VIRTUES AND THEIR VICES

Virtues and Their Vices is the only extant contemporary, comprehensive treatment of specific virtues and, where applicable, their competing vices. Each of the essays, written exclusively for this volume, not only locates discussion of that virtue in its historical context, but also advances the discussion and debate concerning the understanding and role of the virtues. Each of the first four sections focuses on a particular, historically important class of virtues: the cardinal virtues, the capital vices (or 'seven deadly sins') and the corrective virtues, intellectual virtues, and the theological virtues. The final section discusses the role virtue theory and the virtues themselves play in a number of disciplines, ranging from theology and political theory to neurobiology and feminism. The treatment of the virtues in this present volume is sensitive to the historical heritage of the virtues, including their theological heritage, without paying undue attention to the historical and theological issues.

Virtues and Their Vices engages contemporary philosophical scholarship as well as relevant scholarship from related disciplines throughout. It is a unique and compelling addition to the philosophical treatment of the virtues as well as their import in a wide spectrum of disciplines.

Virtues and Their Vices

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Introduction

Kevin Timpe and Craig A. Boyd

RESURGENCE OF THE VIRTUES

The recent revival of philosophical work devoted to virtue ethics, and virtue theory more generally, is well documented. Though there is always something rather artificial to drawing temporal and intellectual boundaries of this sort, this resurgence can perhaps be seen as beginning in 1958 with G. E. M. Anscombe's 'Modern Moral Philosophy.'[1] In her article, Anscombe criticizes the dominant deontological and consequentialist approaches to the ethics of her day. One key problem, Anscombe claims, is that they wrongly focus on legalistic notions of obligations and rules. The language these theories employ appeals to an outdated moral context—a context that assumed a divine law-giver as the one who established the order of the world or at least a context that assumed a fairly stable human nature. She suggests that ethics would benefit from an adequate moral psychology, such as that found in ancient Greek ethics where one can 'look for "norms" in human virtues':

> [J]ust as *man* has so many teeth, which is certainly not the average number of teeth men have, but is the number of teeth for the species, so perhaps the species *man*, regarded not just biologically, but from the point of view of the activity of thought and choice in regard to the various departments of life—powers and faculties and use of things needed—'has' such-and-such virtues: and this 'man' with the complete set of virtues is the 'norm', as 'man' with, e.g., a complete set of teeth is a norm. But in *this* sense 'norm' has ceased to be roughly equivalent to 'law'.[2]

[1] Anscombe (1958). Speaking of the impact of Anscombe's article on contemporary philosophical reflection on the virtues, Crisp and Slote write that 'Anscombe's article anticipates much of the recent development of virtue ethics in large part through having *influenced* that development. But many present-day ethicists—including both defenders and opponents of virtue ethics—would question some of Anscombe's main assumptions in "Modern Moral Philosophy."' (Crisp and Slote (1997), 4).

[2] Anscombe (1958), 14f.

According to Anscombe, only a return to a virtue approach to ethics and the notions of human flourishing and well-being that underscore such an approach will be able to provide for the future flourishing of ethics.[3]

Anscombe's article didn't initially receive much attention. However, in the coming decades her critique of modern ethics would be continued, among other places, in the work of Philippa Foot and Alasdair MacIntyre. Foot begins her article 'Virtues and Vices' with a criticism of the modern ethical landscape that is reminiscent of Anscombe:

> For many years the subject of the virtues and vices was strangely neglected by moralists working within the school of analytic philosophy. The tacitly accepted opinion was that study of the topic would form no part of the fundamental work of ethics. . . . During the past few decades several philosophers have turned their attention to the subject.[4]

Foot then goes on to express the linguistic difficulty that such a rapprochement would face, which she describes as

> a lack of coincidence between their terminology and our own. For when we talk about the virtues we are not taking as our subject everything to which Aristotle gave the name *aretē* or Aquinas *virtus*, and consequently not everything called a virtue in translations of these authors. 'The virtues' to us are the moral virtues whereas *aretē* and *virtus* refer also to arts, and even to excellences of the speculative intellect whose domain is theory rather than practice.[5]

As shall become clear below, this volume's approach to the virtues is broad, including not only the moral virtues but also (following Aristotle, among others) intellectual virtues and (following Aquinas, among others) theological virtues.

MacIntyre's influential book *After Virtue* examines the historical roots of thinking about virtue, diagnoses the reasons for its absence from the majority of contemporary moral theorizing, and offers a proposal for its recovery. In this work, he asks his audience to

> Imagine that the natural sciences were to suffer the effects of a catastrophe. A series of environmental disasters are blamed by the general public on the scientists. Widespread riots occur, laboratories are burnt down, physicists are lynched, books and instruments destroyed. Finally a Know-Nothing political movement takes power and successfully abolishes science teaching in schools

[3] A number of the main critiques Anscombe gives in 'Modern Moral Philosophy' were anticipated in Schopenhauer (1841). Robert Adams notes that it is a 'curious feature of Anscombe's paper that at the substantive, as distinct from the metaethical level, she seems much more concerned with the ethics of actions than the ethics of traits of character. Concepts of virtue are to provide the terminology of moral assessment, but it is *actions* that she seems absorbingly interested in identifying as "untruthful," "unchaste," or "unjust"' (Adams 2006, 5). He also raises a similar criticism regarding MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, which we discuss below.

[4] Foot (1997), 163. [5] Foot (1997), 164.

> and universities, imprisoning and executing the remaining scientists. Later still, there is a reaction against this destructive movement and enlightened people seek to revive science, although they have largely forgotten what it was. But all they possess are fragments: a knowledge of experiments detached from any knowledge of the theoretical context which gave them significance.[6]

This dystopia is a world in which scientific terms have been radically altered from their original context even though they appear to function in a scientific way. People think that they are engaged in the practices of the sciences. But since they have no coherent method to form their practices what they do is more closely related to alchemy rather than genuine science. In a similar way, the language of ethics, devoid of a coherent narrative of its practices as grounded in moral psychology and the virtues, devolves into a series of incommensurable language games. But MacIntyre was not advocating a return to the virtue ethics of a previous era, for both the concepts of narrative unity and practice have been lost.[7] Those 'practices' are what primarily constitute specific virtues.

In subsequent years, much of what Anscombe and Foot advocated for has come to pass, and virtue theory has seen a resurgence. But this trend has also been shaped by MacIntyre's vision regarding the loss of narrative unity. Our aim in this work is both to document this trend and to contribute to it. Merely parroting the work of Aristotle, Aquinas, or some other historically important figure in virtue ethics does not advance research. In this volume, like MacIntyre we aim not to be slavishly beholden to the past. However, unlike some recent books on virtue (you will hopefully forgive us if we fail to name names), it is equally problematic to write on the virtues as if they have no historical context. The treatment of the virtues in the subsequent chapters aims to be sensitive to the historical heritage of the virtues, including their theological heritage, without being beholden to this tradition. In what follows, we intentionally engage contemporary philosophical scholarship as well as relevant scholarship from related disciplines.

Contemporary Reflection on the Virtues

Largely as a result of the above developments, contemporary work on virtue and virtue ethics more broadly is flourishing. It is, as David Solomon recently put it, 'an embarrassment of riches.'[8] But it would be wrong to describe contemporary philosophical reflection on the virtues as monolithic. It's simply not the case that there is a single, unified account of virtue theory, or even the nature of the virtues themselves. Although there is a strong tradition of

[6] MacIntyre (1981), 3. [7] MacIntyre (1981), 226. [8] D. Solomon (2003), 58.

reflection on the virtues running from Plato and Aristotle through Augustine and Aquinas down to contemporary thinkers such as Anscombe, Foot, and MacIntyre, even within this tradition there is an on-going conversation about the exact content and extent of that account. Furthermore, philosophical reflection on the virtues isn't restricted to this tradition. Christian Miller notes this breadth in his recent *The Philosophy and Psychology of Moral Character*:

> Virtue ethical positions take the virtues to be among the central ethical concepts and typically use them to ground an account of morally right actions. But even consequentialists, Kantians, moral pluralists, and advocates of other competing views have realized the importance that the virtues should play in their overall normative ethical theories, even if it is not at the foundational or grounding level.[9]

Nancy Sherman's *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue*, for instance, explores Kant's ethical writings on the virtues, with an eye towards how his thought depends on ancient philosophy, including Aristotle but most notable the Stoics. As she notes there, 'Kant was self-aware of his historical predecessors and in sympathy with important parts of the ancient tradition of virtue. His own distinctive contributions cannot be underestimated, but by his own telling, the account of virtues [he develops] owes clear debts to "the ancient moral philosophers, who pretty well exhausted all that can be said upon virtue".'[10] Other voices contributing to reflection on the virtues include John Stuart Mill and select other consequentialists,[11] Humeans and other sentimentalists,[12] and even iconoclasts such as Nietzsche.[13] All of these voices—to some extent—represent the language of virtue.

According to David Solomon, even within virtue ethics there are 'disagreements that are as deep, and sometimes as divisive, as those that arise across normative theories.'[14] For example, many virtue ethicists seek to follow Aristotle quite closely, while Rosalind Hursthouse's *On Virtue Ethics* is a neo-Aristotelian approach and Julia Annas' *The Morality of Happiness* draws more on the Stoics. Solomon outlines two divergent ways one might pursue virtue ethics, which he characterizes as 'routine' and 'radical.'[15] Routine virtue ethics sees the revival of virtue in contemporary ethics as being fairly continuous with much of nineteenth and twentieth century analytic ethics. It emphasizes 'the virtues while working comfortably within the conventions of contemporary

[9] Miller (2013), 23. [10] Sherman (1997), 3.

[11] Mill's account of the virtues is developed in Semmel (1984). See also Kagan (1989) and Driver (2001).

[12] See, for instance, Dees (1997) and Taylor (2002).

[13] Here see Hunt (1991) and R. Solomon (2001). [14] D. Solomon (2003), 58.

[15] Hookway suggests that a similar difference between the routine and the radical can be found in virtue epistemology as well; see Hookway (2003), 185.

ethical theory.'[16] In contrast, radical virtue ethics involves a much greater break with most of nineteenth and twentieth century analytic ethics. 'Here the question is not how to locate the concept of virtue within the local economy of practical life, but rather how to accommodate certain fundamental commitments of classical ethical theory within the relatively restricted—and restricting—agenda of modern moral philosophy. . . . [On this second approach] there is a much grander conflict between the ambitions and agenda of modern ethics—and its classical opponents.'[17] What marks an approach to virtue as routine, according to Solomon, is that it 'attempt[s] to reduce the difference between an ethics of virtue and its contemporary alternatives to a single, crucial issue—the place of the notion of virtue in the overall justificatory structure of a theory.'[18] As examples of such approaches, he mentions those modern neo-Kantian and consequentialist theories—some of which were mentioned above—which attempt to accommodate the virtues within a preexisting normative system. On such approaches, 'virtue has been invited into the house of contemporary normative theory, but told to stay in its place—typically some subordinate or secondary place within the overall structure of the theory.'[19] Despite this contrast, Solomon also points out that one can conceive of a spectrum of approaches to virtue ethics, some of which are more routine or radical than others, and some of which may be intermediate between the two.

