ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOKS

The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Humility

Edited by Mark Alfano, Michael P. Lynch and Alessandra Tanesini

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HUMILITY AND THE AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF *UBUNTU*

Thaddeus Metz

22.1 Introduction

The word '*ubuntu*' comes from the Nguni language group mainly in South Africa, and it literally means humanness, where humanness is something for a person to realize through certain positive relationships with other persons. Although the word is local, the relational approach to ethics that it signifies is much broader, being salient in many philosophies produced from the sub-Saharan African region. This chapter explores prominent respects in which humility figures into not just the relational ethic of *ubuntu*, but also the epistemic perspectives that are usually associated with it in regard to moral knowledge.

The African philosophical tradition, although long-standing, is only in its third generation when it comes to literate contributors and interpreters. Until the 1960s, sub-Saharan philosophers by and large lived in oral cultures. Whereas those in the Judeo-Christian tradition can invoke passages about humility that are at least 2000 years old (e.g., *Proverbs* 11.1–3, 16.5, 16.18–19, 18.12), as can those in the Confucian tradition (e.g., *Analects* 1.14, 14.20), there are no aged, venerable written texts to consult by those working in African philosophy.

To deal with this lack, one strategy would be to interview sages for accepted views of humility and to look for commonalities amongst indigenous African peoples (cf. Oruka 1991), or to consult proverbs about humility that can be shown to have had widespread appeal (one could consider Ibekwe 1998: 14–15, 150–151, 197; Kuzwayo 1998: 32, 34, 45, 49, 52). However, the approach of this chapter is to draw on philosophical ideas that have been published in academic fora over the past 50 years or so. They were substantially informed by the cultures of the philosophers who advanced them, and, even setting that point aside, these philosophies in themselves provide rich approaches to morality and epistemology that differ from what is salient in many other intellectual traditions and merit engagement.

Although the concept of humility has not often been explicitly invoked to make sense of African morality and epistemology in academic works, this chapter shows that it is a useful lens through which to consider key facets of these literate philosophies. In many ways, by *ubuntu* we are to be humble in respect of what an individual should claim from others and what an individual may claim to know, although no claim is made here that it is some kind of 'master virtue' for the tradition (a view often ascribed to St. Augustine in respect of Christianity).

The chapter begins by spelling out what is arguably characteristic of humility as such, whether it is a feature of how we treat others or how we come to know about the world (Section 22.2). Next, it articulates some ethical ideas associated with *ubuntu* and considers humility in the light of them (Section 22.3), after which it does so in the context of moral epistemology (Section 22.4). The chapter concludes by sketching some prominent African philosophies other than what has been advanced as *ubuntu*, and by suggesting ways in which the analyses offered here could be plausibly extended to them (Section 22.5).

22.2 An analysis of humility

In order to consider how *ubuntu* morality and epistemology may be understood to prescribe humility, one first needs some sense of what humility is. This section does not presume that there is an essence to humility, although it also does not reject that possibility (unlike Kellenberger 2010: 323–324). Instead, it advances features that are typical of a humble orientation, whether in the domains of ethics or epistemics. In emphasizing similarities between ethical and intellectual humility, the following does not strive to mark out the finer points of either one considered in isolation from the other.

The introduction spoke of making a 'claim', where one might make a claim on others' resources such as their time, or make a claim to know something about the world. Humility may be understood in these contexts to prescribe tempering claims (e.g., Roberts and Wood 2003: 258, 265–267; Kellenberger 2010). A humble person neither makes unreasonable demands to possess what others have, nor unreasonably maintains that she is in possession of certain kinds of truth. A humble person does not grasp for what is not hers to receive.

Talk of 'assumption' and cognate terms, and specifically the lack of it, is a second recurrent feature of humility. In the ethical realm, a humble agent is unassuming, relatively unconcerned that her status be greater than others (e.g., Roberts and Wood 2003: 259–261) and not wanting to impose on others without giving their interests at least due consideration (if not greater consideration than what is owed, on which see Kellenberger 2010). With regard to epistemology, a humble enquirer questions her assumptions, perhaps even when she is entitled not to doubt. She does not suppose that she knows with certainty or with too much confidence, or she accepts that there are certain topics about which she cannot know (e.g., Whitcomb et al. 2017). She judges herself to need evidence, perhaps seeking more than is sufficient. Whereas the humble agent does not take things for free from others, the humble enquirer does not take things for granted about the world. Neither is presumptuous; both accept limits.

