role models are required to stimulate entangled *phronesis*, the central mechanism at work in emulation, hence the appeal to experientially available *teachers* that children will inevitably encounter in the context of their everyday lives.

10. Therefore, to alleviate said developmental moral unluck, teachers have a normative obligation to be moral role models to the children in their care.

The primarily inductive nature of this argument means that, if the premises are convincing, the conclusion can at best be highly probable. Assuming this is the case, this supports the introduction of a new principle – the moral disadvantage principle – which encourages teachers to: *envisage it is the case that pupils do not have good enough moral role models at home and model from this perspective.* As at other junctures in this thesis, by 'good enough' I mean role models who possess at least a sufficient degree of *phronesis* to enable entangled *phronesis* and thereby stimulate explicitly *virtuous* character development.

Unfortunately, however, this important stipulation runs into a *potentially* substantial problem to which this chapter will be largely dedicated to overcoming. In essence, despite the moral obligation that teachers ought to be role models to pupils, not all are 'good enough' aspiring *phronimoi,* and might more likely exist within the continent trajectory. This means many may not have cultivated the degree of *phronesis* required for inspiring emulation, and thus the development of moral virtue and *phronesis* in pupils. I call this the 'moral threshold problem' in neo-Aristotelian character education (for related incarnations of this problem see also Carr, 2023; Yacek and Jonas, 2023). I want to argue that getting classroom teachers to the moral threshold required to be role models to pupils requires that they too have *phronimoi* within the teaching profession to emulate – a theme I pick up again in the qualitative case study on teachers who *actually are* role models to other teachers in Chapter 7. More specifically, given that emulation requires entangled *phronesis*, which is most effective when a role model is experientially present, it requires that less experienced teachers have access to *phronimoi* within their school to emulate. These *phronimoi* will not only be paragons of good character in general but also *role* models in the sense that they will *embody* virtues specifically related to the day-to-day practice of teaching. Ultimately, it is hoped that by emulating experienced

teacher *phronimoi* all teachers will eventually reach the *phronetic* threshold required to be role models themselves.

I will proceed to defend this thesis as follows. In Section 6.2., I first outline findings from current empirical research on teachers as moral role models. In Section 6.3., I then introduce some possible solutions derived from existing literature to the moral threshold problem and evaluate their relative strength – in particular the use of morally transformative epiphanies. In Section 6.4., I propose my own solution to the problem, namely the aforementioned thesis, before concluding by prescribing some practical ways to alleviate pupil moral disadvantage – *qua* developmental moral unluck – through the *phronetic* development of teachers.

6.2. Empirical studies on teachers as role models

At the time of writing there is not one, but three, special issues on role modelling circulating in academic journals – clear evidence that it continues to be a hot topic. I was invited to guest edit the special issue on 'Exemplars and Emulation in Moral Education' in the *Journal of Moral Education* (Henderson, 2024b) and also contributed a paper to another special issue on 'Role Models' in *On Education* (Henderson, 2024a). In addition, *Educational Theory* released a volume on the 'Pedagogical Potential of Exemplar Narratives in Moral Development and Moral Education' specifically (Gulliford et al., 2023). These follow another similarly themed special issue published in 2019 (edited by Campodonico et al.), which was largely fuelled by interest in Linda Zagzebski's seminal work *Exemplarist Moral Theory* (2017). However, whilst Zagzebski should be credited with reviving interest in exemplarism and emulation in multiple academic discourses, many scholars critique her exemplarist proposal, in particular as regards its overemphasis on admiration (Tachibana, 2019; Vaccarezza and Niccoli, 2019) and its

neglect of more ordinary sources of moral inspiration (Szutta, 2019). One may therefore argue that with some exceptions her direct influence—in moral education at least—does seem to be waning (see also Henderson, 2023, p. 275; 2024a; Kaftanski, 2022; Vaccarezza and Niccoli, 2022). Despite this scepticism, the appeal emulation *qua* role modelling as a moral developmental method endures, which naturally has led to numerous philosophical papers and book chapters emphasising the salience of teachers as moral role models or mentors to pupils (e.g., see Kristjánsson, 2006a; 2020b, pp. 135-149; Harðarson, 2019; Henderson, 2022; Jonas and Nakazawa, 2021, pp. 141-161; Sanderse, 2013; 2024; Standley, Forthcoming; Whitlock, 2023). However, for reasons of space, and so as not to reiterate insights expounded in this thesis already, my interest in this section is predominantly on empirical studies concerning teachers as role models (e.g., see Fernández and López, 2023; Joseph, 2016; Sanderse and Cooke, 2021; Osman, 2019) and, perhaps even more relevantly, on those which specifically highlight the value of role modelling to teacher professional ethics education (e.g., see Kristjánsson, 2024; Taylor, 2021; Timmerman, 2009). I will now outline some key findings from this empirical research.

That teaching is an inherently moral profession which comes with role-and-situation-specific virtue obligations has been emphasised many times in the literature (e.g., see Fowers et al., 2023a, p. 9; Kristjánsson, 2024; Orchard, 2021; Sanderse and Cooke, 2021; Sanger and Osguthorpe, 2013). Sanderse and Cooke, for example, argue that teaching is 'irreducibly saturated with moral concerns and considerations' (2021, p. 227). Their study – involving data collected from student teachers, newly qualified teachers and experienced teachers in the UK (*N*254) – found that teachers largely learnt to become a moral teacher, which can reasonably be interpreted as moral role model, through experience and by drawing upon good character cultivated during their upbringing, yet typically felt inadequately prepared for the moral aspects of the role by their initial teacher training (ibid., p. 232). Poignantly, the experienced teachers

in the study placed particular importance on both their 'experience in teaching' and 'experience in life' which they felt gave them confidence to model virtues in the classroom and address complex moral issues with pupils (ibid., p. 233). This insight can be taken to support how being a role model in teaching requires practical wisdom cultivated both in life in general and specifically in the profession. That said, the study also found that only a 'sizable minority'[69] of teachers chose the profession for moral reasons, i.e., wanting to make a difference and develop the whole child, with most choosing it due to an intellectual passion for their subject and a desire to pass this passion on (ibid., p. 235). On the bases of these findings the authors suggest that teachers can be helped to develop their character through a system of peer-to-peer coaching which stimulates transformation of their prior life and work experience into (a form of) practical wisdom, and further that experienced teachers ought to model their practical wisdom intentionally in order to provide newer teachers with sources of moral learning and inspiration (ibid., p. 237). I fully agree.

That teachers try to be role models or perceive themselves as role models *to students* is also reflected in the empirical literature (Joseph, 2016, p. 39; Sanderse and Cooke, 2021, p. 232). For example, in a study of newly qualified teachers (*N:* 36) concerning ethical reflections on themselves as practitioners, the most prevalent inductively derived code relating to teachers as moral agents was their perception of themselves as moral role models (Joseph, 2016, p. 36). Similarly, in the Sanderse and Cook study, teachers mentioned their intention to be a role model (2021, p. 232). Approached from another angle, a study by Fernández and López (2023) which asked first year university students (*N:* 200) about the teacher that most influenced them in high school, found that many do indeed consider their former teachers as role models, by which

---

69 This chimes with what Barry Schwartz calls 'canny outlaws'– people who, in professions like teaching, have the wisdom and obstinacy to practise what they do well and for the right reasons, despite often formidable pressures to do otherwise (2010, pp. 185-186).

they mean characterological examples to emulate. It is perhaps interesting to note that the study itself was focused on teacher leadership and purposeful learning, and whilst the authors conceptualised being perceived as a role model as a kind of 'exemplary leadership' on the part of the teacher, many of the other interrelated leadership types devised from the data could also be taken to reflect aspects of moral role modelling, such as 'empathetic leadership' and 'motivational leadership' (ibid., p. 8), which gives further weight to the idea that pupils do indeed regard at least some teachers as moral role models. These insights highlight the theoretical weaknesses in older, and arguably now outdated, empirical studies which found only 3% of 12–17-year-olds (*N:* 4759) mention teachers when asked about persons they 'want to be like' or 'look up to' (see Sanderse, 2013, p. 31; as an analysis of Yancey et al., 2002; 2011). With this rising to 10% in other studies (*N:* 1150) which asked about former role models (Bucher, 1998) – a statistic which has classically been used to support the idea that pupils recognise their teachers as role models *retrospectively.* Specifically, by theoretical weaknesses, I here refer to two assumptions implicit in these studies which are made visible through the way the questions are phrased: that admiration reliably identifies *moral* role models and that emulation is always a conscious process on the part of the learner – both points which this thesis contests. These quantitative insights are therefore an arguably unreliable measure of who actually inspires the emulation of virtuous character in young people. Moreover, regardless of the current accuracy of the aforementioned data, these descriptive points still do not negate the arguably more important normative point that teachers ought to be role models to pupils, for reasons outlined in the Introduction.

As for the salience of teacher role models – by which I mean experienced teachers as role models to other less experienced teachers – it seems apt to start with the Timmerman study (2009). Seminal in the field, this investigated how current teacher educators, who had previously worked as classroom teachers, had been influenced by their own secondary school

teachers (*N:* 13). Whilst not concerned with *moral* role modelling explicitly, the reasons cited for considering former teachers role models consistently referred to both professional *and* character traits, making the study highly relevant to the present context. It found that the secondary school teachers had indeed been significant role models to the teacher educators – they inspired emulation to different degrees, were formative in the development of their intertwined moral and professional identity, and instrumental in their overall socialisation into teaching. Further, whilst they acted as a continuous and relatable frame of reference, teachers were motivated to autonomously apply what they learnt from them according to their own teaching experiences and personality (ibid., p. 237). Overall, that all 13 participants modelled their 'teaching behaviour' to some extent on their secondary school teachers makes visible the importance of teacher role models – even experienced teacher educators are inspired by the power of their own good teachers. Approached from another direction, a more recent study found that pre-service teachers also perceive their mentors as moral role models, largely due to their words, actions, body language and interactions with colleagues (Taylor, 2021). Drawing upon empirical research conducted at the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, and insights from other scholars which recommend relatable and attainable *phronimoi* role models as the ideal inspiration for emulation (Han et al., 2017; Han and Dawson, 2023; Henderson, 2022; 2023), Kristjánsson also highlights the centrality of role models to *phronesis*-guided teacher professional ethics education (2024, p. 1038). People who are already experientially available to a moral learner – specifically fellow teacher *phronimoi* – rather than distant figures from literature or the public eye, are considered to best serve as models for emulation in the professional context of teaching. It should be noted that whilst Kristjánsson's recommendation derives from existing empirical and theoretical literature, at the time of writing there are no specific interventions studying role model-guided or *phronesis*-guided professional ethics education for teachers: a clear lacuna in the field.

Yet perhaps this growing interest in *phronesis* heralds the '*phronetic* turn' in teacher professional ethics education. The threshold problem ultimately taps into this insight by illuminating a) the salience of *phronesis* to emulation *qua* role modelling and b) the issue that many teachers simply have not cultivated a sufficient degree of *phronesis* to be a role model to pupils. In previous elements of this thesis, I have made visible how the psycho-moral mechanism of entangled *phronesis* drives emulation. As such, my account of emulation also specifically requires, in this case teachers, to be at least aspiring *phronimoi* in order to be role models. For the same reason, any professional ethics education for teachers will require experienced teacher *phronimoi* to help stimulate the development of *phronesis* in more novice teachers – a point I will argue for more formally in Section 3. Having mapped the empirical landscape regarding role modelling in education, and made visible its relationship to the threshold problem, is now time to evaluate possible theoretical solutions to this problem.

6.3. Existing (as yet) theoretical solutions to the threshold problem

Indirectly, one may construe a number of ideas currently circulating in the moral education discourse as plausible and partial responses to the threshold problem. I shall mention two just briefly before expounding a third. First, Kaftanski's concept of future-orientated self-representations (FOSRs) illuminates the possibility of using one's future self as a kind of imagined individual moral role model to emulate (2023). Devised by and held in imagination, FOSRs are essentially mental images that have both representational and visual dimensions: representational in the sense that they 'represent/re-create objects, states of affairs and relations'; and visual in the sense that they 'can be attributed with vividness' (ibid., p. 120). Kaftanski argues that as imagination has moral dimensions, FOSRs can help shape one's moral identity and cultivate a morally good character – for example, by enhancing one's moral

sensitivity and by bridging the knowledge-action gap (moral motivation) – provided that this future blueprint represents a real possibility (ibid.). Individually unique, FOSRs are understood to have four central features, they '1) are expressive of us as moral agents; 2) shape our moral identity; 3) serve as moral pointers; and 4) help devise mitigating strategies' (ibid.). Furthermore, building mental FOSRs is ultimately a co-creative process which requires teachers to guide the practice of moral self-reflection in pupils (ibid.). That said, the method could reasonably be extended to teachers themselves to further their own moral development through imagined FOSRs. Indeed, since the process of forming FOSRs requires deep self-reflection about who one aspires to become morally, and aligns well with specific features of *phronetic* excellence – for example, that relating to the constitutive function (moral sensitivity) or its overall motivational potency (see Kristjánsson et al., 2021) – it could help teachers who do not currently meet the *phronetic* threshold required to be a role model take tangible steps to become one. I am essentially persuaded by this idea, but question whether some teachers would have the degree of moral imagination necessary to actualise the transformative power of FOSRs independently. Thus, as reflected in Kaftanski's argument, perhaps some kind of moral guide or role model is still required to initiate the process and inspire the FOSR blueprint in teachers. If this is the case, then FOSR formulation does not seem *by itself* to bypass the threshold problem, except by indicating that the role models do not need to be constantly there in person. They do, however, still need to have existed at some point in the teacher's professional development for her to be able to imagine an FOSR in the first place.

The second potentially compelling idea is Ohlhorst's concept of cognitive behavioural virtue (CBV) which, as the name suggests, applies the techniques of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to the acquisition of virtue in adults (2023). It is argued to work by altering an agent's cognitive appraisal of a situation, thus changing their emotional and motivational reaction, which in turn fosters behavioural improvements – a process which is essentially

commensurate with the account of virtue acquisition supported in this thesis and current literature (e.g., see Snow et al., 2021). Indeed, if one understands the central idea of CBT to be to 'help clients change their *behaviour* by helping them *to regulate their emotions*, especially by *modifying their rules* and *cognitive appraisals*', then CBV similarly involves, in this case, a moral therapist helping morally misguided adults to replace old emotional and behavioural habits with different, better, moral habits in the form of specific virtuous emotions and actions by altering their appraisals (Ohlhorst, 2023, p. 9). Importantly, though, 'appraisals' in CBV are more complex than pure CBT, in that they not only aim at the (re)appraisal of a situation *qua* situation, but additionally must involve an explicitly virtue-laden appraisal of a situation, e.g., as just or unjust, integrated with the corresponding virtuous emotional response (ibid., p. 12). That CBV is intended for morally misguided *adults* is particularly poignant, since it supports the idea that virtue cultivation is still possible for, e.g., *non-phronetic* teachers. In essence, I find this idea persuasive. It has the potential to transform those on a non-virtuous developmental trajectory to a virtuous one by essentially rewiring their neural pathways to create new moral habits. However, as with CBT proper (see Norcross and Lambert, 2018; see also Chopik et al., 2024; Petrowski et al., 2021), it is likely that its effectiveness will largely rely on the relational bond between moral therapist and moral novice – arguably a bond that is motivationally similar to the relational bond between moral role model and those who emulate them. As such, this moral-psychotherapeutic tool will require someone who is simultaneously a trained psychotherapist *and* a *phronimoi* in order for CBV to meaningly effect *virtue* acquisition in the agent: a tall but potentially feasible order. A second potential issue concerns how to motivate morally-misguided adults to see the need to pursue a CBV programme. Will they self-diagnose their moral failings? And, if not, who might be best placed to illuminate their moral deficit and enforce or encourage such a programme? If CBV is to be effective, these are important questions to consider.

Having outlined the merits and potential weaknesses of the aforementioned ideas, it is now time to address a more direct solution to the threshold problem – one that specifically concerns teachers. Indeed, the strongest and most relevant iteration of the problem can be traced to Yacek and Jonas (2023), and for this reason it is instructive to examine their conceptualisation of the problem and associated response in more depth. Ultimately, they suggest that proponents of *phronesis*-inspired teacher education have overlooked a necessary psychological precondition of *phronetic* development: namely prior habituation in the moral virtues. They argue that since most pre-service teachers were not habituated in virtue in early childhood – something which I conceptualise being a product of 'habituated emulation' where a child learns what virtue is even before they understand why it is important – they do not have the correct motivational structures in place to cultivate *phronesis* and, as such, will be largely immune to *phronesis*-inspired teacher education initiatives (ibid., p. 3). Since *phronesis* is proclaimed as 'the pinnacle of teaching excellence' (ibid., p. 4), as a matter of developmental cohesion, teachers who are unable to cultivate *phronesis* will also fail to meet the moral threshold required for being an excellent teacher70.

Their solution to this problem proposes to extend models of *phronesis*-inspired teacher education with *phronesis*-directed transformative experiences – epiphanies – to which role models act as key facilitators (Yacek and Jonas, 2023; see also Gary and Chambers, 2021; Jonas and Nakazawa, 2021, ch. 6-7; Jonas, 2023; Kristjánsson, 2020b, pp. 114-118). Epiphanies are 'moments of profound ethical insight in which we recognise the moral significance of a particular action, activity or way of life and desire to become a better version of ourselves as a result' (Yacek and Jonas, 2023, p. 10; see also Gary and Chambers, 2021). Indeed, whilst Aristotle himself was particularly pessimistic about the possibility of moral

70 It should be noted that whilst their argument is directed at pedagogical expertise in general, as being a moral role model is a necessary facet of this, it applies equally well to this chapter's focus too.

development for anyone not blessed with good parental role models who encouraged them to desire virtue for its own sake (2009, 1103b21-25; see also Jonas, 2023, pp. 39-40), some neo-Aristotelians have sought guidance from neo-Platonists who support the aforementioned concept of moral epiphany. Generally speaking, epiphanies are thought to offer a developmental lifeline to misguided learners because they enable them to be rehabituated in virtue, which, with sustained effort and support, can set them on a new path to moral transformation (Jonas, 2023, pp. 39-40). Rehabituation, here, essentially implies that one's old habits are replaced with new, better, habits – i.e., virtue adjacent pro-social behaviours – which through repeated practice can create the right foundation and motivational structures for *phronesis* to begin to develop71.

In the context of teacher ethics education specifically, *phronesis*-directed epiphanies can be used as a catalyst for inspiring pre-service teachers to cultivate the habituated virtuous foundation they will need to advance towards *phronesis* proper (Yacek and Jonas, 2023, p. 4). It requires said teachers to acknowledge both the value of *phronesis* as a professional aim and the necessity of habituation for achieving this aim, which the authors argue enables them to

---

71 However, that this process is possible in adulthood invites the question of whether rehabituation makes more 'ordinary' habituation redundant? I am inclined to argue that it does not, and thus to an extent agree with Sanderse (2020), who maintains that habituation – *qua* the repeated practice of 'virtue' – is a lifelong process and thus that versions of it persist beyond childhood. Intended as an exegesis of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (2009, see e.g., 1103a15-30), he argues that two qualitatively different forms of habituation remain relevant in adulthood. First, he proposes that habituation is appropriate for developing *phronimoi,* where the repeated practice of *phronetically-informed* virtue, i.e., virtuous action motivated by the appropriate virtuous emotion, is intended to help consolidate virtue (Sanderse, 2020, p. 99). This kind of adult *phronesis-driven* habituation thus echoes Aristotle's idea that people 'must also practice the lessons they have learnt, and confirm them by habit, when they are grown up' (1080a1). Second, Sanderse proposes that habituation is also appropriate for those not on the path to virtue, such as the *enkratic* or *akratic*, since abiding by imposed rules, such as those enforced by the state, or receiving praise or blame, can help the morally misguided internalise the moral judgements *of others*, thereby building a kind of moral foundation (2020, p. 106). Qualitatively, then, the former kind of adult habitation involves *self-cultivation*, which is made possible by the *phronetic* capabilities of the agent; whilst the latter kind of adult habituation is largely a matter of being conditioned or educated *by others* to perform virtue adjacent pro-social actions (ibid., p. 104). Leaving aside the issue of whether the *phronetically-infused* practice of virtue should really be termed 'habituation' or more something along the lines of 'virtue practice' (since these actions qualify as being fully virtuous in the strict sense), or even simply 'habit', rehabituation does not appear to render these other forms of habituation redundant. Further, if this interpretation holds, Yacek and Jonas' neo-Platonic epiphany-driven rehabitation account extends previous literature by providing a method by which a more childlike version of habituation can be useful for *non-phronetic* adults, not just to keep them in moral check as with Sanderse's Aristotelian interpretation, but as a foundation for later *phronesis* development.

make individual moral progress by illuminating areas of moral strength and weakness (ibid., p. 10). In this sense, then, conceptual expansion through epiphany induces moral motivation for habituation which may later develop into *phronesis* in years to come (ibid.). Such epiphanies can thus be understood to act as a 'psychological bridge' from a pre-service teacher's current phase of moral development to the phase needed to develop and practice *phronesis* (ibid., p. 11). They are thought to work by, first, illuminating said teachers 'strengths and weaknesses regarding pedagogically relevant virtues, such as courage, generosity, care, patience, and diligence', which serves to kickstart how said teachers begin to systematically cultivate these virtues; and, second, by helping them to 'expand their view of how their practice can be oriented towards human flourishing'(ibid.). Ultimately, this epiphanic process enables teachers to understand the intrinsic value of teaching, which further enables them to realise how their prior thoughts and actions were flawed in salient moral ways, which then motivates their moral transformation towards *phronesis* (ibid., p. 12). Importantly for present purposes, epiphanies also require experienced teacher *phronimoi,* likely teacher educators in this case, to act as role models to help guide the transformative process and provide an inspirational and context-sensitive *in situ* example for pre-service teachers to emulate (ibid.). This necessity of a moral guide is a feature also shared by the previous two possible responses to the threshold problem – a commonality I shall emphasise again later in the chapter.

Having expounded the central elements of this epiphany-driven rehabituation account, it is now time to evaluate it as a response to the threshold problem. Indeed, if the threshold problem is as problematic as Yacek and Jonas propose, i.e., if it is the case that the 'vast majority' of early career teachers lack basic habituation in the moral virtues making *phronesis* cultivation an 'impossibility' (2023, p. 12), then I am persuaded by their solution. Not only does it deeply engage with the intricacies of Aristotelian developmental theory, which clearly asserts that *phronesis* development is not possible without habituation (e.g., see Aristotle, 2009,

NE 1144a31), it also promotes a nuanced vision for teacher education with *phronesis* at the core and connects it with a broader vision of an education for flourishing (e.g., see de Ruyter et al., 2022; Kristjánsson, 2020b; 2023; Stevenson, 2022). Perhaps most originally, though, it goes beyond the confines of neo-Aristotelianism to include insights from neo-Platonism – specifically the idea of epiphany which Aristotle indirectly rejected – something which serves to elevate what has been criticised as a 'disenchanted' and overly pessimistic idea of moral education based *purely* on the former (Kristjánsson, 2020b, p. 91). In the context of moral role modelling specifically, their position can also be taken to add an element of optimism to the landscape of moral development – through moral epiphany misguided teachers have an opportunity for rehabituation in moral virtue and thus an *eventual* shot at cultivating *phronesis,* which, in turn, will help them become the moral role models that children require them to be. All this said, it is possible that the authors have overstated the problem, something which they acknowledge (Yacek and Jonas, 2023, p. 8), but, following some detailed thought, eventually dismiss (ibid., p. 9).

To me, this deserves further scrutiny. Is teaching really in the midst of a *phronetic* drought? Do the 'vast majority' of teachers really lack basic habituation in virtue? Whilst there can be no doubt that at least some teachers are in need of moral reform through epiphany, perhaps the situation is not quite as catastrophic as assumed. My reasoning here is twofold. First, it is entirely possible that many teachers do indeed enter teaching habituated in virtue or even as very elementary *phronimoi*. For example, drawing upon the large-scale empirical study by Sanderse and Cooke mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is clear that many of the teachers interviewed relied on their own 'good sense', 'character', or 'moral compass' developed during their upbringing when attempting to be a moral teacher rather than on pre-service teacher training (Sanderse and Cooke, 2021, p. 233). This could indicate that some teachers do enter the profession *at least* habituated in virtue and supports how teacher professional ethics

education ought to go beyond rehabituation and also aim at *phronesis* development. This does not mean that rehabituation though epiphany is not needed, it may well be for some, but that elevating more morally advanced teachers to the *phronetic* threshold required to be a role model to pupils will need to aim higher than merely this. In essence, then, perhaps one needs to take for granted that the majority of teacher trainees do enter the profession with a proper grounding in virtue and can go straight to the *phronesis*-cultivation phase of professional ethics education.

Second, if one understands, as I do, *phronimoi* to represent an ordinary degree of virtue and relatedly *phronesis* to be a product of an ordinary well-brought-up life and cultivated in the context of ordinary life (see Curzer, 2005; Hursthouse, 2006, p. 308; Foot, 1978, p. 6; Nussbaum, 1986, p. 320), then this serves to weaken the claim that 'only few students, if any' will have the habituated moral foundations necessary to develop it. Indeed, whilst there is of course something *extraordinary* about a highly advanced *phronimos,* as *phronesis* is a threshold or 'satis' concept, there is a strong sense in which becoming at least an elementary *phronimos* is possible for a sizable chunk of ordinary people – and potentially more likely for those who choose an inherently moral profession like teaching. Furthermore, whilst the authors do highlight the importance of role models and mentors to the epiphanic process (see also Jonas and Nakazawa, 2021, Ch. 6-7), if the threshold problem is indeed overstated, then this could support a more direct role for experienced teacher *phronimoi* – i.e., teacher role models – in the professional ethics education of more novice teachers. Again, harking back to the Sanderse and Cook study, many more experienced teachers interviewed perceived themselves to have the professional and life experience necessary for meeting the moral requirements of their role, which made them 'able and willing to intentionally model certain moral qualities or discuss specific moral topics' (2021, p. 233). Perhaps, then, there are good enough *phronimoi* already teaching in schools who are able to inspire others with their in situ professional ethical

expertise. Taking this into account, one may deem the role of emulation *itself* as a method of virtuous character development in teachers to be somewhat underplayed. Fleshing out this idea will be the focus of the next section.

6.4. A weaker problem and simpler solution?

An analysis of the aforementioned possible solutions to the threshold problem reveals that all three – rehabituation through epiphany (Yacek and Jonas, 2023), future-orientated self-representations (Kaftanski, 2023) and cognitive behavioural virtue (Ohlhorst, 2023) – *to an extent* rely on guidance from *phronimoi* , i.e., moral role models. For example, epiphany requires a role model to stimulate the conceptual expansion central to it and inspire a teacher's continued moral motivation. Given the salience of these emulative figures, it is clear to me that *emulation itself* needs illuminating as a central method of virtuous character development in teachers. The aim of this section is therefore to motivate the emulation of teacher moral role models as a, perhaps even *the*, primary solution to the threshold problem.

In order to ground my position on the salience of experienced teacher *phronimoi* as moral role models for more novice teachers, it is instructive to restate three assumptions that I have already argued for at length in this thesis. The first is not particularly original, but simply the product of neo-Aristotelian theorising: in order to stimulate *virtuous* character development, which at its core concerns the development of *phronesis*, emulation must involve role models who are *at least* good enough, i.e., aspiring, *phronimoi*. The second is original, that emulation is primarily driven by the psycho-moral mechanism of entangled *phronesis* between role model and novice, a process which also requires role models to be *phronimoi*. As is the third, as emulation is developmentally sensitive, the novice is first habituated in virtue though *pre-phronetic* 'habituated emulation' which gradually evolves into *phronetically-*

informed 'complete emulation' in line with a learners own developing *phronesis*. Consequently, like other neo-Aristotelian scholars (e.g., see Kristjánsson, 2006b), I agree that a foundation of habituated virtue in early childhood is needed for a smooth transition to *phronetically-informed* virtue later on, with 'smooth' here denoting the path as the *ideal* moral developmental trajectory through emulation. Now, quite clearly, there will be some teachers who enter the profession having grown up on a non-ideal developmental trajectory, specifically one lacking in moral role models, and as a result are merely *enkratic* (strong-willed), *akratic* (weak-willed), or worse – these teachers are far from the kind of *phronetically-informed* characters students require them to be. Inspired by Yacek and Jonas, I agree that *a minority* might benefit role-model-stimulated rehabituation though epiphany – although the re-conditioning inherent in rehabituation is beset with potential issues concerning paternalism and the deprivation of agency in adults which for reasons of space lie beyond the scope of this chapter to expound (for an awareness of these issues in the context of rehabituation see Yacek and Jonas, 2023, p. 10; Jonas and Nakazawa, 2021, p. 166; and for more on the (arguably specious) problematics of habituation in general see Curren, 2000, p. 206; Kristjánsson, 2006b, pp. 115-117). However, drawing on studies which demonstrate that, for example, teachers have by far the strongest sense of professional purpose compared to other typical professions (Kristjánsson, 2024, p. 1035), and the idea that, for Aristotle, professional ethics should be about the development of *phronesis* because we expect professionals to already have a grounding in the virtues (Kristjánsson, 2024), I suggest that *the majority* teachers will enter the profession with enough of a moral foundation, i.e., one of at least habituated virtue, even if their moral developmental path has not been totally 'smooth' overall. In this sense, whilst they may not yet be *phronimoi*, and thus not yet role models for pupils, they are also not necessarily immune to *phronetic* development and, as such, will benefit from having more experienced

teachers in the school to emulate. If plausible, this makes the threshold problem somewhat weaker than previously assumed.

This position requires further support. Ultimately, I suggest that the 'strong' version of the threshold problem underestimates the moral capabilities of teachers and that the 'weaker' version is both more moral-developmentally optimistic and realistic (e.g., see Sanderse and Cooke, 2021; see also Joseph, 2016). For clarity, I restate both versions below:

> *Strong threshold problem:* the vast majority of teachers enter the profession lacking the correct motivational structures produced by habituated virtue which makes the cultivation of *phronesis* an impossibility.

> *Weak threshold problem:* many teachers enter the profession with at least a grounding in habituated virtue, and whilst not yet *phronimoi* themselves, can hope to become one in part by emulating an experienced teacher who is.

In further defence of the weak version, then, I propose that it is likely that the majority of teachers do have at a basic grounding in virtue, partly because, as I have previously argued, emulation – which includes habituated emulation – requires only aspiring, i.e., good enough, *phronimoi* as stimuli who are experientially available in one's ordinary life. If this is the case, then it is feasible for teacher character to be further developed by harnessing the emulative power of existing teacher *phronimoi*. The reason for this is predominately practical: experienced teacher *phronimoi* are embedded in the same context and thus embody and express virtues in a way that is both relatable and useful to, in this case, a budding teacher. Since *phronesis* is the integrative intellectual virtue which enables, amongst other functions, correct context and situation sensitive expressions of virtue, having *phronetic* role models who are

already *in professional situ* to learn from is therefore necessary for teacher professional ethics education.

