

# Some Intellectual Aspects of the Cardinal Virtues

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## 1.2.1 INTRODUCTION

Nothing is more common in the burgeoning field of virtue epistemology than to find papers written about the moral aspects of the intellectual virtues. Hence, we have excellent work on intellectual courage by Robert Roberts and Jay Wood, as well by Jason Baehr; with regard to the role of temperance in intellectual virtue, Christopher Hookway has written insightfully on epistemic *akrasia*, while Heather Battaly has done the same for epistemic self-indulgence.<sup>1</sup> And as for epistemology and justice, Miranda Fricker has written a fine treatise on epistemic injustice, or the sort of injustice perpetrated when people's testimony is discredited for arbitrary reasons, such as race.<sup>2</sup> There is also a small literature on judicial virtue, or the moral virtues of a good judge in a legal system.<sup>3</sup> And while virtue epistemologists have been strangely silent about wisdom *per se*, John Kvanvig has at least approached the topic with his work on the difference between knowledge and understanding.<sup>4</sup> So, many virtue epistemologists

<sup>1</sup> Roberts and Wood, *Intellectual Virtues* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 2007; Baehr, *The Inquiring Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press) 2011; Hookway, "Epistemic Akrasia and Epistemic Virtue," in *Virtue Epistemology*, A. Fairweather and L. Zagzebski (eds.) (New York: Oxford University Press) 2001; Battaly, "Epistemic Self-Indulgence," in *Virtue and Vice*, H. Battaly (ed.) (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell) 2010.

<sup>2</sup> *Epistemic Injustice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 2007.

<sup>3</sup> For a good introduction, see Lawrence Solum's "Virtue Jurisprudence," in *Metaphilosophy* 34, nos. 1–2, 2003: 178–213. See also David Luban's "Justice Holmes and Judicial Virtue," Terry Pinkard's "Judicial Virtue and Democratic Politics," and Judith Shklar's "Justice without Virtue," all in *Virtue, Nomos, Vol. 34* (New York: New York University Press) 1992.

<sup>4</sup> *The Value of Knowledge and the Pursuit of Understanding* (New York: Cambridge University Press) 2007.

have explored how the cardinal moral virtues can bear on issues in epistemology. Less has been said on the other side: namely, on the intellectual aspects of the cardinal moral virtues, which are courage (*andreia*), temperance (*sophrosune*), justice (*dikiaosune*), and wisdom (*phronesis*).

Wisdom is perhaps the exception, since *phronesis* is variously translated as practical intelligence, practical rationality, or practical wisdom, so its intellectual standing stands out. Indeed, two impressive book-length treatises on this topic have been recently produced by Julia Annas and Daniel Russell.<sup>5</sup> We will return to them and *phronesis* toward the end of the essay. The plan is first to explore the intellectual aspects of courage (*andreia*), temperance (*sophrosune*), and justice (*dikiaosune*). Then, with these results on the table, we can draw some conclusions about their relation to *phronesis*, the intellectual aspects of moral virtue, and the degree to which there is a unity among the virtues despite how they may differ. The issue at bottom is that, on one side, common sense (*eudoxia*) tells us that the virtues are, at least for the most part, unrelated. We should not be surprised by the idea that, for example, people may be courageous without being just. On the other side, there are theoretical considerations which have led philosophers to think that there is in fact only one virtue, *phronesis* or practical rationality (or practical wisdom), and that courage is the exercise of practical wisdom in dangerous circumstances, temperance is practical wisdom in tempting circumstances, and so on. This is the much contested “unity of virtues” thesis: that possessing practical wisdom is necessary and sufficient for possessing all the virtues. The solution which falls out of looking into the intellectual structure of the moral virtues is that *phronesis* is necessary for all the virtues but is not sufficient. Aside from the experience required to master individual virtues, there are intellectual aspects of each of the virtues which may not be derived by *phronesis* alone. So, in Section 12.2 a model of how the intellectual aspects of the cardinal virtues are related to each other is given, and in Section 12.3 there is a discussion of the intellectual aspects of each of the virtues taken on its own. Finally, in Section 12.4 the unity of virtues thesis is discussed.

One might wonder if much of what is to come is really necessary.<sup>6</sup> Is there really any debate about how “intellectual” the cardinal virtues are?

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Russell, *Practical Intelligence and the Virtues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 2009; Julia Annas, *Intelligent Virtue* (New York: Oxford University Press) 2011.

<sup>6</sup> I thank Drew Schroeder for wondering just this.

In fact, there is. Common sense often caricatures the virtues in a non-cognitive way: courage is about handling fearful feelings, temperance is about handling temptation, justice is about handling greedy desires, and wisdom is about avoiding foolishness. Undoubtedly, this is a start, but it is far from a proper account of the virtues. More to the point perhaps is the fact that theorists of the virtues, both moral and intellectual, debate over the nature of virtue itself. Many take an approach based on Greek eudaimonism, agreeing that the virtues are intimately related to (if not necessary and/or sufficient for) living a happy flourishing life. Many who take this approach follow Socrates and the Stoics in thinking that the virtues are skills, much like the prosaic skill of being a cobbler or an automobile mechanic.<sup>7</sup> Others follow Aristotle and acknowledge that the virtues are very similar to skills, but differ from them in some important ways (for example, that skills concern the making of products (*poesis*) while virtues concern practices (*praxis*).)<sup>8</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre has argued for a relativistic virtue theory in which what counts as a “virtue” is determined by cultural convention.<sup>9</sup> There are also sentimentalist theories of virtue, such as that of Michael Slote, wherein what counts as a virtue is determined by what is fit to be admired.<sup>10</sup> Consequentialist virtue theories, such as those of Thomas Hurka and Julia Driver, take virtues to be those character traits that lead to the best consequences, where these are defined independently of virtue itself.<sup>11</sup> And there are also “pluralist” views of virtue, such as those developed by Christine Swanton and Robert Adams, in which there is no univocal account of the nature of a virtue; virtues are simply character traits that respond well to those items in the “field” of the virtue.<sup>12</sup> So, the primary goal

<sup>7</sup> See for example, Julia Annas, “Virtue as a Skill,” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 3 (2), 1995: 227–43, and *Intelligent Virtue* (New York: Oxford University Press) 2011; Matthew Stichter, “Ethical Expertise,” in *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 10, 2007: 183–94, and “The Skill Model of Virtue” in *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 14: 39–49 (2007); and my own “Virtue Epistemology and the Epistemology of Virtue,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 60 (1), 2000: 23–43, and *Moral Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press), 2001, chapter 2.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1999, and Linda Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London: Duckworth Press) 1985.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Slote, *Moral Sentimentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Hurka, *Virtue, Vice, and Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 2000; Julia Driver, *Uneasy Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Christine Swanton, *Virtue Ethics: A Pluralistic View* (New York: Oxford University Press) 2005; Robert Adams, *A Theory of Virtue* (New York: Oxford University Press) 2006.

here is to vindicate the idea that each virtue has its own intellectual structure, a *logos*, which must be accounted for by any adequate theory of the virtues.