The essays that follow illustrate the multiplicity of approaches to virtue mentioned above. Short of imposing a single tradition on all the essays (which, we think, would lead to a narrower and less interesting work), we do not see a way of eliminating this diversity from the volume. As a result, the essays that follow contain a range of considerations and assumptions about the best way to approach the virtues. Despite this breadth, however, the main thrust of the majority of the essays is best understood as working within the general tradition beginning with Aristotle, continuing through Aquinas and any number of other medieval philosophers and theologians, and represented in contemporary philosophy by Anscombe, Foot, MacIntyre, and Solomon, among others. We want it to be clear that in this volume we neither develop nor presuppose a particular account of virtue ethics. A crucial reason for this is that the present volume focuses more on particular virtues than virtue theory in general. But even here, it is not our aim to develop a theory of the nature of

[16] D. Solomon (2003), 66. For this reason, Solomon is willing to include 'routine virtue ethics' to include those deontologists and consequentialists who seek to find a place for virtue within their own theories. At other times in this article, however, Solomon seems to exclude this approach from the umbrella of 'routine' approaches, instead seeing it as a third approach altogether.

[17] D. Solomon (2003), 76–7. [18] D. Solomon (2003), 69.

[19] D. Solomon (2003), 70. In addition to using the language of such approaches 'subordinating' virtue to their normative frameworks, he also describes these views as 'condescending to the virtues.'

the virtues.[20] Instead, our primary aim in this collection has been to bring together treatments of particular virtues and, in many cases, the primary vices opposed to them.

The Nature of the Virtues

As mentioned above, it is not the case that all work on the virtues and vices reflects a single account of what they are. Aristotle's discussion of moral character, and virtue in particular, is the historically most influential treatment of such issues. For this reason, his discussion will be used as a beginning point. The Greek word used by Aristotle and most commonly translated as virtue is *aretē*, which is perhaps better translated as 'goodness' or 'excellence.'[21] In general, an excellence is a quality that makes an individual a good member of its kind. For example, it is an excellence of an axe if it is able to cut wood efficiently and effectively. An excellence, therefore, is a property whereby its possessor operates well or fulfills its function. Aristotle, for instance, sometimes speaks of a good moral character as 'human excellence' or an 'excellence of soul' (*Nicomachean Ethics* I.13). The idea here is the same as with the axe—having a good moral character helps its possessor operate well and live up to her potential, thereby fulfilling her nature.

Those approaches to the virtues that are heavily indebted to Aristotle's conception have been referred to as 'the Traditional View of Moral Character,' or the *Traditional View* for short.[22] Different theories within the Traditional View will, of course, fill out the details in diverse ways. So it will be helpful to think of the Traditional View as a family of similar and related views, rather than a fully developed and determinate view itself. Despite this variation, the Traditional View holds that virtues are relatively stable, fixed, and reliable dispositions of action and affect that ought to be rationally informed. Since virtues are relatively stable and reliable dispositions, they should be reasonably good predictors over time of an agent's behavior if that agent is in a trait-relevant situation. This does not mean, however, that such traits must be exceptionless. For example, a single case of dishonesty need not mean that an individual lacks a generally honest character. Thus, the dispositions should be understood as involving a particular level of probability. Furthermore, while such traits are malleable—individuals can change their moral character over time—such changes are usually not immediate, taking both time and effort.

[20] For two recent worthwhile attempts to construct a theory of virtue, see Annas (2011) and Adams (2006). More on their views in 'The Nature of the Virtues.'

[21] The term '*aretaic*' ethics has become more popular recently because it is a translation from the Greek for 'excellence.' The English word 'virtue' comes from the Latin '*vir*' and means 'manly.' Some object to this on the grounds of a kind of linguistic gender exclusion.

[22] See Timpe (2008).

Moral character traits are not just dispositions to engage in certain outward behaviors; they can also be dispositions to have certain emotions or affections. For example, justice is often understood as the disposition to treat others as they are due, while courage is the disposition to feel the appropriate amount of fear called for by a situation. But in both cases one should feel the appropriate kind of emotion (e.g. fear or anger) to the appropriate degree. Additionally, insofar as they are dispositions, an individual can have a particular virtue and not currently be manifesting trait-relevant behavior or affect. An individual may be generous in her giving to charity, even if she is not engaged presently in any charitable action. Finally, in order for a moral character trait to be a virtue, it must not only be in accord with the relevant moral norms, but the disposition must also be informed by proper reasoning about the matter at hand. This is so because the virtues are excellences of character insofar as they are the best exercise of reason. This connection between practical reasoning and the other virtues is one that comes up repeatedly in the pages that follow.

Proponents of the Traditional View also tend to endorse three further claims about the virtues: the Robustness Claim, the Stability Claim, and the Interconnection Claim.[23] The first two are claims about the nature of the virtues, while the third is a claim about the relationship among the virtues within a particular individual. According to the Robustness Claim, an individual with a particular virtue will exhibit trait-relevant behavior across a broad spectrum of trait-relevant situations. It is for this reason that virtues are said to be 'robust' traits. Given that the virtues, as mentioned above, need not be exceptionless, a single counter-instance doesn't rule out an individual's possession of a particular trait and doesn't contradict the Robustness Claim. According to the Stability Claim, moral character traits are relatively stable over time. The Stability Claim doesn't preclude the possibility of an individual changing his moral character over time. Rather, it holds that such changes take time. A soldier who has courageously proven himself in battle situations over the course of numerous years will not cease to be courageous overnight. If the soldier does act non-courageously in a particular battle, the Stability Claim suggests that we should still think of the soldier as possessing the virtue of courage unless the soldier behaves non-courageously for a significant period of time. Finally, according to the Interconnection Claim there is a probabilistic correlation between having one virtue and having other virtues. We explore this aspect of the Traditional View in greater detail in the next section.

Even within those who endorse a version of the Traditional View, there are often important differences between exactly how the virtues are understood. As evidence of this variety, consider what we think are two of the leading

[23] All three of these claims find support in Gordon Allport's work on the 'psychology of virtue.' See, for instance, Allport (1960).

accounts of virtue, those developed and defended by Julia Annas and Robert Adams. A virtue, for Annas, is an active, developing, persisting, and reliable disposition to act, feel, or respond in certain ways. These dispositions are 'deep' and 'characteristic' features of the person—'that is, the virtuous (or vicious) person is acting in and from character. . . . A virtue is a disposition which is central to the person, to whom he or she is, a way we standardly think of character.'[24] According to Annas, what is distinctive about her account of virtue are two ideas:

> One is that exercising a virtue involves practical reasoning of a kind that can illuminatingly be compared to the kind of reasoning we find in someone exercising a practical skill. . . . The other idea is that virtue is part of the agent's happiness or flourishing, and that it is plausible to see virtue as actively constituting (wholly or in part) that happiness.[25]

Many of these aspects of Annas' account can also be found in other neo-Aristotelian approaches.

In contrast, Adams' account is decidedly less Aristotelian. He defines a moral virtue as a 'persisting excellence in being for the good. . . . A virtuous person, a morally good person, will of course be for good things and against bad things—and not in just any way, but excellently.'[26] Furthermore, he understands being for the good to involve a disposition to favor the good in action, desire, emotion, and feeling. While the central idea that a virtue is a disposition towards excellence is one which 'has never been seriously questioned,'[27] Adams understands the excellence in question quite differently than does Annas. One difference is that, unlike Annas, he doesn't define a virtue in terms of its being instrumental in promoting human flourishing or happiness. His is an 'excellence-based theory,' according to which the virtues are worth having primarily for their own sake. Although he doesn't deny that a virtue can contribute to flourishing or well-being, virtue is not to be measured by the level of flourishing or well-being achieved. In fact, he defines what it means for something to be an excellence in terms of intrinsic value: 'excellence is the objective and non-instrumental goodness of that which is worthy to be honored, loved, admired, or (in the extreme case) worshiped, for its own sake.'[28] Second, Adams also rejects the unifying role of practical wisdom among the virtues. (More on this issue in the next section.) A third difference between their accounts illustrates another point of contention among virtue ethicists: Annas seeks to develop her theory of virtue in a way that is largely

[24] Annas (2011), 9. [25] Annas (2011), 1.
[26] Adams (2006), 15. [27] Zagzebski (1996), 85.
[28] Adams (2006), 24. The reader should also keep in mind that Adams differentiates the 'ethics of virtue' from 'virtue ethics.' The latter attempts to reduce the conception of rightness (or obligation) to goodness as involving virtue; he intends his work only to be the former. See Adams (2006), 6.

independent from a theory of human nature, and Adams is less optimistic that this can be done.

It is not our goal in this section to adjudicate between these (or any) conceptions of what a virtue *is*; nor have we imposed a single understanding on the chapters which follow. But it is important to keep in mind that exactly *how* a person understands the nature of a virtue will have an impact on not only what virtues she thinks there are, but how individual virtues should best be understood.

The Interconnection of the Virtues

Most virtue theorists have thought that there is a connection between having one virtue and having others. The strongest form of this connection is the unity of the virtues thesis, sometimes also called the 'identity of the virtues thesis,'[29] which holds that all of the apparently different virtues are really just one single thing overarching virtue. Plato is sometimes interpreted as endorsing the unity of the virtues in the *Protagoras*, where the single virtue is 'knowledge of good and evil.'[30] Gary Watson writes that 'nowadays the unity thesis is mostly ridiculed or ignored.'[31] Not only does this thesis conflate the plausible distinction between the moral and the intellectual virtues, it just seems implausible on empirical grounds. For one, it would rule out cases of weakness of will where the agent has the relevant practical wisdom about what should be done yet fails to do it. Second, it appears to many that an individual could have the virtue of, say, temperance, while not also having the virtue of magnanimity.[32] Peter Geach thinks the unity thesis is obviously problematic for this kind of reason:

> if a man is manifestly affected with one vice, then any virtue he may seem to have is only spurious, and really he is vicious in this respect too. . . . The world would present a very terrible aspect if we had to think that any-one who is morally faulty by reason of one habitual grave defect must be totally devoid of virtue; that any virtues such faulty people seem to have are worthless; that any-one who is morally faulty by reason of one habitual grave defect must be totally devoid of virtue; that any virtues such faulty people seem to have are worthless shams.[33]

[29] See Devereux (2006), 325.

[30] See, for instance, Penner (1973). For a different interpretation, see Vlastos (1972) and Kremm (2009). Plato's discussion of the cardinal virtues in the *Republic*, however, seems to be in conflict with the unity of the virtues thesis.

[31] Watson (1984), 57.

[32] For an argument for the rejection of the unity of the virtues thesis, see Adams (2006), 172–5.

[33] Geach (1969), 163.

A slightly weaker claim than the unity of the virtues thesis is the reciprocity thesis; according to this thesis, while there are multiple virtues, they come as a necessary package.[34] Raymond Devettere, for example, endorses this view:

> If you have one virtue, you have them all. . . . Virtues cannot be separated—a person lacking the virtue of temperance also lacks the virtues of justice, love, and so forth. At first, this thesis appears counterintuitive, but once the central role of practical wisdom in each and every moral virtue is understood, the unity of the virtues emerges as inevitable.[35]

But even here, one might think this is too strong, for it certainly seems possible that a particular individual could be temperate in her desires but not courageous. One might even think that the having of one virtue, such as magnanimity, might in fact disincline an individual toward having another virtue, such as humility. Though we don't have the space to pursue adequately these worries here, these concerns over the unity of the virtues and reciprocity theses seem fundamentally right to us.

