

At stake in this disagreement is the possibility to account for a moral agent's responsibility for his actions. Although I believe Dreyfus gets Aristotle right on a descriptive level, I regard his reading of phronesis problematic for marginalizing the crucial notions of *deliberation* and *choice*. Deliberation, as Dreyfus presents it, is a matter of situation-detached reason or rule-application. I argue that this is an unnecessarily rigid notion of deliberation, which motivates Dreyfus to propose a problematic dualism between what he calls ground floor absorbed coping (under which he places phronesis as well), and secondary detached conceptual

introduces to refer to these actions is *ab*

example

as non-conceptual. My aim for the remainder of this paper is to show that this claim of non-conceptuality is incompatible with some of the most important elements of Aristotelian phronesis, namely choice, deliberation, and, tied to this, moral accountability.

Although our initiation into the ethical life is certainly not a matter of following explicitly given reasons for acting, we have to be careful how exactly we define it as 'non-rational'. If non-rational means outside the range of reasons, and therefore inaccessible for critical self-reflection, it seems impossible to hold someone accountable for their habitually acquired ethical outlook.⁵ This is certainly a reading Aristotle wants to avoid, since he holds that "at the beginning the unjust person and the self-indulgent person had the option not to become like that," [NE, 1113b5-b10]

emphasizing the point 

experience. He holds that there is no space for rationality, deliberation and self-awareness in a conceptual story about absorbed coping.¹²

Because rationality, deliberation, reflection and self-awareness are portrayed as the enemies of absorbed coping it seems that, on Dreyfus' account we can only be *either* absorbed in our responding to solicitations *or* taking up a fully detached stance towards the world and our

disposition of character that aims at well-being, and phronesis as the excellence of wisdom

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done, and then choosing a certain path for action. Aristotle writes, for example, “Virtue makes us choose the right end to aim at, but practical wisdom makes us choose the right means.” Or, “the practically wise man should know ... what are the things good for man ... and he should deliberate as to the means by which this may be attained.” The challenge for McDowell is to provide a reading of deliberation and choice that is compatible with phronesis as an immediate situation-specific sensitivity.

In order to make sense of the phronimus' virtuous actions as the culmination of plw

[Ergon], where this function lies in man's logos (roughly reason). As McDowell puts it, eudaimonia is "rational activity in accordance with excellence." And he concludes that this "t

lines: "Doing this is what, here and now, doing well is." Dreyfus wants to avoid this McDowellian view of phronesis because he believes this to be incompatible with our ability to respond unreflectively and immediately to the demands of the situation at hand. But reasons for acting for McDowell don't have to be understood as accompanying our action as an explicit, supplemented thought. On the contrary, our expressions of phronesis can, for McDowell, be described in Dreyfusian terms, that is, as an immediate, pre-reflective response to a solicitation.

understanding of what it means to act well has

"McDowell could counter that, if there is no ego actually acting nor somehow op

internal to all expressions phronesis, rather than a supplement used by the phronimus when things get foggy.

McDowell has helped us show that staying true to this textual evidence does not commit us to the view that phronesis is a matter of detached reflection by means of general concepts or reasons. Instead, when we frame our understanding of deliberation in terms of McDowell's Aristotle, we can hold on to situation-specific responsiveness to the moral demands of the situation, without losing the ability to self-ascribe and reflect on these responses and take responsibility for them. McDowell wants us to thi

Lear, Jonathan, (1988), *Aristotle The Desire to Understand*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988

Cf. Hubert L. Dreyfus, "The Return of the Myth of the Mental," (*Inquiry* 50, No 4, 2007) 373
Cf. John McDowell, *Mind*,