A terminological note to start. Very often when virtues are discussed by virtue ethicists, they end up looking far different than how they appear to common sense.<sup>13</sup> Still, there is some reason to think that virtue, especially wisdom, is something we should not expect to be wholly within the ken of the folk: the folk revere the wise because the wise have insight which the folk lack. And we should expect the same to be true of the other virtues.<sup>14</sup> We can imagine a “folk theories” of courage, temperance, justice, and wisdom, which could be formulated by psychologists gathering data from random subjects on what they think of these virtues. But we would not want this to be taken as the truth about the virtues any more than we take folk theories of physics give the truth about physics. To keep the truth about the virtues distinct from what the folk think about them, henceforth, “f-courage,” “f-temperance,” and so on, will be used to refer to what the folk think about the virtues and the words unadorned will be used to refer to how the virtues are modeled within a putatively true and complete theory of the virtues.<sup>15</sup> So, for example, f-temperance involves prudishness, tee-totaling abstinence, and perhaps even the nightmare of

<sup>13</sup> Thanks to Tim Elder for making me see the need for this terminological point.

<sup>14</sup> Of course, this opens the question about whether or not virtue ethics is elitist. Here I argue against Philippa Foot, Rosalind Hursthouse, Julia Annas, and perhaps Aquinas as well. In discussing the claim that it is “quite wrong to suggest that wisdom cannot be a virtue because virtue must be within the reach of anyone who really wants it,” Foot responds: “Wisdom, insofar it consists of knowledge which anyone can gain in the course of an ordinary life, is available to anyone who really wants it. As Aquinas put it, it belongs ‘to a power under the direction of the will.’” My response to such a thought is that while I am perfectly, enthusiastically egalitarian about moral fallibility and about the fact that each of us can become more wise than we currently are, I understand this as being comparable to saying that we can each become better at mathematics than we currently are. Becoming truly wise, or becoming an exceptionally talented mathematician, is a feat which can only be accomplished with prodigious natural talent; all the best intentions and effort in the world are not sufficient. For the charge of elitism, see Julia Driver, *Uneasy Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 2001. For Foot, *Virtues and Vices* (Berkeley: University of California Press) 1978, p. 6; Rosalind Hursthouse, “Practical Wisdom: A Mundane Account,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 106 (1), 2006: 285–309; Annas 2011. For the relevant notion of talent and achievement, see D. Lubinski and C. P. Benbow, “Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth After 35 Years: Uncovering Antecedents for the Development of Math-Science Expertise,” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 4 (1), 2006: 316–45.

<sup>15</sup> This notion of modeling is discussed in Russell (2009, p. 362), and will arise again at the end of this essay.

Carrie Nation wielding a hatchet, while temperance carries no such baggage. The thought here is that, with regard to practical wisdom, the folk have a rough and ready conception of it, along with being able to grasp simple articulations of it (consider the homilies in *Poor Richard's Almanack*), much like in folk physics. When matters become subtle, however, the judgment of the folk turns unreliable, while the judgment of the truly wise does not.

### 1.2.2 A PRACTICAL MODEL FOR VIRTUE

Let us begin with a rough and ready way of understanding the relation of courage and temperance to wisdom by saying that courage is the management of *phronesis* as applied to emotions and attitudes involving fear and confidence, while temperance is *phronesis* engaged with desire and revulsion.<sup>16</sup> More specifically, courage directs our behavior when we are faced with things from which we naturally shrink, like the prospect of pain or death, while temperance directs us when we are faced with what our passions and appetites crave, such as pleasure and satisfaction. Thus, both courage and temperance involve knowing how to “stand firm” in the face of what is repellant and attractive (respectively). How does justice fit into the picture? The answer is that it is justice at play when we must consider others, often in relation to ourselves. It involves knowing what people deserve, in terms of resources, rewards, and punishments, given both who they are and what they have done. And very often, this involves self-knowledge about who we are what we have done.<sup>17</sup> While we should not take the Aristotelian idiom of “virtue as a mean” too literally, we can caricature courage and temperance by noting that the former is a mean between cowardice and recklessness, while the latter is a mean between gluttonous over-indulgence and tee-totaling abstinence. If so, then, contra Aristotle, justice can be understood as a mean

<sup>16</sup> This idea is discussed in T. H. Irwin, “The parts of the soul and the cardinal virtues.” in *Platon: Politeia*, O. Hoeffe (ed.) (Berlin: Akademie Verlag) 1997. I think I found even more helpful Irwin’s “Do Virtues Conflict? Aquinas’ Answer,” in *Virtue Ethics, Old and New*, S. Gardiner (ed.) (Ithaca: Cornell University Press) 2005. I am indebted to Lionel Shapiro for discussion in which he pointed out the differences between revulsion and cowardice that I had not appreciated.

<sup>17</sup> For more on why this is so, see my “Justice as a Self-Regarding Virtue,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 82 (1), 2011: 46–64.

between arrogance and servility.<sup>18</sup> On such an account, it is arrogance and not gluttony that is the cause of *pleonexia* or unjust greed.

As a model for understanding how the intellectual aspects of these virtues are related, consider how being a master carpenter, plumber, and electrician are related. The first works with wood, the second with water, and the last with electricity. But all require practical intelligence in design and construction, and all require the sorts of intellectual virtues that are involved in being methodical, careful, precise (to the degree required by the activity), creative, patient, and insightful.<sup>19</sup> Now, if we imagine that a master carpenter has a leaky faucet or has to install a new electrical outlet in her own house, we should expect that this would not be too challenging: if one is capable of framing a house, one is most likely capable of fixing a leaky faucet. And if a master plumber wanted to build a tree house for a child, we should not expect this to be beyond her ken. The degree of practical intelligence required to be a master at any of these skills will be sufficient for successfully undertaking relatively undemanding construction jobs which are not within their specialty. Nevertheless, being a master at any of these involves large amounts of special knowledge. Carpenters must understand how different materials and different designs can support different amounts of weight, plumbers have to understand fluid dynamics, and electricians must have at least a rudimentary understanding of the physics of electricity. And being an expert at one of these certainly does not entail being an expert at any of the others (though, of course, there are those rare few who can do them all). Of course, a plumber will continue to be methodical, careful, precise, and so on, when trying to fix some electrical wiring and will not be sloppy about it or rushed or careless. If there are peculiar “vices” of construction, then our experts will avoid them even outside their areas of expertise. But being

<sup>18</sup> This argues against Bernard Williams’ interpretation of Aristotle’s idea that virtue as a mean. His thought is that one cannot be “too just” and so justice is an exception to the idea of virtue as a mean. But aside from justice as a mean between servility and arrogance, it can also be seen judicially in meting out just deserts, as a mean between being merciful and being draconian. Bernard Williams, “Justice as a Virtue,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s Ethics*, A. O. Rorty (ed.) (Berkeley: University of California Press) 1980; David Sachs, “Notes on Unfairly Gaining More: *Pleonexia*,” in *Virtues and Reasons: Philippa Foot and Moral Theory*, R. Hursthouse, G. Lawrence, and W. Quinn (eds.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1998.

<sup>19</sup> And we can even see further analogies to the virtues when we think of “character building.”

an expert in one only guarantees a certain competence in the others—a far cry from any sort of full unity. The competence here does not imply expertise—only an ability to complete those tasks which can be “figured out” without any of the special knowledge that marks experts. (This is similar to a theoretical example, regarding *theoria* as opposed to *phronesis*, in which being an expert in metaphysics guarantees a certain competence in ethics or logic.)

### 12.3 THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

So, with this idea in mind, we may now turn to courage, temperance, and justice *per se*.