One could reject the reciprocity thesis and yet still think that the virtues are interconnected. Julia Annas, for example, gives the following reason to think the virtues are interconnected:

> Another important indication of the nature of virtue comes from the point that we can't teach the virtues in isolation, one by one, since they can't be learned that way. Generosity gives us a good example here. A child doesn't learn to be generous by just giving her things away, or sharing things whether they belong to her or not. Generosity involves considerations of fairness and justice. For, as Aristotle points out, generosity requires taking from the right sources as well as giving to the right people in the right way. And 'giving in the right way' involves a great deal. Giving a gift which is indifferent to what the recipient wants is not generous. Generosity requires intelligence about what people both need and want, and also about appropriate ways, times, and manners of giving, avoiding obtrusiveness and condescension. Generosity thus requires, at the least, benevolence, a real interest in other people, their needs, and their wants.[36]

Annas raises another reason to think that the vices are interconnected, this one built on the role of practical wisdom. Annas thinks that it is obvious that practical wisdom is unified over a person's entire moral life; there are not independent practical wisdoms each of which governs a distinct virtue or

[34] Adams refers to this as 'the *mutual entailment* of the virtues' (2006), 171 and Devereux calls it 'the inseparability view' (2006) 325.

[35] Devettere (2002), 64. See also McDowell (1979).

[36] Annas (2011), 84. To be clear, Annas herself thinks these considerations favor the reciprocity thesis, as is made clear by the context of the quotation. Adams rejects even this unifying notion of practical wisdom in his (2006), 184–9. MacIntyre (1999) seems to subscribe to a version similar to Annas when he claims that in order for us to find another person 'trustworthy' there are a number of qualities that converge for us to make such a judgment.

virtue cluster. Such a view would, she writes, fail to 'produce an integrated view of the values in a person's life as a whole.'[37] Gary Watson, on the other hand, thinks that the sensitivity that comes from practical wisdom only establishes a weak interconnection among the virtues: 'if you have any virtue, you will have some sensitivity for considerations relevant to the others—you will have, in one sense, all the virtues "to some degree."'[38] This unifying role of prudence, in either the stronger version endorsed by Annas or the weaker endorsed by Watson, is explored in a number of chapters in this volume.[39]

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO THE VIRTUES

Not only is there disagreement with the Traditional View about how best the virtues and the relationship between them should be understood, but there is also significant disagreement about whether or not the Traditional View is even on the right track. One major source of criticism is motivated by the idea that normative ethics ought to be constrained by the best currently available psychological data. According to this view, theories of moral character ought to be constrained in certain regards by what social and cognitive psychology tells us moral agents are actually like. And recent empirical work suggests that agents lack the kind of robust moral character at the heart of the Traditional View. In this section, we lay out this challenge and indicated possible avenues of response to the challenge. We certainly do not take the brief treatment here to be exhaustive, but rather to simply raise criticisms to what seems to be the historically dominant way of understanding the virtues.

Recently, a number of philosophers and social scientists have begun to question the very presuppositions that robust theories of moral character and moral character traits are based on; their concern is that it rests on an empirically inadequate view of human agents. The following quotation by John Doris captures this concern:

> I regard this renaissance of virtue with concern. Like many others, I find the lore of virtue deeply compelling, yet I cannot help noticing that much of this lore rests on psychological theory that is some 2,500 years old. A theory is not bad simply because it is old, but in this case developments of more recent vintage suggest that the old ideas are in trouble. In particular, modern experimental psychology has

[37] Annas (2011), 88. Annas argues, for this kind of consideration, for a 'filter test' which would enable us to differentiate 'traits which may well be admirable, popular, valued, and more, but which are not virtues' (97). The idea here is that, given her view of the interconnection of the virtues, one can decide whether or not X is a virtue or merely otherwise admirable trait by evaluating whether one could have the clear virtues without having X or vice versa.

[38] Watson (1984), 60.

[39] See, for instance, the chapters by Wood and Boyd in this volume.

> discovered that circumstance has surprisingly more to do with how people behave than traditional images of character and virtue allow.[40]

This criticism of the Traditional View began with *attributionism*, a branch of psychology that seeks to differentiate what is rightly attributable to an individual's character from what is rightly attributable to outside features. Much of attribution theory attributes a significantly higher proportion of the causal basis of behavior to external factors and less to moral character than traditionally thought. According to such theorists, most individuals overestimate the role of dispositional factors such as moral character in explaining an individual's behavior, and underestimate the role the situation plays in explaining an agent's behavior. Gilbert Harmon expresses this idea as follows:

> In trying to characterize and explain a distinctive action, ordinary thinking tends to hypothesize a corresponding distinctive characteristic of the agent and tends to overlook the relevant details of the agent's perceived situation. . . . Ordinary attributions of character traits to people are often deeply misguided and it may even be the case that there . . . [are] no ordinary traits of the sort people think there are.[41]

Philosophers such as Doris and Harman have used this work in the social sciences to develop an alternative approach to moral character, commonly known as 'Situationism.'

Like the Traditional View, Situationism can be understood as comprised of three central claims:

1. *Non-robustness Claim*: moral character traits are not robust—that is, they are not consistent across a wide spectrum of trait-relevant situations. Whatever moral character traits an individual has are situation-specific.
2. *Consistency Claim*: although a person's moral character traits are relatively stable over time, this should be understood as consistency of situation specific traits, rather than robust traits.
3. *Fragmentation Claim*: a person's moral character traits lack a strong correlation between having a particular virtue (or vice) and having others. There may be considerable disunity in a person's moral character among her situation-specific character traits.

Thus, Situationism rejects the first and third claims of the Traditional View, and embraces only a modified version of the second claim. According to Situationists, the empirical evidence favors their view of moral character over the Traditional View. To cite just one early example, Hartshorne and May's study of the trait of honesty among school children found no cross-

[40] Doris (2002), ix. [41] Harman (1999), 315f.

situational correlation. A child may be consistently honest with his friends, but not with his parents or teachers. From this and other studies, Hartshorne and May concluded that character traits are not robust but rather 'specific functions of life situations.'[42] Other studies further call into question the Integrity Claim of the Traditional View.

Some virtue theorists have responded to the challenge of Situationism.[43] Some claim, for instance, that the attempt to base the normative claims of any theory—whether it be a form of virtue ethics or not—runs the risk of illicitly moving from 'is' to 'ought.' That is, simply because studies may—or may not—indicate the relative consistency of character traits in different contexts, it does not follow that the theory itself is in question. The transition from fact to value cannot be made by a simple appeal to 'empirical considerations.' Others think that the empirical evidence doesn't actually show that the virtues, as traditionally conceived, don't exist. Robert Adams, for example, writes that while 'this evidence . . . is significant for moral psychology, . . . it does not show that there are not actually any virtues.'[44] Others agree that the traditional understanding of virtue ought to be modified in light of the empirical evidence, but not to the degree that Situationists claim.

This is, of course, nothing more than a quick summary of a growing exchange between social psychology and virtue ethics. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that if the virtues are to be examples of human excellence, a proper understanding of them ought to take into consideration all the relevant human sciences.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF VIRTUES AND VICES

The previous sections intend to, among other things, motivate the normative focus on the virtues and vices, despite the various permutations that such a focus can take. But even if one accepts the general constraints of what we've been calling 'a virtue-approach to ethics,' that by itself does little to give content to what the virtues that an individual should be pursuing are, nor how they are to be understood. There are a number of different ways that virtues and their corresponding vices can be classified. In what follows, we consider the historically most common and influential classifications of virtues. Sections I through IV each focus on one class of virtues: the cardinal virtues, the virtues opposed to the capital vices, a number of epistemic virtues,

[42] Hartshorne and May (1928), 379f.

[43] See, for instance, Merritt (2000), Sreenivasan (2002), Miller (2003), Kamtekar (2004), and Webber (2006).

[44] Adams (2006), 12.

and the theological virtues. Within each of these sections, the various contributors not only discuss the nature of the virtue in question, but also address some of the vices opposing those virtues. Section V deals not with particular virtues and vices, but instead considers some of the ways that reflection on the virtue extends beyond ethics to other related disciplines. As with the earlier sections, our goal in this final section isn't to develop a unified account of virtue ethics or theory of virtue; rather, our aim is to make it clear how treatment of particular virtues impacts not only moral theory, but a wide range of related disciplines.

The Cardinal Virtues

The first section of the volume is dedicated to the cardinal virtues. The list of virtues that have come to be known as 'cardinal virtues' goes back at least as far as Plato. In the *Laws*, for example, Plato writes that 'Wisdom is the chief and leader [of the virtues]: next follows temperance; and from the union of these two with courage springs justice.'[45] And the discussion of the good soul in the *Republic* also contains an extended discussion of these four virtues.[46] Here, Plato famously thinks that the virtues in individuals have their parallel in the well-ordered city: 'There will be more justice in the larger thing, and it will be easier to discern. So, if you are willing, let's first find out what sort of thing justice is in cities, and afterward look for it in the individual.'[47] So Plato also thinks that the good city is one that must be wise, courageous, temperate, and just.[48] Although Aristotle retains all the virtues on Plato's list of cardinal virtues, he doesn't single out these virtues as distinct from the other virtues, and places prudence, as an intellectual virtue, as the chief among them. The first use of the term 'cardinal' to refer to these four virtues appears to be found in the fourth century AD in the writings of St. Ambrose: '*Hic quattuor velut virtutes amplexus est cardinales*.'[49] In Latin, *cardo* means 'hinge' or 'that on which a thing turns' as its principal point. The cardinal virtues soon came to be understood as the main virtues under which all the other virtues can be subsumed.[50] Aquinas, for instance, described the cardinal virtues as the 'chief' virtues, indicating that they 'especially claim for themselves what commonly belongs to all virtues.'[51] These four virtues thus contain the common qualities

[45] *Laws* I. 631.

[46] Interestingly enough, in *Protagoras*, Plato adds another virtue to prudence, temperance, courage, and justice: piety (or holiness); see 330b.

[47] *Republic*, 368e–369b.

[48] *Republic*, 427e.

[49] Rickaby (1908). See also Ambrose (2001), 133.

[50] That is, the intellectual and moral virtues. The theological virtues are usually taken to be distinct insofar as they are infused by God, rather than acquired. See the relevant section below.