In light of the theory of emulation developed in the previous chapters, and given my optimism that most teachers will begin teaching at least habituated in basic virtue, I propose that emulation in this professional context is likely to be of the ‘complete’ variety *and* that it is likely to work in much the same way in this professional context than any other. Of course, on an ideal developmental trajectory one would expect beginning teachers to already enter teaching as elementary *phronimoi*, yet since the threshold problem concerns teachers who have considerable character building still to do and may not have had the necessary developmental moral luck for this to occur, I am justified in using complete as my starting point. Specifically, then, complete emulation will here typically involve:

- entangled *phronesis* between a teacher *phronimos* and a less experienced teacher, shared both verbally and non-verbally though a combination of virtuous action, explanation and mind reading;
- the giving of increasingly sophisticated reasons *qua* explanations for virtuous actions in line with a teacher’s *phronetic* development, which work to instil an understanding of the complexity of moral decision-making, i.e., the four central functions of *phronesis*, *in the professional context of teaching specifically*; and
- physical feelings of positively experienced admiration *and* negatively experienced distress on the part of the less experienced teacher.

As for the observed virtuous actions, the catalyst of entangled *phronesis*, this might involve consciously or unconsciously perceiving such things as a teacher *phronimos* treating two pupils with fairness despite their differing abilities; or providing the right degree of emotional support

to a pupil struggling with exam-related anxiety. Ideally, in each case, the teacher *phronimos* would also explicitly verbalise their reasoning to the observing teacher, in order that they too can understand the nuance of the situation-specific *phronetic* choices made.

Yet one may question whether this solution simply leads to an infinite regress of teacher role models? I.e., if it is the case that to alleviate developmental moral unluck teachers have a normative obligation to be moral role models to pupils, and bringing them up to the *phronetic* speed required for such a task requires there are existing teacher *phronimoi* within a school to learn from, could one not then argue that they too need further even more advanced *phronimoi* to refine their characters…*ad infinitum*. Perhaps taken to its logical extreme this objection presents a problem. However, going back to the idea that teaching is an inherently moral profession which is likely to attract those who desire to 'do good' and are morally attuned to pupil well-being (e.g., see Kristjánsson, 2024, p. 1032), and the idea that *phronesis* – and by extension being a role model – is a satis concept, it is likely there will be enough at least good enough teacher *phronimoi* in most teacher education programmes or schools for less experienced teachers to emulate. In essence, then, since it is unlikely that there is a complete drought of *phronesis* in this professional context, this issue does not affect my position substantially.

Perhaps more concerning, then, is Harðarson's well-founded scepticism about the possibility of *phronesis* development itself in pre-service teachers[72] (2019). Aside from Yacek and Jonas' concerns about habituation, Harðarson argues that a necessary precondition of *phronetic* development is that it requires a professional environment which promotes teacher moral agency and is conducive to their flourishing[73](ibid.). Indeed, without giving teachers

---

72 Although his argument applies equally well to in-service teachers too.

73 This echoes Higgins' idea that 'restoring to its central place the flourishing of the practitioner is the first step in constructing a virtue ethics of teaching' (2011, p. 10). He argues that an obstacle to flourishing is a teacher's altruism, which can slide into asceticism, leading to teacher burn-out and, what he terms, teacher 'burn-in' (ibid.,

opportunities to exercise *phronesis* in the work they do and considerably better working conditions, he maintains it is likely that 'attempts to integrate practical wisdom…will not have much practical import' (ibid. 1526). To a large extent I agree with Harðarson here, clearly teacher *phronetic* development will suffer if, for example, their work load is too high or they lack autonomy in the classroom, which would erode the headspace, time and freedom needed to cultivate and exercise *phronesis*. In light of this, I will again emphasise an important caveat to my position: that it is intended as a weighty, but nonetheless *pro-tanto,* rather than all-things-considered, solution to the threshold problem. As such, I wish to promote emulation *qua* role modelling *as a specific method of phronesis development* in teachers, whilst simultaneously acknowledging that other flourishing-relevant considerations may help or hinder such development and thus ought to be addressed by initial teacher education providers, schools and policy makers as well. However, despite this concession, one must not lose sight of my motivation for addressing the (weak) threshold problem itself. Indeed, thinking back to the discussion of developmental moral luck and unluck in the Introduction, the primary purpose of emulating teacher *phronimoi* is to enable all teachers to eventually become sufficiently *phronetic* role models to ameliorate the moral disadvantage caused by insufficiently *phronetic*, or even blatantly bad, influences at home. Thus, even if there is considerable work to be done regarding the enabling conditions of teacher flourishing, this can be actualised alongside a focus on role-model-stimulated pupil flourishing.

Conclusion

---

pp. 145-170). The 'burnt in' teacher is one whose years of dedication to her profession eventually transforms into resent and hostility (ibid).

This chapter sought to ameliorate the moral disadvantage caused by inadequate role models during childhood through a focus on teachers as role models to pupils. In light of the (weak) threshold problem, which asserts that many teachers do not meet the *phronetic* standard required for being a role model but do have the potential to become one, I argued that experienced teacher *phronimoi* were required to inspire emulation in more novice teachers, thereby facilitating the latter's context and situation sensitive *phronetic* development. As with emulation in childhood to early adulthood, I maintain entangled *phronesis* is required to facilitate this moral change, which further requires role models who are experientially present. I am confident that *phronimoi* already exist within most schools and teacher education programmes and that harnessing their emulative power is an effective method of moral virtue and *phronesis* development in teachers. Practically speaking, this position has a number of prescriptive implications – some of my own theorising and some which are inspired by others – reflected in the bullet points below:

- both schools and initial teacher education should recruit for *phronetic* potential, i.e., for teachers already *at least* habituated in virtue;
- schools should make sustained efforts to retain experienced practically wise teachers that can serve as role models to less experienced teachers;
- experienced teachers ought to be aware of their responsibility to serve as role models to both pupils and other teachers, they should be encouraged to actively model virtuous actions (the initial medium of perception) and where possible substantiate these actions with verbal explanations for such actions; they should also be aware that moral content is also shared though non-verbal mind reading, meaning that teachers will likely be able to perceive their emotion states and other *phronetically*-valuable information even when this is not actively shared;
- novice teachers ought also to be aware of their potential to be role models to pupils and encouraged to take steps to fulfil this role;
- all teachers ought to be aware of the moral disadvantage principle – *envisage it is the case that pupils do not have good enough moral role models at home and model from this perspective;*
- *phronesis*-driven professional development should be promoted for all teachers (see also Kristjánsson, 2024), e.g., through direct moral mentorship, which pairs beginning teachers with a *phronimoi* in the school (see also Sanderse and Cooke, 2021, p. 237; Whitlock, 2023); through *phronesis*-focused lesson observations of teacher role models followed by a reflective discussion; or through encouraging novice teachers to seek out relatable and inspirational teacher *phronimoi* to emulate;

- for the morally misguided minority, those trained in epiphany-stimulation ought to provide opportunities for such morally transformative experiences that can enable these teachers to be rehabituated in virtue, thereby reorientating their developmental trajectory (Yacek and Jonas, 2023).

Whilst not intended as exhaustive, these suggestions may provide some direction for those committed to alleviating pupil moral disadvantage – *qua* developmental moral unluck – through the *phronetic* development of teachers. However, whilst these suggestions are well founded, in the sense that they are a product of both theoretical and empirical theorising, they also illuminate avenues for further empirical research. In particular, they invite questions such as: to what extent and why are early career teachers influenced by teacher moral role models? What possible factors and causal processes affect the relationship between the two? And, to what extent and why do early career teachers and teacher moral role models perceive of *themselves* as moral role models? These questions provide the impetus for the next chapter, which focuses precisely on experienced teachers who *actually are* moral role models to other teachers.

CHAPTER 7: QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY ON EXPERIENCED TEACHERS AS MORAL ROLE MODELS TO EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

7.1. Introduction

Chapter 6 made a normative case for teachers as role models and, through doing so, further illuminated the salience of emulation *qua* role modelling in the applied professional context of teaching. Specifically, I argued that the experiential availability of teacher moral role models – by which I mean experienced teacher *phronimoi* who serve as moral role models to less experienced teachers – was required for the latter's continuing virtuous character development, such development being further required for inspiring pupils with their virtuous example, i.e., serving as role models to them. In this chapter, I therefore aim to supplement the emulative story so far with insights gained from a qualitative case study on early career teachers (ECTs) and those they perceive as teacher moral role models (TMRMs[74]) from both their current school and initial teacher training. However, it should be noted that despite this empirical element, this is not essentially an empirical thesis, meaning that the present chapter serves just as a useful complement to my overall argument. That said, it is perhaps surprising, given the aforementioned normative importance of teacher moral role models to virtuous character development, that no empirical research exists on these emulative figures specifically. The novelty of this study thus lies in gaining epistemic access to the teachers who *actually are* moral role models to other teachers in order to better understand the phenomenon of emulation *qua* role modelling in this professional context.

More precisely, the central purpose is to explore and explain to what extent and why early career teachers (ECTs) are influenced by teacher moral role models (TMRMs): a question

74 It is worth clarifying that whilst some of the nominated TMRMs were formal teacher educators, perceived as role models, others were senior teachers from the ECTs' present or initial teacher training school who they identified as their role models there.

which relates to a further sub-question: what possible factors and causal processes affect the relationship between ECTs and their TMRMs? In addition, I am interested in investigating teachers' perceptions of themselves as role models or potential role models, which leads me to ask two further sub-questions:

- To what extent and why do ECTs perceive of themselves as moral role models?
- To what extent and why do TMRMs perceive of themselves as moral role models?

Ultimately, by establishing contextually sensitive answers to the aforementioned questions, I hope to build a more comprehensive picture of how emulation *qua* role modelling operates in the applied professional context of teaching and, through doing so, be in a better position to offer empirically-supported insights into how this might best be done beyond the confines of this case study in other relevantly similar school, and possibly also professional, settings. It is worth highlighting the originality of the final question in particular. Since the TMRMs interviewed will have been nominated as moral role models by ECTs, ascertaining to what extent they perceive of themselves in a similar light and are aware of the influence they have had on ECTs will both extend and add new layers to the understanding of emulation in the professional context of teaching.

This chapter has three parts. Firstly, owing to my previous argument reconceptualising emulation as a moral virtue (see Chapter 3), emulative theory has similar metaethical commitments as virtue ethics more generally. As such, I situate the study within a realist ontology and methodologically naturalist epistemology (Section 7.2). Following this, I outline the related research method (Section 7.3), before delineating and discussing the results (Section 7.4). Finally, I conclude and discuss possible strengths and limitations of the study (Section 7.5). The dual focus on *exploration and explanation* also deserves a little more justification. Firstly, as role modelling is inherently relational in nature, and causal relationality is a central facet of this, then research into how it works concerns *causal explanation* to some degree (see

Chapter 4 for a thorough defence of this point). Secondly, since the aforementioned focus of the study is – to the best of my knowledge – empirically novel, I also want to allow room for the analysis which ensues to potentially adapt and/or refine existing emulative theory – making this study partly *exploratory*.

7.2. Methodology

Systematising the theoretical research-philosophy (the methodology) with empirical research (the methods) is important because it helps ensure that the philosophy is practicable and the said research is logically coherent. In its most simple form, a research philosophy concerns 'a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge' (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 130). These beliefs and assumptions concern the underlying ontology, epistemology and axiology of the researcher (ibid.), which, when applied, help shape the choice of research questions, methods and data analysis (Crotty, 2014). As such, in this section I make my theoretical assumptions visible in order to justify and inform my choice of research method. Indeed, as a normative ethical theory, neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics is already laden with metaethical ontological and epistemological commitments, and since my research is embedded within this theoretical context, these commitments apply here too. As I have already expounded why virtue ethics supports a realist ontology – specifically in the form of psychological virtue-based naturalism – in the context of the whole thesis in Section 1.1., I shall not reiterate the details of this here. In addition, that this thesis supports a naturalist epistemology has already been made explicit many times. In light of this, what follows illuminates what this methodological stance implies for the conduct of empirical research generally, before adding contours to how it affects an exploration of emulation, and thus the present study, specifically.

7.2.1. A methodologically naturalist epistemology

From a research methodology perspective, understanding how knowledge of virtue can be empirically extended, i.e., the relevant epistemological position (see Saunders et al., 2019, p. 133), invites further consideration of the metaethical commitments that I outlined for this thesis as a whole in Section 1.1. Indeed, as virtue ethics is cognitivist in nature, meaning moral judgements can be known and understood via their cognitive content, and virtue itself non-reductionist, meaning it is possible for knowledge of it to be derived empirically and justified through direct 'foundational' appeal to sense experience, it is best conceptualised within a *naturalist epistemology*. Specifically, *methodological naturalism* is the idea that moral principles are justified *if and only if* they satisfy similar criteria as would justify scientific hypotheses (Scott, 1980, p. 267). Here the *similar* caveat is important, as not all scientific criteria are relevant to assessing the credibility of moral principles, meaning that they need only be roughly the same (ibid., p. 268). Proponents of methodological naturalism therefore seek through their research to arrive at (a form of) objective knowledge of, put bluntly, moral 'facts'. Starting with theory, generating hypotheses, and testing these hypotheses, is known as the hypothetico-deductive (deductive-empirical) method (Della Porta and Keating, 2008, p. 26), a process which ultimately aims to provide 'an objective, logical, and systematic method of analysis of phenomena, devised to permit the accumulation of reliable knowledge' (Lastrucci, 1963, p. 6). Importantly, in virtue ethics, knowledge concerns epistemologically objective but contextually sensitive moral knowledge.

As I have emphasised numerous times during the course of this thesis already, Aristotle is arguably the original catalyst for the naturalist turn in ethics, he writes:

> We must therefore survey what we have already said, bringing it to the test of the facts of life, and if it harmonises with the facts we must accept it, but if it clashes with them we must suppose it to be mere theory (2009, NE 1179a20-23).

Encouraging the interplay between ethical theory and empirical data in this way ultimately compels neo-Aristotelians to scrutinise the central tenets of virtue ethics and reinvigorate them

in light of modern scientific developments (Kristjánsson, 2020b, p. 5). Relatedly, Aristotle proposes that one way to elicit the empirical data required for such scrutiny is by seeking the verdict of the 'many' rather than simply 'the wise':

> So much for our outline sketch for the good. For it looks as if we have to draw an outline first, and fill it in later. It would seem to be open to anyone to take things further and to articulate the good parts of the sketch. And time is a good discoverer or ally in such things. That's how the sciences have progressed as well: it is open to anyone to supply what is lacking (2009, EN 1098a20–6).

Here he makes visible that extending particular knowledge of 'the good' is not simply the proviso of *phronimoi* but ultimately 'open to anyone' – which one can reasonably interpret as the general public. This indicates that empirical research ought ideally to be grounded in theory, thus creating an 'outline', then substantiated with the insights of those relevant to such research, a process which necessitates expanding the sphere of epistemic input beyond the 'wise'. Choices about sampling methods and sizes, with specific criteria for participant inclusion and exclusion, reflect this approach. In the present context, this directly justifies using interviews with early career teachers and their moral role models – who collectively represent the general 'many' – to further the empirical understanding of role modelling in the professional context of teaching. This does not render the insights of 'wise' theorists obsolete, of course, but rather supplementary to the insights of the 'many'.

As I end this section, it is instructive to briefly outline how current empirical enquiries into virtue adopt methodological naturalism, in order to further justify the method I employ in this study. Indeed, virtue ethics is at the forefront of interdisciplinary research in ethics, which typically sees moral philosophers joining forces with moral psychologists to enhance the understanding of virtue[75] (e.g., see Fowers et al., 2021; Kristjánsson, 2021b). Generally

---

[75] However, despite the efforts of empirically informed philosophers and philosophically informed psychologists to empirically research virtue, its inherent normativity means that such a task is hugely complex – arguably far more so than purely scientific research (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 193). This ultimately means that evaluations made about, for example, measuring the development of a person's virtuous character need not aim at the same degree

speaking, attempts to synthesise the theoretical with the empirical has stimulated direct research into virtue measurement (see Morgan et al., 2017; Wright et al., 2020) and *phronesis* (see Darnell et al., 2022; Kristjánsson et al., 2021; Kristjánsson and Fowers, 2024), with prominent thinkers even promoting the idea of 'virtue science' (see Fowers et al., 2021; 2023a; see also Cokelet, 2022; Snow, 2020).

More directly relevant to the present context, there also exists a growing number of studies on moral exemplarism in moral psychology (see Bella, 2024; Han and Dawson, 2023; Han et al., 2017; 2022). What makes this research methodologically naturalistic is the way it 'tests' existing neo-Aristotelian theory using empirical means with the aim of extending and refining said theory. For example, in the Han and Dawson study (2023), which was theoretically inspired and informed by neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, they analyse different types of exemplary stories using Bayesian multilevel modelling to empirically demonstrate the centrality of relatability and attainability for inspiring positive emotional outcomes in both adults and university student participants. More specifically, they show that it is the perception of *relatability* that positively predicts moral elevation and pleasantness, with *attainability* primarily operating to boost the effect of relatability. These findings enable them to propose that the relatability of exemplars in particular is a necessary condition for effectively motivating positive emotional responses to exemplars.

As a result of this research and similar studies which proceed it, numerous theoretical papers now cite these factors as salient motivation for emulation, something which reflects the theoretical/empirical interplay characteristic of methodological naturalism (e.g., see Henderson, 2024b; Klimstra et al., 2023; Kotsonis and Dunne, 2023; Sanderse, 2023). That

---

of accuracy/objectivity as non-normative scientific research – something which aligns virtue ethics with the degree of objectivity aspired to in a naturalist epistemology.

said, it must be remembered that philosophical argument remains the gold standard in terms of what one can aspire to argue for normatively, meaning that the purpose of empirical research in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics is to refine, extend and critique existing theory. As empirical research holds little value in isolation from its theoretical foundation, theory is far from redundant. Persuasive theory, however, ought *at the very least,* to aim at 'minimal psychological realism' (see Flanagan, 1991, p. 32) and, where relevant, 'developmental adequacy' (see Lapsley, 2021, p. 138).

7.2.2. Methodological implications for emulation qua role modelling and associated research methods

Until now, this chapter has largely conceptualised the research methodology around 'virtue'. This was a deliberate move since I understand emulation itself to be a moral virtue, moral role models to be those who inspire emulation, and entangled *phronesis* to be a mechanism explicitly and inextricably linked to role-model-driven virtuous character development. The arguments I have provided in defence of a realist ontology (see Section 1.1.) and a naturalist epistemology therefore pertain to emulation too. However, for my research to be logically coherent, this research methodology must align with my choice of research method – justifying this is the focus of the present subsection.

I begin by foregrounding the importance of teacher role models specifically. Ultimately, if one accepts that moral role models are those who inspire emulation, then studying such role models empirically can further the understanding of emulation. Since I have already built a normative case for teacher role models, i.e., teachers as role models to other teachers, in Chapter 6, I am particularly interested in understanding how emulation operates in the professional context of teaching. To recap, emulation q*ua* moral role modelling continues to be cited as a central aspect of teaching (e.g., Fernández and López, 2023; Henderson, 2022;

Jonas and Nakazawa, 2021, pp. 141-161; Kristjánsson, 2020b, pp. 135-149) and of teacher professional ethics education (Kristjánsson, 2024; Orchard, 2021). Put simply, as teaching is an inherently moral profession and teachers *just are* in the lives of their pupils, they have a special obligation to serve as role models to them. Yet as some teachers do not reach the moral threshold required to be role models, it is crucial they are provided with a source of moral guidance themselves, in the form of professional teacher *phronimoi*, to enable them to acquire the degree of *phronesis* necessary for being role models to pupils. Given the salience of teacher role models, understanding why some teachers *actually are* moral role models to other teachers, and whether it matters that they understand themselves as such, is of real importance, and is to this purpose that this study is primarily dedicated.

There exists a multitude of possible ways to potentially gain empirical insights about teacher role models. As emphasised in Chapter 6, there have already been some studies concerning teachers as role models (e.g., see Fernández and López, 2023; Sanderse and Cooke, 2021; Osman, 2019), but none, to my knowledge, focused on teachers and teacher educators who act as current moral role models to early career teachers. The novelty of this research thus lies in gaining epistemic access to the teachers who *actually are* moral role models to other teachers. To gain this access, I first needed to identify the teacher role models, which required seeking the perspective of 'the many', or, put simply, less experienced teachers, by asking them to reveal their own teacher role models (if any). Further, since I required the insights gained from this research to be deep enough to meaningfully further the understanding of emulation in the professional context of teaching, I then needed to interview said teachers and their identified teacher role models, which illuminated the suitability of qualitative research methods. More specifically, I employed a single case study in the form of semi-structured interviews with early career teachers (ECTs) in Phase One, and their teacher moral role models (TMRMs) in Phase Two, then examined and synthesised the data collected from each phase of

interviews using abductive thematic analysis[76]. Perhaps unconventionally, yet in line with my research methodology, this study is simultaneously 'small-e-explanatory'[77] and exploratory in purpose. Relatedly, the initial approach to interview question and code development was theory-driven and thus deductive and the thematic analysis itself abductive in nature. Having outlined my choice of method, I will now justify why they cohere with my methodological commitments.

By definition, qualitative research methods, such as interviews, are those that 'focus on actors' meanings and description, along with an emphasis on context, process and flexibility' (Becker et al., 2012, p. 274). A case study is an in-depth 'rich' inquiry into a specific topic or phenomenon that takes place within its real-world context (Yin, 2018), which aims to enhance knowledge of a topic, inform practice or establish a case's value (Simons, 2009, p. 24). Focussing on a single case is considered a strength as it facilitates complex understandings and rich descriptions (May, 2011, p. 224). Indeed, it has been argued that in-depth case studies best enable one to understand the interaction between a phenomenon and its context, because they can be designed to uncover what is happening and why, understand the effects of a situation and the implications for action (Dubois and Gadde, 2002; Saunders et al., 2019). The inherent contextualism of a case study thus makes it well suited to understanding the phenomenon of role modelling *in the context of teaching,* because studying the subjects of the case – primarily the TMRMs – can provide rich contextual insights into, for example, the causal mechanisms and processes that affect the interactions between TMRMs and ECTs.

---

76 Put simply, abductive reasoning concerns logical inference to the best explanation. From observation B one hypothesises that A is the most likely cause: A<B. For example, I observe a friend's sunburn (B) and abduce that they are likely to have forgotten to apply sunscreen (A). 'Likely' here implies that A is *non-necessarily* the cause of B – the degree of certainty is at best probable. In the context of empirical research, abduction enables one to refine hypotheses and theories that best explain observations.

77 The 'small-e' communicates that the study seeks to cultivate probabilistic and contextually sensitive knowledge, rather than hard facts. The details of which will be made clear in what follows.

Yet historically critics have questioned whether qualitative research methods can identify causal relationships, because they are too situation-specific and thus insufficient for making law-like generalisable conclusions, and further whether case studies can be used for explanatory (i.e., causal) purposes, because the limited sample size does not allow one to generalise beyond the confines of the specific case (Campbell and Stanley, 1963; Scandura and Williams, 2000). Fortunately for present purposes, these objections are now widely considered to be *misconceptions* (Buchanan, 2012; Flyvbjerg, 2011). They are misconceptions in the sense that their scope relates largely to interpretivist research, rather than the naturalistic approach supported in this thesis; and because they rely on an overly narrow – Humean – account of causation as constant conjunction (the idea that causal relationships cannot be directly perceived and are instead a matter of observing regularities in associated events) (Maxwell, 2004, p. 244; see also Hume, 1984). On this understanding, to infer something is indeed a matter of causation would require *an experiment* designed to systematically compare situations to test the proposed causal factor in terms of its absence/presence/strength and control for other possible causes (ibid.). Yet since qualitative research does not conduct controlled experiments to assess observed regularities, many qualitatively-minded researchers either shun appeal to causality entirely, make only highly speculative causal claims, or use vague circumlocutions to tentatively hint at – but not commit to – causal statements (ibid.). However, causation is now understood to primarily encompass processes and mechanisms, rather than merely observed regularities between variables, rendering the latter account limited (ibid., p. 246). This transition means that it is possible for a qualitative case study to at least aim at causal explanation – albeit given some caveats and qualifications.

In the context of the present study, these caveats and qualifications indicate that the case study is naturalist in epistemology, both small-e-explanatory and exploratory in purpose, and both deductive and abductive in the process of theory development. That it is naturalist, in

the neo-Aristotelian sense explained earlier in the thesis, entails that I aspire to arrive at a probabilistic and contextually sensitive – rather than a law-like and general – knowledge of reality (as aimed for in positivism). Relatedly, in designating *small-e-explanation* as a purpose, I seek to tentatively confirm existing theory developed during the course of this thesis, regarding the factors and processes affecting the contextualised causal relationships between ECTs and TMRMs – the 'small-e' communicating that this again refers to probabilistic and contextually sensitive knowledge. Indeed, that a case study can be used for a multitude of purposes, including explanation and exploration, is supported in the literature (Yin, 2018).

Regarding data analysis, since an explanatory case study is most naturally allied with a deductive approach (ibid.), I will also appeal to the emulative theory devised during the course of this thesis so far, and relevant existing neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical insights, to inform the questions I ask during semi-structured interviews and to initially code the responses during thematic analysis. In this sense, the case study is partly deductive or 'theory driven' (see Saunders et al., 2019, p. 655). However, since I do not simply aim to confirm but also potentially refine and/or modify the understanding of emulation *qua* role modelling by enriching it with additional contextual insights, the process of theme development during thematic analysis is abductive (Thompson, 2022; see also Saunders et al., 2019, p. 155). Since the process of abduction concerns logical inference to the best explanation, conclusions reached can at best be likely or probable, which further justifies the degree of objectivity the results of the study aspire to.

To conclude, then, even within the limitations of a qualitative case study, I have argued that given the aforementioned caveats and qualifications, it is possible to aim at generating probabilistic and contextually sensitive but still truth tracking insights into the relational phenomenon of role modelling. Having justified why my methodological commitments cohere

with the aforementioned method, I will now outline the research design in more detail, before delineating and discussing the results.

7.3. Method

7.3.1. Participants

In total 18 participants – comprising seven ECTs and 11 TMRMs – were recruited using a non-probability combination of typical case/convenience and snowball purposive sampling (see Gorard, 2013, pp. 83-84; Saunders and Townsend, 2018, pp. 486-487). This sample size is considered more than sufficient for qualitative interviews because it enables data saturation – the idea that enough information has been gained from participant responses when few new insights are identified from each additional case (see Saunders and Townsend, 2016; 2018; see also Terry et al., 2017, p. 22). Justification for participant numbers is also related to transparency, in that the data collected must be deep and broad enough to inform the research purpose (Alvesson and Ashcraft, 2012). Since the open-ended nature of qualitative research means that data collection could continue *ad infinitum*, I appeal to the notion of data saturation to support limiting the interviews to 18 participants and also consider this number sufficient for gaining the required depth and breadth of information needed to answer my research question(s).

As for the sampling methods, the research questions I have sought to answer demand strict criteria for participant inclusion and exclusion. Specifically, in Phase One I interviewed ECTs in their first or second year of secondary school teaching who had completed a PGCE (or equivalent professional qualification); and in Phase Two I interviewed the TMRMs whom the ECTs identified from their current school and/or their initial teacher training (ITT). In this

sense, I used ECTs to identify and gain access to TMRMs. Out of the 11 TMRMs interviewed, seven were from the ECT's current school and four from their ITT. Some ECTs also nominated the same person. Of all TMRMs identified, only those deemed to have made a significant impact on the ECT were contacted, meaning that a small portion of TMRMs that ECTs identified but seemed ambivalent about were not contacted. All TMRMs that were contacted agreed to be interviewed.

This selection of TMRMs has implications for what type of case study this is. Indeed, since these TMRMs constitute a highly defined yet also 'normal' or 'typical' illustration of moral role models in the professional context of teaching, they represent – although not statistically – teacher role models more broadly, making this a 'typical case' (see Saunders and Townsend, 2018, p. 486). Importantly, this appeal to the 'typical' will later help justify the small-e-explanatory claims I seek to make post (abductive) thematic analysis. However, as I, the researcher, used my own contacts from my prior career as a secondary school teacher and department lead in a co-educational independent day school in south London to initially recruit the ECTs, the sampling method is partly also a matter of 'convenience' (ibid., p. 487). Further, since the interviews with ECTs were used to identify and subsequently recruit their TMRMs, the sampling method in Phase Two employs a 'snowball' approach (ibid.). Participant demographics are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Phase	Participant	Gender	Age	Ethnicity/ Ethnic Group	Route Into Teaching	QTS	Subject	Years Teaching
One	P1	Female	24-30	W	PGCE & SD	Yes	Maths	1
	P2	Male	24-30	W	PGCE	Yes	History	1
	P3	Male	24-30	W	PGCE & SCITT	Yes	French/German	1
	P4	Male	20-24	W	PGCE	Yes	Chemistry	1
	P5	Male	30-40	W	PGCE	Yes	CC	1
	P6	Male	20-24	W	PGCE	Yes	Geography	1
	P7	Male	24-30	AABI	Teach First	Yes	Religion & Philosophy	1
Two	SRM1	Female	40-50	W	PGCE	Yes	French	28
	SRM2	Female	50+	W	PGCE	Yes	French	35
	SRM3	Male	40-50	W	PGCE	Yes	Chemistry/Science	16

SRM4	Female	24-30	W	PGCE	Yes	Latin/Ancient Greek/CC	6
SRM5	Female	40-50	W	PGCE	Yes	Geography	22
SRM6	Female	30-40	W	PGCE	Yes	Religion & Philosophy	6
SRM7	Female	30-40	W	PGCE	Yes	Religion & Philosophy	8
ITTRM1	Female	24-30	W	SD	Yes	Maths and Economics	6
ITTRM4	Female	50+	Irish	PGCE	Yes	Initial Teacher Education	15
ITTRM5	Male	30-40	W	PGCE	Yes	CC	9
ITTRM6	Female	40-50	AABI	PGCE	Yes	Religious Studies	24

P = Participant, ECT = Early Career Teacher, TMRM = Teacher Moral Role Model, SRM = School Role Model, ITTRM = Initial Teacher Training Role Model, W = White: English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British, AABI = Asian / Asian British: Indian, PGCE = Post Graduate Certificate of Education, SD = Schools Direct, SCITT = School-centred Initial Teacher Training, QTS = Qualified Teacher Status, CC = Classical Civilisation

7.3.2. Design

This is a cross-sectional design consisting of two phases which employs semi-structured one-on-one interviews (see Gorard, 2013, p. 125; Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 437-338). Semi-structured interviews were considered the appropriate medium of data collection because they allow one to systematically explore the same questions with each participant whilst allowing for individual insights (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 437). It is worth emphasising here that since the nature of semi-structured interviews relies on accurate narration – which is further reliant on the perception and memory of the narrator – I do not seek to arrive at ‘hard facts’ through this research design but more to ascertain a probabilistic and context-sensitive knowledge of reality (Della Porta and Keating, 2008, p. 23). As before, in Phase One I interviewed ETCs and in Phase Two I interviewed the TMRMs from their current school and/or initial teacher training. The questions from each phase of interviews can be found in Table 2 and Table 3. These questions were informed by the emulative theory devised in the previous chapters of this thesis and other neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical insights, making the initial approach to theory development ‘deductive’ in nature (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 655). Relatedly, the transcripts from each phase were coded deductively in light of each of the interview questions (Terry et al., 2017, p. 19) in NVivo 12 (Jackson and Bazeley, 2019). Themes were then developed using abductive thematic analysis (Thompson, 2022) and presented using thematic networks

(Attride-Stirling, 2001). In this way, I aimed to identify why TMRMs are moral role models to ECTs.