Starting with courage, it seems that clearly immoral people, from criminals to pirates to tyrants, can regularly behave in ways that at least appear to be courageous, and this seems to imply that one can be courageous and unjust. It is doubtful that anyone ever accused Stalin of being a coward. Common sense, as well as Bernard Williams, tells us that one person can both meet the “standard of the bright eye and gleaming coat” while still being “red in tooth and claw.”<sup>20</sup> And even if everyone does want to draw a distinction between f-courage and foolish recklessness, still perhaps it seems possible that a person can be f-courageous and not too smart or at least without coming close to having the sagacity of a judge on the bench.<sup>21</sup> And there seems to be little superficial reason to think that f-courageous soldiers are necessarily going to be f-temperate as well.

<sup>20</sup> The first phrase here is Williams'; the second is from Tennyson. See *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press) 1985, p. 46, and *In Memoriam A. H. H.*, 1850, canto 56.

<sup>21</sup> See fn. 7. This is the point at which appears the fictional character of Forrest Gump, who seems to have an abnormally low IQ and yet is quite capable of brave-hearted courage. Nevertheless, given the intellectual aspect of courage discussed later, Gump's character strains credulity, as being someone not smart enough to discern the difference between recklessness and courage, and yet is always lucky enough to get away with his recklessness; foolish, lucky recklessness can make for f-courage, but does not true courage make, however superficially similar they may appear. At the very least, what Gump seems to lack is *euboulia* (good deliberation), which will be discussed more later. Two examples of this are given by Hursthouse 2006: (i) the person who sees a child drifting down a river and thinks to run down river ahead of the child before diving in, and (ii) the soldier, upon finding out that the enemy is in his camp, thinks to grab his helmet and shield and not just run out with his sword. Gump runs into a burning forest to recklessly rescue comrades when only pure luck keeps him from burning with them. Again, f-courage may call this “courageous,” but recklessness plus luck do not equal true courage.

If any of this is true, then there might be good reason to think that f-courage is not a moral virtue, given that the virtues are not supposed to be compatible with unethical or immoral or vicious behavior: if f-courage really is a “virtue” which can be possessed in isolation from all the other moral virtues, and can, like money, be used in the pursuit of the basest ends imaginable, then perhaps it does not deserve the honorific of being “a virtue” at all. Of course, this is not how the ancient Greeks thought of courage. Plato, for example, tells us that courage is always noble (*kalon*).<sup>22</sup> And there is no doubt that Aristotle also thought of it as a virtue (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III, chapters 7–10). So, how can we reconcile contemporary thoughts about the possibility of immoral yet f-courageous people with the ancient understanding of the inherent nobility of courage?

Well, one quick way is to chalk up the issue to the idea that f-courage is understood wholly in relation to how people handle fear. And of course, managing fear is central to understanding courage and managing any emotion can require cognitive or even skillful consideration: we need, at some level, to train ourselves to handle fear well, to control, say, our breathing and how calm we are in the face of real danger so that we may reliably (and not just luckily) do the right thing. The psychological training of fearful response, brought about through practice and reflection upon handling what typically elicits fear, is the sort of thing that military boot camp is for and that real-life experience of danger deepens. The mistake of f-courage is in thinking that the content of courage is exhausted by handling one’s fearful reactions correctly. For a start, consider how part of “fearing correctly” involves knowledge of the difference between what is truly fearful and what merely appears to be. As soon as one brings in an appearance/reality distinction, we have left the emotional world behind and have entered purely cognitive territory. Recognizing a phobia as such is not too difficult, but distinguishing real danger from what only seems dangerous may be far less easy. And we may remember that the Stoics thought that nothing is truly fearful at all: according to them, when we know what is truly of value and what is not, we will see that nothing is truly fearful—even torture on the

<sup>22</sup> *Laches*, 192C, and *Protagoras*, 349E. I found helpful Kenneth Seeskin, “Courage and Knowledge: A Perspective on the Socratic Paradox,” in *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 14 (4), 1976: 511–21.



rack, or death. Of course, Aristotle disagreed with the Stoics, dismissing those who accept such thoughts as being in the grip of a theory. But remember that Aristotle himself was in the grip of *ta endoxa* with regard to *eudaimonia*, or what we might call the “folk theory of happiness,” which includes the idea that certain “external goods” are necessary for a flourishing life, and we can see his account of courage and what is fearful as being based on his theory of what is of value in the world, what intellectuals call “axiology.”<sup>23</sup> So, the full story about courage, on any sophisticated account, requires more than the ability to manage one’s fears: at the barest minimum, it will require both an ability to discern real from apparent danger and knowledge of what is of value in life.

So, courage requires an ability to manage fear, a conative achievement, but it also requires an intellectual understanding of what is worth taking risks for. Still, this sort of axiology, while a cognitive inquiry, is oriented around value in general and not knowledge *per se*. Nevertheless, there is another even more purely epistemic layer to courage that becomes apparent upon considering the deliberative activity involved in risk assessment. One form of recklessness involves not fearing what truly merits fear, while another is taking inappropriate risks for the sake of trivial ends. It seems plain, even to common sense once it is pointed out, that true courage requires knowing what is worth dying for, that any fool can die for a cause, but truly courageous people are not fools. At this point we may note that “discretion is the better part of valor.”<sup>24</sup> Now, even if Falstaff did use this thought in excusing his own cowardice, we might still insist that courage requires knowing what to risk for the sake of what. “Discretion” here can refer to the ability to discern when to charge forward and when to retreat, as well as the self-knowledge involved in comprehending one’s own talents and abilities and the reliable application of this knowledge in the face of danger. One must be able to envision and evaluate different possible scenarios in order to deliberate upon them. But even assuming that “discretion” names a distinct epistemic virtue, there is nothing about it *per se* which

<sup>23</sup> For more on Aristotle on *endoxa*, see Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (New York: Oxford University Press) 1994.

<sup>24</sup> Falstaff says, upon faking his death on the battlefield, “The better part of valor is discretion, in the which better part I have sav’d my life.” *Henry IV*, part 1, act 5, scene 4. A less cowardly take on the thought is found in Bob Marley’s song *The Heathen*, in which he sings “Rise and take your stance again/ ’Cause he who fight and run away/live to fight another day,” from *Exodus*, 1977.

yields this substantial practical knowledge. One must have experience in battle, or in the courtroom, to be able to see when continuing the charge forward is in fact self-defeating. One must be able to comprehend which missions are possible and which are impossible. And even keener sight is needed in order to be able to spot a trap when all appears safe. It is, at least in part, the intellectual assessment of risk which separates the courageous from the reckless, and yet this idea seems missing from f-courage. Courage cannot be had without experience of risk itself, and one's courage is developed in part by the development of the intellectual skill of assessing risk. In purely quantitative terms the science of risk assessment is nowadays known as the "actuarial sciences," about which the author admits to knowing practically nothing, other than that equations from physics describing Brownian motion are sometimes used in making predictions of success and failure in taking risks.<sup>25</sup> More philosophically, we are in the area of formal decision-making and planning, as these are discussed by philosophers such as Michael Bratman and Allan Gibbard, with perhaps Bayesianesque epicycles appended.<sup>26</sup>

This is not to suggest that the consummately courageous person must be an actuary, much less a Bayesian. On the contrary, what is more apt is to say that these formalized procedures of assessing risk are attempts to model what is known by those who are courageous. The intellectual structure of full courage, encompassing both knowledge of value and the assessment of risk is epistemically far richer and deeper than merely managing an emotion like fear. And it is only when one begins to appreciate the intellectual aspects of courage that one sees that money or material goods are *not* worth the risks of theft or piracy, and that power over others is not worth the risks of being a tyrant. Even if these people escape punishment, they inevitably live plotting to keep it at bay. Evil

<sup>25</sup> My thanks to Auralia Perrica for discussion on this matter.