[51] *ST* II-II 123.11, as quoted in Regan (2005), 111.

of all other moral virtues. According to Aquinas, since each of the cardinal virtues perfects one of the various capacities of the soul (i.e. the intellect, the will or intellectual appetite, the concupiscible appetite, and the irascible appetite), each of the other virtues can be subsumed under one of these four.[52]

The volume begins with W. Jay Wood's 'Prudence,' which is not only an excellent introduction to the foremost of the cardinal virtues, but also illustrates a number of key themes the reader will find throughout the rest of the volume: (a) how a particular account of a virtue will be tied to a larger theory about what the virtues are and, in many cases, an account of the human good; and (b) the close connection between the moral and intellectual virtues. Regarding the first of these two issues, Wood approaches prudence primarily through Aristotelian and Thomistic traditions, exploring ways in which the theological framework of the latter is responsible for places where Thomas disagrees with the Philosopher about the nature of prudence. For both of them, prudence is practical wisdom about what is to be done, directing one to the excellent human life, even though they disagree about the exact form that the excellent human life takes. Prudence is defective when it is inconsistent with genuine human flourishing. Regarding (b), Wood shows how, for both Aristotle and Aquinas, while the moral virtues are not identical with intellectual virtues, they must be joined with, and informed by, prudence. The moral virtues cannot properly aim the individual at their objects without the individual knowing, via prudence, what those objects are. But intellectual virtues such as prudence are also informed and shaped by properly tuned desires, emotions, and the will. In the discussion of the connection between the moral and intellectual virtues, Wood also shows how moral vices can lead to intellectual vices opposed to prudence, such as cunning, cleverness, and negligence.

The second essay is David Schmidtz's and John Thrasher's 'The Virtues of Justice.' Schmidtz and Thrasher do not attempt to delineate necessary and sufficient conditions for the virtue of justice, in part because they think that justice can be understood in a number of different ways: as a virtue of individuals and as a feature of social institutions. They reject Plato's claim from the *Republic* that justice in a *polis* is simply justice in the individual 'writ large'; they do, however, think that the two conceptions of justice are closely related in at least two ways. First, the just individual will want to be a contributing part to a just *polis*. But Schmidtz and Thrasher argue that the two are also related in the other direction as well: a just *polis* will be one which helps to produce just individuals. Thus, while not endorsing the identity between individual and communal justice that marks Plato's view, they also reject those modern views which seek to divorce the two conceptions of justice

[52] See, for example, Aquinas (2005).

from each other. In this regard, they argue for a third related conception of justice that helps to bridge the gap between the two other conceptions, insofar as the goodness of 'mere' justice as primarily a negative virtue can be in the good of the community.

Daniel McInerny's 'Fortitude and the Conflict of Frameworks' considers the cardinal virtue of fortitude, or courage, from a variety of perspectives. His ultimate purpose in doing so is to discover the conceptual connections that hold between these perspectives in order to discern from them the truth about the nature of courage. The first of the three accounts of courage that he explores is the ancient conception of courage associated with the warrior. While one can find this account in numerous places, McInerny takes *Beowulf* as his paradigmatic expression. The second account of courage he examines is that found in Thomas Aquinas, according to which fortitude is the disposition which 'binds the will firmly to the good of reason in face of the greatest evils: because he that stands firm against great things, will in consequence stand firm against less things.'[53] McInerny thinks that fortitude involves not only the disposition to endure evil, but that it 'likewise demands that we *attack* evils well, that is with moderation, in order to win safety for the future. Thus again, fortitude has to do both with restraining fear and moderating acts of daring.'[54] For Aquinas, fortitude thus has four integral parts: patience and perseverance when it comes to enduring evil, and magnanimity and magnificence when it comes to attacking it. Furthermore, Aquinas understands the ultimate act of fortitude to be not a soldier's death on the battlefield, but rather martyrdom. The third conception of fortitude is found in Western modernity; Alasdair MacIntyre has famously argued that it is characterized by the abandonment of natural teleology. Deprived of a natural *telos*, which is integral to the two previous conceptions, courage becomes reduced to a quest for authenticity. We find this quest, McInerny suggests, vividly portrayed in Steve Jobs' 2005 Stanford University commencement address. Drawing on the work of MacIntyre as providing a way of comparing competing frameworks, McInerny ends by exploring comparative strengths and weaknesses of these three approaches.

Robert Roberts' chapter on temperance concludes the section on the cardinal virtues. Loosely following Aristotle's treatment of *sôphroneô* in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Roberts takes temperance to be the virtue which governs the appetites for food, drink, or sexual activity insofar as they are governed by right reason. He shows how, given its connection to the flourishing of the individual, an account of temperance needs to presuppose a conception of human physical health, even though he does not wed his treatment of temperance to any particular conception of human physical health. He then goes on

[53] *ST* II-II.123.4. [54] This volume, page 84.

to show how it is possible to train the physical appetites involved in temperance so that they can come to be controlled by right reason. With an account of the virtue in hand, he then focuses his attention on the vice of intemperance, differentiating it from the modern concept of an addiction. He ends by showing temperance's close connection with other virtues—not only prudence, but justice as well. Roberts' essay thus represents an excellent model of the interconnection of the virtues we discussed earlier in this introduction.

The Capital Vices and the Corrective Virtues

A capital vice is a vice which directs a person towards an end and encourages the development of other vices in a person to achieve that end.[55] Rebecca DeYoung's *Glittering Vices* serves as an excellent introduction to the capital vices, including the history of this particular grouping of vices. DeYoung's book recounts how the reflection on the capital vices and their corresponding virtues originated in the Christian monastic tradition and developed into a central element of medieval Christian ethics and spiritual formation. The list appears to have originated with Evagrius on Pontus (346–399 AD). Cassian, one of Evagrius' pupils, treated the vices more systematically than did his teacher and referred to them as '*principia vitia*,' highlighting their ability to serve as the source of other offspring vices: 'There are eight principle faults which attack mankind; viz. first *gastrimargia*, which means gluttony, second fornication, thirdly *philargyria*, i.e. avarice or the love of money, fourthly anger, fifthly dejection, sixthly *acedia*, i.e. listlessness or low spirits, seventhly *cenodoxia*, i.e. boasting or vain glory, and eighthly pride.'[56] Gregory the Great's treatment in the sixth century pared the list down to seven, replacing dejection with envy, and treating pride as the root of the other seven. Gregory describes the capital vices' relationship to pride as follows:

> Pride is the commander of the army of the devil, and its offspring are the seven principle vices. All the vices that assail us are invisible soldiers against us in a battle of pride which rules over them; of these, some precede as leaders, others typically follow as the army. For not all vices take possession of the heart with equal effect. Rather, after a few great faults enter a neglected soul, countless lesser vices pour into the soul in waves. For pride itself is the queen of the vices, which, once it has completely seized and vanquished the soul, hands the battle over to the seven principle vices, as to its commanders. After these leaders of the army

[55] Some vices, e.g. gluttony, do not simply encourage the development of other vices, but produce other vices as effects of achieving their desired ends. For example, according to Aquinas, restlessness and callousness are effects of greed, since trying to find satisfaction in one's own consumable and transient possessions tends to leave a person discontented, as well as more inclined to selfishly overlook the needs of others in favor of one's own accumulation of wealth.

[56] As quoted in DeYoung (2009) 36.

> follow troublesome multitudes of vices, which undoubtedly arise from them. We will understand this better if we enumerate these leaders and their armies as we are able. Truly pride is the root of all evil. . . . Her first progeny are the seven principle vices, which proceed from this venomous root, and they are: vainglory, envy, anger, sorrow, greed, gluttony, and lust.[57]

The current list of seven—lust, gluttony, avarice, sloth, wrath, envy, and pride—comes from Aquinas' treatment in *Summa Theologiae* IaIIae 84.3–4 when Aquinas collapses sloth and dejection, and treats vainglory as a species of pride. This list of these vices would come to be known more commonly as the *capital* vices, a term derived from the Latin *caput* or 'head,' a metaphor which can be seen in the description above of these vices as the principle and director of other vices.[58] According to DeYoung,

> Capital vices are defined in the tradition as vices which serve as fertile sources of other characteristic vices. They serve as final causes, orienting the person to a false conception of happiness and organizing patterns of thought, desire, and action around that end. The list of seven (or eight) vices was later designated the seven deadly sins, but this title has a different meaning, since 'deadly' refers to the distinction in Catholic moral theology between mortal and venial sin. Writers on the sins such as Thomas Aquinas deny that every act of a particular vice necessarily constitutes a mortal sin.[59]

Though often confused with 'the seven deadly sins,' the capital vices are better thought of as a particular class of vices which serve as the root or source of other vices, just as pride is often thought to be the root or source of all the vices. Though the capital vices are primarily associated with medieval Catholic accounts of virtue and vice, as the readings in this section indicate, both the vices and the corrective virtues associated with them are fertile soil for contemporary reflection.

The section on the capital vices opens with Colleen McCluskey's 'Lust and Chastity.' McCluskey's chapter shows how a number of contemporary treatments of sexual desire—such as that offered by Simon Blackburn—view lust as the virtue and chastity as the vice, contrary to the capital vice tradition. She begins by exploring the roots of the reflection on lust as a capital vice in the desert monastic tradition mentioned above. Even those Christian monks who took the strongest line against lust insisted that sexual desire in and of itself was not vicious, but good. Sexual desire becomes lust when it becomes inordinately strong and distracts one from higher goods. The monastic fathers' and mothers' practical reflection on the dangers of sexual desire

[57] *Moralia in Iob* 31.45.87–90.

[58] Aquinas also writes that 'those sins are capital which have ends chiefly desirable as such, so that other sins are subordinate to such ends' (*De Malo* VIII.1.ad).

[59] This volume, page 178, note 5.

would be developed into a larger theoretical framework by the Middle Ages. In general, for Aquinas, a human acts virtuously when she acts in a way that (a) is in accordance with right reason and (b) which promotes flourishing. Sexual desire, in particular, is in accord with reason when it contributes to the good of the species, rather than the individual—that is, when it is aimed at procreation within a properly ordered relationship (that is, marriage). Excessive sexual desire, then, moves the individual to engage in sexual activities that are not aimed at the good of the species' procreation. As a result, those sexual activities which are aimed merely at pleasure (even within what Aquinas would take as a proper marriage relationship) are disordered. The virtue of chastity, on the other hand, moderates sexual desire by keeping it aligned with the order of reason. McCluskey distances herself from certain aspects of Aquinas' account, such as the claim that sexual desire needs to be aimed at procreation and not just pleasure to be virtuous and that contraception is always immoral. But she also rejects recent attempts to redefine lust as virtuous; her main foil here is Simon Blackburn, though a number of others have developed similar views. Part of the ostensible disagreement between the traditional view and the recent proposals as exemplified by Blackburn is terminological; but she then argues that Aquinas' view can better account for how vicious sexual desire can result in objectification. The desire for sexual activity apart from the love of friendship objectifies one's sexual partner; sexual activity solely for pleasure and not aimed at the good for friendship (which includes commitment) between individuals thus turns out to be vicious on McCluskey's account. She thus defends a modified version of the traditional account of lust and chastity, though one which admittedly includes a wider range of acceptable sexual activities and desires than Aquinas thought possible.

The next chapter also concerns a capital vice opposed to the cardinal virtue of temperance. In 'Gluttony and Abstinence,' Robert Kruschwitz treats the virtue of abstinence as more than just about our disposition to not eat too much, but rather in a holistic orientation of the individual to know and rightly desire the good. It is true that gluttony is the disposition for sensory pleasures associated with eating and drinking that has become disordered because it is directed toward something that is not good once all the relevant factors are. But Kruschwitz also shows how gluttony and the behaviors that it leads to are connected with justice and hospitality. The connection to justice is easily seen when one considers the impact that the typical American diet's over-reliance on factory-farmed meat has on the environment and national health. Kruschwitz also considers how gluttony is, and more importantly is not, related to a number of biomedical issues, such as genetic predispositions towards excessive appetites. He ends with a discussion of how certain practices associated with abstinence, such as fasting, can help train one's physical appetites.