Table 2. Phase One Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Question Number	Question Text
1.	What in general do you take to be positive personal qualities/character traits in teachers?
1.1	You mention…can you tell me more about what this means to you? Why might this personal quality be important for teachers?
2.	Do you have a moral role model, i.e., someone who inspires you because of their positive personal qualities/character, at this school? If so, who?
3.	Is this person a mentor or a peer?
4.	What is it about [*person X*] that inspires you?
5.	Could you tell me more about their positive personal qualities/their character?
6.	Can you describe your feelings towards them?
7.	Did you have a moral role model, i.e., someone who inspires you because of their positive personal qualities/character, during your initial teacher training (ITT)? If so, who?
8.	Was this person a mentor or a peer?
9.	What is it about [*person X*] that inspired you?
10.	Could you tell me more about their positive personal qualities/their character?
11.	Can you describe your feelings towards them?
12.	Do you see your role as a teacher connected to who you are as a person? If so, in what way?
13.	Do you consider yourself to be a moral role model?
13.1	If so, in what way?
13.1.1.	Of any particular positive personal qualities?
13.1.2.	To whom?
13.2.	If not, why?
14.	Do you think teachers should be role models? If so, why might this be? If not, why not?

Table 3. Phase Two Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Question Number	Question Text
1.	What in general do you take to be positive moral personal qualities/character traits in teachers?
1.1.	You mention…can you tell me more about what this means to you? Why might this personal quality be important for teachers?
2.	During your career, have you had any moral role models, i.e., someone who inspires you because of their positive personal qualities/character?
2.1.	What was it about [*person X*] that inspired you?
2.2.	Could you tell me more about their positive personal qualities/their character?
2.3.	Can you describe your feelings towards them?
3.	Do you see your role as a teacher connected to who you are as a person? If not, why not? If so, in what way?
4.	How does your role as a teacher align with your personal values?
4.1	Does the kind of person you are as a teacher cross over to other areas of your life? If so, in what way?
4.2	How similar or different do you think who you are as a teacher is from who you are in the rest of your life?
5.	Do you consider yourself to be a moral role model? I.e., a model or person of good character in the school?
5.1	If so, in what way?
5.1.1.	Of any particular positive personal qualities?
5.1.2.	To whom?
5.2	If not, why?
6.	(If yes) Do you take pleasure in being a role model?
6.1.	Can you describe it?

6.2. How easy is it?
7. (If yes) What motivates you to be a moral role model?
7.1. Are these reasons internal to you, or more external? How?
8. How would you describe the balance you have, or don't have, between caring for yourself and caring for others?
9. Do you consider yourself to be practically wise?
9.1. If so, in what way?
9.2. If not, why not?
10. Have you read any of the academic literature on teachers and professors as role models or moral exemplars for students?

7.3.3. Procedure

Prior to each interview participants were emailed an information sheet about the essential aims of the study including how long the interview was expected to take, any potential risks, remuneration (none), the voluntary nature of the study and right to withdraw, and the purposes for which their data would be processed and stored. So informed, they then completed a consent form. When the study began, participants first completed a demographic survey which included questions relating to their route into teaching and years of experience. Phase One interviews with seven ECTs were conducted face-to-face and lasted approximately 30 minutes. Phase Two interviews with 11 TMRMs were conducted both face-to-face and on Zoom and lasted approximately 45 minutes. In both phases, the interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. Following each interview, participants were subsequently provided with a more detailed debrief of the aims of the study and asked, given this additional information, whether they were still happy for their data to be used. It was considered necessary to limit initial knowledge of the study in this way to avoid social desirability bias which could affect the credibility of results (see Bergen and Labonté, 2020). Following the debrief, all participants remained content for their data to be used. Within two weeks of the interview, participants were also provided with a copy of their transcript and given an opportunity to correct any errors or misunderstandings before the data was analysed. A copy of the aforementioned documents can be found in Appendices 1-4.

7.3.4. Analysis plan

The results of the semi-structured interviews were initially coded deductively phase-by-phase according to the theoretically derived interview questions and then analysed through a process of abductive thematic analysis (Thompson, 2022; Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 155-156; see also Terry et al., 2017) using NVivo 12 software (see Jackson and Bazeley, 2019). Generally speaking, thematic analysis is considered both a useful and flexible method of qualitative research, particularly in psychology, but also in interdisciplinary settings, such as this study (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 77). It is a method for 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (ibid., p. 79) and compatible with a realist ontology (ibid., p. 81). Whilst the approach to knowledge development in thematic analysis can be deductive, inductive or abductive, as previously emphasised, the process employed here is abductive in that 'existing theory and literature is applied in tandem with the raw data to explain the patterns and story behind the data' (Thompson, 2022, p. 1411; see also Saunders et al., 2019, p. 156). More precisely, this required the data to be first coded deductively according to the theoretically driven interview questions (see Thompson, 2022, p. 1413; Terry et al., 2017, p. 19). It is worth mentioning here that only the portions of the interview deemed applicable to the deductively derived interview questions were coded. Following this came three rounds of increasingly nuanced abductive theme development pertaining to basic themes, general themes and global themes (see Attride-Stirling, 2001, pp. 388-389). Consistent with the abductive approach, the outcome of the thematic analysis concerned latent themes, i.e., themes which go beyond the data by employing existing theory to conceptually interpret and explain empirical findings (Thompson, 2022, p. 1415).

In order to add more structure and sophistication to this abductive thematic analysis, I then presented the themes as thematic networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001). These are 'web-like illustrations (networks) that summarise the main themes constituting a piece of text' (ibid., p.

386). Indeed, by presenting themes in a more analytical manner, and systematising textual data in this way, I hope to arrive at a more 'sensitive, insightful and rich exploration of a text's overt structures and underlying patterns' (ibid.). Guided but not determined by my existing theoretical understanding of emulation *qua* role modelling and virtue ethics, I then compared the results of the Phase One and Phase Two thematic analysis to explain the relationship of these themes to the broader data set and prior theoretical commitments. This generated global themes relating to the central research question: to what extent and why are early career teachers (ECTs) influenced by teacher moral role models (TMRMs)? To further illuminate the relationships between these themes I then presented them as a diagram (Guest et al., 2012).

It is worth emphasising again that the empirical novelty of this topic, primarily the focus on gaining insights from teachers who *actually are* moral role models to ECTs, combined with the abductive nature of the analysis which allows room for adapting and refining existing theory, makes this partly an exploratory analysis. Yet since such analysis simultaneously intends to make probable and contextually sensitive causal claims about the relational phenomenon of role modelling, it is also 'small-e-explanatory', as previously explained.

7.3.5. Ethics

The University of Birmingham granted ethical approval to this research study (Ref: ERN_21-1774) which was conducted in accordance with the UK Research Integrity Office's *Code of Practice for Research* (2022) and British Educational Research Association's *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (2024). The potential ethical issues and risks were deemed to be relatively low due to the content of the study, all participants being over 18 years old, and it not involving vulnerable people. However, a number of possible issues remained concerning confidentiality, privacy, consent and data protection (Becker et al., 2012, p. 56). To mitigate these possible risks, all data was anonymised, informed consent acquired and data

stored securely. Less formally, as knowledge produced by interviews is partly reliant on the social relationship between interviewer and interviewee, it is important for the former to cultivate a space where the latter feels safe, to enable them to talk more freely about often personal matters (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015, p. 20). In their pursuit of interesting knowledge, it is therefore also important for the interviewer to maintain respect for the ethical integrity of the interviewee (ibid.). Since the questions in this study may prompt participants to divulge personal and/or distressing experiences, it remains particularly important to put concerns for their integrity at the forefront of all communication.

7.4. Results and discussion

Given the scope of the research questions and the length constraints of this thesis, I have chosen to report only the results considered most relevant to answering said questions. The results of all codes – presented as basic themes and organising themes – can be found in Appendices 5-6. To increase transparency and demonstrate how the theoretical themes are derived from coding empirical data, I first present the results pertaining to each research question as thematic networks (Figures 4-10), before explaining these with supporting quotations from the interviews. I explain and illustrate the findings from Figures 4, 5, 6 and 7 in Section 7.4.1., the findings from Figure 8 in Section 7.4.2., the findings from Figure 9 in Section 7.4.3. and the findings from Figure 10 in Section 7.4.4.

7.4.1. To what extent and why are early career teachers (ECTs) influenced by teacher moral role models (TMRMs)?

In this sub-section I seek to provide a deep description and discussion of each global theme pertaining to the primary research question78. In order to make the empirical support for each theme more compelling, I will show my reasoning through thematic network maps and supplement each global theme with illuminating quotations79 from the raw data (see Braun and Clarke, 2006; Guest et al., 2012; Lochmiller, 2021; Thompson, 2022). In each case, I will also reflect upon the degree to which the theme aligns with existing theory and, if not, consider whether said theory needs adapting, refining or extending in light of the empirical findings (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Thompson, 2022; Timmermans and Tavory, 2012). It should be noted that the discussion of findings is deliberately brief, since I shall reflect further on these themes in the context of the thesis as a whole in the final chapter.

As the global themes were identified from a comparison of Phase One and Phase Two results, it is first instructive to show the basic and organising themes relating to Phase One (Figure 4) and Phase Two (Figure 5) as thematic networks:

---

78 In a standard empirical thesis I would present results and discussion in separate chapters. However, as this empirical study is only a small part of the overall argument in this thesis, I combine the two into one here.
79 Participant identifiers accompany each quotation and relate to the demographic information in *Appendix 1*. For the early career teachers (ECTs) from Phase One, they are referred to as P1, P2, etc., to denote 'participant one'. For the teacher moral role models (TMRM) from Phase Two, they are referred to *either* as SRM1, SRM2, etc., if they are a current 'school role model' or ITTRM1, ITTRM2, etc., if they are an ECTs 'initial teacher training role model'.

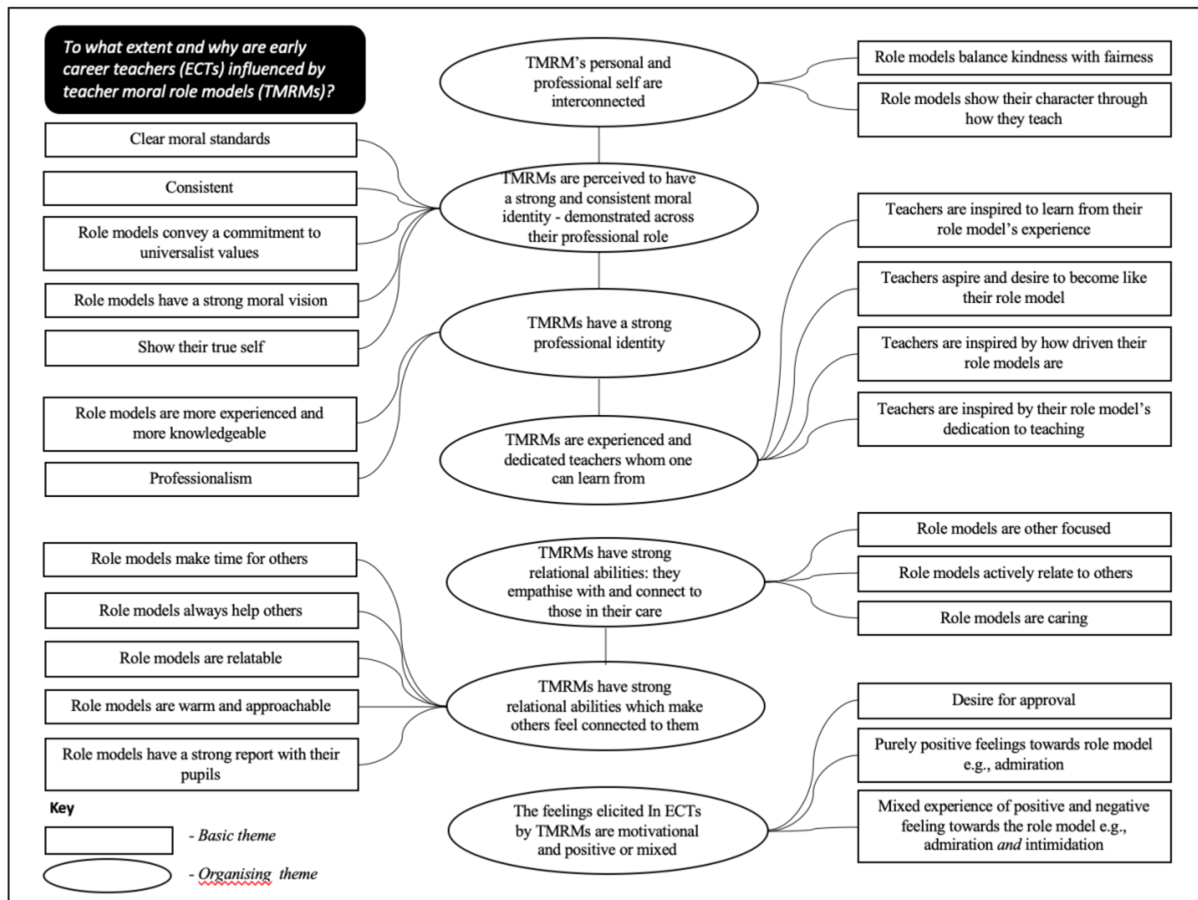

Figure 4. Thematic network map of salient Phase One results (basic and organising themes) related to the question: to what extent and why are early career teachers (ECTs) influenced by teacher moral role models (TMRMs)?

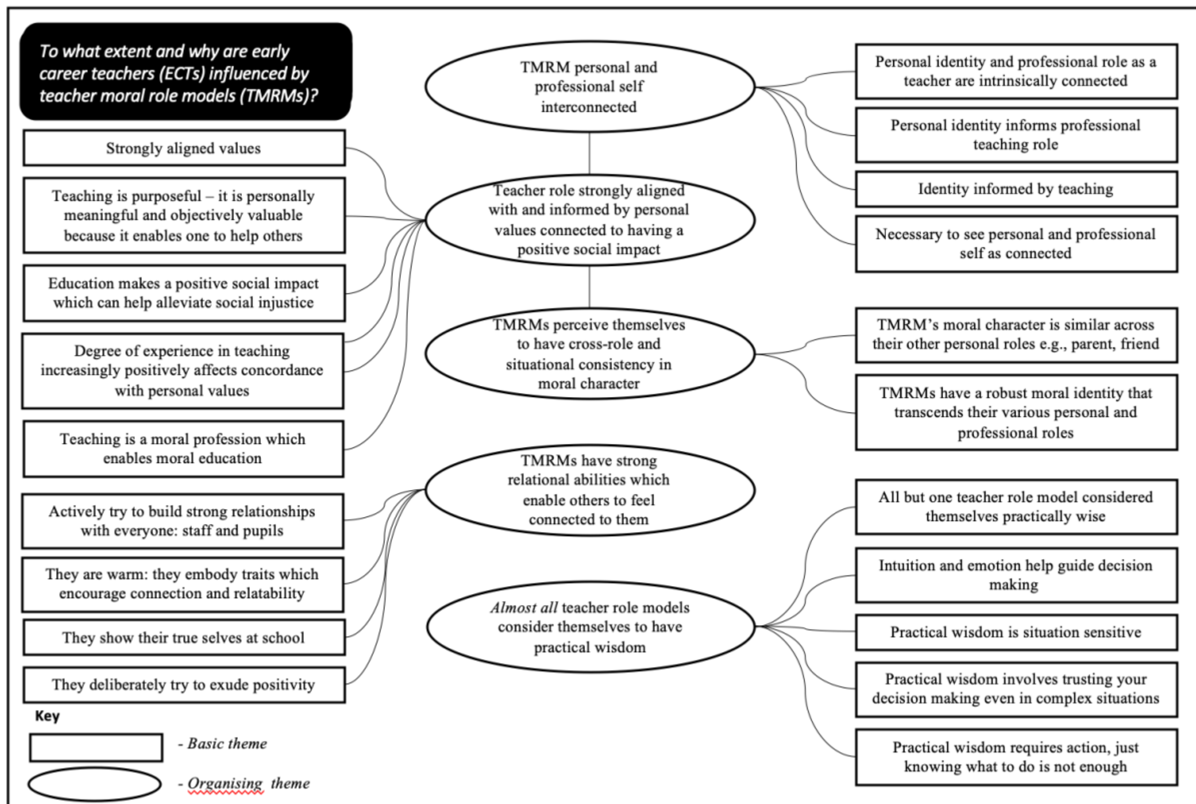

Figure 5. Thematic network map of salient Phase Two results (basic and organising themes) related to the question: to what extent and why are early career teachers (ECTs) influenced by teacher moral role models (TMRMs)?

The results of the thematic analysis resulting from a comparison of Phase One and Phase Two results point to three main global themes regarding the relational process of role modelling between TMRMs and ECT – represented in Figure 6 below. These concern the TMRMs display of and ECTs perception of:

- a strong moral identity intertwined with professional identity
- practical wisdom *(phronesis*)
- strong and active relational abilities – TMRMs are expert relators and thus *relatable*

Figure 6. Thematic network map of the salient themes resulting from a comparison of Phase One and Two results (organising and global themes) concerning the research question: to what extent and why are early career teachers (ECTs) influenced by teacher moral role models (TMRMs)?

The global themes explained and illustrated:

Global theme one: Strong moral identity intertwined with professional identity

TMRMs are perceived – by both themselves and ECTs – to have a strong and consistent moral identity which is interconnected with an equally strong professional identity. They are actively committed to showing their true selves in the classroom and display their character through how they teach. This entails that they, for example, demonstrate clear and consistent moral standards, convey a commitment to universalist values, and have a strong moral vision. They are also thought to balance kindness with fairness. The teaching profession itself strongly aligns with their personal values regarding, for example, the idea that teaching is a moral profession which enables moral education, that teaching makes a positive social impact which can help alleviate social injustice, and that teaching is purposeful in the sense that it is subjectively

meaningful and objectively valuable because it enables one to help others. TMRMs consider the degree of time spent in teaching to positively affect the degree to which the profession concords with their personal values. They also consider themselves to have cross role and situation consistency in moral character, meaning that the person they are as a moral teacher is similar to who they are as e.g., a parent or friend. ECTs are inspired by TMRM's depth of knowledge, experience, professionalism, drive and dedication to teaching. Ultimately the strength of TMRMs moral and professional identities *and* the interconnectedness of these two 'selves' inspires ECTs to become like them.

As to the degree to which these findings align with current theory, they do in the sense that virtuous character is thought to transcend one's personal and professional roles (Fowers et al., 2021; Fowers et al., 2023a). However, the context of this research is novel, so it also can be considered to partly extend said theory by imbuing it with insights from the professional context of teaching explicitly, in particular regarding the dual perception of this quality from both the moral learner (in this case ECTs) and the role model (in this case TMRMs). The following quotations add further support to this theme (continued in Appendix 7):

> *'I was born a teacher.' (SRM1)*
>
> *'So, to students, one of the things I try and do, within the boundaries of maintaining distance and professionalism, is trying to show them I am being my whole self at school.'(ITTRM5)*
>
> *'I can't be somebody else, I can't do that. So, on the one hand, it is like acting isn't it teaching, to some extent, but I am not a very good actor, so I have to bring myself to the lesson. And actually, I think that's why I enjoy it so much.' (SRM5)*
>
> *'I lead with a moral compass, you have to do right by people, and I think I treat people well. It's about how you treat people. You talk about being a moral role model, it's very much about understanding, like morality and integrity as well, in leadership in the way that you treat your staff – do right by them.' (ITTRM6)*
>
> *'I think what struck me from my training year here, is that [SRM5] knew all of the kids' names straight away, she remembers all the kids' names, she remembers so many of the kids that's she's taught. I left the school six years ago and she still remembers all the kids that did [subject X] in my class. She's so bubbly, she says hello to everyone*

> *in the corridor, she's got this real sense of 'I am this bubbly lovely person and you are going to see that, I'm not going to close that off, I'm just going to be me'. I suppose trying to be more like her in the classroom, this personable warm person, is what I aspire to be.' (P6)*

Global theme two: Practical wisdom (phronesis)

All bar one TMRMs consider themselves to have practical wisdom. That ECTs identified these TMRMs as role models could indicate their conscious or unconscious awareness of this intellectual virtue in their role model too. For TMRMs practical wisdom is primarily a product of experience and involves using intuition and emotion to help guide decision-making and eventual *action* – simply knowing what to do is not enough. It also involves trusting one's decision-making even in highly complex situations. It is situation sensitive in the sense that it involves: fully understanding the complexity of different situations; adapting to the situation; recognising that individuals require different things and have different needs. It also comes seemingly naturally.

That all bar one TMRM considered themselves to have practical wisdom highlights it as an important finding, especially given existing neo-Aristotelian theory on emulation which argues that being a moral role model requires *phronesis,* i.e., practical wisdom (e.g., see Chapter 2 and 3 of this thesis and Kristjánsson, 2024). Although not asked about their role models' practical wisdom directly, the fact that all ECTs identified at least one TMRM with this trait can justifiably be taken to indicate that practical wisdom is very likely to be a factor which influences the relational bond between these moral learners and their role models. What is also interesting is that despite being unaware of the neo-Aristotelian literature on *phronesis*, the answers given by TMRMs regarding practical wisdom strongly accorded to this highly specific theoretical understanding. As such, it is justifiable to conceptualise practical wisdom in '*phronesis'* terms. Furthermore, if one additionally conceptualises TMRMs as *phronimoi*,

it is clear that they are situated within the context of ordinary life. This supports how *phronimoi* can represent an ordinary degree of virtue (see Curzer, 2005; Hursthouse, 2006, p. 308; Foot, 1978, p. 6).

Fundamentally, then, that TMRMs are role models and appear to have cultivated *phronesis* can be taken to support existing theory regarding the necessity of *phronesis* to role modelling and further makes visible the salience of *phronesis* to teacher professional ethics education specifically. The following quotations add further support to this theme (continued in Appendix 8):

> *'This is one that makes me laugh a bit because actually [being wise] is a bit of a long running epithet that people have had for me. So, since I was quite young other people seem to think that I'm wise. So, in my teacher training I was the youngest on the course by far at 21, and we all had Mr Men character epithets given to us, and mine was Little Miss Wise, was who I was voted as. And it seems to be an impression that people have about me that they seem quite quick to volunteer. And I think it's because people feel able to talk to me in a way where I'm not going to overreact and where I can break it down in a pragmatic way.' (SRM4)*

> *'I do have a very very very strong sense of what is actually right in general. I.e., it is right to do that kind of thing, and it is not right to do that kind of thing...Like one of things I find very frustrating is people or organisations who talk the talk but don't walk the walk. And so, in those kinds of situations you do need to be judgemental and you do need to fight for change...I think so, again probably to a fault, but I think so. So, when the Ukrainian people were moving out, I knew exactly what should happen, I knew how we should start to withdraw support to help them be independent. And I was very sure that what my plan for what would happen would end up in a good result. So, I guess that is quite a complex situation.' (ITTRM4)*

> *'Oh my goodness, I can't remember if [P7] was here when this happened, but we had a serious incident on the school site. And you want to talk about my response to that and how I had to manage that. And instinct takes over. There is nothing in terms of a rule book or any training on an NPQH that's gonna train you for when a child tries to hurt themselves– what do you do? And how I responded to that in the immediate, and then in the short term, and then in the long term, I look back at that and think 'my goodness, you did an outstanding job'. You know. And it did come naturally.' (ITTRM6)*

In order to make credible that these TMRMs are referring to practical wisdom in a way which aligns with a broadly neo-Aristotelian conception of phronesis, it is instructive to include a

further thematic network map (Figure 7) which illuminates the basic and organising themes pertaining to this claim (see also Appendix 6):

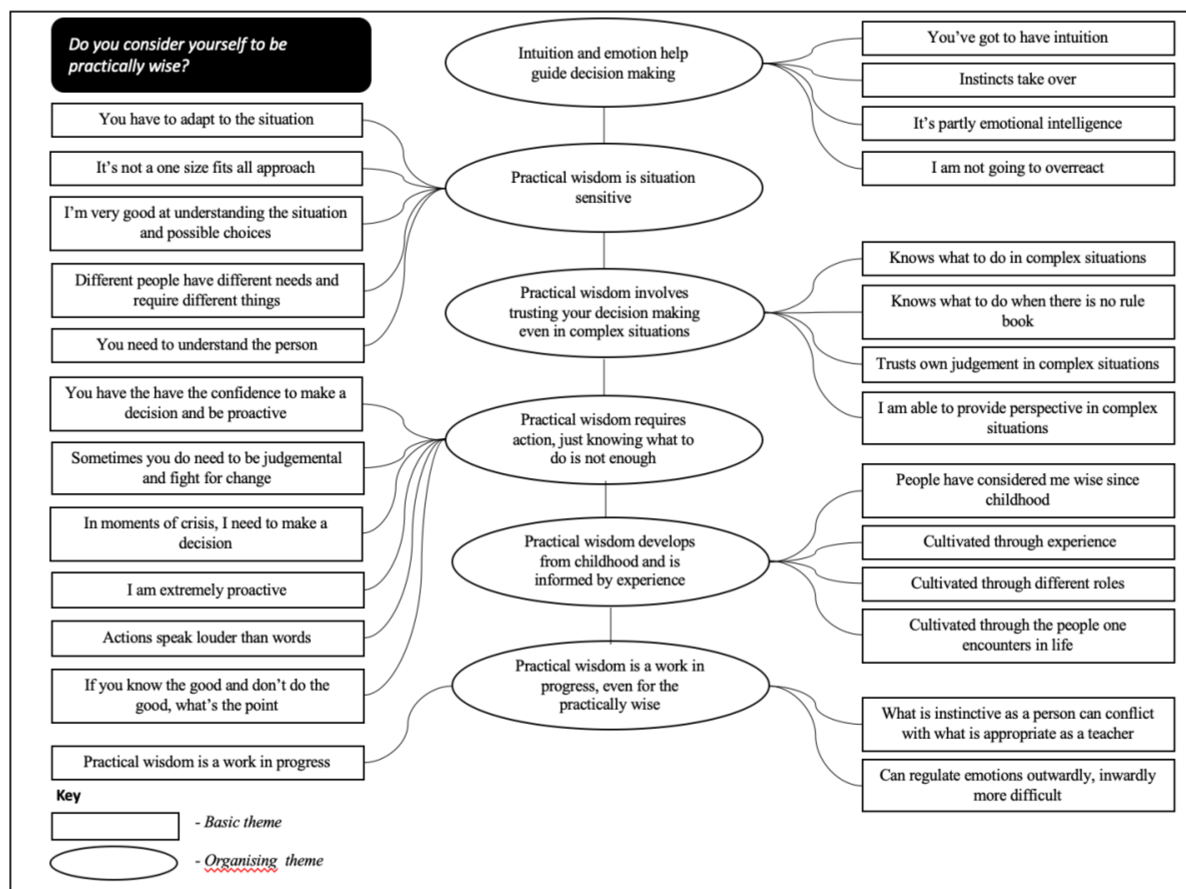

Figure 7. Thematic network map of the basic and organising themes supporting global theme two: practical wisdom

As can be seen from Figure 7, the basic themes can be collated into organising themes which correspond to a neo-Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* (see Kristjánsson and Fowers, 2024). For instance, the soft-rationalist understanding of reason-infused emotion expounded in Chapter 3, where *phronesis* helps regulate emotion, educate intuition, and, as a result, motivate action, is represented by the first organising theme 'intuition and emotion help guide decision-making'. Furthermore, that *phronesis* involves being sensitive to the particulars of a situation, which requires the adjudication and integration of virtues in cases of moral complexity, and ultimately making an all-things-considered decision which motivates virtuous action, is represented by the following three organising themes. Whilst the final two organising themes

capture how *phronesis* development *ideally* begins in childhood through relational teaching (or, in my terms, through entangled *phronesis*), and is further cultivated through general life and more specific professional experience over a whole lifetime.

Global theme three: Strong and active relational abilities – they are expert relators and thus relatable

The ability to forge connections which encourage relational closeness is a salient factor in moral role modelling between TMRMs and ECTs. As expert relators, TMRMs exude warmth and embody traits which enhance trust. They are caring and approachable, consistently making time to help others. Notably, ECTs observe the strength of the rapport between TMRMs and their pupils, with TMRMs emphasising how said rapport enables them to be more open – something that gets easier with experience. That these relational abilities are practiced deliberately is also important to note, for example, TMRMs consciously try to show their true selves at school through being transparent and – at times – vulnerable; actively try to cultivate a good rapport with staff *and* pupils; and actively try to model positivity to help others feel comfortable and uplifted.

This theme is particularly enlightening because it demonstrates that 'relatability' is not merely a case of a learner perceiving a role model as similar in some way, but *also* a case of the role model essentially being good at relating to others. Indeed, relatability in the former sense is already considered a central motivational factor in emulation (e.g., see Han and Dawson, 2023). Broadening this understanding to also encompass 'the ability to relate' and thus represents an extension of current emulative theory and indeed the concept of relatability itself: relatability is a two-way concept. The following quotations add further support to this theme (continued in Appendix 9):

'…on a religious level, in Sikhism, we are constantly reminded to be humble. To be humble in your approach with everything, to remove ego, so do I wake up thinking 'I'm a good person'? No, I don't. But there are moments in my day which remind me that I'm doing good for others. Like a little Y7 came running up to me, came running up to me: 'Miss…, Miss… thank you for my birthday card', and I said 'that's ok', and they said 'Miss, I got so excited, I thought it was from my Nan, but then when I opened it, it was from you, and so I was even more excited', and so I said 'yeah'. And he continued 'Miss, do you give everybody a birthday card?', and I said 'I do'. It's one of the things I do, I send everybody a birthday card.' (ITTRM6)

'I try and name people as I pass them and just say 'hi so and so'. And there is a reason for that, number one I'm remembering names, number two is I want them to feel 'oh she knows me, she remembers my name', 'she's thinking about how I feel'. So, I do actually think about that.' (SRM5)

'…she was always such a positive presence in the house, and it's what I wanted to emulate in the classroom – so a really upbeat positive atmosphere I think is really important if children are going feel comfortable and want to learn with you.' (SRM4)

7.4.2. What possible factors and causal processes affect the relationship between ECTs and their TMRMs?

Role modelling is an inherently relational process involving a multitude of interrelated conscious and unconscious interactions between learner and role model. As such, arguably each identified global theme could be construed as a relational factor or causal process in some way. Figure 8 below represents the main elements of role modelling as a relational process. Put simply, the tripartite power of the TMRMs strength of moral and professional identity, practical wisdom (*phronesis*) and relational abilities explains why ECTs consider them a role model. Ideally, of course, these factors will also cause ECTs to emulate them – although it is beyond the scope of the present research to establish this effect. However, given the scepticism surrounding whether qualitative case studies can aim at causal explanation, it is again worth reiterating that my intention here is to establish *context sensitive* and *probable* knowledge of the relational processes at work between TMRMs and ECTs. Further, since this question is an extension of the primary research question, the supporting quotations from the previous question are intended to suffice here too.