<sup>26</sup> Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press) 1987; Gibbard, *Thinking How To Live* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press) 2008. For general discussion of risk, see N. Rescher, *Risk* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America) 1982; S. O. Hansson, "Risk," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (autumn 2011 edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/risk/>>; and P. Weirich, "Causal Decision Theory," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (winter 2012 edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), forthcoming: <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/decision-causal/>>.

causes are not worth fighting and possibly dying for, and it is reasonable to think that all truly courageous people will agree that this is true. As noted, only reckless fools are willing to die for causes that are not worth it. Disagreement here only arises over the axiological question of determining “what is worth what?” and not on the epistemic claim that courageous people know what is worth dying for: people who are truly courageous know what is worth dying for and the wrong causes are not. And so, there is some reason to think that people who fight for evil causes are not truly courageous, even if the folk say something different, and, more to the point, even if f-courageous people are capable of acting in many circumstances as truly courageous people would. Being truly courageous entails comprehending the reasons for being courageous, and these reasons must be good reasons: but evil causes cannot be good reasons for action. (Of course, there are bad reasons for fighting for evil causes.) People who are not truly courageous may appear to be, and, as noted, the judgments of the folk, and the medals for bravery they distribute, are not authoritative. While putting off the “unity of virtues” thesis for a bit longer, we may in any case conclude that if discretion really is the better part of valor, if one must accurately assess the risks and values involved before one can justify courageously putting one’s life on the line, then intellectual perspicacity is essential to courage.

Temperance is similar to courage in that its intellectual depth superficially appears to be exhausted by learning how to “stand firm” in the face of something non-cognitive: for courage it is fear and for temperance it is pleasure and satisfaction.<sup>27</sup> To give a sense of the current state of philosophical literature on what the Greeks called *sophrosune*, the *Philosopher’s Index* database gives 187 hits for papers with *akrasia* or “weakness of will” in the title and only twenty hits for *sophrosune*, “temperance,” and “will power.” Moral philosophers seem to be almost ten times more interested in incontinence than temperance. Now, the psychology of moral philosophers aside, this approach is backward. How can one expect to explain what happens when things go wrong without first clearly understanding what it is like when they are as they ought to be?<sup>28</sup> This is something like

<sup>27</sup> My thinking about temperance in these regards is much influenced by conversations with Scott LaBarge and his paper “Socrates and the Recognition of Experts,” in *Apeiron* 30 (4), 1997: 51–62.

<sup>28</sup> It seems to me that if *akrasia* is a failure of willpower, then again understanding willpower should precede the investigation of *akrasia*. For one philosophical article on willpower, R.

trying to fix a broken engine without understanding how engines are supposed to work. There is more to temperance than willpower, since if one is truly temperate, willpower is not needed at all: those who are temperate are not even tempted by what they ought truly not to be tempted by, and as such they do not even need willpower, since for them there is no temptation to resist.<sup>29</sup> Those who are temperate, *sōphrones*, are immune to improper temptation and, *a fortiori*, *akrasia*. Aristotle famously contrasted temperance to both continence and incontinence (*Nicomachean Ethics*, book VII). Willpower is only needed by those who are continent, which is better than being incontinent but not as good as being well-tempered. *Sōphrones* comprehend which pleasures are innocent and which are harmful, which salutary and which detrimental; they discriminate between pleasures. Of course, this does not inhibit their ability to be passionate about their chosen pleasures: while *f*-temperance may see itself as champion of abstinence and the enemy of passion, temperance is truly only the enemy of illicit passion and over-indulgence. And so, perhaps unsurprisingly, axiology again becomes relevant to the virtue. Consider: most probably none of us are even tempted by heroin, despite knowing the pleasure we could experience by taking it. This shows that we have at least some understanding of what is truly valuable in life.

The more purely epistemic aspects of temperance involve how questions of epistemology affect our moral decision-making. And I think these can be addressed by thinking about how we make judgments about who to trust and who to distrust; the epistemological jargon casts the debate in terms of “testimony.” Fricker introduces the idea of an “anti-prejudicial virtue” by saying: “Let us call it (what else?) the virtue of *testimonial*

Roberts, “Will Power and the Virtues,” in *Philosophical Review* 93 (2), 1984: 227–47. Recent data from psychology on willpower is relevant. Some have argued that willpower should be understood, literally, at least partly as a form of strength, given that glucose levels in the blood seem to affect one’s ability to “stand firm” in the face of temptation. The hypothesis is contentious. See R. F. Baumeister, K. D. Vohs, and D. M. Tice, “The Strength Model of Self-Control,” in *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 16 (6), 2007: 351–5, and M. T. Gaillot *et al.*, “Self-Control Relies on Glucose as a limited Energy Source: Willpower is More Than a Metaphor,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92 (2), 2007: 325–36. For a critique of this work, see V. Job, C. Dweck, and G. Walton, “Ego Depletion; Is It All in Your Head?: Implicit Theories About Willpower Affect Self-Regulation,” in *Psychological Science*, published online 28 September 2010 at <http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2010/09/28/0956797610384745>.

<sup>29</sup> Continuing with the strength metaphor, “resisting” illicit temptation for people who are truly temperate is like a weight-lifter lifting a 1-pound weight; it does not even exercise one’s capacities.

justice” (2007, p. 92, italics in original). In answer to the “what else?” an alternative, more classical way of thinking about how to combat prejudice is not by pitting it against justice and explaining its occurrence as a lack thereof, but rather by way of temperance and its absence.<sup>30</sup> Of course, people are done an injustice if their testimony is discounted for arbitrary reasons, but Plato’s thought (in *Charmidies*) is that the relevant virtue which is supposed to manage issues of this sort is temperance, since prejudice is due to the undue influence of non-cognitive, appetitive elements of the mind, such as desire, insecurity, passion, and so on. The intellectual aspects of temperance appear in how and to what degree we let our appetites and desires cloud our judgment of who to trust and listen to; presumably, the more wanton we are, the more prone to prejudice we will be. In any case, it is common nowadays to note that people tend to listen to the “experts” with whom they already happen to agree: in America, Republicans tend to watch Fox News, and Democrats tend to listen to MSNBC. It is less common to see the influence of prejudice in these tendencies as failures of temperance, and yet, rightly understood, they are.<sup>31</sup>

There has been some discussion of these issues by contemporary epistemologists cast in terms of how we can discriminate between trustworthy and untrustworthy experts. Alvin Goldman tells us to (i) look at the how experts support their views, (ii) see if there is a consensus of experts on a question, (iii) look at “meta-expertise” or how credentials are earned, (iv) look for bias or a conflict of interest on the part of experts, and (v) look for success in the past.<sup>32</sup> But these helpful suggestions about

<sup>30</sup> The issue between Fricker and myself recapitulates somewhat a discussion between Hursthouse and Christine Swanton. Hursthouse points out that unjustly cheating fellow soldiers out of their rations out of a “pursuit of pleasure” is ultimately a failure of temperance not justice. Swanton, perhaps rightly, points out that not all unjust acts are the result of a lack of temperance; if injustice due to arrogance is a failure of temperance, it is not a normal failure. For the double self-deception involved in arrogance, see Robin Dillon, “Kant on Arrogance and Self-Respect,” in *Setting the Moral Compass*, C. Calhoun (ed.) (New York: Oxford University Press) 2004. For Hursthouse, see “A False Doctrine of the Mean,” in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 81, 1980–81: 57–72, at 64. For Swanton, see *Virtue Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 2003, at p. 21.