Andrew Pinsent begins his 'Avarice and Liberality' by distinguishing the capital vice of greed from the contemporary tendency to broaden its meaning

to include its offspring vices, the general desire to have more, and various forms of injustice. The restricted understanding of avarice Pinsent focuses on is the disposition to overvalue money or possessions under the aspect of financial value. He notes a number of ways in which the desire for material wealth is unlike the desires for food, drink, and sex, a comparison that other treatments of avarice often make. Largely because of these differences, examination of the vice of avarice faces what Pinsent calls 'the failure of the rational mean': 'namely the fact that any attempt to address the question, "How much should I possess in order to live a virtuous life?" throws back a spectrum of answers.'[60] To help demarcate how and when the disposition for material wealth is vicious, Pinsent draws on recent work on prosopagnosia, or face blindness, and argues that avarice is vicious because it inhibits, or even destroys, second-personal relatedness with others. Money is particularly prone to such destruction because by its nature as a medium of exchange it reduces goodness to a single quantitative assessment, thereby encouraging a reductive outlook regarding value. Avarice thus counts against an individual's flourishing because it inhibits the individual's relatedness to and love for others.

In his treatment of the capital vices in the *Purgatorio*, Dante described lust, gluttony, and avarice as involving excessive or immoderate desire or love for things that we should love. In contrast, he thinks that sloth involves lax love, or the failure to be properly moved by the love or desire of things that we should be moved by. In her 'Sloth: Some Historical Reflections on Laziness, Effort, and Resistance to the Demands of Love,' Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung shows how the capital vice tradition understands sloth to be much more—and much worse—than mere laziness. Tracing the history of *acedia* from its desert monastic roots through medievals such as Gregory the Great and Aquinas, she shows how the original understanding of sloth as a failure of spiritual commitment to what one knows one ought to do has been stripped and secularized to mere inertia or lack of effort. The corrective virtue, diligence, is also more than mere industriousness; it's a sign of proper love and devotion, ultimately to God and the loving relationships he calls us to. DeYoung also shows how a certain kind of industriousness—which she describes as frantic busyness and restless escapism—can itself be an expression of sloth insofar as it is an attempt to avoid the demands of love. DeYoung advocates a return to the historical conception of sloth, since this more robust understanding helps us see how both inactivity and intentional diversion can express resistance to charity.

Zac Cogley's 'A Study of Virtuous and Vicious Anger' adopts a roughly Aristotelian approach to the emotion of anger. Cogley's goal is to develop an

[60] This volume, page 164.

account of what differentiates virtuous anger from vicious anger in a way that is informed by both philosophical psychology and recent empirical studies. Cogley explores three functions that anger can serve. First, anger is an appraisal that a particular situation is illegitimate, wrong, unjust, or otherwise wrong. Anger is not only an emotional reaction to a situation, but it is also a motivational source in response to that situation. Cogley argues that anger often should produce motivation to work toward realizing a morally laudatory purpose, such as fighting against injustice. (Two of Cogley's recurrent examples of virtuous anger are Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King, Jr, who both used their anger to fight against social injustice and oppression.) Finally, anger serves a communicative social function, providing for emotional engagement with and transformation of others.

Within this understanding of the functions of anger, Cogley argues that anger is virtuous only when it is excellent with respect to each of these three functions: 'her anger is fitting, it motivates her to take assertively resistant actions, and she communicates her anger to others with nuanced attention to social norms governing its display.'[61] Anger which lacks excellence in any of these functions will be vicious; there are thus a plethora of ways to be vicious with respect to anger. Cogley's chapter ends with a discussion of two characteristic vices associated with anger: meekness and wrath. The meek person is an individual who is deficient with respect to all three of anger's functions: he fails to feel sufficient fitting anger, his anger fails to motivate him to work to change the situation, and he doesn't express his own anger and experience the anger of others properly. The wrathful individual, on the other hand, is excessive with respect to each of these functions: she feel excessively angry given the situation she is in, acts aggressively and impulsively on her anger, and is quick to communicate her own and others' anger in a way that is socially inappropriate. Whereas the meek individual is disposed to not taking himself seriously as a moral agent, the wrathful individual is morally overconfident and insensitive.

Not only philosophers, but also psychologists and economists have devoted energy to studying envy. The nature of envy, however, has been understood in quite disparate ways, sometimes being understood primarily as a reason for action, an economic and social force, an emotion, as well as a vice. In 'Envy and its Discontents,' Perrine and Timpe seek to give an account of envy as a capital vice and then show how that account is related to the range of treatments of envy one finds in the literature. The vice of envy, most generally, is the disposition to desire that another lose her good. But this description fails to be a definition. They begin by examining Thomas Aquinas' treatment of

[61] This volume, page 217. Cogley prefers not to use the term 'patience' to refer to the virtue perfecting one's anger in order to avoid the contemporary connotations of passivity and quietude which the term often evokes.

envy in the *Summa Theologiae* and argue that Aquinas' definition fails to properly mark off the complete class of envy from other nearby dispositions. They then modify Aquinas' definition and they argue that envy should be understood as the disposition to sorrow over another's good because of a perception of inferiority regarding the other's good. They then draw on recent work in economics and psychology to show how the divisiveness of envy damages both the envious person and the larger community, treating a number of the offspring vices of envy, such as jealousy, covetousness, greed, and injustice. They end the chapter with a brief discussion of the corrective virtues that help an individual overcome envy.

The final chapter in this section is Craig A. Boyd's 'Pride and Humility: Tempering the Desire for Excellence.' In this essay, Boyd argues that we can see a sharp distinction between Aristotelian magnanimity and the Christian virtue of humility. For Aristotle, the *megalopsychos* exemplified the pinnacle of morality. He is the self-sufficient paragon of virtue who gives to others but is reluctant to receive. In contrast to Aristotle's depiction of the self-sufficient *megalopsychos*, the Christian tradition of Augustine and Aquinas offers an account of humility that sees this as a species of pride. To deny our reliance on others—especially God—is to deny reality. It is 'right reason' that enables us to see that we are part of an indispensible community wherein we depend tremendously on the giving and receiving of assistance. But right reason also takes into account all the relationships we have—including our relationship to God and so it is a propaedeutic to the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. That is, the agent must first recognize her need for divine grace before being able to receive these infused virtues. Boyd argues that the Thomistic account of humility can be viewed as one of Alasdair MacIntyre's 'virtues of acknowledged dependence.'[62] Without the healing work of humility, our relationship to God and to others remains irreparably severed.

Intellectual Virtues

The third section of the volume addresses a number of intellectual virtues. The current interest in intellectual virtue is more recent than the revival of virtue ethics. As mentioned above, Plato appears to have held that all the virtues are identical, that 'knowledge of good and evil' is 'the whole of virtue,' thereby turning all vice into ignorance.[63] Aristotle's differentiation between vice, incontinence, continence, and virtue entailed that it was possible for a person to possess intellectual virtue but not moral virtue. He also expanded the list of epistemic virtues in book VII of the *Nicomachean Ethics* to include not only

[62] MacIntyre (1999). [63] *Laches* 199d–e.

phronêsis (translated into the Latin as *prudentia*), but also *sophia*, *technê*, *epistêmê*, and *nous*. Aquinas, following the Philosopher, endorsed this list:

> [Aristotle] refers to his work on morals, that is *Ethics* 6, where he discusses the way science and art and wisdom and prudence and understanding differ. To put it briefly, wisdom and science and understanding are in the speculative part of the soul, where he here calls the scientific part of the soul. They differ in that understanding is the habit of the first principles of demonstration; science concerns conclusions about lesser things, whereas wisdom considers the first causes, so in the same place it is called the chief of the sciences. Prudence and art are in the practical part of the soul, which reasons about contingent things that can be done by us. But they differ, for prudence directs actions which do not pass into exterior matter but are perfections of the agent; hence prudence is called there right reason about things to be done. But art directs in making, which passes into exterior matter, such as to build and to say; hence art is called right reason about things to be made.[64]

For Aquinas, the intellectual virtues other than prudence (which, as seen above, is a cardinal virtue) are only virtues in a qualified sense insofar as they make individuals capable of good activities but are compatible with a bad will. The only exception here is prudence which, insofar as it is also a cardinal virtue as seen above, 'is essentially connected with good desire and that is therefore essentially ordered to a good use of the intellectual capacity.'[65]

However, despite this historical connection, the past three decades have seen the development of explicitly virtue-based positions in epistemology, a development that has reinvigorated the connections between ethics and epistemology. Virtue epistemology can arguably be traced to Ernest Sosa's work in the 1980s.[66] Soon, Jonathan Kvanvig,[67] James Montmarquet,[68] and Linda Zagzebski[69]—among others—had devoted entire manuscripts to developing and defending virtue epistemology. Though these approaches, like virtue ethics itself, are diverse, there is a general unifying schema which Christopher Hookway describes as follows: virtue epistemologies are '(1) approaches to the most central problems of epistemology (2) which gives to states called "intellectual" or "epistemic" virtues (3) a central or "primary" explanatory role.'[70] That is, these approaches have at their heart a commitment to various intellectual excellences in the process of belief acquisition and formation. As Zagzebski and DePaul describe it, 'at a minimum, virtue epistemology is

[64] *In Meta* 1, lecture 1, n. 34; as quoted in Hoffmann (2012), 329. Aquinas' treatment of the intellectual virtues is significantly less tied to Aristotle in the *Summa Theolgiae*, both in terms of how they are presented and how they are understood.

[65] Hoffmann (2012), 328.

[66] Many of Sosa's early papers on intellectual virtue are collected in Sosa (1991), particularly parts III and IV.

[67] Kvanvig (1992).

[68] Montmarquet (1993).

[69] Zagzebski (1996).

[70] Hookway (2003), 183.

characterized by a shift in focus from properties of beliefs to the intellectual traits of agents. The primary bearer of epistemic value is a quality of the agent that enables her to act in a cognitively effective and commendable way.'[71] Shortly thereafter they continue:

> Virtue epistemologists understandably concentrate on the ways the idea of virtue can help resolve epistemological questions and leave the conceptual work of explaining value to ethics. Clearly, then, virtue epistemology needs virtue ethics. But . . . virtue ethics also has something important to learn from virtue epistemology. Perhaps due to historical accident, virtue ethicists have had little to say about intellectual virtue. They generally take for granted that the moral and intellectual virtues are not only distinct, but relatively independent.[72]

In part because of the collection that the above quotation comes from, recent years have seen significant interaction between virtue ethicists and virtue epistemologists that go beyond just the need for prudence in developing moral virtues. This connection is addressed in a number of places in the following chapters,[73] but there are other relations between the epistemic and moral virtues as well.