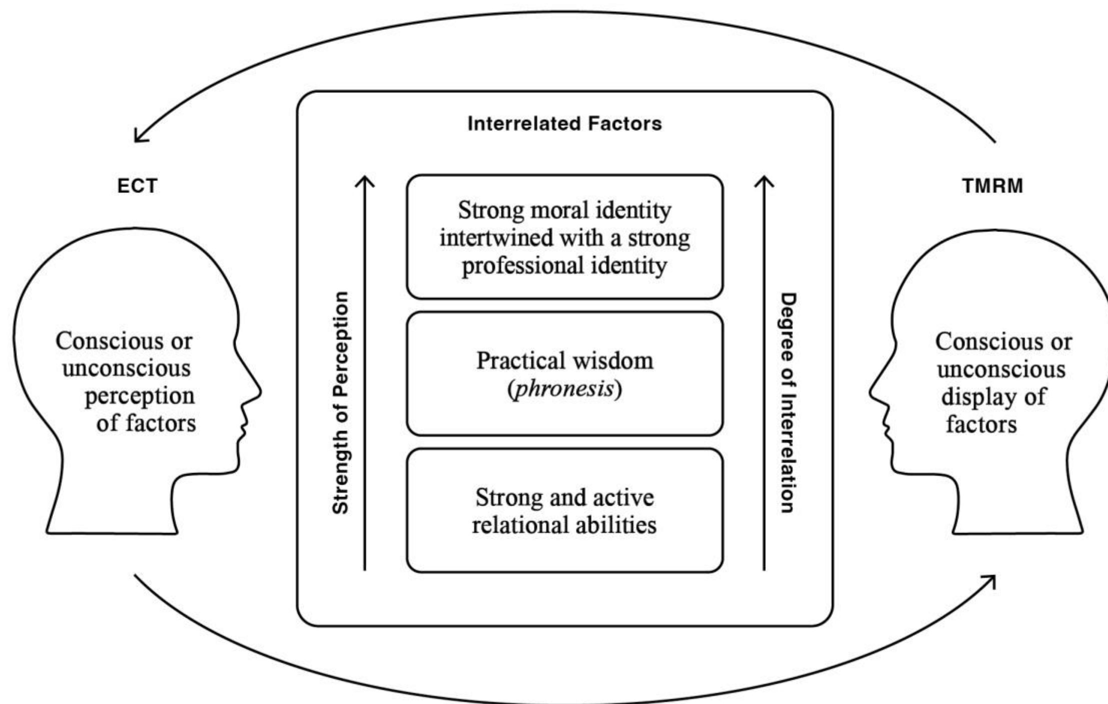

Figure 8. Factors affecting the relational process of role modelling between TMRMs and ECTs

7.4.3. To what extent and why do ECTs perceive of themselves as moral role models?

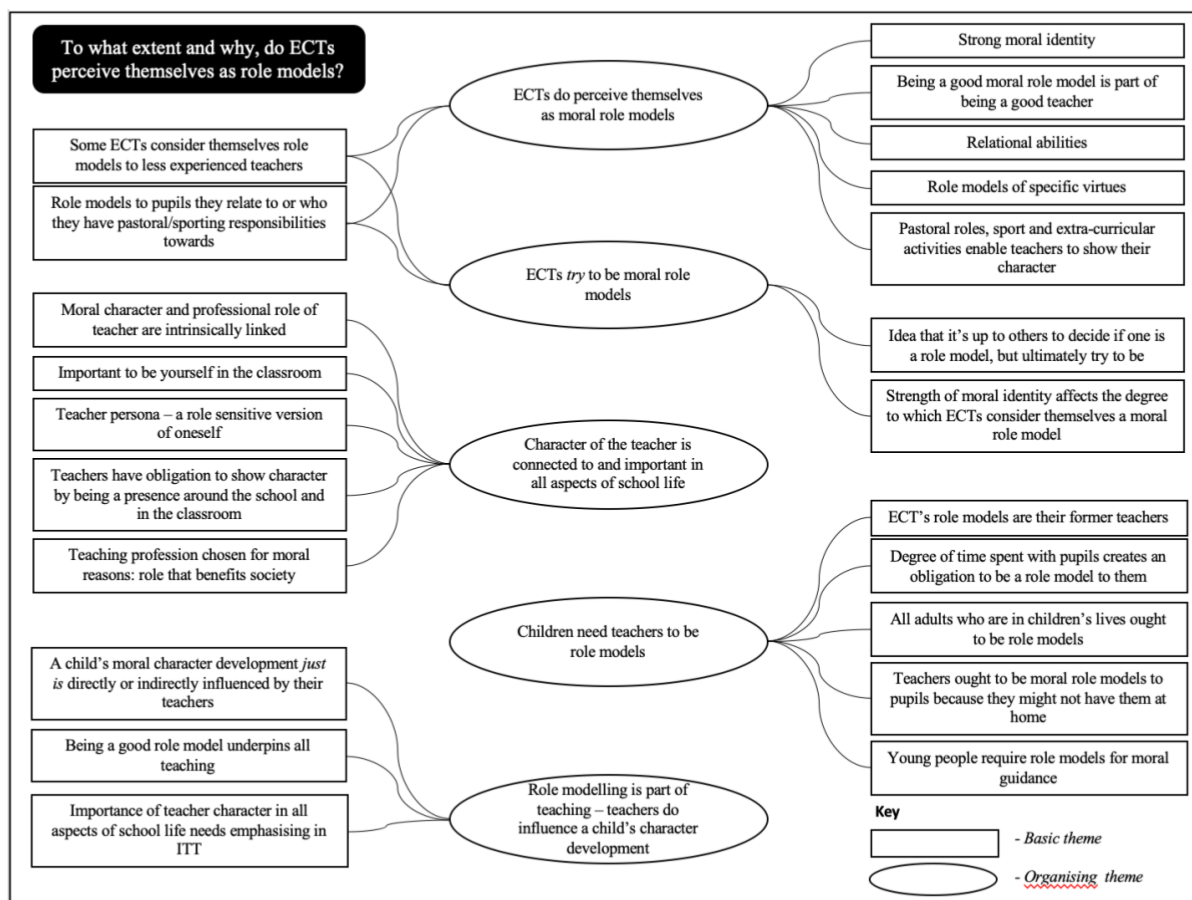

Figure 9. Thematic network map of salient Phase One results (basic and organising themes) related to the question: to what extent and why do ECTs perceive of themselves as moral role models?

First, it is instructive to briefly report the statistical results derived from the data. Whilst this is not usual practice with qualitative research, in this case it is justified because it can help illuminate the salience that teachers themselves allot to moral role modelling. In Phase One (*N*7), when asked if they considered themselves moral role models 71% answered definitively in the affirmative, with the remaining 29% stating they would like or try to be. Relatedly, 100% of ECTs thought teachers *ought* to be moral role models.

It is clear from ECT responses that even those in the early phases of their career think teachers ought to be moral role models and accordingly try to be. The details of which and supporting reasons are represented in Figure 9. They displayed a deep understanding of the moral obligations teachers have to pupils, driven by an awareness that whilst all young people require role models for moral guidance some might not be blessed with the moral luck to have

them at home. As such, all adults who are in the lives of pupils should strive to be role models to them. Since teachers spend a considerable amount of time with pupils, ECTs thought this further enhanced their obligation to be role models to them. It is also interesting to note that many ECTs cited their former teachers as role models. These insights are exemplified in the following quotations:

> *'I think it underpins everything, and that kind of innately your values and things come through in the way that you teach.' (P7)*
>
> *'I absolutely think that teachers should be role models and that should be part of it. And if a teacher cannot be a good role model, then I don't think they can be a good teacher.' (P6)*
>
> *'They do have a responsibility to be moral role models, because I suppose you have to assume that they are not going to get it from somewhere else.' (P7)*
>
> *'I think, you know when you're at school, even after school, I would still think my role models now are my teachers. They are who you spend every day with, they are the ones teaching you, they are the ones full of all this knowledge. You do look up to them. They are important, they can change a kid basically, well some of them. So, yeah, definitely I think teachers should be role models.' (P1)*

Those who displayed a stronger moral identity also considered themselves to be moral role models to (primarily) pupils, especially those they had pastoral or sporting responsibilities towards, as this quotation demonstrates:

> *'I like to model traits, manners, I model good practice – you know let teachers through the door first, hold the door open for the person next to you, even make sure your uniform is good, please and thank you, all that. I just think it's – for them to see that, I think especially with boys, like the 13-year-old boys the 14-year-old boys, Y9, Y7, when they're still developing and all of that and they're all a bit wary about what's cool and what's not. Just to show it's not a matter of being cool or not, it's just a matter of being a good person. And if they've got someone that is a superior to them that does all that, it's much easier for them to go "actually no, this is the way it should happen". So, I like to think I'm a moral role model.' (P6)*

This quotation also reflects the insight that role modelling underpins all teaching because teachers – directly or indirectly – *just do* influence a child's character development, in virtue of being embedded in the context of their lives. Since not all ECTs grasped this insight with

such confidence, one may argue that the importance of teacher character to all aspects of school life needs emphasising in ITT and CPD.

7.4.4. To what extent and why do TMRMs perceive of themselves as moral role models?

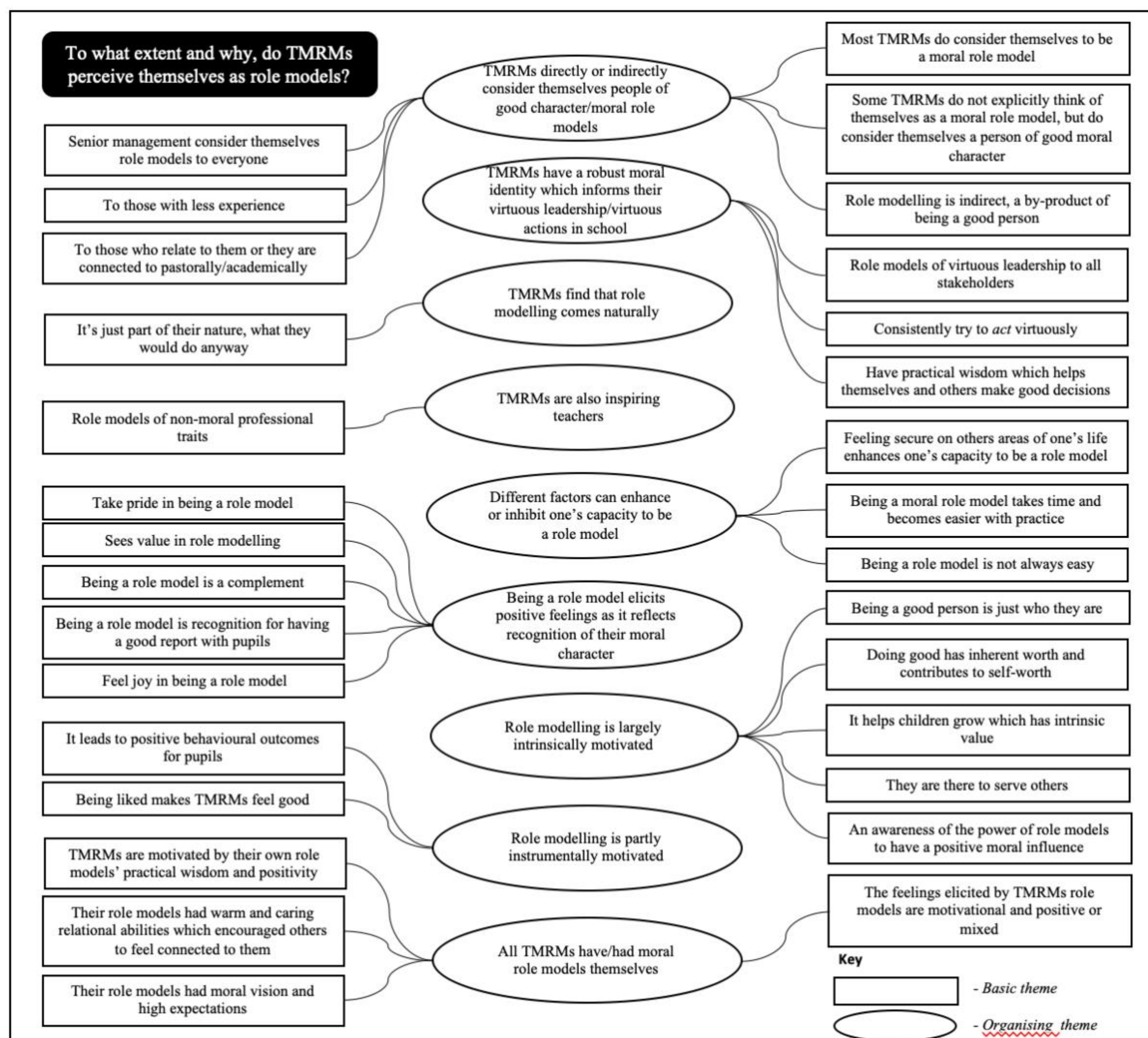

Figure 10. A thematic network map of salient Phase Two results (basic and organising themes) relating to the research question: to what extent and why do TMRMs perceive of themselves as moral role models?

In Phase Two (*N*11), 100% of TMRMs had moral role models during their career, with most citing numerous influences. When asked if they considered themselves a moral role model (*or person of good character) within the school 100% of TMRMs directly or indirectly considered this the case. TMRMs have already been nominated as a moral role model by ECTs, so it is perhaps unsurprising that they all – directly or indirectly – considered themselves as such.

Some expressed initial hesitation, but when asked if they considered themselves a person of good character within the school, answered definitively in the affirmative. This indicates an awareness that being a role model is not simply something one decides to be but must be a deeper reflection of one's moral character. As such, considering oneself a role model may be a factor in being a good role model, but only if it is underpinned by an authentic moral identity. The nuance of these responses is reflected in the following quotations:

> *'I think it's just something I think I'm meant to be.' (SRM6)*

> *'I lead with a moral compass, you have to do right by people, and I think I treat people well. It's about how you treat people. You talk about being a moral role model, it's very much about understanding, like morality and integrity as well, in leadership in the way that you treat your staff – do right by them.' (ITTRM6)*

> *'I think it's about being a role model for all stakeholders – you become a role model for everybody you interact with, so the parents, the students, and the staff.' (ITTRM6)*

> *'Yeah, I think so. I don't think it's the kind of thing I would say about myself, but I think over time enough different people have said things to that effect either to me or about me which has gotten back to me. And I think, yeah, the way that I conduct my life and the way that I interact with my colleagues and my students, I think people, not everyone of course, but I think some people look to me and think yes that is something to try and emulate.' (ITTRM5)*

> *'I'd never say to my classes 'look at me I'm a great role model', I would never do that, it just happens. You try and do things the right way, and I think if you're trying to do it – yeah the way you'd put it is, you go in and try and set a good example to people, and sometimes that can maybe lead into you being looked at as a role model.' (SRM3)*

> *'Not explicitly. I think if I thought about it enough then I would see that maybe I might be, but I don't try to make myself into a role model. I want to embody those characteristics because I think that's important, and that's what I want to live in my life because those are my values. But I see how that might influence other people, if those are the things I am demonstrating.' (SRM7)*

Relatedly, whilst further details regarding what motivates TMRMs can be found in Figure 10, it is also worth briefly reflecting how role modelling comes naturally to them:

> *'I don't find it difficult because it's in my nature. When you stop and think about it's a tough responsibility to have.' (SRM2)*

> *'I think to an extent it does come naturally, in that I would say a lot of these traits are ones I've had from a small child, but also it's the kind of thing you get better at with practice. I'd say it was something that was quite obvious from quite a young age*

> *actually. As a child I very much had a moral compass that pointed due north, and I would be that child in the class who would take on situations if I felt that people were behaving badly.' (SRM4)*

> *'There's no other way. Yes. Else gosh that would be terribly exhausting wouldn't it. No this is who I am.' (SRM5)*

Whilst it would be usual practice to compare my findings from this question to the associated background literature here, the originality of this element of the study in particular means there isn't any. These results thus provide the first step in advancing the understanding of TMRMs perception of themselves as moral role models.

7.5. Conclusion

The central focus of this study was to add empirical weight to the foregoing discussion by trying to understand why some teachers *actually are* moral role models to early career teachers and further whether these teachers perceived themselves to be moral role models. The results of two phases of interviews with ECTs and their TMRMs respectively, and subsequent abductive thematic analysis, demonstrate that – in the professional context of teaching at least – someone is likely to be a moral role model due to the following three interrelated factors:

- a strong moral identity intertwined with a strong professional identity
- their practical wisdom *(phronesis*)
- their strong and active relational abilities – TMRMs are *expert relators* and thus *relatable*

This supports role modelling as an inherently relational process, involving the conscious and/or unconscious perception of these factors on the part of the learner and conscious and/or unconscious authentic display of these factors on the part of the role model. That these factors are interrelated is also important, arguably the lack of one or more may negatively affect whether a person is a role model, although it is beyond the scope of this study to ascertain to what degree.

These findings complement existing emulative theory formulated during the course of this thesis by illuminating *phronesi*s as a salient element of moral role modelling and other work on the professional ethics of teaching to similar effect (see Kristjánsson, 2024). Contrary to critics which argue that there is a drought of *phronesis* in schools which undermines the possibility of teachers as role models (see Yacek and Jonas, 2023), this research highlights that – in the present case at least – it very much exists as a source of moral wisdom for early career teachers. The findings also complement current research on the importance of relatability in emulation (Han and Dawson, 2023), yet further extends it in the sense that, in addition to being perceived as *relatable* in some sense, role models are also experts at *relating* to others. This two-way process is new territory for the concept of relatability which I intend to explore in further work down the line. Role models actively forge connections which encourage relational closeness, meaning they exude warmth and embody traits which enhance trust. As for the intertwined moral and professional identities, this also complements existing research which supports how virtuous character transcends one's personal and professional roles (see Fowers et al., 2023a), but applies it to the specific context of teaching. It demonstrates that, in order to be inspired by a professional moral role model, it is not enough for them to simply be a good person, they must also embody the role-relevant virtue and other demands of their specific professional role. Put simply, they need to be a good teacher and a good person; a good person who is a bad teacher will likely fail to be considered a TMRM. The two selves are intrinsically connected. Similar to research on morally exceptional exemplars (see Fleeson, 2021), this study also makes visible how more ordinary role models, in this case teachers, demonstrate consistent moral standards, convey a commitment to universalist values and have a strong moral vision.

As for teachers' perception of themselves as role models, that all TMRMs confidently self-identified as at least a person of good character – which one can reasonably interpret as a

moral role model – represents a particularly original insight for role modelling in this context. To my knowledge, no studies ask those who are *already* perceived as moral role models by others if they *also* perceive themselves as such. It transpired that TMRMs, who all held middle to senior teaching positions, were aware of their potential moral influence on others, be they pupils, less experienced teachers, or even, at times, parents. Their leadership can thus be construed as a form of role-model-driven virtuous leadership. However, their responses made visible that identifying as some kind of moral role model was not *in itself* what made them so. Moreover, being a role model must stem from one's authentic moral character, which in professional contexts is intertwined with one's professional role. As such, this self-perception was a reflection of something much deeper, it being an awareness of one's potential moral influence on others, derived from a strong moral and professional identity. In this sense, then, perceiving oneself as a moral role model is simply the extension of one's good character, it comes naturally, even unconsciously, it is not contrived. Furthermore, the study also makes clear that even ECTs at least try to be moral role models, largely due to their awareness of the moral obligations that teachers have to pupils.

Taken together these findings – some of which I will return to in the closing chapter of the thesis – both extend and add new layers to the understanding of emulation in the professional context of teaching. They illuminate how and why ECTs consider specific other teachers moral role models and thus add considerable normative clout to the case for TMRMs. These practically wise teachers are the missing piece of the emulative puzzle. Put simply, they are the key to better moral role modelling in schools.

7.6. Strengths, limitations and avenues for further empirical research

A significant strength of the study is that it approached the research questions empirically, rather than purely conceptually. For example, whilst the researcher had preconceptions – derived from the virtue ethical literature – regarding what *phronesis* is and how it is implicated in emulation *qua* role modelling, it was not possible for this theoretically informed bias to affect participant responses. That TMRMs expressed an understanding of their own practical wisdom that was closely aligned with the central tenets of *phronesis* can thus be taken to support its importance in the professional context of teaching specifically, and possibly also emulation *qua* role modelling more generally. That said, critics could argue that *even if* the researcher's existing understanding of *phronesis* did not directly affect participant responses, *it may* have informed how the responses were interpreted and analysed. In response, I, the researcher, maintain that such theory-driven interpretation and analysis corresponds to the abductive nature of the thematic analysis employed in this study, a point which weakens this possible objection. A further strength concerns the study's methodological originality whereby findings were collated into figures which worked to illuminate the logic of the thematic analysis by visually representing links between basic, organising and global themes. This visual representation works to reduce the required number of supporting quotations – compared to what is typically seen in the empirical part of qualitative studies – because they enable responses to be synthesised. However, to further justify themes and theorisation, some quotations were still deemed helpful. This is because the authenticity of raw data is difficult to dispute, because it is *quite literally* the verbatim voice of participants, which adds to the trustworthiness of the analysis by alleviating concerns of potential researcher bias (Guest et al., 2012). The use of quotations also helps demonstrate my reflexivity as a researcher since they are free of researcher personal feeling (ibid.). By using some quotations to support each global theme, I therefore hope to have further justified the objectivity and reliability of said themes.

The credibility of the three main global themes is also enhanced because they are a product of the thematic analysis of both Phase One and Two results.

A potential limitation of the study, however, concerns the single researcher coding and subsequent process of thematic analysis. It is best practice for a second researcher to code a portion of the questions and compare the themes derived from these codes with the primary researcher to assess the degree to which the results cohere. However, given that the case study is part of a much larger PhD project, I, the researcher, did not have access to another coder, making this process unfeasible. To overcome this potential limitation and increase rigour, I remained reflexive, meaning, in this instance, that throughout the thematic analysis I critically interrogated my reasoning process to ensure the identification of increasingly more nuanced themes truly reflected the insights derived from participants. A further limitation relates to the reasoning process itself. Indeed, since my reasoning is not purely deductive, I am compelled *at best* to aim at a probable outcome and must thus leave room for an element of doubt. This does not render the research ungeneralisable, since it may also apply in other relevantly similar professional contexts, but implies that a caution must be taken not to extend the findings too far beyond the intended scope. Finally, one must also acknowledge the possibility of social desirability bias (see Bergen and Labonté, 2020), whereby participants alter their responses by over-reporting positives and under-reporting negatives to appear more favourable to, in this case, the interviewer. Since it is indeed desirable to be a role model, this bias had the potential to affect all participants, yet particularly TMRMs who, unlike ECTs, entered the study knowing they had been identified as a moral role model and, as such, may have felt especially motivated to fulfil this externally perceived role in the interview. In light of this, the decision was made to limit initial knowledge of the study's full aims and provide participants with a full debrief only after each interview had taken place. However, as participants still had *some* knowledge

of the study, an element of empirical bullet biting still exists, despite the steps taken to alleviate this type of response bias as far as possible.

Taking this study's overall findings, and the aforementioned strengths and limitations into account, it is now time to consider how they might support avenues for further empirical research. Ultimately the possibilities here are multitudinous and, as such, I shall mention the most relevant qualitative study ideas only. Within the teaching profession itself, to further increase the reliability of the present results and more thoroughly justify generalising them to other contexts, it would be instructive to conduct similar research with ECTs and their TMRMs in both other independent schools and state schools, to assess if the findings replicate and how they compare. Given the present research was focused on teachers in a secondary school, it may also be illuminating to conduct a similar study in primary school settings, again to assess if the findings replicate and how they compare. Beyond teaching, one could further extend the study to other professions, particularly those with a similarly normative ethos, such as medicine (see Jameel et al., 2021), to assess if, for example, junior doctors or nurses identified more senior doctors or nurses as moral role models and whether the latter were perceived and perceived themselves to be role models and have *phronesis*. There are some studies which already illuminate the centrality of *phronesis* to being a good doctor (Jameel, 2022), which the present study could build upon in the context of *phronesis* development through moral role modelling specifically. As for empirical exemplar research more generally, the study could be adapted to focus on the reported self-image of more distant possible exemplars, such as Barack or Michelle Obama, famous footballers, or others in the public eye, to assess whether, for example, they too considered themselves moral role models and to whom, and whether they perceived themselves as *phronimoi*. However, as I have already raised concerns during the course of this thesis about the degree to which distant exemplars can positively affect emulation, I do here add a note of caution, since it is possible that too much emphasis can be

put on distant exemplars, rather than on those who more readily stimulate entangled *phronesis*: ordinary known *phronimoi.*

On the basis of this study's findings and the argument advanced in this thesis as a whole, it is now time to synthesise these theoretical and empirical insights into a cohesive whole, draw out salient normative and practical implications, and address possible objections. This will be the focus of the following and final chapter.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

8.1. Introduction

Delineating a philosophically discerning, psychologically realistic and developmentally adequate theory of emulation *qua* role modelling is an ambitious task and one that I hope this thesis has accomplished. By introducing some original concepts and processes – in particular, the idea of emulation as a moral virtue, entangled *phronesis*, habituated emulation and complete emulation – I have proposed a developmentally sensitive step-by-step account of how the morally immature potentially develop moral virtue and *phronesis* by emulating moral role models. Indeed, by extending the conceptual and methodological repertoire of neo-Aristotelian character developmental theory, and synthesising it with empirical research in current moral psychology, I have arguably made a contribution to moral developmental theory more broadly. As such, I have attempted to provide an all-things-considered response to the primary research question: *what is emulation and how does it work as a method of virtuous character development in different developmental phases?* I will now reiterate the central tenets of my theory through the medium of the following, deliberately *ideal*, example:

Lucky Harmony. Born to ordinary *phronimoi* parents, Harmony is blessed with the developmental moral luck of a good upbringing. In infancy, her parents consistently model virtuous actions, which she (largely unconsciously) perceives, and 'condition' her to practice them herself with the use of encouraging phrases, such as, 'great sharing Harmony' or 'it's good to say 'thank you''. On the rare occasions Harmony does something 'vicious', her parents are quick to verbally discourage such actions. Harmony eventually recognises particular actions as good or bad, and develops a love of the good, even though she cannot yet understand why. Through entangled *phronesis* her parents have helped sow the first seeds of *phronesis*. This is habituated emulation. Gradually, as Harmony's capacity for elementary reasoning emerges, typically around the age of three, her parents begin to supplement their modelled

actions, and Harmony's own 'virtue' or 'vice' adjacent actions, with very basic reasons *qua* explanations. For example, 'saying thank you is good because it demonstrates appreciation'. At school, her *phronimoi* teachers reinforce such learning, as do other *phronimoi* primary care givers, such as her nanny. As this transitional phase comes to an end, typically around the age of six in line with the beginnings of Harmony's own capacity for metacognitive *phronetic* thinking, her experientially available role models step-up their explanatory game. They continue to model virtuous actions, but this time add increasingly sophisticated reasons for such actions to help her understand and reflect upon the full context and complexity of moral decision-making. In addition, Harmony perceives normative content, such as her role models' specific virtuous emotional states, through mind reading, i.e., the aligning of psychological states, which further helps her develop the right motivational structures to practice virtue. In this phase of complete emulation, her role model's *phronesis* thus entangles with Harmony's own developing *phronesis* through a combination of virtuous action, verbal reason-giving and non-verbal mind reading, which drives her to emulate them in perception, thought, feeling and action. Inspired and supported by her role models, which could *to an extent* also include some peers, she gradually starts to practice virtue with increasing independence. As she makes individual moral progress, she seeks out more advanced, yet still relatable, *phronimoi* to emulate. Further, because Harmony's reason, desires and actions are aligned, she not only does the good, but also derives pleasure from it. As such, her virtuous actions are now properly motivated by *phronetically*-infused virtuous emotion. Inspired by her own teachers, as a young adult she decides to follow in their footsteps, and enters the profession as an aspiring *phronimos,* ready to inspire pupils with her own virtuous example.

This example is *ideal* in that it illustrates a fairly smooth and direct developmental trajectory to becoming a *phronimos* through the emulation of moral role models. Its purpose is thus to show how the right developmental conditions, in this case involving the experiential

availability of *phronimoi* role models throughout the most morally formative phases of one's life, are conducive to moral virtue and *phronesis* development. Ideal examples are therefore aspirational in the sense that they describe a best-case scenario. However, since life is rarely ideal, they are limited to the extent that their scope does not extend to showing what would happen if these 'best-case' conditions are not met.

Given the inherent normativity of the teaching profession, which comes with specific role-and-situation-sensitive virtue obligations, the next phase of the thesis then proceeded to consider how this new theory of emulation *qua* role modelling could be applied to the professional context of teaching. Here, I sought to answer the research question: *to what extent and why is emulation qua role modelling important to the professional ethics education of teachers?* I made visible how, in order to alleviate the developmental moral unluck caused by a morally bad, or neutral, home upbringing, which stunts moral development, teachers should ideally aspire to be role models to pupils. However, since some teachers do not meet the *phronetic* threshold required to be role models, this creates a threshold problem, which I argued could be overcome by harnessing the emulative power of experienced teacher *phronimoi* in ITT programmes and schools, for insufficiently *phronetic* teachers to learn from. The crux of this argument relied on the existence of *phronimoi* teacher moral role models. Yet finding no empirical studies on teachers who *actually are* considered moral role models to other teachers in the literature, I then asked a further, distinctly empirical, research question. Specifically: *to what extent and why are early career teachers (ECTs) influenced by teacher moral role models (TMRMs)?* Overwhelmingly, the results of the qualitative case study in Chapter 7 illustrate, not only that ECTs are influenced by their TMRMs in morally-relevant ways, but also that there are indeed experienced *phronimoi* teachers in schools. Thus, despite the inevitable limits of a case study, which by its nature is representative of just a small fraction of teachers, it remains unlikely this is a unique case, meaning that there are likely to be other *phronimoi*

teachers in other schools for less experienced teachers to emulate. In this sense, the results from Chapter 7 strongly support the conclusion I argued for in Chapter 6. I will now illustrate this enhanced understanding of emulation *qua* role modelling in the professional context of teaching with two further imaginary examples which relate to the salience of this method for pupils and teachers respectively:

Mixed Luck Kai. Kai lives in a fairly deprived area, yet close to a good school, which he attends. His parents work long hours and take little interest in his development. Even if they did have time, it is unlikely that Kai would learn much from them, morally speaking, because they are *akratic* or worse. How uninspiring! Not knowing any better, Kai is frequently verbally reprimanded for various misdemeanours at school, yet over time, and with modelling, encouragement and praise from his *phronimoi* teachers, he makes progress. He also likes the novel feeling of being praised which motivates him to do more 'virtuous' things over the coming years. It took a bit longer than on the *ideal* trajectory of emulation, but with the help of his teachers, Kai becomes habituated in virtue via habituated emulation. With his foundation for *phronesis* development now fairly established, Kai continues to be inspired by various teachers, but in particular by Miss Harmony Wright. Consciously or unconsciously, Kai recognises there is something special about Miss Wright, she oozes warmth and approachability, which helps Kai feel they can relate to her, and always makes the effort to ask the pupils she teaches how they are when she sees them around the school – she *really cares*. Of course, she is also an excellent teacher – Kai does *quite* like Physics – but really it is her character that he admires, and a little, reveres. Even in the midst of morally complex classroom issues Miss Wright intuitively knows how to act, and what to say, and this practical wisdom is modelled to Kai on frequent occasions. Miss Wright has met Kai's parents only once, because they rarely turn up to parents' evening, and knows he does not have the easiest time at home. She realises he is in need of moral role models, and that an integral part of her role as a teacher

is to be just this, especially to those who may not have them elsewhere. Through entangled *phronesis*, involving the display of Miss Wright's virtuous actions, the clarity and depth of her reasoning about these actions, and mind reading, Kai begins to develop *phronesis* and moral virtue via complete emulation. His moral developmental path might be somewhat bumpier and more elongated than if he had been supported in this endeavour by his parents from birth, but by emulating his teachers he advances towards the practice of *phronetically-informed* virtue.