<sup>31</sup> Other surprising places to find a lack of temperance are in “rubbernecking” as people drive by car wrecks; when gossiping about others; or in watching melodramatic soap-operas or even “reality” TV shows. All these, in the end, amount to the same thing, though we should be careful to distinguish Schadenfreude from Nemesis. I thank Julia Annas for pointing out this final distinction to me.

<sup>32</sup> “Experts: Which Ones Should You Trust?” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 63 (1), 2001, 85–110.

discerning between experts will not be of much help when we are trying to judge the trustworthiness of people in everyday life. Nor will they help when the problems in making good judgments about who to trust come from within us as opposed to being found in those who may pose as neutral experts but are not.<sup>33</sup> Some of the thorniest epistemological problems involving questions of who to trust are the result of our own biases of which we might be wholly unaware. And these are not problems regarding judging expertise *per se*, but are more general issues of our own propensities to trust writ large. Nothing is more human than for us to hear what we want to hear, to ask for advice and opinions from people who think like we do, and to think that those who disagree with us with regard to matters we care about must be wrong. True temperance, at the epistemic level, involves knowing if and how our personal psychological needs and passions are influencing our decision-making. Here, we approach a topic that has been discussed by virtue epistemologists; namely, the intellectual virtue of being “open-minded,” but these discussions have not drawn any explicit connections to temperance.<sup>34</sup>

In the early modern period, Bishop Butler was one person who pursued these themes, though again not explicitly in terms of temperance, but he did employ the idea of “temperament” which is obviously germane. In his sermon “Upon Self-Deceit” he notes that there is nothing more common than for us to use our reflective abilities to justify to ourselves the way we favour the special objects of our desires or passions:

But whereas, in common and ordinary wickedness, this unreasonableness, this partiality and selfishness, relates only, or chiefly, to the temper and passions, in the characters we are now considering, it reaches to the understanding, and influences the very judgment. And, besides that general want of distrust and

<sup>33</sup> Aristotle’s remarks on *sunesis* (comprehension) (*NE* 1143a15), as an aspect of *phronesis* (practical wisdom), are related to the present point about temperance, for this is a virtue which concerns the evaluation of testimony. In particular, the way in which we can spot another’s incorrect testimony or reading of a situation requires *sunesis* in a way which may be purely cognitive, in which there are no biases or prejudices causing the error which is spotted. For discussion, see Hursthouse (2006).

<sup>34</sup> See papers by Wayne Riggs and Jason Baehrs. While Riggs’ discussion of open-mindedness does involve self-knowledge, Baehrs takes self-knowledge to be a precondition of open-mindedness and not part of it. Baehrs does use the word “tempted” once in relation to a tendency to fall back into a default cognitive position. Neither explicitly relate open-mindedness to temperance. Riggs, “Open-Mindedness,” in Battaly 2010 Baehrs, chapter 8 2011.

diffidence concerning our own character, there are, you see, two things, which may thus prejudice and darken the understanding itself: that overfondness for ourselves, which we are all so liable to; and also being under the power of any particular passion or appetite, or engaged in any particular pursuit.<sup>35</sup>

As Butler notes, as good as we may be at defending ourselves, we are perhaps even better at criticizing those with whom we disagree or do not like. The topic on which Butler writes, self-deceit, is one which obviously calls for self-knowledge and knowledge in general, and when we see that it is our passions and appetites that cause our self-deceit, then the epistemology of temperance comes to the fore.

We have to go back to Plato's *Charmides*, I think, to find a discussion of self-knowledge and recognition of experts that explicitly places the epistemological issues within the bailiwick of the moral virtue of temperance. Indeed, at one point in the dialogue, temperance is described as the virtue captured by the quotation at the entrance to the Oracle of Delphi, *Know Thyself*, the thought being that "Know Thyself" and "Be Temperate" are "the same thing:" temperate is what you are when you know yourself (164e). On this hypothesis, to say "know yourself" can be a piece of practical advice of special use when a person is about to give in to improper temptation—similar to saying "Nothing in excess."<sup>36</sup> A few paragraphs later it becomes clear that knowledge of the self has a less moral, purely epistemological character. There it is clear, as it is put, that the *sophrosune*, the temperate man (the gender being in the original):

... alone will know himself and be able to examine what he in fact knows and what he does not, and he will be capable of looking at other people in the same way to see what any of them knows and thinks he knows, if he *does* know; and what, on the other hand, he thinks he knows but does not. (167a, italics in translation)

Of course, *Charmides* is all about the problematic nature of this sort of second-order "knowledge of knowledge," though (hopefully) we can

<sup>35</sup> *The works of Joseph Butler, D.C.L.*, W.E. Gladstone (ed.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 1897, pp. 146–7.

<sup>36</sup> The translation is partly Donald Watt's. I substitute "Be Temperate" for "Be Self-Controlled" in the quoted phrase, but the identity asserted is clearly in the text. *Early Socratic Dialogues* (London: Penguin Books) 1987.

side-step these issues, taking it for granted that we have, in fact, gained some knowledge about knowledge over the centuries, and that we now call this knowledge “epistemology.” And it barely needs to be mentioned that self-knowledge is a species of knowledge. Now, if *akrasia* exists, which is practically indubitable, we can conclude that temperance is not exhausted by knowledge, and thus we may side-step Socrates infamous claim that all vice is due to ignorance. And it seems equally indubitable that Aristotle’s account of temperance as involving only bodily pleasures and appetites is also radically incomplete (*NE*, book 3, chapter 10). A complete account of temperance will require the investigation of matters that are both cognitive and non-cognitive.

Plato’s conception of temperance as operating in the realm of the purely cognitive and Aristotle’s conception of it as operating in the realm of the non-cognitive can be reconciled by the straightforward idea that, while temperance may be exercised in purely cognitive ways, such as in choosing who to trust, or in the knowing of when others know, very often (but not always) what makes these cognitive processes go awry, when they do, is something non-cognitive. Temperance is the virtue of not letting the exercises of one’s judgment be clouded by emotions, desires, appetites, passions, and so on. One might say that while our non-cognitive lives are central to the human condition, they should only be taken as evidence or data to be considered during deliberation, which is best done (as Butler pointed out) in an emotionally cool state of mind. One might think that the “purely cognitive” sorts of knowledge involved in temperance might be purely descriptive or non-normative, but as Critias suggests (*Charmides*, 174b), axiology must once again be included, for there is perhaps nowhere our judgments are more likely to be non-cognitively influenced than in judgments about what is good and bad: humans naturally want to see what we want, or what we desire, as good.

A last word about temperance before moving onto justice. Epistemologists are most often concerned with knowledge in the broadest sense. And the judging of when people (in general) know and when they do not is often the focus. But, as noted above, there is the special case of knowledge which is peculiar to each of us considered as individuals: obviously, self-knowledge. There are aspects of this which are general that all self-knowledge shares, while other aspects are unique from person to person. Perhaps there are general lessons we can learn about how



to strengthen our willpower so that it may face all but the very greatest of pleasures without a glimmer of temptation (see fn. 21 and 22). But from the personal point of view, at a basic level, the ways in which our own peculiar appetites and passions may affect, or infect, our judgments are something about which we must be autodidactic—no one can know any of us well enough to teach us this.<sup>37</sup> In the solitude of our own individual consciences, we must learn to discern the effects of the judgments we make about ourselves, our self-conceptions, upon the judgments we make about the rest of the world, and it will always be here that temperance will be hardest to master.