In this section, we have departed from the Aristotelian list of the intellectual virtues. One reason is that *phronêsis*/*prudentia* is treated in the section on the cardinal virtues. But we have also chosen to not include chapters devoted to *technê* or *epistêmê* given that they, as described above, are only virtues in a qualified sense. The section opens with an essay on trust by Linda Zagzebski. According to Zagzebski, trust comes in both practical and epistemic forms, but both forms are complex attitudes involving belief, feeling, and behavioral components. Epistemic trust, both in terms of self-trust and as placed in others, is pre-reflective and rationally inescapable if we're to avoid skepticism. However, epistemic trust, according to Zagzebski, isn't an intellectual virtue, in part because trust can be misplaced. But it is closely related to intellectual virtue in a number of important ways.[74] First, many of the intellectual virtues presuppose epistemic trust and would not be virtues if it were not for the reasonableness of epistemic trust. Furthermore, many of the intellectual virtues are either enhancements of epistemic trust—as in the cases of intellectual courage, perseverance, and firmness—or—as in the cases of intellectual humility and open-mindedness—constraints on it. Zagzebski also elucidates ways that the intellectual virtues can help prevent trust from becoming either excessive or deficient.

The other two chapters in this section are traditional Aristotelian intellectual virtues, and both draw on the connections with virtue epistemology

[71] DePaul and Zagzebski (2003), 1. [72] DePaul and Zagzebski (2003), 2.

[73] See not only the chapter on prudence, but also the chapter by Perrine and Timpe on envy and Boyd's chapter on pride and humility.

[74] For another discussion of the close connection between trust and virtues, see Annas (2011), 73f.

mentioned above. First here is John Greco's '*Episteme*: Knowledge and Understanding.' Greco has two main goals in this chapter. The first is to argue that *epistêmê* is better translated as 'understanding' than as either 'knowledge' or 'scientific knowledge.' Insofar as Aristotle claims that one has *epistêmê* only if one can 'give an account' of the thing in question, *epistêmê* should not be understood as knowledge insofar as one can have knowledge of some true proposition even if one can't give an account of why that proposition is true. While scientific knowledge does involve 'giving an account,' *epistêmê* differs from it in that one can have *epistêmê* of things that fall outside the scope of science's domain. Greco then defends a neo-Aristotelian account of the nature of the intellectual virtue. *Epistêmê*, for Aristotle, requires that one 'has the appropriate sort of confidence, and knows the principles.'[75] Greco argues that Aristotle's notion of 'cause' should be replaced with dependence relations more generally (including, in addition to causal dependence, logical and supervenient relations). More specifically, to understand a thing is to be able to (knowledgeably) locate it in a system of appropriate dependence relations. Greco then defends this account from two objections, both of which deny that understanding is a kind of knowledge at all, and therefore cannot be understood as knowledge of dependence relations.

Jason Baehr's '*Sophia:* Theoretical Wisdom and Contemporary Epistemology' aims to shed light on the nature of *sophia* and why it should be seen as an intellectual virtue. He begins by giving reasons for why contemporary philosophers ought to care about *sophia*; he then delineates three different ways of understanding the nature of *sophia*, each of which he claims has some prima facie plausibility:

(a) as involving the grasp of fundamental metaphysical truths and of various truths that follow from them, which he calls the 'epistemic state' conception;

(b) as the cognitive faculty or capacity in virtue of which a person can know or understand the content in question, which he calls the 'cognitive faculty' conception; and

(c) as a kind of personal orientation or character trait that is directed at and helps its possessor lay hold of these truths aimed at in the epistemic state conception, a conception which he calls the 'intellectual trait' conception.

Baehr then shows how each of these conceptions of *sophia* figures relative to various issues and debates in contemporary epistemology, such as epistemic significance, understanding, the value problem, reliabalism, and responsibilism. His goal in this section is to pave the way for renewed reflection on *sophia* and related epistemic concepts.

[75] *NE* 1139b 34–5.

The Theological Virtues

The fourth section of the book addresses the most distinctive Christian contribution to the virtues: faith, hope, and charity.[76] Paul the Apostle mentions that 'These three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.'[77] The Christian tradition latched onto these three 'virtues' as the key point of differentiation between its own views on morality and those of the surrounding pagan culture.[78] This stemmed from basic theological beliefs about human nature, sin, and grace.

In contrast to the pagan tradition of antiquity, the early Christians saw themselves as fundamentally alienated from God and they could only be reconciled through the divine grace offered by Christ. Sin, therefore, was not merely 'weakness of will' or ignorance, but an alienation from God resulting from a 'turning away' from the true human good. Although human reason, on its own, was powerless to save the human soul, it could recognize its need for the salvation that could come only through the grace of God. Some thinkers, like Augustine, argued that there could be no virtue whatsoever without grace. Others, like Aquinas, held that pagans could practice a kind of 'imperfect' virtue.

Augustine says, 'No one can have true virtue without true piety, that is without the true worship of God.'[79] But for Augustine this meant that one first had to receive divine grace before any act whatsoever could be understood as 'good.' 'Pagan virtue,' such as it was, could not be considered true virtue because there was no recognition that God must be the one to whom all human activity is directed. Only by a *conversio* of the will (i.e. a 'turning back to God') could a human agent's actions become virtuous. As a result, true beatitude could only be found in God.

Aquinas sees the distinction in terms of 'imperfect' and 'perfect' happiness. Certainly, Aristotle's virtuous person could achieve a certain kind of 'happiness' in this mortal life by developing the cardinal virtues. But the problem is that humans are destined for the 'perfect' happiness of communion with God. Since sin prevents them from achieving this on their own they need the theological virtues. He says,

[76] Pieper (1986) notes that 'the English word for love is inadequate as we use it to cover too many activities. The Greek *agapé* or the Latin *caritas* better expresses the idea conveyed in the sense of love as a theological virtue.'

[77] 1 Corinthians 13:13.

[78] Wisdom 8:7 mentions the four cardinal virtues but they do not seem to play an important role in Christian thought until late antiquity or the early Middle Ages. Augustine's *On Free Choice of the Will* briefly develops each of the four cardinal virtues and follows Aristotle's ranking rather than Plato's.

[79] *City of God* V.19.213.

> Certain additional principles must be given by God to man by which he can thus be ordered to supernatural happiness, just as by natural principles he is ordered to a connatural end, though not without divine help. The additional principles are called theological virtues: first, because they have God as their object, inasmuch by them we are rightly ordered to God; secondly, because they are infused in us by God alone; and finally, because these virtues are made known to us only by divine revelation in Sacred Scripture.[80]

Following Augustine, Aquinas contends that the agent needs to have God as the object of these virtues in order to have our lives 'rightly ordered.' Secondly, the agent acquires them not by her own efforts but by the 'infusion' of divine grace. They each may grow as a habit—as all virtues can—but they must first be given by God. Thirdly, we know of them only through the divine revelation of the Scriptures. Again, unaided natural reason could not discover these virtues on its own but needs the revelation of the Scriptures—as a witness to the grace of Christ—in order to know that the truly virtuous life is one of faith, hope, and charity.

These virtues were not merely ad hoc accretions to an already complete set of 'secular Aristotelian virtues' but transformed the moral and intellectual virtues at their core.[81] Christian prudence is shaped by charity and faith to the extent that 'right reason' sees new relationships—e.g. with the divine trinity—that unaided natural reason could not even imagine. Humility and magnanimity see the tempering and striving for excellence in an entirely new way—with reference to one's desire for the honors only God can bestow and with regard to one's place in the universe vis-à-vis God and one's neighbor.

The first chapter in this section, 'Faith as Attitude, Trait, and Virtue' is by Robert Audi who argues that we can distinguish faithfulness in three ways. First, we can consider it as an attitude as when we speak of someone who has 'faith in' another person or an institution. This is not properly a moral use of the term. A second use of the term can be one of a 'trait.' Here, we mean that a person has a kind of loyalty to another person whether or not that other person is morally good. The primary element here is that faith is a kind of 'allegiance' to another. And a third notion of faith is as a psychological virtue. Audi believes there are six important conceptual dimensions to the idea of a virtue of character: situational, conceptual, cognitive, motivational, behavioral, and teleological. From this point he argues that there are two kinds of virtues: moral and non-moral. Moral virtues are valuable in themselves and so we find justice and honesty. Others are non-moral (or 'adjunctive') and here we find courage and conscientiousness, which can be found in very immoral individuals.

[80] *ST* I-II.57.1.

[81] For a worthwhile discussion of the relationship between the theology and moral virtues in Aquinas, see Pinsent (2012).

Faithfulness seems to be an adjunctive virtue as it adheres to persons—while not necessarily judging the moral character of those persons. As directed toward God and neighbor (i.e. as a 'theological' virtue) it is both a virtue of character since it is grounded in love and a moral virtue in the sense that it has an egalitarian concern for others. So religious faith can be a character trait or a kind of attitude towards God. But it can also be construed as a virtue of personality. In this last case, faith has God as the right kind of 'object' and integrates the believer's life accordingly.

Charles Pinches' 'On Hope' develops the idea that hope is not merely an animal or human emotion but a theological virtue that orients the self to God. In a generic sense hope (1) is a 'tensed' emotion, and (2) aims at a 'difficult good.' It is tensed in the sense that we recognize something we do not presently have but wish to attain in the future and so there is a temporal gap between our initial desire and the attainment of the object of our hope. It also aims at a difficult good. I do not hope for air but I do hope for a long life. But what distinguishes 'natural hope' from the theological virtue of hope is the 'object.' And the object of hope as an 'emotion' can be any end—good or bad—that an agent may desire. However, the 'object' of hope as a theological virtue is communion with God.

Hope 'expects' and 'waits for' what faith affirms. In this sense, faith is a theological virtue of the intellect since it informs us of the truth about God. But hope is a virtue of desire since it concerns the 'difficult good,' but what is unique about hope is that it 'leans on God' for its help. This leaning on God ties hope together with charity since we hope for communion with God in the beatific vision. Yet, this hope is not only for the next life but applies to this one as well. In the last section of this essay Pinches shows how theological hope can shape and inform Christian politics by rejecting the 'false hopes' promised by utopian societies or by 'scientific progress.'

In the final essay of this section, Paul Wadell's 'Charity: How Friendship with God Unfolds in Love for Others,' the discussion once again focuses upon an interesting comparison-contrast of Aristotle with Aquinas. Aristotle claims that friendship plays a central role in the moral life but believes that friendship with God would be absurd. Aquinas, however, takes the idea of friendship as a 'participation' in the life of the other and applies it to the triune God of Christianity. For Aristotle there was an unfathomable gulf between the human and the divine since 'friendship' could only be had between 'equals.' But Christ bridges that gulf in grace so that God draws the creature into participation in divine beatitude. As a result, grace not only enables us to be 'friends' with God but elevates us so that we can become 'participants' in the divine life itself.

Genuine charity does not merely love God for God's own sake—which it does—but also implies that we love others as we love ourselves. That is, we come to love the neighbor as a 'second self' in that we come to desire the good

of 'friendship with God' for the neighbor. But we also love others because God loves them. That is, when we love a friend we come to love those whom the friend loves—and in this way love 'unfolds' to others—even for those whom we may have a natural enmity. And so charity enables us to move beyond our 'natural' predilections for those whom we instinctively love to love for our enemies. The ways in which love 'unfolds' for others is through the practices of mercy, kindness, and almsgiving.