Mr Gilbert's Transformation. Upon finishing university, Tom Gilbert was unsure what to do with his Maths degree, so he decided to become a teacher. Tom was truly passionate about all things Maths and wanted to pass this onto the pupils he taught – a seemingly noble pursuit. During an ITT placement his colleagues recommended the infamous mantra, 'don't smile before Christmas', which he took literally by integrating it into his stern 'teacher persona'. With a national shortage of Maths teachers, he quickly found a job and thus became 'Mr Gilbert'. Yet even though *he* was enthused by Maths, he struggled to connect to his classes, there was something missing. Mr Gilbert had never given much thought as to the moral aspects of his professional role, or indeed his life in general, and tended to exist fairly unreflectively. He did, however, typically do the right thing in predictable morally-relevant situations. He was good at – *and enjoyed* – following rules, such as the 10 Commandments, something instilled in him during his Christian upbringing. But faced with complex or unfamiliar everyday moral dilemmas, the kind often encountered in professional life, he was stumped. In this sense, he was habituated in virtue, but was far from becoming a *phronimos* – he needed to practice complete emulation. Mr Gilbert's school had a policy that new teachers would be observed by more experienced teachers once per week and, fortunately for him, it was currently the responsibility of Ms Wright. After the lesson, they collaboratively reflected on what had and had not gone well, and thus entangled their evolving and developed *phronesis* respectively. Unsurprisingly, the lack of rapport between him and his pupils concerned her, so she suggested

he try to show more character in the classroom to help them relate to him. Taking this on board, he asked to observe her lessons to crystalise what she meant. That Ms Wright was a great teacher was well-known, yet on observing her, Mr Gilbert realised this was not simply because of her depth of subject knowledge, as presumed, but because of who she was as a person. Just as he had experienced during their post-observation conversation, she was also an expert at relating to others, and he could tell the pupils felt at ease and heard in her presence. Even during inevitable classroom conflict, she proactively modelled how to deal with it and explained her reasoning afterwards. It was clear that Ms Wright set high moral standards for herself, her pupils and even universally – she was a moral role model. Inspired, Mr Gilbert set to work implementing what he had seen, albeit in his own way, and continued to emulate her and other experienced *phronimoi* teachers both in and out of the classroom. Recognising that his role extends beyond merely teaching Maths, he now aspires to also be a moral role model to his pupils.

Whilst it is impossible for these examples to reflect the exact theoretical nuance of my original arguments, they nevertheless convey how the central components of my theory of emulation relate to the professional context of teaching. Having thoroughly demystified emulation and clarified how it could be applied to the aforementioned context, I will now address some objections relating to the method of emulation itself, before considering possible limitations of the overall thesis and how these pinpoint avenues for future research, and concluding with some final thoughts.

8.2. Objections and responses

> There is no such thing as a good influence, Mr. Gray. All influence is immoral…Because to influence a person is to give him one's own soul. He does not think his natural thoughts or burn with his natural passions. His virtues are not real to him. His sins, if there are such things as sins, are borrowed. He becomes an echo of

> some-one else's music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him (Wilde, 2014, p. 11).

Whilst I have acknowledged and responded to numerous objections throughout the thesis, I have, until now, omitted those which specifically critique emulation *qua* role modelling *itself*. This was a deliberate move, since I will now use the thesis as a whole to illuminate the specious nature of these objections, which have been eloquently raised by a *former* proponent of virtue ethics: David Carr (2023; 2021). I will first respond to two concerns from his recent paper, 'The hazards of role modelling for the education of moral and/or virtuous character' (2023), which, as the title suggests, anticipates and critiques the very focus of this thesis. Carr's central query relates to whether virtue can be 'read off' from perceptible moral character *alone* (ibid., p. 73). Here, I interpret him as primarily questioning two things: (1) the effectiveness of role modelling (let me call this the 'ineffectiveness objection'); and (2) its effectiveness as a stand-alone method (let me call this the 'overstatedness objection'). Once I have provided rejoinders to these objections, I will then address a third from Carr (2021), which taps into the sentiment reflected in the Oscar Wilde quotation from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* above – that a person's influence need not be virtuous and can inculcate vice. In general, though, I argue that Carr's conceptualisation of role modelling is restrictive and does not represent the far more encompassing and nuanced account of it found in the current literature and as exemplified in this thesis. He oversimplifies the discourse to that which concerns purely a direct and conscious moral educational strategy, which is philosophically and psychologically naïve and oblivious to the changing moral developmental needs of the individual. Consequently, I do not deem his recent papers to represent a real problem for this thesis.

Before I proceed, it is worth highlighting that I am aware that Athanassoulis and Han (2023) have already aspired to respond to some of the objections Carr raises in his 2023 paper. However, I hope that the rejoinders I provide below will be somewhat more conclusive and act to rebuff – what I have interpreted to be – the most central issues more thoroughly. As I see it,

the main shortcoming of Athanassoulis and Han's response is that they misinterpret the main thrust of Carr's argument as being about *indoctrination* and, as a result, spend the majority of their paper defending why role modelling is autonomy-supporting. A closer reading of Carr's paper reveals that, whilst he does entertain this issue, it is in the context of pondering effective ways to inculcate belief change in general (see 2023, p. 72), and thus explicitly 'not' directed at a neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical conception of role modelling (ibid.), leading their response to miss the mark. A further shortcoming is their over-optimism towards the potential for negative influences to positively affect character development – a concern I share with Carr. Since my own response more precisely engages with his main objections, and acknowledges where his scepticism is well-founded, it is more convincing.

Ineffectiveness

As regards ineffectiveness, i.e., Carr's scepticism regarding whether role modelling works as a method of virtuous character development, the emulative theory advanced in this thesis directly responds to this by providing a step-by-step account of precisely how one learns moral virtue, i.e., both virtuous emotion and action, and *phronesis* from moral role models. Driven by the moral-psychological mechanism of entangled *phronesis*, my theory expounds how habituated emulation provides the foundation needed for the later practice of complete emulation, which I conceptualise as a moral virtue. Whilst Carr could respond that I have not yet empirically 'tested' this theory, my rejoinder is strengthened by my extended account of the moral psychology of emulation in Chapter 5, in which I substantiate my previous philosophical argument with current research in developmental moral psychology and neuroscience. As such, the theory I advance is not merely a product of philosophical thinking, but in line with this thesis' commitment to naturalism, also distinctly 'possible',

psychologically speaking. In addition, the empirical case study in Chapter 7 demonstrates that teachers *actually are* influenced by teacher role models who *actually are phronimoi*, a finding that adds additional empirical clout to my response. Furthermore, an important caveat of my argument, which I explain at length in Chapter 4, and emphasise again in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, is that for emulation to stimulate virtue development, role models must also be (good enough) *phronimoi*, since becoming virtuous requires entangled, i.e., shared, *phronesis.* As such, I essentially agree with Carr's point that role modelling can only successfully cultivate *virtuous character* when the models in question have cultivated *phronesis* themselves (2023, p. 77). That said, as I acknowledge in Chapter 4, one might concede that the non-virtuous, such as the *enkratic*, could still be of use to those who are not yet *enkratic*, whilst maintaining that their influence on *virtue* development itself will be limited.

Interestingly, the importance of shared *phronesis* in the more direct strategy of one-on-one mentoring has also been emphasised elsewhere (see Whitlock, 2023). Additionally, two empirical studies specifically demonstrate how characterological exemplarity – in this case stories of virtuous people – do elicit positive emotional outcomes, which can be reasonably interpreted as virtuous emotions, particularly when they are perceived to be relatable and attainable (Bella, 2024; Han and Dawson, 2023). If this translates beyond the story realm to actuality, then one might also hope that – in addition to virtuous emotion – exposure to role models might further stimulate virtuous actions, i.e., virtue proper, in the novice. Indeed, given my argument that known role models best stimulate emulation, one would expect that the strength of the emotions and actions elicited to be considerably higher with the known than the unknown – a research project for the future perhaps. Collated, then, the chapters in this thesis and the other sources cited can be taken to diffuse the ineffectiveness objection by adding substantial theoretical and empirical contours to the understanding of how role modelling potentially works. Carr's objection thus rests on a lack of understanding of the state-of-the-art

in the emulation discourse, which this thesis exemplifies, along with various other recent contributions to this discursive field (e.g., see Han and Dawson, 2023; Kaftanski, 2023; Whitlock, 2023; Vaccarezza and Niccoli, 2022).

Overstatedness

Now to the overstatedness objection, the idea that *alone* role modelling is insufficient as a character developmental method. First, one might argue that this critique is unjustified since proponents of role modelling, such as myself, by no means consider it the 'only' player in the character-educational game and fully intend it to be complemented by other methods. That said, I hope that the content of this thesis marks emulation out as a – logically and developmentally – *primary method* and illuminates the moral developmental disadvantage that a lack of role models would cause. Second, whilst Carr claims that 'simple adult explanations' aimed at teaching virtue indicate that not all character developmental methods depend on role modelling (2023, p. 74), I understand this to be a central aspect of emulation, since it enables a role model to communicate the complexity of moral decision-making with a learner, thus helping them to develop skills such as moral adjudication and emotion regulation associated with *phronesis* (see Chapter 5 for a precise exposition of the role reason *qua* explanation plays in emulation). Third, rather than being tools for the homogeneous cultivation of character (see ibid, p. 75), the ideas I present in this thesis are developmentally sensitive and attuned to the context of the individual. For example, whilst in habituated emulation learners may benefit from more direct instruction and guidance, in order for moral agency to prosper, in later phases of complete emulation this guidance will evolve to facilitate the increasingly autonomous practice of virtue, in line with the importance placed upon moral self-cultivation. Furthermore, because people *just are* influenced by those in their moral sphere, I fully intend that emulation

should be understood to work both in indirect and unconscious ways *and* direct and conscious ways. For example, whilst I maintain that typically the former is the norm, understanding this better can also illuminate the use of emulation as a more direct developmental method. Overall, then, this more extensive understanding renders Carr's account limited to the extent that he misrepresents the methodological and developmental scope of what emulation broadly encompasses. All this said, I do concede that some of his 'hazards' are warranted. For example, I essentially agree that some teachers are simply not *phronetically* advanced enough to be role models of virtuous character, that young people can and do fall prey to negative influences and that Zagzebski's emphasis on admiration – to borrow Carr's words – 'puts the empirical cart before the normative horse' (2023, p. 77), namely by assuming that admiration reliably identfies who to emulate. However, since I, a key proponent of emulation, share these concerns, this does not render them unsurmountable, nor role modelling superfluous, but instead serves to illuminate avenues for future research.

Charismatic influence towards vice

In a previous paper, Carr warns that learning from personal or literary example is an 'educationally dubious and unstable' method of virtuous character development because a person's 'charm or spell' can exert influence which is immoral (2021, p. 405). Citing the alluring Lord Henry Wotton's part in the downfall of Dorian Grey, from the Oscar Wilde novel of the same name, he makes visible how this literary character draws Dorian towards extreme vanity rather than virtue. As such, he contends that whilst 'charismatic or seductive pedagogues' can inevitably exert considerable influence on a learner, since this influence can be negative, it is a person's *wisdom* that ought to be the benchmark for what makes them a role model (ibid.). Although he does not specifically mention Zagzebski (2017) here, Carr's

objection may also be interpreted as a critique of admiration as the driving force behind emulation, it being an unreliable guide for correctly identifying virtuous character (e.g., see Irwin, 2015; Kaftanski, 2022; Szutta, 2019). Extending the Dorian Grey example, he is captivated by Lord Henry's 'beautiful voice' (Wilde, 2014, p. 11), which may reflect admiration, yet this does not draw him towards moral virtue. Essentially, I agree with Carr's objection. This is why I understand moral role models as specifically those who stimulate the emulation of explicitly *virtuous* character. It is also why I maintain that *in order to be a moral role model*, a person must – as a matter of necessity – have cultivated a sufficient degree of practical wisdom to enable entangled *phronesis*. Thus, if a role model does not have *phronesis,* they cannot stimulate the emulation of virtuous character and, put bluntly, are not a role model. Further, since I agree that admiration alone is unreliably virtue-directed, and thus that learners can fall prey to those they admire for non-virtuous reasons, such as a famous Instagram influencer, I also consider admiration a small element of my theory of emulation – it being a physical feeling associated, along with distress, with just the material cause of complete emulation (see Chapters 3 and 5). In light of this, I suggest that it is primarily the perception of role-model-represented virtuous ideals and relatedly their *phronesis* – both initially made visible through virtuous action – which helps learners both to unconsciously or consciously identify role models and to emulate them (see Chapters 3, 4 and 5). This idea that learners are indeed able to correctly identify role models with *phronesis* is further supported by the findings of the empirical case study in Chapter 7, in which *phronesis* was identified as a global theme from the analysis of interviews with both ECTs and TMRMs. Specifically, ECTs identified role models with *phronesis*, and these TMRMs were also perceived to have *phronesis* from the perspective of themselves *and* the researcher.

Going even further, because I conceptualise emulation as a special kind of moral virtue concerned with moral education, and a componential account of virtue to include both virtuous

emotion and virtuous action, role models are intended to help cultivate the whole spectrum of virtue development in the learner (See Chapters 3 and 5). I thus, to an extent, share Carr's scepticism as to the degree to which literary exemplars can stimulate emulation, albeit for slightly different reasons. Indeed, given my emphasis on entangled *phronesis* as the driving force of emulation, which requires a role model to be experientially present, I do not grant unknown distant exemplars, such as literary figures, full role model status. Put simply, I am sceptical about whether they can stimulate emulation because the moral psychological mechanisms by which I have argued emulation to work *in actuality* require two minds. As such, and as has been made clear many times already, my focus and interest is primarily on *known* role models who are situated within the context of a learner's life. I do, however, concede that literary figures, especially biographical narratives which represent real people, are still valuable sources of moral education (e.g., see Brooks et al., 2021). Yet I hold strong in maintaining that their effectiveness is limited to, for example, enhancing a learner's understanding of the morally complex aspects of an exemplar's inner life, stimulating self-reflection or *perhaps* cultivating a degree of virtuous emotion. As such, whilst known *phronimoi* role models stimulate emulation, unknown exemplars do different, but nonetheless important, kinds of 'work' in virtuous character education – again, refining the precise remit of role models and exemplars may signal an avenue for future research. Thus, whilst I agree with Carr's interpretation of Aristotle in his *Poetics*, that 'poetry and tragedy may play a significant educational role in cathartic refinement of the feeling and sentiment of the good moral character of Aristotelian virtue' (2021, p. 403). Unlike Carr (ibid.), I do not agree that Aristotle would naturally extend the full remit of emulation *qua* role modelling to literary figures, due to the distinctly neo-Aristotelian emulative theory developed over the course of this thesis. Finally, then, whilst I do fundamentally agree with Carr's objection, it is something

of a straw man, in that it misrepresents the current state of the emulation discourse and how it has evolved.

8.3. Philosophical avenues for further research

I will now mention a few possible limitations of this doctoral research and how these could motivate further research beyond this thesis. First, as I have alluded to already, to date I have focused on what can be described as the 'ideal' trajectory of emulation-inspired virtuous character development, meaning I have expounded a probable yet precise route to full *phronetically-informed* virtue for those blessed with the moral luck of good enough role models in their early life through to early adulthood. However, since a neo-Aristotelian account of moral development is *multilinear* (recall Kristjánsson, 2022d, p. 292-293; Kallio, 2020, p. 11) – in that it represents progress from one phase to another though gradual and constant change and along two separate routes – I have not yet fully expounded the second 'non-ideal' trajectory, which limits the scope of the thesis. I specify *fully* here because in Chapter 6 I considered the role that *phronimoi* teachers play in alleviating *to a degree* the developmental moral unluck caused by a lack of role models in a child's homelife, yet as this represents a change of luck and an early reorientation onto the ideal trajectory, I still need to consider how emulation might operate in *even more* non-ideal contexts. Second, whilst this research is undergirded by naturalism and thus synthesises philosophical theorising with empirical insights, it does not empirically 'test' whether emulation works as I argue it does, i.e., by stimulating both virtuous emotion and action in the learner through entangled *phronesis*. A clear limitation. Third, whilst I hold strong in my sentiment at the outset of this thesis – that due to my commitment to psychological virtue-based naturalism, which supports a shared psychological make-up, the emulative theory I expound is intended to apply *universally* – the

case study does not directly support such a claim. This is because the participants are very WEIRD indeed *and* mainly teach in an independent school – making them even WEIRDer (see Flanagan, 2016, p. 4). This limits the scope of the conclusions which can be drawn from the thesis as a whole.

Given the aforementioned possible limitations, future research could focus on the second route, i.e., to emulation *qua* role modelling in non-ideal contexts. Relatedly, I might ask a research question such as: *how does emulation work as a method of virtuous character development in non-ideal contexts*? I could explore whether is it possible for those with a moral disadvantage caused by negative moral influences in their early life to later become *phronimoi*, albeit indirectly, and, if deemed possible, to devise a plausible method for this non-ideal moral developmental route. In plain English, I would need to understand whether it is possible for someone with a morally 'bad', or even 'neutral', start to somehow end up 'good', and, if so, how. Indeed, the literature on moral conversion and Damascus experiences might be a good place to start (e.g., see Irvine, 2015; Jonas, 2015; Kristjánsson, 2020b, pp. 114-118). This endeavour would likely invite me to investigate the case of 'reformed characters', such as reformed juvenile offenders, in both a weak and strong sense. The weak sense would entail they are no longer 'bad', or in Aristotelian terms, have made individual moral progress to the status of being *enkratic* (knowing and doing what is good despite an inclination to the contrary); whilst the strong sense would concern their moral evolution to the status of at least an aspiring *phronimos* (where reason, desire and action are aligned with the good). I would be particularly interested in addressing the case of reformed *juvenile* offenders, since adolescence is typically an accelerated time of moral development and, as such, may be particularly salient for those in need of 'moral reform'. Indeed, this period could represent a real opportunity for 'turning things around', one which may become increasingly difficult in later years.

Naturally, what drives the emulation of moral role models for those on the non-ideal context route will also be motivationally different from those habituated in virtue from early childhood, largely because the process will typically happen in mid-to-late adolescence (or later) once their character is fairly set. As such, I would need to question the justification of calling it 'emulation', and potentially explore other incarnations of (role) modelling, including what kind of models inspire 'reformers' best. As a facet of the latter, it may be interesting to reflect upon whether and how negative influences can contribute to explicitly *virtuous* character development? Might they potentially work by eliciting some kind of 'dysepiphany' (see Maes, 2023) and/or transformative emotions such as disgust? Presently, I remain sceptical as to the extent of their moral value, but open to dedicating further thought to it. Furthermore, as with emulation 'proper', I am also dedicated to finding out how entangled *phronesis* – which I argue to be the underlying psycho-moral mechanism at work in emulation *qua* role modelling – might work in the non-ideal route. For example, in light of the Aristotelian truism that *phronesis* is a product of teaching and experience – which this thesis demonstrates to be supported by relevantly similar ideas in developmental moral psychology and neuroscience – it might be the case that, e.g., deep self-reflection on life experience, could work to supplement the degree to which either conscious or unconscious 'teaching' from moral role models is necessary for kickstarting *phronesis* development in, for example, juvenile detainees. That said, scepticism regarding the degree to which self-reflection can affect self-reform has already been voiced (Battaly, 2016). In addition to reformed characters, a further element of 'non-ideal contexts' could explore emulation for the neurodiverse whose route to *phronetically-informed* virtue is more likely to follow an atypical path. Indeed, there has already been some discussion as to whether this path would be more suitably Kantian than Aristotelian, due to potential difficulties for some neurodiverse people in cultivating and experiencing virtuous emotion (Dineen, 2019).

In addition, it may also be informative to give serious thought to the specific scope and limits of both moral role models and other exemplars, in order to ascertain how each type of influence might most effectively be employed in neo-Aristotelian character education. Here the possibilities are multitudinous and could be advanced both theoretically and empirically. Regarding the latter, given my argument that emulation is best conceptualised as a moral virtue, which enables it to be operationalised in the same way as other moral virtues, one could specifically measure the effect of both known role models and distant exemplars on emulation, perhaps by adapting the multi-component gratitude measure devised by Morgan, Gulliford and Kristjánsson (2017). This would enable one to 'test' the degree to which each stimulates the virtuous emotional and virtuous action elements of emulation. One could also measure the *phronesis* of known (suspected) *phronimoi* role models and compare this to a control group of other known (suspected) *non-phronimoi* using the 'short' *phronesis* measure devised by Kristjánssson, McLoughlin and Thoma (2023), then further measure the extent to which each stimulates emulation. Moreover, if the argument I have advanced in this thesis is sound, I would expect the strength to which known *phronimoi* role models stimulate emulation to be stronger than both distant exemplars and known *non-phronimoi*. Finally, as for other interdisciplinary research, the project could be extended to operationalise entangled *phronesis* in order to ascertain if it works as I have argued it does, i.e., to advance the neuroscience of entangled *phronesis*. Perhaps the kind of measuring tools involved in recent research on interbrain synchrony (see Bigand et al., 2024; Djalovski et al., 2021; Koul et al., 2023), a form of interpersonal neural synchronization which shares some similarities with how I conceptualise entangled *phronesis*, could be helpful here. For all future empirical research relating to this thesis, ideally the samples will include both WEIRD and non-WEIRD participants, to ensure the results derived are as representative as possible of humanity in general. Having outlined some key ways in which this thesis could be extended, I will now share some final thoughts.

Final thoughts

At the close of this thesis, I bring readers' attention back to Aristotle. Indeed, perhaps the boldest claim I have advanced so far is that Aristotle is guilty of a category mistake when defining emulation as merely an emotion, rather than a full-blown moral virtue, in his *Rhetoric* (2001, pp. 75-76) and fleetingly in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (2009, 1105b22). Arguing for the necessity of action to emulation, I made clear how – as a matter of logical coherence – it was better categorised as a moral virtue in its own right, albeit a unique kind: practised prior to other virtues and explicitly concerned with moral education. However, in Aristotle's defence, one must remember that the *Rhetoric* is a book about the emotional sources of motivation that orators can use for their own benefit. It is not a book about virtue. Taking this into account, that Aristotle homes in on emulation as *only* an emotion in *this* context does not preclude him from being sympathetic to my interpretation of it as a moral virtue in the context of virtuous character development. If reasonable, this concession has an important implication for future readings of my overall theory of emulation. Namely, if Aristotle would have been potentially onside at the conceptual bedrock phase of theory development, then this could work to strengthen its philosophical foundations and thus further support my choice to substantiate it with other elements from his thought, such as the four causes, albeit in a reconstructive way. Indeed, that this overall emulative theory is a product of *incrementally* reasoning, refining and extending this concept of emulation as a moral virtue is arguably a major strength, because it helps demonstrate how each element of the theory coheres. Whilst this might be interpreted as a kind of fallacious argument *ad hominem*, in that it appeals to the authority of Aristotle, I again summon Nussbaum's sentiment that whilst his support of something does not guarantee it is

true, it does illuminate it as a 'plausible candidate for the truth' (1988, p. 5). As such, given that I am appealing here to the wisdom of Aristotle specifically, my reasoning is justified.

Aristotle's probable support of my argument notwithstanding, I will end this thesis with a few hopes I have for it. As for intended impact, within academic circles I essentially hope that this enhanced understanding of emulation will help inform and fuel further research in what I understand to be a *necessary* moral developmental method. Put simply, without the sustained influence of good enough *phronimoi* role models, one simply cannot become a *phronimos* or, relatedly, flourish. Ultimately, though, what really motivates me is the hope that my research might, eventually, make valuable societal impact, particularly by helping to reorientate pupils on a less advantaged moral trajectory, by harnessing the emulative power of teacher *phronimoi.* As such, I would like to dedicate considerable time to ensuring the effects of the project are tangible *on the ground*, for example in teacher education programmes and schools. This could involve disseminating my research findings though accessible talks, designing innovative yet practical training and ideally having policy impact. Fundamentally, then, my vision for what this research might achieve is ambitious and I will continue to dedicate my time and thought to actualising it.

REFERENCES

Alvesson, M. and Ashcraft, K. L. (2012) 'Interviews', in Cassell, G. S. a. C. (ed.) *Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges.* London: Sage, pp. 239–257.

Andre, J. (1991) 'Role morality as a complex instance of ordinary morality'. *American Philosophical Quarterly,* 28 (1), pp. 73-80.

Annas, J. (2011) *Intelligent Virtue*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Annas, J. (2015) 'Applying virtue to ethics'. *Journal of Applied Philosophy,* 32 (1), pp. 1-14.

Anscombe, G. E. M. (1958) 'Modern Moral Philosophy'. *Philosophy,* 33 (124), pp. 1-19.

Archer, A. and Sie, M. (2022) 'Using Stars for Moral Navigation: An Ethical Exploration into Celebrity'. *Journal of Applied Philosophy,* 40 (2), pp. 340-357.

Ardelt, M. (2003) 'Empirical Assessment of a Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale'. *Research on Aging,* 25 (3), pp. 275-324.

Aristotle (1936) *Aristotle's physics : a revised text / with introduction and commentary by W.D. Ross*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Aristotle (1992) *Eudemian ethics : books I, II, and VIII / translated with a commentary by Michael Woods*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Aristotle (1999) *Metaphysics / translated with a commentary by Arthur Madigan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Aristotle (2001) *Rhetoric / translated by W. Rhys Roberts*. Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech.

Aristotle (2009) *Nicomachean ethics / translated by David Ross with introduction and notes by Lesley Brown*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Aristotle (2014) *Politics / Aristotle with an English translation by H. Rackham*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Arthur, J., Kristjánsson, K., Cooke, S., Brown, E. and Carr, D. (2015a) *The good teacher: Understanding virtues in practice.* . Available at: http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/1970/ (Accessed: 19th June 2024).

Arthur, J., Kristjánsson, K., Thomas, H., Holdsworth, M., Badini Confalonieri, L. and Qiu, T. (2014) Virtuous character for the practice of law. Available at: http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/1953/ (Accessed: 15th July 2024).

Arthur, J., Kristjansson, K., Thomas, H., Kotzee, B., Ignatowicz, A. and Qiu, T. (2015b) Virtuous medical practice. Available at: https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/project/virtuous-medical-practice/ (Accessed: 15th July 2024).

Athanassoulis, N. (2005) *Morality, Moral Luck and Responsibility: Fortune's Web*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Athanassoulis, N. (2017) 'A positive role for failure in virtue education'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 46 (4), pp. 347-362.

Athanassoulis, N. (2019) 'Aristotle on Constitutive, Developmental and Resultant Moral Luck', in R.J., C. I. a. H. (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy and Psychology of Luck.* New York: Routledge, pp. 13-24.

Athanassoulis, N. (2022) 'The Phronimos as a moral exemplar: two internal objections and a proposed solution'. *The Journal of Value Inquiry,* 58 (1), pp. 131-150.

Athanassoulis, N. and Han, H. (2023) 'Role Modeling is Beneficial in Moral Character Education: A Commentary on Carr (2023).'. *Philosophical Inquiry in Education,* 30 (3), pp. 240-243.

Attride-Stirling, J. (2001) 'Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research'. *Qualitative Research,* 1 (3), pp. 385-405.

Austin, N. (2010) *Thomas Aquinas on the Four Causes of Temperance.* Doctoral Thesis Doctoral Thesis, Boston College. Available at https://dlib.bc.edu/islandora/object/bc-ir:101570 (Accessed: 5th December 2022).

Baltes, P. B. and Staudinger, U. M. (2000) 'Wisdom. A metaheuristic (pragmatic) to orchestrate mind and virtue toward excellence'. *American Psychologist,* 55 (1)**,** pp. 122-136.

Battaly, H. (2016) 'Developing virtue and rehabilitating vice: Worries about self-cultivation and self-reform'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 45 (2)**,** pp. 207-222.

Baumeister, R. F., Vohs, K. D., Nathan DeWall, C. and Liqing, Z. (2007) 'How Emotion Shapes Behavior: Feedback, Anticipation, and Reflection, Rather Than Direct Causation'. *Personality and Social Psychology Review,* 11 (2)**,** pp. 167-203.

Becker, S., Bryman, A. and Ferguson, H. (2012) *Understanding research for social policy and social work : themes, methods and approaches*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Bella, A. F. (2024) 'Inspiring or annoying? A new measure of broadening and defensive self-regulatory responses to moral exemplars applied to two real-life scenarios of moral goodness'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 53 (1)**,** pp. 31-55.

BERA (2024) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, fifth edition* Available at: https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024 (Accessed: 5th May 2024).

Bergen, N. and Labonté, R. (2020) '"Everything Is Perfect, and We Have No Problems": Detecting and Limiting Social Desirability Bias in Qualitative Research'. *Qualitative Health Research,* 30 (5)**,** pp. 783-792.

Bigand, F., Bianco, R., Abalde, S. F. and Novembre, G. (2024) 'The geometry of interpersonal synchrony in human dance'. *Current Biology,* 34 (13)**,** pp.

Blasi, A. (1980) 'Bridging moral cognition and moral action: A critical review of the literature'. *Psychological Bulletin,* 88 (1)**,** pp. 1-45.

Bleidorn, W. and Denissen, J. J. (2015) 'Virtues in action–the new look of character traits'. *British Journal of Psychology,* 106 (4)**,** pp. 700-723.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology'. *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 3 (2)**,** pp. 77-101.

Briggs-Gowan, M. J., Pollak, S. D., Grasso, D., Voss, J., Mian, N. D., Zobel, E., McCarthy, K. J., Wakschlag, L. S. and Pine, D. S. (2015) 'Attention bias and anxiety in young children exposed to family violence'. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry,* 56 (11)**,** pp. 1194-1201.

Broadie, S. (1991) *Ethics with Aristotle*. Oxford University Press on Demand.