Now, perhaps the careful reader will have noticed that we have slipped into the cognitive idiom of “judgment” talk. This was no accident. There is a rich tradition of theorizing about what judgments are, what judging is; the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists twelve basic (though somewhat overlapping) usages. Descartes, Locke, and Hume, and I am sure many others, have had their own theories of judgment. Here, judgments may be considered evaluations or assessments of what is being judged, where an evaluation or assessment is the application of a standard to a case: one paradigm of judgment is in the application of rules practiced with the sensitivity to spot, grasp, or comprehend exceptions. The broadest sense of this idea of rule application is found in bare predication, in concept application, such that we judge an item to instantiate a property or think or assert that “the world is thus and not so.” (We will return to this later.) We judge things as being of a kind, and we also judge them as being good or bad examples of their kind, better or worse, right or wrong, correct or incorrect, functioning or malfunctioning, or, colloquially, “up to snuff.” And yet, despite all this implicit normativity, at least some such judgments have truth values: we can judge truly that the engine is broken, that it is not working “as it is supposed to work,” or that it is not doing “what it ought to do,” that something is “wrong with it.” So too, truly, a heart may malfunction and not do what it ought to do. And so too, we may judge that some agent is acting properly, is not behaving as he or she ought to behave,

<sup>37</sup> I take this point from John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty*, chapter 4. Drew Schroeder insightfully points out that, for example, one’s spouse might very well be able to spot the ways in which one’s emotions are affecting one’s judgments better than one can for oneself. The point is well taken, and is backed up by various writings on self-deception. The point about being an autodidact is perhaps best construed in terms of the privileged yet still all-too-fallible access which we have to our own minds.

that there is something wrong with that behavior. The logical structure of these judgments is identical, and this leads one to conclude that, at least *qua* judgment, they merit being treated in the same way. As such, a unified theory of judgment may require bridging the “truth/value” gap, may force a reconception or even dissolution of that gap. And interestingly, this opens up the possibility that normativity, as it is found in morality and epistemology respectively, should likewise not be conceived of as wholly non-factual evaluation. If the moral virtues and the intellectual virtues are so intertwined that they cannot be understood independent of each other, then a unification of metaethics and metaepistemology may be possible.<sup>38</sup> Obviously, these issues range far beyond the current topic. For now, it suffices to note that the content of judgments are normative, insofar as they mark when something “hits a standard,” “makes the grade,” or “counts as an *x*.”<sup>39</sup> Notice that there is an analytic reason to think that “judgment” as a noun is predicated upon “judging” as a verb, that the verb is primary: without judging, there are no judgments. Judging is performative action, and so can itself be done well or poorly and is therefore itself up for normative assessment. We may judge our judgments, and we have just seen how this may involve temperance. In any case, judgments are normative, and judging is normative too.

In a purely epistemic mode, justice is the virtue of making good judgments.<sup>40</sup> The primary uses of “judgment,” and “judge” (as both a noun and a verb) in the *Oxford English Dictionary* are the legal senses of these terms. So, it seems that etymologically we may say that judging is done by judges who make judgments, and that justice is the virtue of judges and therefore of judging. Notice that this is different from the typical discussion of the virtues of judges or jurisprudential virtue mentioned at the outset. While the primary sense of “judgment” in the *Oxford English Dictionary* refers to legal matters, the primary sense of “justice” pertains

<sup>38</sup> As Gary Watson says: “[O]ne cannot apprehend the Form of Justice without apprehending the Form of Human Well-Being. But to apprehend the Form of something is to know its essence. To know the essence of human well-being is to understand what it involves and what it is worth in itself—and hence in all contexts.” From “Virtues in Excess,” *Philosophical Studies* 46, 1984: 57–74, at 60.

<sup>39</sup> While I disagree with John Mackie about the nature of value, I agree with him that the question of whether a discourse is truth-apt is determined by the nature of the standards that are at play in that discourse. See Mackie (1977) on “standards of evaluation,” p. 25–7.

<sup>40</sup> For more on this take on justice, see my “Justice as a Self-Regarding Virtue” 2011.

to morals.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the intellectual virtues of the judicial judge might depart from a strict moral sense of “justice.” So, we are not surprised to learn that the issue of “judicial restraint” is a “hard case” for jurisprudential virtue.<sup>42</sup> There is some reason to think that judges on the bench ought to always err on the side of being conservative and of respecting *stare decisis*. But judging as cognitive phenomenon is certainly not all judicial, and there is no reason to think that all judging should be similarly conservative: sometimes it is the bold judgment which is most likely to be just and true.

This is not to say that any sort of judging can do without some version of “the rule of law.” It is invidious, it is epistemically unjust, to apply a standard to one case and a different standard to a relevantly similar case. At one level, this can be seen as enshrined as a principle of supervenience, in which if all *Xs* are judged to be *p* in virtue of their being *q*, then any *x* which is *q* must be judged to be *p*, on pain of contradiction. (Any exceptions are to be justified based on differences in the exceptional cases which warrant them being treated differentially.) This may be one area in which the law of non-contradiction must be considered as sacrosanct. At another level, the very idea of a concept can be seen as a rule, where actually having the concept *cat* is what allows us to judge any cats that we come across as “cats.” If someone sometimes judges dogs to be “cats,” then we say that that person does not possess the concept of *cat* at all. The very concept of a *concept* has built into it the idea that a concept will only be applied correctly, it will only make sense if it is applied consistently, if it succeeds in picking out all the things in the world to which it applies and picks out no other things. The excellence to be found in epistemic judgment is captured by the idea that like cases be judged alike, and differences in judgment must be due to differences in the cases being judged. This can be seen as the combined exercise of the sort of comprehension (*sunesis*) involved in medical diagnosis taken together with the sort of discretion at play when

<sup>41</sup> From the *Oxford English Dictionary*: “(1303) . . . A public officer appointed to administer the law; one who has authority to hear and try causes in a court of justice. . . .”; “(c.1225) . . . To try, or pronounce sentence upon (a person) in a court of justice; to sit in judgment upon.”; “justice, n. (1137–54). The quality of being (morally) just or righteous; the principle of just dealing; the exhibition of this quality or principle in action; just conduct; integrity, rectitude.”

<sup>42</sup> See Luban, 1992.

one knows what counts as a “relevant difference.” This is the epistemology of the virtue of justice.

If this seems novel, it bears noting that it is not terribly original, though the context in which these issues typically arise is not within moral philosophy but rather on the line between political theory and the law. In an early paper of Rawls, taken from a 1957 APA symposium paper called “Justice as Fairness,” on the very first page he says that “justice is the elimination of arbitrary difference.” And on the next page, while laying out the ur-version of his “first principle of justice,” he writes:

One can view this principle as containing the principle that similar cases be judged similarly, or if distinctions are made in the handling of cases, there must be some relevant difference between them (a principle which follows from the concept of a judgment of any kind). (p. 654)<sup>43</sup>

Nor is Rawls the only other philosopher to place treating like cases alike at the center of all cognitive judgment.<sup>44</sup> And thus, we may conclude, the epistemic virtues of being just in one’s moral judgments will be the same as those involved in making non-moral judgments. So, with regard to the virtues of good judgment, we may find a perfect unity between moral and epistemic or intellectual virtue.