Virtues in Other Disciplines

Philosophy does not hold a monopoly on the study of the virtues. Other disciplines, especially theology and psychology, have taken an interest in these issues, as character traits seem pliable enough to function in a variety of disciplinary contexts.

In the first essay in this section, 'Virtue in Theology,' Stephen Pope begins by noting that theology is not like any other discipline because it requires the participation of the practitioner in the subject. That is, theology is a discipline that requires belief prior to its reflection; in this it follows the famous dictum '*credo ut intelligam*.' It arises out of the life of the community's reflection on the covenantal relationship with God and the community's 'journey to God.' As such, theology sees the virtues not only as helps for the present life but also as habits that prepare us for a deeper communion with God in the life to come. This communion with God is the source of true human happiness. As with most contemporary philosophy of religion, Pope approaches God in light of the Judeo-Christian tradition; while much of what he says may also be applicable to other religious traditions, it is clear from his chapter that he is allowing the particular theological tradition he's working within to shape his treatment. Although the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures speak more to list of commands, admonitions, proverbs, and parable, they provide a rich tapestry to draw upon for a study of the virtues.[82] As mentioned above, the three most important of the Christian 'virtues' are the Pauline virtues of faith, hope, and love (1 Cor 13:13). Faith orients us to God on our journey; hope gives us courage for the journey; and charity sustains us on the journey by 'going with, and to God' with those whom we love. These 'virtues' for the journey also reform the cardinal virtues in ways that are directed towards God and to others rather than primarily to our own happiness. In this way, the theological virtues paradoxically bring us happiness: we attain happiness not by seeking it directly but by seeking it indirectly in the good for others. Pope's essay, while summarizing some of the materials dealt with in greater detail elsewhere in

[82] See for example, Meeks (1995).

this volume, also shows how a focus on virtue can shape much of one's theological reflection.

Christie Hartley and Lori Watson's 'Virtue in Political Thought: On Civic Virtue in Political Liberalism' advances the idea that civic virtues are those that are central to social cooperation; as a result, any kind of political body requires these sorts of virtues even though they do not require 'moral virtues.' They contrast perfectionist and anti-perfectionist theories of the state. Perfectionist models, such as Aristotle's, posit an objective good for human life and orient the society to that good. In contrast to these views, anti-perfectionist models along the lines of John Rawls believe the state should be 'neutral' concerning what constitutes an objective account of good life. Hartley and Watson defend a liberal understanding of political virtues in the tradition of Rawls who famously argued for a heteronomous account of the good.[83] Because we can reasonably disagree about what constitutes the good life, we should advocate civic virtues such as fairness, civility, tolerance, and reasonableness. This assumes two ideas that are central to political liberalism: the public use of reason and reciprocity. The public use of reason concerns how people in a pluralist society argue for the same basic freedoms and opportunities from a political perspective and not those based on religious or other beliefs. Reciprocity means that we allow others the same freedoms we allow ourselves in their pursuit of the good and that they permit us the same freedoms. As a result, some virtues will necessarily shape political organizations. These will include fairness, tolerance, and reasonableness. But it is important to remember that on this view civic virtues are instrumental in a citizen's pursuit of the good and not constitutive of it.

The third chapter in this section is, 'Virtue in Positive Psychology,' by Everett Worthington et al. They contend that positive psychology, the psychology of religion, and spirituality are interested in the study of virtue. These converging trends share a common core of concern with virtue and suggest that our knowledge of both the psychology of religion and spirituality and positive psychology could be enlarged by entering into more active dialogue among these fields.

Positive psychology, a relatively new discipline, has focused on three main areas: positive emotions, happiness, and character strengths. Religion, however, concerns the set of beliefs, practices, etc., of like-minded individuals. Spirituality, though, focuses on the personal experiences an individual has with a sacred object.

Although one can readily see that religion with its corporate concern for morality—and spirituality with its personal response to the sacred—would be

[83] Rawls (1971), 554. Rawls says, 'Although to subordinate all our aims to one end does not strictly speaking violate the principles of rational choice . . . it still strikes us as irrational, or more likely as mad. The self is put in the service of one of its ends for the sake of the system.'

linked closely to the development of virtue, this has not been so for psychology until recently. But psychologists have turned their attention to three areas particularly—cognitive psychology, a non-rational understanding of will-power, and a moral intuitionist model of moral emotion. These areas explore the importance of emotional and moral 'set points' that people can develop over time into positive character traits or virtues. In keeping with the traditional religious and philosophical understanding of the virtues one must practice the virtues repeatedly in order for them to develop appropriately.

James Van Slyke's chapter on 'Moral Psychology, Neuroscience, and Virtue: From Moral Judgment to Moral Character,' explores the recent scholarship on the neuroscientific explanations of moral virtues. This work suggests a dual processing model of moral deliberation that appeals to both cognitive and affective mechanisms. But central to this work has been the discovery or 'mirror neurons' that enable humans (and other more developed animals) to mimic the activities and emotions of others. This ability to mimic others serves as a necessary condition for practical reason in the sense that our moral deliberation is an acquired skill much like that of a musician who mimics and then internalizes the processes of her craft. As the musician learns her craft the ability becomes like a 'second nature' to her where she 'knows' and 'feels' what and how she should play.

Much of the data on moral decision-making come from the work of people like Jonathan Haidt and Joshua Greene who have used fMRI techniques to measure neural activity when subjects process moral dilemmas. The results demonstrate that cognitive and affective responses vary according to the relative personal or impersonal conditions the subject considers. Of course, Van Slyke points out that there are serious limitations on what fMRIs can indicate about 'moral character' from isolated thought experiments in a laboratory context. Moreover, virtue theory considers the narrative of a person's life including how one's character has been formed prior to any particular moral decision.

In her chapter, 'Virtue and a Feminist Ethics of Care,' Ruth Groenhout argues that attempts to categorize an 'ethic of care' are problematic since these efforts assume the 'standard taxonomy' of ethics. This standard taxonomy divides normative theories among consequentialist, deontological, and virtue based approaches. The key problems with this taxonomy are that it unreasonably emphasizes individual decision-making and is reductionistic with regard to thinking that one aspect of our lives is the one salient aspect of our moral lives. That is, it places undue emphasis on agents, acts, and consequences. The ethics of care, however, as well as Confucian ethics place emphasis on relationships, personal narratives, and the much neglected role of emotion in moral decision-making. The ethics of care and virtue ethics do share a number of similarities in that they highlight the importance of relationships and reject the reason–emotion dichotomy. However, the excessive focus on the 'agent'

neglects the importance of the relationships that have shaped the agent. This truncated view of normative theory fails to account for the complexities of relationships in virtue ethics, an ethic of care, and Confucian ethics since the standard taxonomy fails to consider issues beyond the consequences, the agent's motivation, and the isolated act in question.[84]

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Section I:

The Cardinal Virtues

1

Prudence

W. Jay Wood

INTRODUCTION

Virtues are acquired dispositions to excellent functioning in some generically human sphere of activity that is challenging and important for human well-being. Virtues bear upon both moral and intellectual activity, though all virtues make use of good reason at some level. This essay explores practical wisdom (*phronesis* to the Greeks, *prudentia* to the Latins), an intellectual virtue connecting right reason with action.[1] Practical wisdom, or prudence, is thus a 'bridge virtue,' connecting reason with moral activity. Put briefly, prudence is the deeply anchored, acquired habit of thinking well in order to live and act well. Aristotle defines it as 'a state of grasping the truth, involving reason, concerned with action about things that are good or bad for a human being.'[2] When does courage tend toward recklessness, generosity toward profligacy, satiating hunger toward gluttony? These judgments are the special domain of practical wisdom. It is a cultivated habit of good judgment that allows us to reason thoroughly and with finesse amidst the particularities of our moral, interpersonal, emotional, political, and various other life circumstances, toward the end of human flourishing. Prudence is at the heart of moral character, for it shapes and directs the whole of our moral lives, and is indispensible to our becoming morally excellent persons.

Though an intellectual virtue, prudence is also first among the 'four cardinal virtues,' three of which, justice, temperance, and fortitude, are moral virtues.[3] Practical wisdom is due this pride of place because of its indispensible role in

[1] I will use the terms 'practical wisdom,' '*phronesis*,' and 'prudence' interchangeably throughout, making plain at points where, say, Aristotle and Aquinas differ in their accounts of the virtue.

[2] *NE* 1140b5.

[3] The word 'cardinal' derives from the Latin, '*cardo*,' for hinge, thus signaling that these four virtues are the hinges on which swings the whole of the excellent life.

all the other virtues. If, for instance, temperance in eating requires that one avoid too much or too little suitably nutritious food, one must discern the truth about the type and amount of food best suited to health and overall well-being. Virtuous eating is what right reason prescribes.[4]

Aristotle argued that the faculties of mind and will separate us from the beasts. We do not feed or reproduce at the command of our glands, the season of the year, or in response to whatever chemicals may be currently coursing through our bodies. Civilized humans do not yield to whatever impulse wells up within them strongest at the moment: rather, they reason about whether a particular action or emotion is conducive to their personal good and the good of others. Prudence, then, is the acquired disposition to reason well about what courses of action and emotion will best bring about our own and others' well-being. Practical wisdom is intellectual in that persons possessing it characteristically make intelligent judgments regarding the overall trajectory of a flourishing life as well as accurate judgments about how to achieve it. Prudence is essential for moral virtue because it provides the ineliminable sound judgment required to practice any of the virtues in our particular moral circumstances.

One must acknowledge at the outset that definitions and analyses of practical wisdom are contested among philosophers, as are other virtue and vice terms. Conceptions of human nature, the conditions of human flourishing, and the ultimate ends to be sought, all reflect one's metaphysical commitments that differ among philosophical outlooks. If practical wisdom is right reason directed to the excellent human life, we can expect variations in the analyses of practical wisdom to arise out of contrasting accounts of human nature and contrasting visions of the good life. Differing accounts of the excellent human life will also result in varying views about what intellectual practices and habits of mind are constitutive of or productive of practical wisdom. Among other virtues, Aristotle's *phronimos* pursues magnanimity, a greatness of soul and being that is fully self-conscious of and satisfied with its own greatness, made all the greater insofar as free of debts or dependence on others. Yet in the Judeo-Christian tradition, 'Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' On this view, we are created and conserved in being by a maximally perfect and holy God, whose commands we have disobeyed and from whom we stand in need of forgiveness. Humility and gratitude are thus key virtues characteristic of the excellent Christian life. Not so for Aristotle, nor for Nietzsche's Zarathustra, a self-described inventor of a new virtue, the virtues of the overman, who derides Christian prudence and other Christian virtues as 'sham-wisdom,' 'false knowledge,' yielding lives of 'wretched contentment.' What Christians construe as sexual immorality, selfishness, and a

[4] See, for example, Bob Kruschwitz's chapter on gluttony in this volume.

prideful will to power are for the overman keys to personal greatness and the highest kind of flourishing. Analogous remarks could be made for Stoic wisdom, Confucian wisdom, and other traditions with developed accounts of the requirements for human flourishing. This essay will, for reasons of space, focus primarily on Aristotle and Aquinas as key representatives and highpoints of both ancient and medieval accounts of practical wisdom. Though Aquinas is reluctant to break with the Philosopher, we will see that his Christian faith shapes and advances his account of prudence in ways that differ crucially from Aristotle.