Brooks, D. (2016) *The road to character*. London: Penguin Books.

Brooks, E., Coates, O. and Gulliford, L. (2021) 'The use of biographical narratives in exemplarist moral education'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 53 (1)**,** pp. 1-19.

Brown, A. L. (1987) 'Metacognition, executive control, self-regulation, and other more mysterious mechanisms', in Kluwe, F. E. W. R. H. (ed.) *Metagognition, motivation and understanding.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbraum, pp. 65-116.

Brown, A. L. and DeLoache, J. S. (1983) 'Metacognitive skills', in M. Donaldson, R. G., C. Pratt (ed.) *Early childhood development and education: Readings in psychology.* New York, NY: Blackwell, pp. 280-289.

Brownell, C. A. and Carriger, M. S. (1990) 'Changes in cooperation and self-other differentiation during the second year'. *Child Development,* 61**,** pp. 1164-1174.

Buchanan, D. A. (2012) 'Case studies in organizational research', in Cassell, G. S. a. C. (ed.) *Qualitative Organisational Research Core Methods and Current Challenges.* London: Sage, pp. 351-370.

Bucher, A. A. (1998) 'The influence of models in forming moral identity'. *International Journal of Educational Research,* 27 (7)**,** pp. 619-627.
Burnyeat, M. F. (1980) 'Aristotle on learning to be good', in Rorty, A. (ed.) *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics.* Cambridge, MA: University of California Press, pp. 69-92.
Bush, A. J., Martin, C. A. and Bush, V. D. (2004) 'Sports celebrity influence on the behavioral intentions of generation Y'. *Journal of Advertising Research,* 44 (1)**,** pp. 108-118.
Butler, L. and Tomasello, M. (2016) 'Two- and 3-year-olds integrate linguistic and pedagogical cues in guiding inductive generalization and exploration'. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology,* 145**,** pp. 64-78.
Campbell, D. T. and Stanley, J. C. (1963) *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research*. Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company.
Campodonico, A., Croce, M. and Vaccarezza, M. S. (2019) 'Guest editors' preface'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 48 (3)**,** pp. 275-279.
Carr, D. (2000) *Professionalism and ethics in teaching*. London: Routledge.
Carr, D. (2012) *Educating the virtues [electronic resource] : an essay on the philosophical psychology of moral development and education*. Abingdon: Routledge.
Carr, D. (2021) 'Where's the Educational Virtue in Flourishing?'. *Educational Theory,* 71 (3)**,** pp. 389-407.
Carr, D. (2023) 'The Hazards of Role Modelling for the Education of Moral and/or Virtuous Character'. *Paideusis* 30 (1)**,** pp. 68-79.
Čehajić-Clancy, S. and Bilewicz, M. (2021) 'Moral-Exemplar Intervention: A New Paradigm for Conflict Resolution and Intergroup Reconciliation'. *Current Directions in Psychological Science,* 30 (4)**,** pp. 335-342.
Chappell, T. (2013) 'Virtue ethics in the twentieth century'. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 149-171.
Chopik, W. J., Weidmann, R. and Oh, J. (2024) 'Attachment security and how to get it'. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass,* 18 (1)**,** pp. 12808.
Coffey, A. and Atkinson, P. (1996) *Making sense of qualitative data : complementary research strategies*. Thousand Oaks, London: Sage.
Cokelet, B. (2022) 'Virtue science and productive theoretical neutrality: Review of Wright, J. C., Warren, M., & Snow, N. Understanding virtue'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 51 (1)**,** pp. 104-110.
Cokelet, B. and Fowers, B. (2019) 'Realistic virtues and how to study them: Introducing the STRIVE-4 model'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 48 (1)**,** pp. 7-26.
Colby, A. and Damon, W. (1992) *Some do care: Contemporary lives of moral commitment*. New York: Free Press.
Craigie, J. (2011) 'Thinking and feeling: Moral deliberation in a dual-process framework'. *Philosophical Psychology,* 24 (1)**,** pp. 53-71.
Croce, M. (2019) 'Exemplarism in moral education: Problems with applicability and indoctrination'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 48 (3)**,** pp. 291-302.
Croce, M. and Vaccarezza, M. S. (2017) 'Educating through exemplars: Alternative paths to virtue'. *Theory and Research in Education,* 15 (1)**,** pp. 5-19.
Crotty, M. (2014) *The foundations of social research: meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: Sage Publications.
Csibra, G. and Gergely, G. (2006) 'Social learning and social cognition: the case for pedagogy', in Munakata, Y. and Johnson, M. (eds.) *Processes of change in brain and cognitive development.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 249–274.
Curren, R. (2000) *Aristotle on the Necessity of Public Education*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Curren, R. and Kotzee, B. (2014) 'Can virtue be measured?'. *Theory and Research in Education,* 12 (3)**,** pp. 266-282.

Curzer, H. (2005) 'How Good People Do Bad Things: Aristotle on the Misdeeds of the Virtuous', in Sedley, D. (ed.) *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy Xxviii: Summer 2005.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 233-256.

Curzer, H. J. (1990) 'A Great Philosopher's Not So Great Account of Great Virtue: Aristotle's Treatment of Greatness of Soul''. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy,* 20 (4)**,** pp. 517-537.

Curzer, H. J. (1997) 'Aristotle's account of the virtue of temperance in Nicomachean ethics III.10-11'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy,* 35 (1)**,** pp. 5-25.

Curzer, H. J. (2012) *Aristotle and the virtues*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Curzer, H. J. (2016) 'Teeny Tiny Bits of Virtue'. *Paper delivered at a Jubilee Centre Seminar.* University of Birmingham, UK.

D'Olimpio, L. (2020) 'When good art is bad: Educating the critical viewer'. *Theory and Research in Education,* 18 (2)**,** pp. 137-150.

Damon, W. and Colby, A. (2015) *The power of ideals : The real story of moral choice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Darnell, C., Fowers, B. J. and Kristjánsson, K. (2022) 'A multifunction approach to assessing Aristotelian phronesis (practical wisdom)'. *Personality and Individual Differences,* 196**,** pp. 111684.

Darnell, C., Gulliford, E., Kristjánsson, K. and Paris, P. (2019) 'Phronesis and the knowledge-action gap in moral psychology and moral education:a new synthesis'. *Human Development,* 62 (3)**,** pp. 101-129.

Davidson, D. (1963) 'Actions, reasons, and causes'. *The Journal of Philosophy,* 60 (23)**,** pp. 685-700.

De Caro, M., Marraffa, M. and Vaccarezza, M. S. (2021) 'The Priority of Phronesis: How to Rescue Virtue Theory From Its Critics', in De Caro, M. and Vaccarezza, M. S. (eds.) *Practical Wisdom Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives.* New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 29-51.

de Ruyter, D. J., Oades, L. G., Waghid, Y., Ehrenfeld, J., Gilead, T. and Singh, N. C. (2022) 'Education for flourishing and flourishing in education', in Duraiappah, A. K., Van Atteveldt, N., Buil, J. M., Singh, K. and Wu, R. (eds.) *Reimagining education: International science and evidence based education assessment.* New Delhi: UNESCO MGIEP, pp. 72-131.

Delanty, G. and Strydom, P. (2003) *Philosophies of social science : the classic and contemporary readings*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Della Porta, D. and Keating, M. (2008) *Approaches and methodologies in the social sciences : a pluralist perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dineen, K. (2019) 'Kant, emotion and autism: towards an inclusive approach to character education'. *Ethics and Education,* 14 (1)**,** pp. 1-14.

Djalovski, A., Dumas, G., Kinreich, S. and Feldman, R. (2021) 'Human attachments shape interbrain synchrony toward efficient performance of social goals'. *Neuroimage,* 226**,** pp. 117600-117600.

Dougherty, M. R. (2020) 'The Importance of Roles in the Skill Analogy'. *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy,* 17 (1)**,** pp. 75-102.

Dubois, A. and Gadde, L.-E. (2002) 'Systematic combining: an abductive approach to case research'. *Journal of Business Research,* 55**,** pp. 553-560.

Efklides, A. (2006) 'Metacognition and affect: What can metagocnitive experiences tell us about the learning process?'. *Educational Research Review,* 1**,** pp. 3-14.

Eisenberg, N., VanSchyndel, S. K. and Spinrad, T. L. (2016) 'Prosocial motivation: Inferences from an opaque body of work'. *Child Development,* 87 (6)**,** pp. 1668-1678.
Elzinga, B. (2019) 'A relational account of intellectual autonomy'. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy,* 49 (1)**,** pp. 22-47.
Engelen, B., Thomas, A., Archer, A. and van de Ven, N. (2018) 'Exemplars and nudges: Combining two strategies for moral education'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 47 (3)**,** pp. 346-365.
Eraut, M. (1994) *Developing professional knowledge and competence*. London: Falmer.
Evans, J. (2018) 'Dual Process Theory - Perspectives and Problems', in Neys, W. D. (ed.) *Dual Process Theory 2.0.* London and New York: Routledge, pp. pp. 137-156.
Evnine, S. J. (2016) *Making objects and events: A hylomorphic theory of artifacts, actions, and organisms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Falcon, A. (2022) Aristotle on causality. *In:* Zalta, E. N. (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2022 Edition).* Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.
Fenstermacher, G. D. (1994) 'The knower and the known: the nature of knowldge in research on teaching'. *Review of Research in Education,* 20 (1)**,** pp. 3-56.
Fernández, V. and López, J. (2023) 'The effect of teacher leadership on students' purposeful learning'. *Cogent Social Sciences,* 9 (1)**,** pp. 2197282.
Flanagan, O. (1991) *Varieties of moral personality : ethics and psychological realism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Flanagan, O. (2016) *The geography of morals : Varieties of moral possibility*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Flavel, J. H. (1976) 'Metacognitive aspects of problem solving', in Resnick, L. B. (ed.) *The nature of intelligence.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbraum, pp. 231-235.
Flavel, J. H. (2000) 'Development of children's knowledge about the mental world'. *International Journal of Behavioural Development,* 24**,** pp. 15-23.
Flavel, J. H., Miller, P. H. and Miller, S. A. (1993) *Cognitive development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
Fleeson, W. (2021) *Who are the most moral amoung us? Life Improvement Science*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NshUJsn5XE&t=856s (Accessed: 17th March 2022).
Flouri, E., Midouhas, E. and Francesconi, M. (2020) 'Neighbourhood deprivation and child behaviour across childhood and adolescence'. *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies,* 11 (2)**,** pp. 203-227.
Flyvbjerg, B. (2011) 'Case Study', in Lincoln, N. K. D. a. Y. S. (ed.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research.* London: Sage, pp. 301– 16.
Foot, P. (1978) *Virtues and vices, and other essays in moral philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Foot, P. (2001) *Natural goodness*. Oxford: Clarendon.
Fortenbaugh, W. (2003) 'On the Antecedents of Aristotle's Bipartite Psychology'. *Greek, Roman and Byzantine studies,* 11 (3)**,** pp. 233-250.
Fortenbaugh, W. W. (2002) *Aristotle on emotion : a contribution to philosophical psychology, rhetoric, poetics, politics and ethics*. London: Duckworth.
Fowers, B., Carroll, J., Leonhardt, N. and Cokelet, B. (2021) 'The Emerging Science of Virtue'. *Perspectives in Psychological Science,* 16 (1)**,** pp. 118-147.
Fowers, B., Lane, A., Cioffi, K., Abbamonte, J., Lang, S., Cokelet, B. and Anderson, A. (2020) 'Does trait interpersonal fairness moderate situational influence on fairness behavior'. *Personality and Individual Differences,* 193**,** pp. 111615.
Fowers, B., Novak, L. and Selim, M. (2023a) 'The Interplay of Situations, Social Roles, and Virtue Expression'. *Medical Research Archives,* 11 (6)**,** pp. n/a.

Fowers, B. J., Novak, L. F., Kiknadze, N. C. and Selim, M. (2023b) 'Is the concept of personality capacious enough to incorporate virtues?'. *Frontiers in Psychology,* 14**,** pp. 1232637-1232637.

Frede, D. (1996) 'Mixed Feelings in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*', in Rorty, A. l. (ed.) *Essays on Aristotle's Rhetoric.* Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 258-285.

Frimer, J. A., Walker, L. J., Lee, B. H., Riches, A. and Dunlop, W. L. (2012) 'Hierarchical integration of agency and communion: A study of influential moral figures'. *Journal of Personality,* 80 (4)**,** pp. 1117-1145.

Gartzia, L., Morgenroth, T., Ryan, M. K. and Peters, K. (2021) 'Testing the motivational effects of attainable role models: Field and experimental evidence'. *Journal of Theoretical Social Psychology,* 5 (4)**,** pp. 591-602.

Gary, K. and Chambers, D. (2021) 'Cultivating Moral Epiphanies'. *Educational Theory,* 71 (3)**,** pp. 371-388.

Gerrans, P. and Kennett, J. (2010) 'Neurosentimentalism and Moral Agency'. *Mind,* 119 (475)**,** pp. 585-614.

Gilligan, C. (2003) *In a different voice : psychological theory and women's development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gorard, S. (2013) *Research design : creating robust approaches for the social sciences*. London: Sage.

Greene, J. and Haidt, J. (2002) 'How (and where) does moral judgment work?'. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences,* 6 (12)**,** pp. 517-523.

Greene, J. D., Sommerville, R. B., Nystrom, L. E., Darley, J. M. and Cohen, J. D. (2001) 'An fMRI Investigation of Emotional Engagement in Moral Judgment'. *Science,* 293 (5537)**,** pp. 2105-2108.

Gross, J. J. (2015) 'Emotion Regulation: Current Status and Future Prospects'. *Psychological Inquiry,* 26 (1)**,** pp. 1-26.

Grossmann, I. (2017) 'Wisdom in Context'. *Perspect Psychol Sci,* 12 (2)**,** pp. 233-257.

Grossmann, I., Weststrate, N. M., Ferrari, M. and Brienza, J. P. (2020) 'A Common Model Is Essential for a Cumulative Science of Wisdom'. *Psychological Inquiry,* 31 (2)**,** pp. 185-194.

Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M. and Namey, E. E. (2012) *Applied thematic analysis*. Los Angeles and London: Sage.

Gulliford, L., Brooks, E. and Coates, O. (2023) 'Symposium Introduction: The Pedagogical Potential of Exemplar Narratives in Moral Development and Moral Education'. *Educational Theory,* 73 (5)**,** pp. 692-709.

Gulliford, L. and Roberts, R. C. (2018) 'Exploring the "unity" of the virtues: The case of an allocentric quintet'. *Theory & Psychology,* 28 (2)**,** pp. 208-226.

Hacker-Wright, J. (2015) 'Skill, Practical Wisdom, and Ethical Naturalism'. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice,* 18 (5)**,** pp. 983-993.

Haidt, J. (2001) 'The emotional dog and its rational tail : A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment'. *Psychological Review,* 108 (4)**,** pp. 814-834.

Haidt, J. (2007) 'New Synthesis in Moral Psychology'. *Science,* 316 (5827)**,** pp. 998-1002.

Haidt, J. (2012) *The righteous mind : Why good people are divided by politics and religion*. United States: Pantheon.

Haidt, J. (2013) 'Moral psychology for the twenty-first century'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 42 (3)**,** pp. 281-297.

Hampson, M. (2019) 'Imitating Virtue'. *Phronesis* 64 (3)**,** pp. 292-320.

Han, H. (2016) *Neuroscientific and social psychological investigation on psychological effects of stories of moral exemplars.* Doctoral Thesis, Stanford University. Available at

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304249566_Neuroscientific_and_Social_Psychological_Investigation_on_Psychological_Effects_of_Stories_of_Moral_Exemplars (Accessed: 18th April 2023).

Han, H. (2023) 'Considering the Purposes of Moral Education with Evidence in Neuroscience: Emphasis on Habituation of Virtues and Cultivation of Phronesis'. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice,* 27 (1)**,** pp. 111-128.

Han, H. and Dawson, K. J. (2023) 'Relatable and attainable moral exemplars as sources for moral elevation and pleasantness'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 53 (1)**,** pp. 1-17.

Han, H., Kim, J., Jeong, C. and Cohen, G. L. (2017) 'Attainable and relevant moral exemplars are more effective than extraordinary exemplars in promoting voluntary service engagement'. *Frontiers in Psychology,* 8**,** pp. 283.

Han, H., Workman, C. I., May, J., Scholtens, P., Dawson, K. J., Glenn, A. and Meindl, P. (2022) 'Which moral exemplars inspire prosociality?'. *Philosophical Psychology,* 35 (7)**,** pp. 943-970.

Harðarson, A. (2019) 'Aristotle's conception of practical wisdom and what it means for moral education in schools'. *Educational Philosophy and Theory,* 51 (14)**,** pp. 1518-1527.

Harris, N. B. (2018) *The deepest well: Healing the long-term effects of childhood adversity*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Henderson, E. (2022) 'The educational salience of emulation as a moral virtue'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 53 (1)**,** pp. 73-88.

Henderson, E. (2023) 'Entangled phronesis and the four causes of emulation: Developmental insights into role modelling'. *Theory and Research in Education,* 21 (3)**,** pp. 264-283.

Henderson, E. (2024a) 'Beyond admiration: Rethinking the nature of emulation qua role modelling'. *On Education Journal for Research and Debate,* 7 (19)**,** pp. n/a.

Henderson, E. (2024b) 'Special issue on exemplars and emulation in moral education: Guest editorial'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 53 (1)**,** pp. 1-13.

Heyes, C., Bang, D., Shea, N., Frith, C. D. and Fleming, S. M. (2020) 'Knowing Ourselves Together: The Cultural Origins of Metacognition'. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences,* 24 (5)**,** pp. 349-362.

Heyes, C. M. and Frith, C. D. (2014) 'The cultural evolution of mind reading'. *Science,* 344**,** pp. 1357-1357.

Higgins, C. (2011) *The good life of teaching: An ethics of professional practice*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hoyos-Valdés, D. (2018) 'The notion of character friendship and the cultivation of virtue'. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour,* 48 (1)**,** pp. 66-82.

Hume, D. (1984) *A treatise of human nature / edited with an introduction by Ernest C. Mossner*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Hursthouse, R. (1999) *On virtue ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hursthouse, R. (2006) 'Practical Wisdom: A Mundane Account'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society,* 106 (1)**,** pp. 285-309.

Illeris, K. (2018) *Contemporary theories of learning : learning theorists ... in their own words*. Oxford and New York, NY: : Routledge.

Immordino-Yang, M. H., Darling-Hammond, L. and Krone, C. R. (2019) 'Nurturing Nature: How Brain Development Is Inherently Social and Emotional, and What This Means for Education'. *Educational Psychologist,* 54**,** pp. 185-204.

Immordino-Yang, M. H. and Sylvan, L. (2010) 'Admiration for virtue: Neuroscientific perspectives on a motivating emotion'. *Contemporary Educational Psychology,* 35 (2)**,** pp. 110-115.

Irvine, W. B. (2015) *Aha! : the moments of insight that shape our world*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Irwin, T. H. (2015) ‘II—Nil Admirari? Uses and Abuses of Admiration’. *Supplementary Volume - Aristotelian Society,* 89 (1)**,** pp. 223-248.

Jackson, K. and Bazeley, P. (2019) *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Jackson, L. (2021) *Beyond virtue : the politics of educating emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jameel, S. (2022) *Enacted phronesis in general practitioners.* Doctoral Thesis, University of Birmingham. Available at https://etheses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/12197/ (Accessed: 17th June 2024).

Jameel, S., Peterson, A. and Arthur, J. (2021) *Ethics and the Good Doctor Character in the Professional Domain*. London: Routledge.

James, W. (1880) ‘Great Men, Great Thoughts, and the Environment’. *Atlantic Monthly,* 46**,** pp. 441-459.

Jayawickreme, E. and Fleeson, W. (2017) ‘2.3 Whole Trait Theory Can Explain Virtues’. *Moral Psychology, Volume 5: Virtue and Character,* 5**,** pp. 121.

Johnson, M. R. (2015) ‘Luck in Aristotle’s Physics and Ethics’, in Nielsen, D. H. a. K. M. (ed.) *Bridging the Gap between Aristotle's Science and Ethics.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 254-275.

Johnson, S. K., Buckingham, M. H., Morris, S. L., Suzuki, S., Weiner, M. B., Hershberg, R. M., Fremont, E. R., Batanova, M., Aymong, C. C., Hunter, C. J., Bowers, E. P., Lerner, J. V. and Lerner, R. M. (2016) ‘Adolescents' Character Role Models: Exploring Who Young People Look Up to as Examples of How to Be a Good Person’. *Research in Human Development,* 13 (2)**,** pp. 126-141.

Jonas, M. E. (2015) ‘Education for epiphany: The case of Plato's 'Lysis''. *Educational Theory,* 65 (1)**,** pp. 39-51.

Jonas, M. E. (2023) ‘Neo-Aristotelianism and Moral Education’, in Yacek, D. W., Jonas, M. E. and Gary, K. H. (eds.) *Moral Education in the 21st Century.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 25-48.

Jonas, M. E. and Nakazawa, Y. (2021) *A Platonic Theory of Moral Education*. Oxford and New York, NY: Routledge.

Jones, K. (2006) ‘Metaethics and emotions research: A response to Prinz’. *Philosophical Explorations,* 9 (1)**,** pp. 45-53.

Joseph, P. B. (2016) ‘Ethical reflections on becoming teachers’. *Journal of Moral Education,* 45 (1)**,** pp. 31-45.

Jubilee, C. f. C. a. V. (2022) *A Framework for Character Education in Schools.* Available at https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/character-education-/the-jubilee-centre-framework-for-character-education-in-schools/ (Accessed: 23rd March 2023).

Kachel, G., Moore, R. and Tomasello, M. (2018) ‘Two-year-olds use adults' but not peers' points’. *Developmental Science,* 21**,** pp. 12660.

Kaftanski, W. (2022) ‘Admiration, Affectivity, and Value: Critical Remarks on Exemplarity’. *The Journal of Value Inquiry,* 58 (2)**,** pp. 197-214.

Kaftanski, W. (2023) ‘Mental images and imagination in moral education’. *Journal of Moral Education,* 53 (1)**,** pp. 119-138.

Kahane, G. (2012) ‘On the Wrong Track: Process and Content in Moral Psychology’. *Mind Lang,* 27 (5)**,** pp. 519-545.

Kallio, E. (2011) ‘Integrative thinking is the key: An evaluation of current research into the development of adult thinking’. *Theory & Psychology,* 21 (6)**,** pp. 785-801.

Kallio, E. (2015) ‘From causal thinking to wisdom and spirituality: some perspectives on a growing research field in adult (cognitive) development’. *Approaching Religion,* 5 (2)**,** pp. 27-41.

Kallio, E. K. (2020) *Development of Adult Thinking: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Cognitive Development and Adult Learning*. Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge.

Kant, I. (2018) *Groundwork for the metaphysics of morals / edited by Allen W. Wood*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Kindeberg, T. (2013) 'The Significance of Emulation in the Oral Interaction Between Teacher and Students'. *J. Philos. Educ,* 47 (1)**,** pp. 99-111.

Klimstra, T. A., Archer, A., Reitz, A. K., Chung, J. M. and Engelen, B. (2023) 'There Goes My Hero: The Role of Exemplars in Identity Formation'. *Human Development,* 67 (3)**,** pp. 154-169.

Knuuttila, S. (2004) *Emotions in ancient and medieval philosophy*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Kohlberg, L. (1981) *The philosophy of moral development : moral stages and the idea of justice*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Kohlberg, L. (1987) *Child psychology and childhood education : a cognitive-developmental view*. New York, NY and London: Longman.

Konstan, D. (2006) *The emotions of the Ancient Greeks : studies in Aristotle and classical literature*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Kotsonis, A. and Dunne, G. (2023) 'The harms of unattainable pedagogical exemplars on social media'. *Journal of Moral Education,,* 53 (1)**,** pp. 1-17.

Koul, A., Ahmar, D., Iannetti, G. D. and Novembre, G. (2023) 'Spontaneous dyadic behavior predicts the emergence of interpersonal neural synchrony'. *Neuroimage,* 277**,** pp. 120233-120233.

Kral, T. R. A., Schuyler, B. S., Mumford, J. A., Rosenkranz, M. A., Lutz, A. and Davidson, R. J. (2018) 'Impact of short- and long-term mindfulness meditation training on amygdala reactivity to emotional stimuli'. *Neuroimage,* 181**,** pp. 301-313.

Kraut, R. (1993) 'In defense of the grand end'. *Ethics,* 103 (2)**,** pp. 361-674.

Kristjánsson, K. (1998) 'Liberating Moral Traditions: Saga Morality and Aristotle's "Megalopsychia"'. *Ethical theory and moral practice,* 1 (4)**,** pp. 397-422.

Kristjánsson, K. (2006a) 'Emulation and the use of role models in moral education'. *Journal of moral education,* 35 (1)**,** pp. 37-49.

Kristjánsson, K. (2006b) 'Habituated reason: Aristotle and the 'paradox of moral education''. *Theory and Research in Education,* 4 (1)**,** pp. 101-122.

Kristjánsson, K. (2006c) *Justice and desert-based emotions*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Kristjánsson, K. (2010) *The self and its emotions*. Cambridge University Press.

Kristjánsson, K. (2015) *Aristotelian character education*. London: Routledge.

Kristjánsson, K. (2017) 'Emotions targeting moral exemplarity:making sense of the logical geography of admiration, emulation and elevation'. *Theory and Research in Education,* 15(1)**,** pp. 20-37.

Kristjánsson, K. (2018) *Virtuous emotions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kristjánsson, K. (2020a) 'Aristotelian character friendship as a 'method'of moral education'. *Studies in Philosophy and Education,* 39 (4)**,** pp. 349-364.

Kristjánsson, K. (2020b) *Flourishing as the aim of education: A neo-Aristotelian view*. Abbingdon: Routledge.

Kristjánsson, K. (2021a) 'Reason and intuition in Aristotle's moral psychology: why he was not a two-system dualist'. *Philosophical Explorations***,** pp. 1-16.

Kristjánsson, K. (2021b) 'Twenty-two testable hypotheses about phronesis: Outlining an educational research programme'. *British Educational Research Journal,* 47 (5)**,** pp. 1303-1322.

Kristjánsson, K. (2022a) 'Collective Phronesis in Business Ethics Education and Managerial Practice: A Neo-Aristotelian Analysis'. *Journal of business ethics,* 181 (1)**,** pp. 41-56.

Kristjánsson, K. (2022b) *Friendship for Virtue*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Kristjánsson, K. (2022c) 'The Primacy of Civic Virtue in Aristotle's Politics and Its Educational Implications'. *History of political thought,* 43 (4), pp. 607-636.

Kristjánsson, K. (2022d) 'Teaching phronesis to aspiring police officers: some preliminary philosophical, developmental and pedagogical reflections'. *International Journal of Ethics Education,* 7 (2), pp. 289-305.

Kristjánsson, K. (2023) *The New Flourishing Agenda in Education: A Report on the Current Theoretical State of Play* .OECD. Available at: https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/professor-kristjan-kristjansson-becomes-consultant-to-the-oecd/ (Accessed: 10th May 2024).

Kristjánsson, K. (2024) 'Aristotelian Practical Wisdom (Phronesis) as the Key to Professional Ethics in Teaching'. *TOPOI,* 43 (3), pp. 1031-1042.

Kristjánsson, K. and Fowers, B. (2022) 'Phronesis as moral decathlon: contesting the redundancy thesis about phronesis'. *Philosophical Psychology,* 37 (2), pp. 279-298.

Kristjánsson, K. and Fowers, B. (2024) *Phronesis : retrieving practical wisdom in psychology, philosophy, and education*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kristjánsson, K., Fowers, B., Darnell, C. and Pollard, D. (2021) 'Phronesis (practical wisdom) as a type of contextual integrative thinking'. *Review of General Psychology,* 25 (3), pp. 239-257.

Kristjánsson, K., McLoughlin, S. and Thoma, S. (2023) *Phronesis: Developing and validating a short measure of practical wisdom.* University of Birmingham. Available at https://research.birmingham.ac.uk/en/publications/phronesis-developing-and-validating-a-short-measure-of-practical- (Accessed: 15th June 2024).

Kucharska, W. and Erickson, G. S. (2023) 'Tacit knowledge acquisition & sharing, and its influence on innovations: A Polish/US cross-country study'. *International Journal of Information Management,* 71, pp. 102647.

Kvale, S. and Brinkmann, S. (2015) *InterViews : learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Labouvie-Vief, G. (1990) 'Wisdom as integrated thought: Historical and developmental perspectives', in Sternberg, R. J. (ed.) *Wisdom: Its nature, origina, and development.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, pp. pp. 52-84.

Labouvie-Vief, G. (2015) *Integrating emotions and cognition throughout the lifespan*. New York, NY: Springer.

Lange, J. and Crusius, J. (2015) 'Dispositional Envy Revisited: Unraveling the Motivational Dynamics of Benign and Malicious Envy'. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin,* 41, pp. 284-294.

Lapsley, D. (2021) 'The Developmental Science of Phronesis', in De Caro, M. and Vaccarezza, M. S. (eds.) *Practical Wisdom: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives.* New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 138-159.

Lastrucci, C. L. (1963) *The scientific approach: Basic principles of the scientific method*. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing

Lees, J. and Young, L. (2020) '"A Theory of Wisdom Needs Theory of Mind"'. *Psychological Inquiry,* 31 (2), pp. 168-173.

Leget, C., Borry, P. and De Vries, R. (2009) 'NOBODY TOSSES A DWARF! THE RELATION BETWEEN THE EMPIRICAL AND THE NORMATIVE REEXAMINED'. *Bioethics,* 23 (4), pp. 226-235.

Lickona, T. (1992) *Educating for character : how our schools can teach respect and responsibility*. New York, NY: Bantam.

Little, S. B. (2021) 'The graded engagement model of admiration'. *Theory and Research in Education,* 19 (1), pp. 3-18.

Lochmiller, C. (2021) ‘Conducting Thematic Analysis with Qualitative Data’. *Qualitative Report,* 26 (6)**,** pp. 2029-2044.

Lockwood, P. and Kunda, Z. (1997) ‘Superstars and me: Predicting the impact of role models on the self’. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 73 (1)**,** pp. 91.

Lu, Y.-C. (2024) ‘The compatibility of character education and citizenship education in Aristotelian approaches to moral development’. *Journal of Moral Education***,** pp. 1-15.

MacIntyre, A. (1981) *After virtue : a study in moral theory*. London: Duckworth.

MacIntyre, A. (1988) *Whose justice? Which rationality?* London: Duckworth.

MacIntyre, A. (1999) *Dependent rational animals : why human beings need the virtues*. London: Duckworth.

Mackenzie, C. and Stoljar, N. (2000) *Relational autonomy : feminist perspectives on automony, agency, and the social self*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Maes, H. (2023) ‘Peaks and Troughs: Dysepiphany, Antiphany, and Melancholy’. *The Journal of Value Inquiry,* 57 (1)**,** pp. 197-208.