Let me briefly conclude the discussion of courage, temperance, and justice as follows. If justice is really so central to all judging, note that it may sometimes require the boldness of courage, and it certainly requires the “even-mindedness” or balance of the tranquil and temperate disposition, and most certainly requires sagacity and insight. The virtue of courage will require both justice’s discretion of cool-headed judgment, especially under duress, as we understand having “grace under fire,” as well as temperance’s not letting passion or anger recklessly “get

<sup>43</sup> “Symposium: Justice as Fairness,” *Journal of Philosophy* 54 (22), 1957: 653–62.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Isaiah Berlin, “Equality,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56, 1955–56: 301–26; Richard Wasserstrom mentions the point in reference to rationality in “Rights, Human Rights and Racial Discrimination,” *Journal of Philosophy* 61, 1964: 634–5; J. B. Schneewind (without reference) quotes Clarke on the issue, noting in a footnote that Cumberland also comments on it. See *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 70 (2), 1996: 25–41. Of course, there is much discussion of the centrality of treating like cases alike in jurisprudence. See, as a place to begin, H. L. A. Hart, *The Concept of Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 1961, chapter 8.

the better of you”; the truly courageous person can “smell a trap,” and there is certainly a sort of wisdom involved in this. Temperance, as a virtue, requires willpower and being able to endure stress and “stand firm,” and these kinds of strength and endurance are often thought of as being the hallmark of courage. Temperance also requires good judgment and discrimination among the innocent and harmful pleasures in the world. And when all the interconnections between thinking justly, courageously, and temperately begin to look obvious, the unity of virtues thesis starts to look promising.

And this brings us, finally, to *phronesis*. One “mundane” way to conceive of it can be seen as having already been supported by our discussion of the other cardinal virtues. Rosalind Hursthouse (2006) gives an Aristotelian account of *phronesis* where we see its content as being constituted by the intellectual virtues of *euboulia* (good deliberation), (*eu*)*sunesis* ((good) comprehension), and *gnome* (correct discernment), and that possessing these inevitably leads to *eupraxia*, or good practice. Then one might think that, barring the stuff of tragedies, *eudaimonia*, or a good life, inevitably follows. Russell (2009) adopts a similar account of *phronesis* but expands its constituents to include *nous*, or intelligence, and cleverness as well. Perhaps cleverness requires creativity, but if it does not then it seems natural to include creativity on the list. Thinking back on courage, temperance, and justice, it is not hard at all to spot the roles of deliberation, comprehension, discernment, intelligence, cleverness, and creativity in each of them. (We can only hope that some day virtue epistemologists will take up these items directly.)

But while there is some reason to think the Hursthouse/Russell account incorporates elements which are all necessary for a full account of *phronesis*, it nevertheless seems incomplete. This is because it includes no mention of knowledge of the difference between good and bad, no mention of axiology. Of course, one might say this is built in, given that we do not just want *boulia*, or deliberation, but *euboulia*, or good deliberation, and so the *phronimoi* must already have some sense of the difference between good and bad. Of course, this goes for *eusunesis* and *gnome* as well. This is not enough, however. Recall that courageous people need to know what is worth what in order to know how much risk to take, that the temperate needed to know which pleasures are salutary and which are harmful, and that the just make correct or accurate judgments about the qualities of what they judge. Any account of the abilities of the *phronimoi* will have to

include the ability to know good from bad and right from wrong, and so axiology must be included in the account.<sup>45</sup>

#### 12.4 THE UNITY OF VIRTUES THESIS

Given all this, what can we say about how the virtues are related to each other? What falls out of this by way of the “unity of virtues” thesis? Well, first remember the model mentioned at the outset, based on the relationship between being a carpenter, a plumber, and an electrician. True, there are some features of the underlying intellectual structures of these which are identical to each other: no master plumber is going to be a fool when it comes to using a hammer or a wire cutter. But this does not entail that all master plumbers are also master carpenters or electricians either. So too, with the virtues, we see that the truly courageous will have to have the intellectual resources that would prevent them from being fools with regard to judging which pleasures to indulge or who deserves to be rewarded or punished. This does not, however, entail that the truly courageous are automatically consummate experts in temperance and justice.

We can triangulate on this position on the unity of virtues thesis by comparing it to others. There are, of course, virtue theorists who think the thesis is simply false.<sup>46</sup> Three views similar to the present one

<sup>45</sup> No metaethical questions are being begged here, though the implication of axiology here does require not just an account of normative value, what is good and what is not, but also an account of value itself. *Contra* Blackburn, Rorty, and Dworkin, metaethics is a distinct part of axiology. The brief argument for this is as follows: consider the Rawlsian distinction between how “the rules of the game” are employed on the field and how the rules for changing “the rules of the game” are not employed on the field. If arguing over issues in normative ethics is governed by “the rules of the game,” then metaethics is the distinct office in which “the rules of the game” are themselves argued over. Should ethical argumentation over a debated normative issue proceed by rational argument or sentimental suasion or some combination of these? Answering questions such as this is the job of metaethics. For the Rawlsian point, see his “Two Concepts of Rules,” *The Philosophical Review* 64, 1955: 3–32. For more on my take on these issues, see “Archimedeanism and Why Metaethics Matters,” in *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*, Vol. 4, R. Shafer-Landau (ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 2009. For “metaethical minimalism,” see Simon Blackburn, *Ruling Passions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 1998; Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press) 1982; and Ronald Dworkin, “Objectivity and Truth: You’d Better Believe It,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 25 (2), 1996: 87–139. For the most sophisticated version of minimalism I have found, see Matthew Kramer, *Moral Realism as a Moral Doctrine* (Oxford: Wiley–Blackwell) 2009.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Swanton 2003, and Robert Adams, *A Theory of Virtue* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 2006.

should serve to demonstrate its balance. What we end up with is a limited unity of virtues thesis, though not one identical to that defended by Neera Badhwar in an important paper on the topic.<sup>47</sup> She defends three theses: (i) that the existence of a virtue in one domain in one's life does not imply its existence in other domains, such that one might be courageous on the battlefield but a coward in love; (ii) the existence of virtue in one domain implies the absence of vice there and "ignorance in most other domains" (p. 308); and (iii) that within a domain, having one of the virtues implies having the rest. From the current perspective we can agree on (ii), but must take issue with (i) and (iii). With regard to (i), the idea that one can be courageous on the battlefield but not in love implies that the person does not truly understand the reasons behind being courageous. Part of being courageous involves thinking like someone who is courageous, not merely acting like such a person (the difference between *f*-courage and courage), and the idea that one can think like a courageous person in one situation but not in another suggests something like knowing that  $2 + 2 = 4$  sometimes but not all the time, or a plumber who can install a sink but not a toilet. When we fully appreciate the intellectual aspects of the virtues we find that having a virtue in one domain implies that one must have it to some significant degree in others. Lacking nerve in love tells against the courageousness of apparently brave action on the battlefield. This does not entail that the expert soldier must also be an expert lover, but rather that if one is a coward in love, or, even worse, has a phobia about harmless spiders, then one is not fully courageous. To take a different example, one may be able exercise temperance in one's professional life, so as not to let one's emotions dictate one's choices, and yet succumb in all sorts of way to influence of emotions when one's children are concerned.<sup>48</sup> The conclusion to draw from these examples is not that one can be courageous or temperate in one domain and not in others. Rather, it is to remember that, at the very least, courage involves the proper management of fear, and temperance involves the proper management of temptation and that the degree to which some fears or temptations "get the better of one" is the degree to which one fails to be courageous or temperate

<sup>47</sup> "The Limited Unity of Virtues," *Nous* 30 (3), 1996: 306–29.