PRACTICAL WISDOM DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHER INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES

Aristotle and Aquinas distinguished three major types of knowledge: theoretical, productive, and practical knowledge, and five intellectual virtues that enable the reliably successful pursuit of each sort of knowledge. Theoretical knowledge has truth about the general structure of reality as its subject matter, which Aristotle further divided into the sciences of theology, mathematics, and nature. These sciences are modeled on the axiomatic system of geometry, whose starting points, according to Aristotle, cannot be otherwise, and from which we can infer knowledge that is universal, unchanging, and necessary.

Three intellectual virtues pertain to theoretical knowledge: understanding, science, and wisdom. Understanding (*nous*, *intellectus*) is the science of first principles, and its corresponding virtue is the mature power of natural intellect by which one grasps self-evident axioms and universal truths that serve as the foundations of the various sciences, such as mathematical axioms (e.g. a triangle is an enclosed geometric figure with three sides) and moral first principles (*eudaimonia* is our highest end). Understanding also makes possible our apprehension of universals by induction or abstraction from particulars. Understanding plays a double role in ethical reasoning, allowing one to apprehend first principles through induction, but also to apprehend a particular situation as falling under a moral universal.[5] Understanding, not prudence, apprehends life's ultimate goods and ends. Prudence doesn't determine that happiness is our ultimate end; it determines the best means to bringing about happiness.

Science (*episteme*, *scientia*) is the cognitive power to infer truths from universal truths about a particular subject (or genus), together with middle terms containing the particulars of a case. For Aristotle and the medievals,

[5] See Reeve (1992), 59–60.

sciences such as mathematics, physics, and theology consist of deductions or demonstrations that make evident how a particular natural thing exemplifies or falls under a universal principle. While the subject matter and starting point of each science are different, they nevertheless share the same formal, deductive structure. Unlike mere logical syllogisms, however, the person with *scientia* apprehends the necessary causes of that which is under investigation. Aristotelian science was not simply a matter of inferring lesser-known conclusions from what was already known and better grounded than the conclusion. The middle terms of the deduction were supposed to be ampliative, making known one or more of the four causes at work in the natural world. Aquinas's commentary on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* makes this last point plain:

> It is obvious that a cause is the middle in a demonstration, which produces *scientia*, because to have *scientia* is to cognize the cause of a thing. But a cause is what is sought in all the aforesaid questions [in which demonstration plays a part].[6]

We can ascribe the virtue of science to the investigator of nature whose stable, reliable intellectual powers lead to correct causal explanations of natural phenomena rightly ordered under a universal or genus term. Theoretical wisdom is not, like *scientia*, restricted to a particular kind of knowledge, but judges with respect to all knowledge.

The Greek and Latin traditions distinguished between two types of wisdom, theoretical wisdom (*sophia*, *sapientia*) and practical wisdom, each the subject of two distinct intellectual virtues. Theoretical, or speculative wisdom, as already noted, has truth about the general structure of reality as its goal. Theoretically wise persons, says Aristotle, are 'wise in general, not wise in some [restricted] area'[7] and, moreover, have knowledge of the causes of things that obtain independently of human action. Practical wisdom, by contrast, commands us to act toward morally appropriate ends, and to devise the best means of achieving those ends. The theoretically wise person, says Aristotle, 'must not only know what is derived from the principles of a science, but also grasp the truth about the principles. Therefore theoretical wisdom encompasses understanding and scientific knowledge'[8] of the world's unchanging truths. Such truths are not open to deliberation, nor are they directed to or suitable to guide the accidental and contingent particularities of our daily lives, since there is no point to deliberating about what cannot be otherwise. But knowledge of a moral first principle such as 'It is wrong to cause unnecessary harm to others,' does not by itself prescribe a particular course of action in a particular situation. Nor does the person who knows what is good necessarily pursue it. 'Thought by itself moves nothing; what moves us is goal-directed

[6] Aquinas, as quoted in Stump (2005), 238.
[7] *NE* 1141a15. [8] *NE* 1141a19–21.

thought concerned with action.'[9] Speculative wisdom, then, is concerned solely with truth, not production of goods, or right action. Both Aristotle and Aquinas think *sophia* the highest form of wisdom insofar as it leads to knowledge of the ultimate cause of all being: God.[10] But a person can acquire the fruit of speculative wisdom and understanding, without having the overall praiseworthy character of a prudent person. Prudence, unlike speculative wisdom, qualifies the whole person, mind, will, and action.

Craft knowledge (*tekne*), or Art, and the virtue which is its maturation, is concerned with the production of artifacts of various sorts: bows, tables, chariots, saddles, etc. It is, says Aquinas, 'nothing else but the right reason about certain works to be made.'[11] It is up to the artisan either to manufacture some artifact or not, as well as to modify the qualities of the artifact. Craft knowledge, then, is not about what is necessary and unchangeable, but about what might be otherwise, subject to the preferences of the artisan. Like practical wisdom, it is intellect directed to certain ends, but in this case the ends of production, not action. Practical wisdom differs still further from, say, saddle-making, in that the production of saddles can be codified in a set of rules and standardized procedures which, if followed carefully, will routinely bring about the desired end. Not so with prudence, as the particulars involved in moral action are circumstantial and vary so widely. Craft, unlike prudence, need not be directed toward what is good: the virtue of craftsmanship depends only on the quality of the work, not the ends to which the work is applied. A virtuous craftsman, therefore, might make excellent weapons to be put to use in an unjust war. Genuine prudence, however, can never be directed to an immoral end.[12]

PRUDENCE AT WORK

Aristotle tells us that virtues are of two sorts: virtues of thought and virtues of character. Virtues of character further divide between virtues of emotion and virtues of action.[13] He famously teaches that we fail to exemplify the virtues by errors of excess and deficiency. Consider, for example, acting temperately with respect to eating and drinking. We can fail to eat temperately either by stuffing or starving ourselves. Virtuous eating requires that practical wisdom discern and direct us to act in accordance with the mean between these extremes. Of course, what constitutes caloric excess and deficiency must be calculated

[9] *NE* 1139a37. [10] *ST* I-II.66.5. [11] *ST* I-II.57.3.

[12] A most illuminating and thorough treatment of the *techne* and *phronesis* can be found in Dunn (1993).

[13] *NE* 1106b18.

relative to the bodily needs and physical demands of a particular person in particular circumstances (Are we under war-time rationing or an impending famine?). Clearly, a middle-aged man who works at a desk all day, and whose chief exercise consists of walking to and from the refrigerator for another beer, will reach the point of excess long in advance of a college-aged varsity swimmer. In this example, prudence takes stock of several factors—age, weight, activity level, other medical and physical conditions—and calculates the path of action between excess and deficiency in the particular case.

Practical wisdom works similarly with respect to virtues of emotion. Anger is in keeping with temperance when directed to the offender for a legitimate reason, in an appropriate degree. Clearly, one errs on the side of excess if one flies into a rage because another driver arrived first at a parking spot you had your eyes on. On the other hand, some sorts of offensive behavior ought to provoke anger, perhaps even high levels of anger. Failure to be angry with someone who attacked one's small children would signal a serious deficiency of emotional character. But how do we determine how much anger it is appropriate to feel in the heat of the moment? Sometimes the better part of practical wisdom is to defer to a moral exemplar, rather than relying solely on our own wisdom. 'Virtue, then, is a state that decides, consisting in a mean, the mean relative to us, which is defined by reference to reason, that is to say, to the reason by reference to which the prudent person would define it.'[14] Prudence on our part sometimes shows itself in having the good judgment to identify and imitate the morally wise among us. We see, then, that the mean state indicative of virtue is both a quantitative and qualitative mean. Aristotle tells us that the virtuously generous person is reliably disposed to give the right amount, to the right person, for the right reason, to the right end, and in the right way.[15] Only the first criterion is a purely quantitative matter. Identifying and acting in accordance with a quantitative and qualitative mean, however, does not exhaust the requirements for virtuous activity.

The virtuous agent must act in full knowledge of the end being sought, must choose to act for the sake of the end and not from impulse, and do so from a firm and unchanging character.[16] Prudence is thus a necessary condition for any action qualifying as morally virtuous. An action cannot qualify as generous, courageous, just, and so on, unless it is truly directed to a good end, proceeds from right intention, and is guided by true beliefs about how best to bring about the good end. Says Aquinas: 'Wherefore there can be no moral virtue without prudence: and consequently neither can there be without understanding.'[17]

What degree of understanding must a person possess in order to exemplify the virtue of prudence? Aquinas denies that prudent persons must have the

[14] *NE* 1107a. [15] *NE* 1109a20.
[16] *NE* 1105a32–4; *ST* I-II.57.5. [17] *ST* I-II.58.5, *sed contra*.

full use of their reason in all matters—metaphysical, theological, scientific, etc.—though he insists they must act with full understanding when pursuing a virtuous goal. Some persons, he notes, have a natural inclination toward courage, generosity, and other good ends, but such persons are not fully virtuous, for if the natural inclination were too strong, it may prove 'perilous.' A blind horse may naturally run fast, says Aquinas, but the faster it runs the more grievous will be its injury should it stumble. So too with persons who act toward good ends unguided, or not fully guided by right reason. Socrates overstated the case to say that moral virtue is equivalent to right reason though, says Aquinas, moral virtue must be in accordance with right reason, as Plato and Aristotle maintain.

Aristotle and Aquinas write as though prudential reasoners deliberately and self-reflectively work through the various stages of practical wisdom each and every time they act out of the virtue. After all, Aristotle does insist that the virtuous person act 'for the sake of the virtue.' Does it follow, though, that acting for the sake of the virtue requires that one always have the various stages of practical reason occurrently in mind? If we think of persons that are, say, habitually compassionate, their disposition to detect and seek to alleviate another's suffering has become second nature; compassion arises immediately and spontaneously in response to their awareness of another's pain. This is not to say it is unguided by practical wisdom. Rather, their response is analogous to the trained movements of a gifted pianist, whose tutored fingers automatically negotiate difficult arpeggios, or a skilled carpenter whose hands deftly manipulate wood and lathe to produce a beautiful spindle. The seemingly effortless actions of the pianist and carpenter are historically conditioned by many moments of deliberate, thoughtful attention. Moral dispositions too can become constitutive of a person's character, or as Aquinas would put it, can become 'connatural' in the person. And many argue that this is how one possesses a virtue in the deepest form. Is this possible with respect to prudence?

It is difficult to imagine how one might act for the sake of the virtue, applying reason to deliberate about the best means to a good end, without being reflectively aware at some level that one is applying one's reason to working out the best means to some good end. But there are levels of self-reflective awareness, and the *phronimos*, I submit, can apply reason rightly in spontaneous ways that flow more effortlessly from a virtuously formed nature than is generally the case with the less morally mature. A beginner at logic proofs must consciously search to find the right inference or replacement rule, and the best step forward. 'What do I do next?' is at the forefront of her reflective consciousness in a way it is not for the expert logician. The expert focuses on *the proof*, not the self-reflective fact that she is thinking about the proof. She looks at the proof and sees almost instantly how the proof must go. In an analogous way, the person of practical wisdom might seek and sift