Malti, T. and Krettenauer, T. (2013) ‘The relation of moral emotion attributions to prosocial and antisocial behavior: A meta-analysis’. *Child Development,* 84 (2)**,** pp. 397-412.

Matheson, B. and Archer, A. (2021) *Honouring and admiring the immoral: an ethical guide*. New York: Routledge.

Matsuba, M. K. and Walker, L. J. (2004) ‘Extraordinary moral commitment: Young adults involved in social organizations’. *Journal of Personality,* 72 (2)**,** pp. 413-436.

Matsuba, M. K. and Walker, L. J. (2005) ‘Young adult moral exemplars: The making of self through stories’. *Journal of Research on Adolescence,* 15 (3)**,** pp. 275-297.

Matthews, R. and Ross, E. (2010) *Research methods: A practical guide for the social sciences*. Harlow: Longman.

Maxwell, J. A. (2004) ‘Using qualitative methods for causal explanation’. *Field Methods,* 16 (3)**,** pp. 243-264.

McDowell, J. H. (1998) *Mind, value, and reality*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.

McLaughlin, K. A., Sheridan, M. A., Tibu, F., Fox, N. A., Zeanah, C. H. and Nelson, C. A. (2015) ‘Causal effects of the early caregiving environment on development of stress response systems in children’. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences,* 112**,** pp. 5637-5642.

McRae, K. and Gross, J. J. (2020) ‘Emotion regulation’. *Emotion,* 20**,** pp. 1-9.

Meinhardt-Injac, B., Daum, M. M. and Meinhardt, G. (2020) ‘Theory of mind development from adolescence to adulthood: Testing the two-component model’. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology,* 38**,** pp. 289-303.

Mikkilä-Erdmann, M. and Liskala, T. (2020) in Kallio, E. K. (ed.) *Development of Adult Thinking: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Cognitive Development and Adult Learning.* Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 123-140.

Mill, J. S. (2003) *Utilitarianism and On liberty : including 'Essay on Bentham' and selections from the writings of Jeremy Bentham and John Austin / J.S. Mill introduction by Mary Warnock*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Miller, C. (2014) *Character and moral psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Miller, C. (2017) *The character gap: How good are we?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Miller, C. (2021) ‘Flirting With Scepticism About Practical Wisdom’, in De Caro, M. and Vaccarezza, M. S. (eds.) *Practical Wisdom: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives.* New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 52-69.

Molewijk, B., Stiggelbout, A. M., Otten, W., Dupuis, H. M. and Kievit, J. (2004) 'Empirical data and moral theory. A plea for integrated empirical ethics'. *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy,* 7 (1)**,** pp. 55-69.

Monin, B. (2007) 'Holier than me? Threatening social comparison in the moral domain'. *Revue Internationale de Psychologie Sociale,* 20 (1)**,** pp. 53-68.

Monin, B., Sawyer, P. J. and Marquez, M. J. (2008) 'The rejection of moral rebels: resenting those who do the right thing'. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 95 (1)**,** pp. 76.

Moore, G. E. (1903) *Principia ethica*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Morgan, B., Gulliford, E. and Kristjánsson, K. (2017) 'A new approach to measuring moral virtues: The multi-component gratitude measure'. *Personality and Individual Differences,* Volume 107 (1 March 2017)**,** pp. 179-189.

Nagel, E. (1962) 'The structure of science: Problems in the logic of scientific explanation'. *Philosophy,* 37 (142)**,** pp.

Nagel, T. (1993) 'Moral Luck', in Statman, D. (ed.) *Moral Luck.* Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 57-72.

Nakamura, J. and Condren, M. (2018) 'A systems perspective on the role mentors play in the cultivation of virtue'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 47 (3)**,** pp. 316-332.

Nietzsche, F. W. (1969) *Thus spoke Zarathustra : a book for everyone and no one*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Norcross, J. C. and Lambert, M. J. (2018) 'Psychotherapy Relationships That Work III'. *Psychotherapy (Chic),* 55 (4)**,** pp. 303-315.

Nussbaum, M. C. (1986) *The Fragility of Goodness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nussbaum, M. C. (1988) 'Non-relative virtues: an Aristotelian approach'. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy,* 13**,** pp. 32-53.

Nussbaum, M. C. (1993) 'Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach', in Sen, M. N. a. A. (ed.) *The quality of life.* Oxford: Clarendon, pp. 242-269.

Nussbaum, M. C. (1995) 'Aristotle on Human Nature and the Foundations of Ethics', in Harrison., J. A. a. R. (ed.) *World, mind and ethics: essays of the ethical philosophy of Bernard Williams.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 86-131.

Nussbaum, M. C. (2001) *Upheavals of thought : the intelligence of emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'Madagain, C. and Tomasello, M. (2022) 'Shared intentionality, reason-giving and the evolution of human culture'. *Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B. Biological sciences,* 377 (1843)**,** pp. 20200320-20200320.

Ochsner, K. N. (2007) 'How Thinking Controls Feeling: A Social Cognitive Neuroscience Approach', in Winkielman, E. H.-J. a. P. (ed.) *Social Neuroscience: Integrating Biological and Psychological Explanations of Social Behavior.* New York: Guilford, pp. 116-118.

Ochsner, K. N. and Gross, J. J. (2005) 'The cognitive control of emotion'. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences,* 9 (5)**,** pp. 242-249.

Ochsner, K. N. and Gross, J. J. (2008) 'Cognitive Emotion Regulation: Insights from Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience'. *Current Directions in Psychological Science,* 17 (2)**,** pp. 153-158.

Ochsner, K. N. and Gross, J. J. (2014) 'The neural basis of emotion and emotion regulation: a valuation perspective', in Gross, J. J. (ed.) *Handbook of emotion regulation.* New York, NY: Guilford, pp. 23-42.

Ochsner, K. N., Ray, R. D., Cooper, J. C., Robinson, E. R., Chopra, S., Gabrieli, J. D. E. and Gross, J. J. (2004) 'For Better or For Worse: Neural Systems Supporting the

Cognitive Down- and Up- Regulation of Negative Emotion'. *NeuroImage,* 23**,** pp. 483.
Ohlhorst, J. (2023) 'Cognitive Behavioural Virtue – how to acquire virtues'. Unpublished work.
Orchard, J. (2021) 'Moral education and the challenge of pre-service professional formation for teachers'. *Journal of moral education,* 50**,** pp. 104-113.
Osman, Y. (2019) 'The significance in using role models to influence primary school children's moral development: Pilot study'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 48 (3)**,** pp. 316-331.
Osman, Y. (2024) 'Understanding how to develop an effective role-modelling character education programme in Saudi Arabia'. *Globalisation, Societies and Education***,** pp. 1-16.
PACT (2023) *Prison Advice and Care Trust Impact Report.* Available at https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/latest/reports/ (Accessed: 19th June 2024).
Papineau, D. (2023) Naturalism. *In:* Nodelman, E. N. Z. U. (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* Stanford University: Metaphysics Research Lab.
Pennanen, M., Heikkinen, H. L. T. and Tynjälä, P. (2020) 'Virtues of Mentors and Mentees in the Finnish Model of Teachers' Peer-group Mentoring'. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research,* 64 (3)**,** pp. 355-371.
Peters, R. S. (1981) *Moral development and moral education* London: George Allen & Unwin.
Peterson, A. and Kristjánsson, K. (2024) 'The Philosophical Foundations of Character Virtue Development', in Lerner, M. M. R. (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Character Development.* New York: Routledge, pp. 257-284.
Petrowski, K., Berth, H., Beiling, P., Renner, V. and Probst, T. (2021) 'Patient's and the Therapist's Attachment Representations, Attachment to Therapists, and Self-Esteem-Change Through Psychotherapy'. *Frontiers in Psychology,* 12**,** pp. 711296-711296.
Piaget, J. (1972) 'Intelectual developmeny from adolescence to adulthood'. *Human Development,* 15 (1)**,** pp. 1-12.
Plato (2017) *Euthyphro Apology, Crito, Phaedo / edited and translated by Chris Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Polanyi, M. (1983) *The tacit dimension*. Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith.
Protasi, S. (2021) *The philosophy of envy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Railton, P. (2016a) 'Intuitive Guidance: Emotion, Regulation and Experience', in Seligman, M. E. P., Railton, P., Baumeister, R. F. and Sripade, C. (eds.) *Homo Prospectus.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 33-85.
Railton, P. (2016b) 'Morality and Prospection', in Seligman, M. E. P., Railton, P., Baumeister, R. F. and Sripade, C. (eds.) *Homo Prospectus.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 225-280.
Reece, B. C. (2019) 'Aristotle's Four Causes of Action'. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy,* 97 (2)**,** pp. 213-227.
Resnick, L. B. (1991) 'Shared cognition: Thinking as social practice', in L. B. Resnick, J. M. L., & S. D. Teasley (ed.) *Persepectives on socially shared cogniton.* Washington, DC: Americal Psychological Association, pp. pp. 1-20.
Ridge, M. (2019) Moral Non-Naturalism. *In:* Zalta, E. N. (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.
Rorty, A. O. (1984) 'Aristotle on the Metaphysical Status of" Pathe"'. *The Review of Metaphysics,* Vol.37 (3)**,** pp. 521-546.
Rosenberg, A. (2018) *Philosophy of social science*. New York, NY and London: Routledge.

Rossi, G. (2018) ‘The Causal Structure of Emotions in Aristotle: Hylomorphism, Causal Interaction between Mind and Body, and Intentionality’, in Marcelo D. Boeri, Y. Y. K., Jorge Mittelmann (ed.) *Soul and Mind in Greek Thought. Psychological Issues in Plato and Aristotle.* Springer, pp. 177-198.

Rushton, J. P. (1975) ‘Generosity in children: Immediate and long-term effects of modeling, preaching, and moral judgment’. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 31 (3), pp. 459.

Rushton, J. P. and Campbell, A. C. (1977) ‘Modeling, vicarious reinforcement and extraversion on blood donating in adults: Immediate and long-term effects’. *European Journal of Social Psychology,* 7 (3), pp. 297-306.

Ryle, G. (1972) ‘Can virtue be taught’. *Education and the Development of Reason,* 8, pp. 323-332.

Sanderse, W. (2012) *Character education : a neo-Aristotelian approach to the philosophy, psychology and education of virtue*. Delft: Eburon.

Sanderse, W. (2013) ‘The meaning of role modelling in moral and character education’. *Journal of Moral Education,* 42 (1), pp. 28-42.

Sanderse, W. (2015) ‘An Aristotelian Model of Moral Development’. *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* 49 (3), pp. 382-398.

Sanderse, W. (2020) ‘Does Aristotle believe that habituation is only for children?’. *Journal of Moral Education,* 49 (1), pp. 98-110.

Sanderse, W. (2023) ‘Adolescents' moral self-cultivation through emulation: Implications for modelling in moral education’. *Journal of Moral Education,* 63 (1), pp. p.1-18.

Sanderse, W. (2024) ‘The intersection of teacher modelling and student emulation in moral education’. *On Education Journal for Research and Debate,* 7 (19), pp. n/a.

Sanderse, W. and Cooke, S. (2021) ‘Being Prepared to Become a Moral Teacher: UK Teachers' Experiences of Initial Teacher Education’. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research,* 65 (2), pp. 226-239.

Sanger, M. N. and Osguthorpe, R. D. (2013) ‘Modeling as moral education: Documenting, analyzing, and addressing a central belief of preservice teachers’. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 29 (1), pp. 167-176.

Sauer, H. (2012) ‘Educated intuitions. Automaticity and rationality in moral judgement’. *Philosophical Explorations,* 15 (3), pp. 255-275.

Sauer, H. (2017) *Moral Judgements as Educated Intuitions*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Sauer, H. (2022) ‘The end of history’. *Inquiry (Oslo),* (ahead-of-print), pp. 1-25.

Sauer, H. (2023) ‘The ends of history: A reply to Sauer’. *Inquiry (Oslo),* (ahead-of-print), pp. 1-11.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2019) *Research Methods for Business Students*. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Saunders, M. N. and Townsend, K. (2018) ‘Choosing participants’, in Cathy Cassell, A. L. C., and Gina Grandy (ed.) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods.* London: Sage, pp. 480-494.

Saunders, M. N. K. and Townsend, K. (2016) ‘Reporting and Justifying the Number of Interview Participants in Organization and Workplace Research’. *British Journal of Management,* 27 (4), pp. 836-852.

Scandura, T. A. and Williams, E. A. (2000) ‘Research Methodology in Management: Current Practices, Trends, and Implications for Future Research’. *Academy of Management Journal,* 43 (6), pp. 1248-1264.

Schindler, I., Paech, J. and Löwenbrück, F. (2015) ‘Linking admiration and adoration to self-expansion: Different ways to enhance one's potential’. *Cognition and Emotion,* 29, pp. 292-310.

Schindler, I., Zink, V., Windrich, J. and Menninghaus, W. (2013) 'Admiration and adoration: Their different ways of showing and shaping who we are'. *Cognition and Emotion,* 27**,** pp. 85-118.

Schwartz, B. and Sharpe, K. (2010) *Practical wisdom : the right way to do the right thing*. New York: Riverhead Books.

Scott, R. B. (1980) 'Five Types of Ethical Naturalism'. *American Philosophical Quarterly,* 17 (4)**,** pp. 261-270.

Searle, J. R. (1996) *The construction of social reality*. London: Penguin.

Shaw, J. P. (2021) 'Aristotle: Mentor for the Soul'. *Adult learning (Washington, D.C.)***,** pp. 104515952199758.

Sherman, N. (1989) *The fabric of character: Aristotle's theory of virtue*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Snow, N. E. (2013) '"May You Live in Interesting Times": Moral Philosophy and Empirical Psychology'. *Journal of Moral Philosophy,* 10 (3)**,** pp. 339-353.

Snow, N. E. (2020) 'What is a science of virtue?'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 51 (1)**,** pp. 9-23.

Snow, N. E., Wright, J. C. and Warren, M. T. (2021) 'Phronesis and Whole Trait Theory: An Integration', in De Caro, M. and Vaccarezza, M. S. (eds.) *Practical Wisdom: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives.* New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 70-95.

Standley, J. (Forthcoming) 'Responsible Belief and the Epistemic Obligations of the Educator'. *Educational Theory***,** pp. n/a.

Stangl, R. (2020) *Neither heroes nor saints : ordinary virtue, extraordinary virtue, and self-cultivation*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Sternberg, R. J. (2020) 'The Missing Links: Comments on "The Science of Wisdom in a Polarized World"'. *Psychological Inquiry,* 31 (2)**,** pp. 153-160.

Sternberg, R. J. (2022) *Wisdom : the psychology of wise thoughts, words, and deeds / Robert J. Sternberg, Judith Glück*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Steutel, J. and Spiecker, B. (2004) 'Cultivating Sentimental Dispositions Through Aristotelian Habituation'. *Journal of philosophy of education,* 38 (4)**,** pp. 531-549.

Stevenson, M. (2022) *Education for human flourishing.* .Centre for Strategic Education. Available at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LKxCvKbk6wFh2xQffxv5hIVCjy8STVKt/view (Accessed: 10th May 2024).

Stichter, M. (2018a) *The Skillfulness of Virtue: Improving our Moral and Epistemic Lives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stichter, M. (2018b) 'Virtue as skill'. *Oxford handbook of virtue***,** pp. 57-82.

Stichter, M. (2021) 'Differentiating the Skills of Practical Wisdom', in De Caro, M. and Vaccarezza, M. S. (eds.) *Practical Wisdom: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives.* New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 96-113.

Swanton, C. (2003) *Virtue ethics : a pluralistic view / Christine Swanton*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Swanton, C. (2007) 'Virtue ethics, role ethics, and business ethics', in Walker, R. and Ivanhoe, P. (eds.) *Working virtue: Virtue ethics and contemporary moral problems.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 207-24.

Swartwood, J. D. (2013) 'Wisdom as an expert skill'. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice,* 16 (3)**,** pp. 511-528.

Szutta, N. (2019) 'Exemplarist moral theory - some pros and cons'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 48 (3)**,** pp. 280-290.

Tachibana, K. (2019) 'Nonadmirable moral exemplars and virtue development'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 48 (3)**,** pp. 346-357.

Taylor, J. (2021) *The Ethical ITE Mentor: Mentor Perceptions on the Role the Ethical Plays in ITE Mentoring*. MA Character Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham.
Terry, G., Hayfield, N., Clarke, V. and Braun, V. (2017) 'Thematic Analysis', in Willig, C. and Rogers, W. S. (eds.) *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology.* London: SAGE, pp. 17-37.
Thompson, J. (2022) 'A Guide to Abductive Thematic Analysis'. *Qualitative Report,* 27 (5)**,** pp. 1410-1421.
Thrash, T. M., Moldovan, E. G., Oleynick, V. C. and Maruskin, L. A. (2014) 'The Psychology of Inspiration'. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass,* 8 (9)**,** pp. 495-510.
Timmerman, G. (2009) 'Teacher educators modelling their teachers?'. *European Journal of Teacher Education,* 32 (3)**,** pp. 225-238.
Timmermans, S. and Tavory, I. (2012) 'Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis'. *Sociological Theory,* 30 (3)**,** pp. 167-186.
Tomasello, M. (2019) *Becoming human: a theory of ontogeny*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Tomasello, M. (2020) 'The adaptive origins of uniquely human sociality'. *Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B. Biological sciences,* 375 (1803)**,** pp. 20190493-20190493.
Tomasello, M. and Gonzalez-Cabrera, I. (2017) 'The Role of Ontogeny in the Evolution of Human Cooperation'. *Human Nature,* 28 (3)**,** pp. 274-288.
Toom, A. and Husu, T. (2020) 'Tacit Knowledge and Knowing at the Core of Individual and Collective Expertise and Professional Action', in Kallio, E. K. (ed.) *Development of Adult Thinking: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Cognitive Development and Adult Learning.* Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 141-155.
Tsai, C.-h. (2020) 'Phronesis and Techne: The Skill Model of Wisdom Defended'. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy,* 98 (2)**,** pp. 234-247.
Tynjälä, P., Kallio, E. and Heikkinen, H. L. T. (2020) 'Professional Expertise, Integrative Thinking, Wisdom and Phronesis', in Kallio, E. K. (ed.) *Development of Adult Thinking: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Cognitive Development and Adult Learning.* Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 156-174.
UKRIO (2022) *Code of Practice for Research.* . Available at https://ukrio.org/ukrio-resources/publications/code-of-practice-for-research/ (Accessed: 20th October 2022).
Vaccarezza, M. S. and Niccoli, A. (2019) 'The dark side of the exceptional: On moral exemplars, character education, and negative emotions'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 48 (3)**,** pp. 332-345.
Vaccarezza, M. S. and Niccoli, A. (2022) 'Let the Donkeys Be Donkeys: In Defense of Inspiring Envy', in Protasi, S. (ed.) *The Moral Psychology of Envy.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 111-128.
Van de Ven, N. (2017) 'Envy and admiration: emotion and motivation following upward social comparison'. *Cognition and Emotion,* 31**,** pp. 193-200.
Van de Ven, N., Zeelenberg, M. and Pieters, R. (2011) 'Why envy outperforms admiration'. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin,* 37 (6)**,** pp. 784-795.
Vasalou, S. (2019) *The measure of greatness : philosophers on magnanimity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Väyrynen, P. (2016) Thick ethical concepts. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* Stanford University: Metaphysics Research Lab.
Vigani, D. (2021) 'Virtue and Embodied Skill: Refining the Virtue-Skill Analogy'. *The Journal of Value Inquiry,* 55 (2)**,** pp. 251-268.

Vos, P. H. (2018) 'Learning from exemplars: emulation, character formation and the complexities of ordinary life'. *Journal of Beliefs & Values,* 39 (1)**,** pp. 17-28.

Walker, L. J. and Frimer, J. A. (2007) 'Moral personality of brave and caring exemplars'. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 93 (5)**,** pp. 845.

Warnick, B. (2008) *Imitation and Education A Philosophical Inquiry into Learning by Example*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Webber, J. (2020) 'Evaluative attitudes as the motivational structures of ethical virtues', *Virtues and Virtue Education in Theory and Practice.* Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 55-68.

Weil, L. G., Fleming, S. M., Dumontheil, I., Kilford, E. J., Weil, R. S. and Rees, G. (2013) 'The development of metacognitive ability in adolescence'. *Consciousness and Cognition,* 22**,** pp. 264–271.

Whitlock, B. (2023) 'Mentorship Programs in Schools: Bridging the Character Education Gap'. *Journal of Moral Education,* 53 (1)**,** pp. 89-118.

Wilde, O. (2014) *A Picture of Dorian Grey*. London: Titan Books.

Williams, B. (1993) 'Moral Luck', in Statman, D. (ed.) *Moral Luck.* Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 35-56.

Williams, B. (2011) *Ethics and the limits of philosophy / with a commentary on the text by A.W. Moore foreword by Jonathan Lear*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Wolf, W., Launay, J. and Dunbar, R. I. M. (2016) 'Joint attention, shared goals, and social bonding'. *The British Journal of Psychology,* 107**,** pp. 322-337.

Wright, J. C., Warren, M. T. and Snow, N. E. (2020) *Understanding virtue: Theory and measurement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yacek, D. W. and Jonas, M. E. (2023) 'Phronesis in teacher education: a critical reexamination'. *European Journal of Teacher Education,* (ahead-of-print)**,** pp. p.1-17.

Yacek, D. W., Jonas, M. E. and Gary, K. H. (2023) *Moral Education in the 21st Century*. Cambridge and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Yancey, A. K., Grant, D., Kurosky, S., Kravitz-Wirtz, N. and Mistry, R. (2011) 'Role modeling, risk, and resilience in California adolescents'. *Journal of adolescent health,* 48 (1)**,** pp. 36-43.

Yancey, A. K., Siegel, J. M. and McDaniel, K. L. (2002) 'Role models, ethnic identity, and health-risk behaviors in urban adolescents'. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine,* 156 (1)**,** pp. 55-61.

Yang, S.-y. (2017) 'The Complex Relations Between Wisdom and Significant Life Learning'. *Journal of Adult Development,* 24 (4)**,** pp. 227-239.

Yin, R. K. (2018) *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. London: Sage.

Ylikoski, P. (2013) 'Causal and Constitutive Explanation Compared'. *Erkenntnis,* 78 (2)**,** pp. 277-297.

Zagzebski, L. (2013) 'Moral exemplars in theory and practice'. *Theory and Research in Education,* 11 (2)**,** pp. 193-206.

Zagzebski, L. (2015) 'Admiration and the Admirable'. *Supplementary volume - Aristotelian Society,* 89**,** pp. 205-221.

Zagzebski, L. T. (1996) *Virtues of the mind : an inquiry into the nature of virtue and the ethical foundations of knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zagzebski, L. T. (2017) *Exemplarist moral theory*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

APPENDICES

List of appendices

Appendix 1. ECT Participant Information Sheet

Appendix 2: TMRM Participant Information Sheet

Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form

Appendix 4: Participant Debrief Sheet

Appendix 5: *Thematic Analysis Phase 1*

Appendix 6: *Thematic Analysis Phase 2*

Appendix 7: *Supporting Quotations - Global Theme One: Strong moral identity intertwined with professional identity*

Appendix 8: *Supporting Quotations - Global Theme Two: Practical wisdom (phronesis)*

Appendix 9: *Supporting Quotations - Global Theme Three: Strong and active relational abilities – they are expert relators and thus relatable*

Appendix 1: ECT Participant Information Sheet

What is the aim of the research study?

The aim of this research study is to better understand the relationship between role modelling and teacher character. There are two stages of this study, the first involves interviews with teachers, the second involves interviews with their teacher role models. I hope you will be interested in participating in the first stage.

What is the aim of this teacher interview?

Through the answers given in response to the questions asked in these interviews, I hope to be able to build up a better understanding of how role modelling influences the character of teachers and of what factors make a good teacher role model. Through doing so I hope to be able to provide pedagogical recommendations for future teacher training. The total time of the project is intended to take place within the academic years of 2022-2023, but it is anticipated that interviews should take no longer than 12 months.

This interview will approximately 40 minutes and will take place in May 2022. The interview is likely to take place on your school premises, or alternatively on Zoom, and at a time that is convenient to you. If during the interview, you would prefer not to answer a particular question, then please tell me and we will move onto the next question. This interview will be audio recorded, with your consent, to provide an accurate record of the conversation. This interview will be later transcribed and analysed. It should be noted that you will receive a copy of the transcript and then have two weeks to change anything before the data is used. There is no financial compensation for taking part in this study.

What happens to my data?

The responses that you provide during this interview will be treated confidentially, and only I and my academic supervisors will be able to match your responses to your identity. Your name and school will be allocated two pseudonyms which will be used in my thesis and in any other types of publications, such as journal articles. Your identity will not be known or identifiable from any content that you give in this interview, neither will the identity of anyone else that you name, your school, or any other professional organisation.

In line with the University of Birmingham policies, all data must be safely stored and retained for a minimum of ten years. Physical data, such as consent forms, will be kept in a locked drawer. Only I, as the postgraduate researcher, can open this drawer. Electronic data, such as audio recordings, will be kept on the University of Birmingham data storage system, named the Birmingham Environment for Academic Research (BEAR). For both physical and electronic data, the researcher and her academic supervisors will be able to access the data, wherever necessary. After ten years, all electronic data will be deleted, and all physical data will be shredded and then disposed.

Participants can withdraw their data up to 28 days after participating in the research study. If a participant wishes to withdraw data, then they will need to let me know by email at . All data relating to the participant from that stage will then be removed from the study. Again, if this option is chosen, then all electronic data will be deleted, and all physical data will be shredded and then disposed.

Keeping in touch.

As the researcher for this project, I will send you a summary of the findings once it has concluded. I will also let you know when the thesis has been written and submitted, and I will send you links to any further publications, such as journal articles, which have involved the data that you have provided through this study.

At any time, you can also write to the email to request an update of the research study. In addition, it is possible to contact my supervisors, Professor Kristján Kristjánsson and Dr Laura D'Olimpio, by email at and respectively.

Please feel free to ask me any questions about this research study or about data management. If you wish to contact me at any point about the research, please feel free to email me.

Yours sincerely,

Emerald Henderson

Postgraduate Researcher/PhD Student
The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues
School of Education
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston, Birmingham
B15 2TT

Email:

Appendix 2: TMRM Participant Information Sheet

What is the aim of the research study?

The aim of this research study is to better understand the relationship between role modelling and teacher character. There are two stages of this study, the first involves interviews with teachers, the second involves interviews with their teacher role models. I hope you will be interested in participating in the second stage.

What is the aim of this teacher interview?

Through the answers given in response to the questions asked in these interviews, I hope to be able to build up a better understanding of how role modelling influences the character of teachers and of what factors make a good teacher role model. Through doing so I hope to be able to provide pedagogical recommendations for future teacher training. The total time of the project is intended to take place within the academic years of 2022-2024, but it is anticipated that interviews should take no longer than 12 months.

This interview will approximately 40 minutes and will take place in May 2023. The interview is likely to take place on your school premises, or alternatively on Zoom, and at a time that is convenient to you. If during the interview, you would prefer not to answer a particular question, then please tell me and we will move onto the next question. This interview will be audio recorded, with your consent, to provide an accurate record of the conversation. This interview will be later transcribed and analysed. It should be noted that you will receive a copy of the transcript and then have two weeks to change anything before the data is used. There is no financial compensation for taking part in this study.

What happens to my data?

The responses that you provide during this interview will be treated confidentially, and only I and my academic supervisors will be able to match your responses to your identity. Your name and school will be allocated two pseudonyms which will be used in my thesis and in any other types of publications, such as journal articles. Your identity will not be known or identifiable from any content that you give in this interview, neither will the identity of anyone else that you name, your school, or any other professional organisation.

In line with the University of Birmingham policies, all data must be safely stored and retained for a minimum of ten years. Physical data, such as consent forms, will be kept in a locked drawer. Only I, as the postgraduate researcher, can open this drawer. Electronic data, such as audio recordings, will be kept on the University of Birmingham data storage system, named the Birmingham Environment for Academic Research (BEAR). For both physical and electronic data, the researcher and her academic supervisors will be able to access the data, wherever necessary. After ten years, all electronic data will be deleted, and all physical data will be shredded and then disposed.

Participants can withdraw their data up to 28 days after participating in the research study. If a participant wishes to withdraw data, then they will need to let me know by email at . All data relating to the participant from that stage will then be removed from the study. Again, if this option is chosen, then all electronic data will be deleted, and all physical data will be shredded and then disposed.

<u>Keeping in touch.</u>

As the researcher for this project, I will send you a summary of the findings once it has concluded. I will also let you know when the thesis has been written and submitted, and I will send you links to any further publications, such as journal articles, which have involved the data that you have provided through this study.

At any time, you can also write to the email [redacted] to request an update of the research study. In addition, it is possible to contact my supervisors, Professor Kristján Kristjánsson and Dr Laura D'Olimpio, by email at [redacted] and [redacted] respectively.

Please feel free to ask me any questions about this research study or about data management. Likewise, if you wish to contact me at any point about the research, please do email me.
Yours sincerely,

Emerald Henderson

Postgraduate Researcher/PhD Student
The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues
School of Education
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston, Birmingham
B15 2TT

Email: [redacted]

Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form

This research study has been approved by the ethics committee at the University of Birmingham. This interview asks for your perspectives about role modelling and teacher character. Your responses will be treated confidentially, and every effort will be undertaken to ensure that your responses will not be identifiable in my thesis or any research outputs. Pseudonyms will be used in any publications. All physical data will be stored in a locked drawer. Only I, the postgraduate researcher, can open this drawer. All electronic data will be stored on the password-protected University of Birmingham data storage system, named the Birmingham Environment for Academic Research (BEAR) for a minimum of ten years. All data may be looked at by the postgraduate researcher and her supervisors, wherever necessary. After ten years, electronic data will be deleted, and any physical data will be shredded, and then disposed. Your participation is voluntary. You have the right to stop the interview at any point and withdraw your data up to 28 days after completion of the interview.

This project being run by Emerald Henderson, a full-time PhD student at the University of Birmingham. These interviews are part of a wider study to examine the relationship between role modelling and teacher character. Please feel free to ask any questions about the research project or the data management. If you wish to contact the researcher involved with this study, please email Emerald Henderson at **EIH168@student.bham.ac.uk**.

Please read, and show your acceptance (by placing a ✓ in each box) of the following statements:

1. I confirm that I have read the above and understood the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have these satisfactorily answered. ☐

2. I understand that my consent and my participation is voluntary and that I am
free to withdraw at any time during the interview, or up to 28 days after the completion of the interview. I am also aware that if I do not wish to answer a question, I can skip it by letting the researcher know. ☐

3. I understand that my data will be treated confidentially. This means that none of my
distinguishing features will be identifiable in the PhD thesis, or research outputs. I also understand that physical data will be kept in a locked drawer, and electronic data will be kept in the University of Birmingham data storage system (BEAR). ☐

4. I understand that data collected during the interview may be looked at by the researcher and his PhD supervisors at the University of Birmingham, where it is relevant to my responses in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my responses and data from this interview. ☐

5. I understand that my name and distinguishing features will not be included in any published material. ☐

6. I understand that this interview will take an estimated 40 minutes and be
audio recorded. ☐

7. I understand that I will not receive any financial compensation for taking part in the study. ☐

8. I consent to take part in the above study. ☐

Name of participant	Date	Signature

Appendix 4: Participant Debrief Sheet

Dear Participant,

Firstly, thank you very much indeed for participating in this study. Your contributions have been incredibly valuable for my research and I appreciate you taking the time and effort to speak with me.