<sup>48</sup> My thanks to Daniel Groll for conversation on this point. The example regarding temperance is from Drew Schroeder.

(respectively). With regard to (iii), Badhwar suggests that if one is kind to one's friends, then one will also be courageous, just, and temperate with them as well. Combining this with (i) implies that one can have the special knowledge of, say, knowing how to assess risks when friends are involved but not knowing how to do this when one is alone. If any conclusions follow from the discussion above, we have learned that what is intellectually required for courage, temperance, and justice is not to be had piecemeal, and that we cannot be expected to have it in some situations but not in others. Nevertheless, (iii) simply cannot be true if it is thought that merely being in a particular context, say being with friends, can automatically supply one with special knowledge of the virtues which one lacks in other contexts. So, of Badhwar's three aspects of her limited unity of virtues thesis, (i) and (iii) cannot be maintained.

While being consummately courageous implies being so everywhere, being so does not imply being consummately temperate or consummately just, though it does rule out being gluttonish or insensible, arrogant or servile. Perhaps however, if one really focuses in on the Aristotelian idea of the necessity of *phronesis* for all the virtues, one can derive a stronger unity than the one just described. If *phronesis* is necessary for all the virtues, then this seems to imply the possibility that being a *phronimos* is sufficient for having all the virtues. Russell 2009 calls the necessity and sufficiency of *phronesis* for all the virtues "hard virtue theory," and Annas (2011) defends something similar. The view that falls out of the discussion above is a more nuanced and limited view: being a *phronimos* is necessary for all the virtues, but it is not sufficient for them as well. It is sufficient for not having any of the moral vices and for *becoming* a master at all the virtues, but it is not sufficient for *being* a master of all the virtues.

In place of my model of carpenters, plumbers, and electricians, Annas suggests a different model; namely, the way that a pianist has all the skills for being a pianist and not one skill for fingering and another for tempo (2011, p. 87). So, in the same way that a pianist could not be skilled at fingering while lacking the skill of keeping proper tempo, a *phronimos* could not be courageous while lacking temperance or justice. In reply, one might suggest that a classical trained pianist might be rather inept at extemporizing jazz. But pursuing the matter in these terms would probably require the ability to individuate or count skills, which seems as hopeless as counting possible worlds. And, in fact, Annas does want



to draw a distinction that allows us to see how one person can be more proficient at one virtue than the others. This is the difference between what she calls “the circumstances of a life” and the “living of a life” (2011, p. 93). The *circumstances of a life* are those features of our lives over which we have no control, the place in time and location in which we are born, our gender, height, nationality, culture, and so on, while the *living of a life* concerns what one does with one’s life and the circumstances into which one is born. She rightly points out that the virtues are always exercised in the circumstances of our lives, and soldiers and caregivers lead very different kinds of life. She then concludes that “There is no such thing as being virtuous in a way which will be appropriate to all kinds of lives, or one ideal balance of virtues such as courage and patience that could be got right once and for all for everybody” (p. 95). She quotes Gary Watson in a footnote on the same page:

The unity thesis implies that if one has a particular virtue one must have them all; it does not imply that if one has a particular virtue one’s life will allow for the manifestation of all virtues equally. Which virtues will receive fuller expression will depend on fortune, cultural context, and one’s moral personality. (2011 p. 65)

Undoubtedly, this is true. We explain how different people express the virtues by appeal to the differences between people and the circumstances in which they live their lives. But the problem with this thought is that it seems to be belied by those rare people, like Socrates, who do seem to be fully consummate in all the virtues. We can imagine a soldier coming home from war and being an excellent care-giver, full both of courage and sensitive patience. The question concerns what we are to say of *phronimoi* born in times of peace and never confronted with the sort of danger that requires advanced competence in risk assessment. These people will no doubt not act foolishly. We can imagine them being as courageous as their circumstances have allowed. What they are lacking, however, cannot be wholly chalked up to circumstance or context. What they are lacking are the specific and specialized forms of knowledge that come with *having learned lessons* through prolonged and intense exposure that cannot be learned by those whose exposure is more limited. To employ the Greek idiom, *phronesis* does not exhaust the individual *logos* for each virtue; each *logoi* also contains special

knowledge and principles. There is more to the knowledge required for being a master of a particular virtue than what is required for being a master of deliberation, comprehension, discernment, and so on. For courage, particular knowledge of risk assessment is required; for temperance, one must know how one's needs, desires, and appetites can/do/may prejudice one's judgment; and for justice, knowing the difference between sympathy and mercy is necessary. There are epistemic aspects of each of the virtues that go beyond *phronesis per se*, and this shows that being practically wise, all by itself, is not sufficient for courage, temperance, and justice, that the wise person must actually go learn the special things known by courageous, temperate, and just people in order to instantiate these individual virtues. This keeps the virtues from being fully unified, even if there are certain people, like Socrates, who can equally and consummately manifest them all.

One might object to this by saying that while the soldier may not grasp justice as well as a judge, whatever special knowledge is involved in being a judge, it is merely the expression of *phronesis* cast in the "direction" of justice. This idea of "direction" comes from Russell, where he contrasts the idea of virtue as a "trajectory" to the idea of it being a "direction" (2009, pp. 342ff.). Trajectories are limited in shape and distance, while virtues are not limited like this. Learning a virtue is applying one's practical intelligence, one's *phronesis*, in a particular way or in a particular direction. Russell interestingly points out the difference between a theoretical understanding of the virtues, or how we model them, and how we attribute them to particular people (pp. 362ff.). So, Russell might try to save the unity of virtues thesis by replying that even if we do not attribute to people equal amounts of virtue, acknowledging that some of the virtues had by a person might not be as strongly manifested as others, when we consider the model of the virtues, and the way in which *phronesis* plays a necessary and unitary epistemological role in each of them, we may therefore conclude that the virtues are in fact unified at the level of theory, even if not in attributed fact.

As noted above, we can acknowledge the sense in which *phronesis* is sufficient for *becoming* fully virtuous even if it is not sufficient for actually *being* fully virtuous. The problem is that *phronesis* is essential to all practical endeavors that admit of excellence, not just the moral virtues, and it is hard to see what could stop Russell's line of argument from spreading in odd and perhaps even global directions. Let us assume that axiology is involved in *phronesis*, as discussed previously, and that we

can draw a principled distinction between being an expert nurse and being an expert torturer, so we do not have to say that being kind and being sadistic are somehow unified. But if *phronesis* unifies the intellectual realm of character building or the construction of a flourishing life, and is also found to be sufficient for all excellent endeavors that are not proscribed by morality, from being a carpenter to a soldier to a nurse, or a parent or friend, we end up with a much broader unity than even Aristotle or perhaps even the Stoics thought. We do not want to say there is a unity to all worthwhile pursuits, but it is hard to see how to stop Russell's "model theoretic" argument from encompassing all this.

Instead, we may return to the prosaic relation of being a carpenter to being a plumber to being an electrician. What unifies them is practical intelligence: *phronesis*. What keeps them distinct is not merely that the rough materials of wood, water, and electricity differ, but the special forms of knowledge and technique that are developed within the various specialties. There are things which courageous soldiers know which just judges do not, and *vice versa*, so being courageous and just, or courage and justice *per se*, cannot amount to the same thing. They cannot be fully unified. Of course, this does not excuse us from striving to learn and manifest all the virtues we can, given the circumstances of life into which we are born. Socrates can still be our model of virtue manifest fully. We may not be as prodigiously talented as he was, but we can try just as hard as we can try. And this will make us as virtuous as each of us can be.