Now that we have conducted the interview, I would like to take the opportunity to offer you a full debrief about the purpose of the study. Prior to participation, you were provided with an information sheet which stated that the aim is to better understand the relationship between role modelling and teacher character. This is, of course, still correct, yet in order to avoid bias and ensure the results of interviews were as objective as possible, the decision was made (and approved by the University of Birmingham's research ethics committee) to limit participant knowledge of the exact aim of the study.

As we have now completed the interview, I can now tell you that the full purpose of the study is to investigate role modelling as a method of moral development in teachers. In the context of moral character education, with which my research is associated, teachers are considered to be important moral role models for pupils because they can help inspire them to become good people. I am interested in evaluating how we can best prepare teachers to be moral role models, which has led me to conduct this study. Interestingly, research suggests the effects of role modelling, where one learns by emulating an exemplar, continues throughout one's career. In light of this, my research aims to assess whether and how teachers can benefit from having role models too. As a result of the findings, I hope to be able to provide pedagogical recommendations for future teacher role modelling training and raise the profile of role modelling as a method of moral development in teachers.

Now that you are aware of the full intention of the study, I hope that you are still happy to contribute your insights to it. If, however, you would like to withdraw, this is still possible, and further details about this process can be found in the information sheet previously provided.
Again, thank you very much for participating in the study, it is much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Emerald Henderson

Postgraduate Researcher/PhD Student
The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues
School of Education
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston, Birmingham
B15 2TT

Email:

Appendix 5: *Thematic Analysis Phase 1*

Codes	Themes	Basic Themes	Organising Themes
Important positive personal qualities in teachers	Approachable + Someone you could go toGives you the time of day	Approachable	Moral traits
	Listener Empathetic Understanding Non-judgemental Patient	Empathetic	
	Nice Kind Warm Genuine care A safe space	Caring	
	Just Fair Honest Integrity Conscientious	Trustworthy	
	Relatable Good at building relationships	Relatable	
	Sociable Friendly Personable Makes you feel like you want to be there	Personable	Non-moral traits
	Fun Entertaining Humour	Fun	
	Positive Optimistic	Positive	
	Resilient Confident A presence	Strong classroom persona	

	Good communicator Solution-orientated Multi-tasker Observant Respected Not too strict Not a pushover Good balance	Capable Good judgement	
Role Model Inspiration (S+ITT)	Balance being good teacher with being good person Kind but firm Shows their character in the classroom Is themselves at work Open Shares own stories and experiences Always says hello to everyone Gives people the time of day Makes people feel seen Always willing to help Helps everyone Ready to help Relatable Aligned in approach to teaching culture Approachable Puts people at ease Good report with pupils The kids love them Knowledgeable about pupils Remembers details about pupils	Teacher role models balance kindness with fairness. Teacher role models show their character through how they teach. Teacher role models make time for others. Teacher role models always help others. Teacher role models are relatable. Teacher role models are warm and approachable. Teacher role models have a strong report with their pupils.	Personal and professional self is interconnected Teacher role models have strong relational abilities which make others feel connected to them

	More experienced Can learn from them Good leader Someone I want to be like Someone I want to emulate I aspire to be like them Successful Good work ethic Ambitious Driven Dedication to teaching Dedication to bettering teaching	Teachers are inspired to learn from their role model's experience. Teachers aspire and desire to become like their role model. Teachers are inspired by how driven their role models are. Teachers are inspired by their role model's dedication to teaching.	Experienced and dedicated teachers whom one can learn from.
RM positive personal qualities (S+ITT)	Fair Clear standards of behaviour Consistent Firm Never raises voice Always helpful Always 'on it' Always has time for you Always has time for pupils Always engages in a conversation with the pupils Gives everyone the time of day Gives everyone as much time as they need Contentious Integrity	Clear moral standards Consistent Role models convey a commitment to universalist values	Role models are perceived to have a strong and consistent moral identity, which they demonstrate thought their professional role.

	A positive changemaker Authentic self Open Generous Kind Selfless Puts others first a lot Empathetic Understanding Approachable Welcoming Easy to talk to Good listener Works together with pupils Relatable Builds community Lovely Bubbly Nurturing Caring Loving Maternal Relaxed More experienced Strong subject knowledge Often an age gap Strong Resilient Strong work ethic Driven Organised Professional A presence Confident	Role models have a strong moral vision Show their true self Role models are other focused Role models actively relate to others Caring Role models are more experienced and more knowledgeable Professionalism	Role models empathise with and connect to those in their care (strong relational ability) Strong professional identity
RM elicited feelings (S+ITT)	Someone looked up to Someone you want to be like	Motivating and aspirational	The feelings elicited by role models are

	Wanting to do well under them Respect Admiration Love Impressed Awe Inspired Grateful Admirable and intimidating Admiration, awe and jealousy Experience, knowledge, tension, frustration Inspired and intimidated Intimidated but desire approval from RM Admiration and frustration (when no longer working as closely with RM)	Desire for approval Purely positive feelings towards role model Mixed experience of positive and negative feeling towards the role model	motivational and positive or mixed.
Connection between teaching role and personal character?	Absolutely connected Role as a teacher intrinsically connected to who I am How you are at work is a continuation of how you are in other aspects of your life You have to be yourself in front of a class Vocational so cannot separate Exhausting to act Self does not differ dramatically at work	Moral character and professional role of teacher are intrinsically linked Being yourself in the classroom	Character of the teacher is connected to and important in all aspects of school life

	Important to be a presence in both classroom and around the school Obligation to bring your moral character into school	Teachers have obligation to show character by being a presence around the school and in the classroom	
	Someone who has aspirations for the future, not just for themselves, but for everybody Wanting to have a job that benefits society	Teaching profession chosen for moral reasons, it's a role that benefits society	
	Teaching is a bit of an act – but still me Slightly performative	Teacher persona – a role sensitive version of oneself	
Perception of self as role model	Strong moral identity = consider self a moral role model Being clear on what's right and wrong The setting of moral boundaries Obligation to challenge misconceptions and create spaces for discussion of moral values	Strong moral identity	ECTs perceive themselves as moral role models
	If can't be a good role model, can't be a good teacher It's part of teaching	Being a good role model is part of being a good teacher	
	A role model of specific traits A role model of kindness and fairness Try to weave in virtues such as honesty	Role models of specific virtues	
	Try to be relatable	Relational abilities	

	Try to empathise Try to show people the best in them Making students feel valued		
	Show character thorough extra-curricular activities like sports coaching, drama, clubs Pastoral role allows one to be a role model Opportunities to develop character	Pastoral roles, sport and extra-curricular activities enable teachers to show their character	
	Pastoral and extra-curricular roles enable one to show one’s character and talk about more than just one’s subject		
	I hope so I try to be Others consider me a role model Arrogant to claim is the pinnacle of X and Y, but try to demonstrate behaviours for pupils to follow	Idea that it’s up to others to decide if one is a role model, but ultimately try to be	ECTs try to be moral role models
	Strong moral identity = strong sense of teacher moral identity = strong awareness that teachers are moral role models	Strength of moral identity affects the degree to which one considers oneself a moral role model	
	It’s not for me to decide if I’m a role model = weaker moral identity?		

… To Whom	Caution – character traits can be politicised Pupils All pupils Younger pupils To who one relates to To those with whom have positive report with The naughtier/cheekier boys who I also do sport with To boys on sports team To those I coach in sport To those in one's form To other teachers doing their training To whom there is an age/experience gap Learning from someone more experienced	 Pupils Relational roles Teachers with less experience	 ECTs primarily consider themselves to be role models to pupils who they relate to, or have pastoral/sporting responsibilities towards. (link to opportunities to show character above) Some ECTs also consider themselves role models to less experienced teachers.
Moral obligation of teachers to be role models	Definitely Absolutely Yes, in an ideal world My role models now were my teachers Most of my role models in my life have been my teachers Part of the reason I decided to teach was because of the teachers I had Teachers spend every day with pupils Pupils spend so much time with teachers,	All responded in the affirmative ECT's role models are their former teachers Degree of time spent with pupils creates an obligation to be a role model to them	Children need teachers to be role models

	role modelling should be part of the job Teachers are in the lives of pupils, and thus are required to be role models All adults in children's lives should be role models		
	You have to assume they aren't going to get it [moral guidance] from somewhere else You cannot control how good a role model the adults at home are, but you can control the adults that children are exposed to in school Moral messages must be taught at school because they might not be at home It's important for children to see that a respectable adult in their life does good things	All adults who are in children's lives ought to be role models Teachers ought to be moral role models to pupils because they might not have them at home	
	Young people need guidance You people need help finding direction You have to assume they just will pick up your habits Teacher role models have an indirect moral impact on pupils Pupils do look up to teachers Teachers can change a child Doing the right thing has an effect on them	Young people require role models for moral guidance A child's moral character development *just is* directly or indirectly influenced by their teachers	Role modelling is part of teaching because teachers do influence a child's moral character development

	If you cannot be a good role model, you cannot be a good teacher Being a role model underpins all teaching Your values are shown through the way that you teach	Being a good role model underpins all teaching	
	Wish importance of character in class and around school was emphasised during ITT	Importance of teacher character in all aspects of school life needs emphasising in ITT.	

Appendix 6: *Thematic Analysis Phase 2*

Codes	Themes	Basic Themes	Organising Themes
Positive personal moral qualities in teachers	Empathy Compassion Open minded Flexible	Empathy	Care-based virtues
	Care Active care Loving Kind Generous Considerate Respectful of pupils and colleagues	Care	
	Integrity – doing the right thing Integrity – best version of self Honest Trustworthy Reliable Consistent Dependable Responsible	Integrity	Trust-building virtues

	Supportive A safe space		
	Universal values Valuing all pupils Putting pupil outcomes at the heart of everything Valuing pupil individuality Valuing what pupils say Being on their side Having pupil best interests at heart	Values all pupils	
	Encouraging A door opener A positive vibe Someone who looks for the positives in others Vision	Positive vision	Positive moral vision
	High standards of expected behaviour High expectations of pupils Firm but fair A boundary setter	High expectations	

	Emotionally intelligent Appropriately emotionally detached Resilient	Emotionally intelligent	Emotional intelligence
Moral role models during career - inspiration	Recognises potential in other teachers Makes others feel special Motivates others to do their pastoral roles well Motivates me to do better Encourages reflection on own practice I am a product of having good role models	Their role models motivated others to do well and be good	**All TMRMs have/had moral role models themselves**
	Experience Wisdom Can learn from Learn a lot from them Someone who helps you grow Someone who inspires self-belief A wonderful teacher	TMRMs are inspired to learn from their role model's wisdom	TMRMs are motivated by their own moral role models' practical wisdom and positivity
	Always has a positive attitude	Their role models actively and	

	Someone who looks for the best in things Always a positive presence Proactive in celebrating what's gone right People who engender a sense of pride in oneself A presence around the school Incredible energy	consistently modelled positivity	
	Approachable Open Warm Kind Leads with love Leads with compassion	Their role models were warm and approachable, even in leadership roles	Their role models had warm and caring relational abilities which encourages others to feel connected to them
	A sanctuary Made me feel very safe Calm Unflappable Level headed Reassuring Very steady Very human	Their role models made others feel safe	

	Honest		
	Relatable Patient Someone who makes you feel you've been heard An active listener Someone who understands Someone who has time for you Someone who really cared Genuine not surface level care Drive to make sure women in leadership excelled	Their role models really cared, making others feel connected to them	
	Great balance between high standards and empathy Firm but fair Kind but no nonsense	Their role models had high expectations of pupils	Their role models had moral vision and high expectations
	Someone who shows care through high expectations Someone who shows pupils they are valuable and have potential through high expectations	Their role models demonstrated care through high expectations	

	Has the ongoing strength to do what will help the kids most Someone who doesn't lose sight of the bigger picture (the children/student teachers) Someone who tries to improve the lives of children	Their role models consistently ensured their actions accord with the bigger picture of what it is to be a good teacher	
Moral role models during career - feelings	Admiration Gratitude Wonder Warmth Friendship Inspired Incredible Scared Formidable Awe, frightened (in a positive way), platonic love Fear and admiration Revered but very human Wanting to work hard for them	Purely positive feeling towards role model Mixed experience of positive and negative feeling towards the role model Motivating and aspirational	The feelings elicited by TMRMs role models are motivational and positive or mixed.

	Wanting to emulate them Wanting to be like them Desire their approval They are accessible You can chat to them Been though more hardship than me Approachable	 Desire for approval Recognition of relatability	
Connection between teacher and personal self	Yes Completely 100% Definitely It's very difficult to separate the two Character similar regardless of whether at work or not I regard teaching as my vocation It's more than just a job Teacher persona is really important Part of my personality is that I really believe in what I am doing	Personal identity and professional role as a teacher are intrinsically connected	Interconnectedness

	My personality lends itself to teaching My identity fits with being a teacher It's just who I am I was born a teacher I would be this way regardless of whether I was a teacher or not Being myself in the lesson is why I enjoy it so much In life and in teaching I try to behave in a similar way I don't see how I could teach, if it wasn't partly a reflection of my personality	Personal identity informs professional teaching role	
	Leaving teaching = loss of identity What am I if I am not a teacher?	Identity informed by teaching	
	The profession demands so much = hard to come home and switch off If the two were not integrated, I'd have left the profession by now as I'd feel it was encroaching on my life	Necessary to see personal and professional self as connected	

Alignment between role as a teacher and personal values	The values I hold in the rest of my life are important to me as a teacher Teaching is compatible with being a good human being How can you be a teacher if you don't have some kind of moral fibre	Strongly aligned values	Role as a teacher is strongly aligned with and informed by personal values connected to having a positive social impact
	Helping There is value in what I am able to do in school on a good day I find it rewarding to help other people Driven by the idea of doing good I want to be a supportive and safe person to young people who are vulnerable I genuinely feel what I am doing is useful Teaching is meaningful It matters, it really matters Fulfilling jobs align with one's values Helping young people grow and develop has inherent worth	Teaching is purposeful – it is personally meaningful and objectively valuable because it enables one to help others	

	I believe in the importance of education Education is empowering Education is something pupils will value forever Trying to level the playing field Trying to help everyone have chances Giving people the best chance they can have is tied up with my sense of personal identity Being part of the net that helps people not to slip through Trying to make sure everyone has a chance regardless of where they come from I feel a personal and societal responsibility towards the children	Education makes a positive social impact which can help alleviate social injustice	
	It's grown and changed over time – from subject to student focused Through experience, I've seen how what I do matters to students My influence has got progressively wider	Degree of experience in teaching increasingly positively affects concordance with personal values	

	Educating them about what is right Teaching RE enables discussion of moral values Teaching RSHE enables discussion of moral values Even when not explicitly teaching values, you are still modelling behaviour	Teaching is a moral profession which enables moral education	
Crossover and comparison between teacher and personal self	Mother Sister Daughter Parent Wife Friend Intuition, flexibility, listening Caring responsibilities Being non-judgemental and compassionate Being kind and trying to do the right thing Trying to be someone fair and just I lead with the same passion and intensity	Teacher role model moral character is similar across their other personal roles e.g., parent, friend Teacher role models have a robust moral identity that transcends their various personal and professional roles	Teacher role models perceive themselves to have cross-role and situational consistency in moral character

	Becoming a teacher has made me better in aspects of my personal life Teaching ethics made me realise I was being inconsistent, so now I'm vegetarian I am perhaps more strict with my own children because I know how lucky they are Standing up to injustice and unkindness I couldn't see someone who needed a hand I could give and not give it My core is the same My values are the same, but my school demeanour more serious Who I am bleeds into my teaching		
Consider self a moral role model/person of good character within school	I would like to think so I am an exemplary teacher Yes I try to do my best all the time and lead by example Yeah, I think so Over time people have said things to this effect	Most teacher role models do consider themselves to be a moral role model	Teacher role models directly or indirectly consider themselves to be people of good character aka moral role models

	There are moments in the day that remind me I am doing good for others I lead with a moral compass I try to be, it's something I aspire to, rather than that I am. Not explicitly a role model, but do consider self a person of good character Humility Being a role model is a by-product of being a good person It just happens Indirect	Some teacher role models do not explicitly think of themselves as a moral role model, but do consider themselves a person of good moral character Role modelling is indirect, a by-product of being a good person	
Role models of any particular qualities	Leading with a moral compass Leading with compassion I always try and lead by example Being a role model to all stakeholders – pupils, parents, staff I have a very strong sense of what is right	Role models of virtuous leadership to all stakeholders	Teacher role models have a robust moral identity which informs their virtuous leadership and virtuous actions in school.

	Keeping an eye out for other people all the time Doing right by people How you treat people How you treat children Not giving up on children Consistency Action Fighting for change I try to have a positive impact I try to do good in the world around me	Teacher role models consistently try to *act* virtuously	
	I'm pragmatic in difficult situations Steer and guide To help guide staff and pupils to make the right decision Being level headed and supportive	Teacher role models have practical wisdom which helps themselves and others make good decisions	Teacher role models have strong relational abilities which enable others to feel connected to them
	Remembering the birthday of every child in the school Building a relationship with my staff Treating everyone equally	Teacher role models actively try to build strong relationships with everyone: staff and pupils	

	Not having favourites Generosity		
	Relatable Empathy Listening Making children feel heard Listening without judging Open-mindedness Understanding Approachable Warmth Honesty	Teacher role models are warm, they embody traits which encourage connection and relatability	
	Being my whole self at school Vulnerability Transparency Integrity Open about my sexuality Humour	Teacher role models show their true selves at school	
	I try to build people up Positivity	Teacher role models deliberately try to exude positivity	Teacher role models are also inspiring teachers

	Cheerfulness Enthusiasm Cheerful – in order to make people feel comfortable and uplifted		
	Resilience Hard work Risk taking Inspiration Love of learning for its own sake	Role models of non-moral professional traits	
…to whom	All stakeholders – pupils, staff, parents Every single pupil Other staff Teachers	Those in senior management positions consider themselves moral role models to everyone in the school, potentially also parents	Senior management consider themselves role models to everyone
	Pupils Students 6th Form Mostly students	To pupils	To those with less experience

	ECTs PGCE students I have trained To my mentee People with less experience New teachers	To less experienced teachers	
	To A Level women in a STEM subject All girls To students who relate to me To anyone who feels we have a connection	To pupils who relate to them	To those who relate to them or they are connected to
	To the students I teach People you work with directly People you work with closely	To pupils who they teach or work with directly	
	My pastoral team Members of your department	To teachers in their teams	
Take pleasure in being a role model or person of good character	Having good role models enables others to do better	Sees value in role modelling	Being a role models elicits positive feelings as it reflects recognition of their moral character

(self-love)	I've benefitted so much from having good role models It's lovely to be a trusted person who can give some advice If others can gain something from me, as I have from others, that would be lovely		
	It's something I take pride in, I wouldn't say I enjoy it It makes me proud You definitely take pride it that	Teacher role models take pride in being a role model	
	It gives me a greater sense of self-worth Feeling good about something you've done that reflects your values is important	Being a role model is a positive reflection of your character	
	It makes me feel I'm doing a good job I think it's a complement If you have fostered a really good relationship with your classes, that's really positive It's not something I think about often, but when it's drawn to your attention that	Being a role model is recognition for having a good rapport with pupils	

	you have meant something to the kids, then yes. It makes you happy It would be difficult not to take joy in it Yeah, it's a boost Absolutely Yes, it's very important I think so, yes It's something which makes me feel good Yes too much I want to be liked	Feel joy in being a role model	
Ease of being a role model	I don't find it difficult because it's in my nature It does come naturally There is no other way, this is who I am It's just what I would do anyway A lot of these traits I've had from childhood	It's just part of their nature, what they would do anyway	Teacher role models find that role modelling comes naturally

	Has been the case throughout life Always had a strong moral compass Treating other people well was a message instilled in me from very early on by family		
	Having a stable home life gives one the strength one to stand up for what is right Feelings of security help one to be morally brave Some days are harder than others	Feeling secure on others areas of one's life enhances one's capacity to be a role model	Different factors can enhance or reduce one's capacity to be a role model
	It's the kind of thing you get better at with practice Sometimes it's hard, but it gets easier with practice The longer I've done it the better I've become at it I get slightly better at it every year It takes time to build a good relationship with staff and pupils Being a role model is a slow gradual process	Being a moral role model takes time and becomes easier with practice	

	Being an introvert makes it tiring, because it requires that one is extroverted In the classroom it's easier than in the pastoral realm, which is more complicated If you have a bad lesson it's due to not having a good relationship with the class	Being a role model is not always easy	
Motivation for being a role model	It's who I am and who I aspire to be I think it's just something I am meant to be Just wanting to be a good person I am driven by the idea of doing some good, rather than external factors like money I'm someone who finds it very rewarding to help other people Doing good for others, gives me a greater sense of self-worth I sleep with a happy heart Just for life satisfaction I want to teach in a way that makes children feel like they matter	Being a good person is just who they are Doing good has inherent worth and contributes to self-worth	Role modelling is largely intrinsically motivated

	I want to help children feel self-confident in their own abilities Helping young people grow and develop has inherent worth I am driven by the kids I see it as a core part of the job I really believe in what I am doing I just do care about the kids I am driven by the idea of the pupils doing well It leads to better outcomes for people The opposite would be terrible I would hate to think that though some kind of character deficiency I could disadvantage someone	It helps children grow which has intrinsic value	
	It's all about servant leadership I've never looked at it as a job, it's ingrained in my life, and I have given my life to this service	They are there to serve others	
	My upbringing Past role models	An awareness of the power of role models	

	When you become a parent you start looking at yourself more as a role model It's not totally altruistic, knowing they think kindly of me, motivates me to do it more It makes me feel good I suppose being liked is there in the back of my mind It leads to better interactions with people If they regard me as a nice person who cares, they will work hard for me It's a positive, proactive behaviour management technique	to have a positive moral influence Being liked makes teacher role models feel good It leads to positive behavioural outcomes for pupils	Role modelling is partly instrumentally motivated
Balance caring for self and others	It can be hard to switch off At the moment not very good It's poor I know how to get others out of a pickle My natural tendency is to prioritise others	Poor balance	Poor Balance

	It's part of my Catholic upbringing, always thinking of others before oneself The cold weather means I spend less time exercising I do put a lot of emphasis on what other people are feeling It's not consistent, it depends on circumstance and what others are going through Every time one changes jobs it gets worse again		
	Balance has been a struggle but one I'm working on I recognise that I don't do enough for myself and need to get better at it I don't think I care about myself very much but I keep meaning to I could be worse but it could be better You have to take care of yourself before you can care for others We talk a lot about self-care with teachers, but its easier to advocate for than to do it	Intention to improve balance	
	I'm very good at the caring side of things out of school	Other caring responsibilities	

	too, but not so much for myself		
	Caring responsibilities outside of school too		
	In the holidays I'm a mother		
	I can be a better support for others if I am in a good place		
	It's important to have some consistent approaches in your lifestyle which ensure your well-being is ok	Fair balance	
	I try to set my own terms		
	It helps to know yourself		
	Setting parameters and limits on my caring for others enables me to care for myself too		
	I've got better at ringfencing my own time		
	I've got better at saying what I want		
	It's got better over time		Fair balance
	It helps that I am organised		
	Feels part of a supportive team	Gets better over time	
	Every Friday the student support team has a cup of		

	tea and a piece of cake and 'off-loads' Working a four-day weeks helps with that balance I work part-time Taking about self-care with teachers It tends to be holidays that you go somewhere to feed your soul I read a book in the evening for 20 minutes to help me fall asleep Little things like going to get a coffee of a morning It doesn't have to be a big gesture I've signed up to a 50K walk I don't work on a Friday and I've been doing three hour walks every Friday	Mechanisms which help balance	
Consider self to have practical wisdom	Yes Yes, I think it's age, being a mother, and being in teaching for so long Definitely Probably to a fault I am quite good at that It's definitely one of my strengths	All but one teacher role model considered themselves practically wise	*Almost all* teacher role models consider themselves to have practical wisdom

	It comes naturally It's common sense to me It's a long running epithet people have had for me Voted "Little Miss Wise" in teacher training It's an impression people are keen to volunteer about me I have a very strong sense of what is right in general Most of the time, if not I know who to ask to help me know I always know the appropriate response, even if I don't know how to fix the particular problem Particularly attuned to perceiving when a situation is e.g., unjust		
	You've got to have intuition Instincts take over It's partly emotional intelligence I am not going to overreact	Intuition and emotion help guide decision making	
	You have to adapt to the situation	Practical wisdom is situation sensitive	

	How you approach things depends on the situation I’m very good at understanding the situation and possible choices It’s not a one size fits all approach Different people have different needs and require different things You need to understand the person Knows what to do in complex situations Knows what to do when there is no rule book Trusts own judgement in complex situations I am able to provide perspective in complex situations I am confident I have done the right thing You have the have the confidence to make a decision and be proactive Sometimes you do need to be judgemental and fight for change In moments of crisis, I need to make a decision	Practical wisdom involves trusting your decision making even in complex situations Practical wisdom requires action, just knowing what to do is not enough	

	I am extremely proactive I help develop mechanisms for others to be proactive I can break things down in a pragmatic way Actions speak louder than words If you know the good and don't do the good, what's the point		
	Practical wisdom stems from childhood role models People have considered me wise since childhood Cultivated through experience Cultivated through different roles Cultivated through the people one encounters in life Part of being a role model is practical wisdom	Practical wisdom develops from childhood and is informed by experience	
	Practical wisdom is a work in progress Can regulate emotions outwardly, inwardly more difficult What is instinctive as a person can conflict with	Practical wisdom is a work in progress, even for the practically wise	

	what is appropriate as a teacher Putting it into action can be trickier No, it's not one of my strengths Good at navigating professional but not emotional situations	One role model did not consider themselves practically wise	
Academic literature on teachers and professors as role models	No Don't have time I don't read I don't have time to read I do not read anything external It's been a long time since I did my PGCE A limited amount Would love to if there were more hours in the day Wish academic had bigger part in professional life, but it for practical reasons it doesn't I would be very interested to read some	Most teachers have not read any of the academic role modelling literature Most teachers would like to read academic literature if they had more time	Limited to no teacher engagement with academic literature on role models

	CPD leaves a lot to be desired I find CPD very boring Most CPD is the equivalent of pop-psychology but for teaching Reading academic literature is not sufficiently embedded in CPD	Some expressed frustration at underwhelming and unchallenging CPD	
	External CPD would be better than in-house In an environment like this where lots of teachers have very academic backgrounds, shame not to get them to engage Academic lit in CPD might get better reception than you think	Many expressed desire for CPD to engage more with academic literature	
	Definitely have Probably because work at university	Teacher educators working at university have engaged with the academic literature on role models	Teacher educators working at universities have engaged with academic literature on role models

Appendix 7: *Supporting Quotations - Global Theme One: Strong moral identity intertwined with professional identity*

> *‘I suppose also part of my personality is that I really believe in what I am doing, I believe in the importance of education, so I am upbeat when I’m teaching, because I genuinely feel what I am doing is useful. I don’t see how you could separate the two really.’ (SRM4)*

> *‘I’ve always thought, right from the beginning, that it’s not just about Geography, it’s about making them into well-rounded students. And every time we have a parents evening, I always say ‘thank you and well done’ to parents where their kids are such wonderful people.’ (SRM5)*

> *‘Within every class there are kids who I matter to, and they gain really important skills, and they gain really important confidence, and so I think it aligns with my values there because I think, over time, I’ve seen it happen in practice. I’ve seen how a teacher can help students become adult and taught them to develop in a really meaningful way.’ (ITTRM5)*

> *‘…for example, had Ukrainian refugees to stay. You know, you don’t want people to slip through the net if you can help them. I mean I think I would like to think I wouldn’t see somebody who needed a hand I could give, and not give it. So, I think it’s all part and parcel of the same thing.’ (ITTRM4)*

> *‘I was quite inspired by her, she was inspirational to listen to about her stories, she was a teacher for –so she was also very experienced as well—so listening to her stories, her experiences, she was very experienced. So just understanding a lot more about teaching through her process, and you know you can learn a lot from her.’ (P4)*

Appendix 8: *Supporting Quotations - Global Theme Two: Practical wisdom (phronesis)*

'Yes definitely. I would say common sense, practical. Because I often look at things and think, for goodness' sake, why has that person done that that way. And they have come out of whatever with whatever degree, actually, and common sense would tell you that would be the wrong thing to do – so I'm definitely in that camp.' (SRM2)

'Yeah, I think I'm quite good at that. I think in my career when I've had different roles, I've had to interact with people who all have different needs and are all very different, and you've got to really just change with the way that you are supporting a variety of different people, you can't do one size fits all for the way you support people, manage people, or check people are ok. Everyone is different, so you have to react to that and you've got to change the way you approach things. Definitely. So, I'd like to think that might be one of my strengths, I think I'm quite good at doing that.' (SRM3)

'You also have to put it into action. I think actions do speak louder than words…if you know the good and you don't do the good, what's the point of it? Especially in a teaching environment, going back to it, if I knew what the right thing to do was, but didn't do it…what's the point.' (SRM6)

Appendix 9: *Supporting Quotations - Global Theme Three: Strong and active relational abilities – they are expert relators and thus relatable*

'I suppose she's always willing to talk to the kids, the office is out the back of one of the classes, and whenever there's a form in there, when she's walking through, they're always like 'oh Miss, Miss, Miss…' and they always stop her for a conversation, and she always engages in a conversation. Like the other day I heard them arguing about what was better Marvel or DC films, and she was giving an opinion on everything and giving them all the time of day. Then eventually she says, 'oh I actually now have to go and do my work', but work was almost a second thought. So that I suppose, giving everyone the time of day, and everyone as much time as they need.' (P6)

'Yeah, she's just so fun, easy to chat to about anything – you know I'll go and moan to her about how rubbish my weekend was…and that's the thing that's good about her, you can chat about school or you could chat about how annoying my mum was when I was at school etc., you just kind of chat about anything.' (P1)

'She was also quite loving in a sense, a maternal kind of sense, saw us, her tutor group, as her kids though that year. She called us the "[ITTRM4] Marvels", so in that sense she was very maternal to us, she was looking after us, so very caring about us.' (P4)
'Then this new headteacher came in, and her approach was way different, it was way more empathetic, way more building a community feel, rather than this sort of authoritarian place for the kids. And you know, some people had their problems with it, which I can understand, but I always saw her as someone who wanted to change the nature of that school in a positive way.' (P7)

'So, I would say, going back to her being a positive role model: understanding and listening. She comes across as someone who is very busy and overworked, but I can knock on her door and say "excuse me do you have a moment" and she'll say "not really, but yes come in". I can tell she's not doing that because I'm annoying her, I know that's not the case, but I know how busy she is and she still takes the time to listen to me and think she's the same with all the pupils as well.' (P4)