A third term frequently associated with humility is 'extravagance', specifically the avoidance of it. An agent who is not humble might make excessive demands on others, or spend lots of resources on herself in respect of a party or an abode, perhaps ascribing to herself a value that is disproportionately great (e.g., Garcia 2006). An enquirer who lacks humility might extravagantly posit entities for which there is insufficient evidence, such as a multiverse or angels.

Putting these ideas together, a person is humble insofar as she tempers her claims, avoids being presumptuous, and eschews extravagance. It is natural to think of humility as a virtue, whether practical or intellectual (for just one instance, see Battaly 2019).[1] It is a disposition not to think too much of oneself, whether that is in relation to what goods one takes from the world or what one takes oneself to believe about it.

Of particular salience when it comes to ethics is the idea that others matter and must be given their due (and perhaps more). A proverbial Robinson Crusoe alone on a deserted island without humans or animals probably could not exhibit the moral virtue of humility, surely not

to its full extent. Relatedly, the 'anti-humble' vices of arrogance, vanity, attention-seeking, selfishness, and the like could not be manifest in the absence of others.

As this volume illustrates, there is of course much more one could discuss about the nature of humility. For example, the above description has roughly focused on avoiding 'too much', but presumably humility, insofar as it is a virtue, also involves avoiding 'too little'. And any 'too' talk, as well as mention of what is 'unreasonable' and the like, beg for specifics. However, the analysis given here will be enough to make sense of certain important features of *ubuntu* as a widely shared African philosophy.

22.3 African ethics and humility

As is becoming increasingly well known around the world, the key phrase used to sum up the moral aspects of *ubuntu* is 'A person is a person through other persons'. This maxim is an overly literal translation of sayings prominent in South Africa and mirrored in much of at least southern and central Africa. This section first provides a philosophical interpretation of the maxim and then brings out how it entails humility in a variety of respects.

22.3.1 An ethical interpretation of ubuntu

To begin to understand what it means to say that a person is a person through other persons or has *ubuntu*, consider some remarks from Desmond Tutu, the influential Nobel Peace Prize winner from South Africa and former Chairperson of that country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

> When we want to give high praise to someone we say, '*Yu, u nobuntu*'; 'Hey, he or she has *ubuntu*'. This means they are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate. They share what they have. It also means my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in theirs. We belong in a bundle of life. We say, 'a person is a person through other people'. It is not 'I think therefore I am'. It says rather: 'I am human because I belong'.
>
> *(1999: 34–35)*

By 'we' Tutu means indigenous African peoples, and the view he is ascribing to them is that one ought to develop one's humanity or personhood, which is constituted by the way one treats other people. One realizes humanness or lives a genuinely human way of life insofar as one exemplifies a variety of other-regarding virtues, some of which Tutu mentions.

Similar remarks appear from Yvonne Mokgoro, a former justice of South Africa's Constitutional Court who is known for having appealed to *ubuntu* in some of her judgements:

> [T]hus the notion *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu/motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe* [a person is a person through other persons—ed.] which also implies that during one's life-time, one is constantly challenged by others, practically, to achieve self-fulfilment through a set of collective social ideals … . Group solidarity, conformity, compassion, respect, human dignity, humanistic orientation and collective unity have, among others been defined as key social values of *ubuntu*.
>
> *(1998: 17)*

Here, too, the *eudaemonist* approach to morality is patent: one is to realize oneself by relating to others in certain supportive ways.

Philosophers are characteristically curious as to whether all the relevant *ubuntu*-constitutive virtues can be reduced to a single one. What might generosity, hospitality, friendliness, care, compassion, solidarity, respect, and unity all have in common, beyond being relational? The suggestion from Tutu, Mokgoro, and several others based in South Africa who have theoretically addressed *ubuntu* (e.g., Mkhize 2008; Metz 2014; Murove 2016)[2] is a harmonious relationship. A certain conception of harmony is plausibly foundational when it comes to the other-regarding moral virtues of *ubuntu*.

To begin to spell out what harmony involves, let us return to Tutu and Mokgoro:

> I participate, I share …. Harmony, friendliness, community are great goods. Social harmony is for us the *summum bonum* – the greatest good. Anything that subverts or undermines this sought-after good is to be avoided like the plague. Anger, resentment, lust for revenge, even success through aggressive competitiveness, are corrosive of this good.
>
> *(Tutu 1999: 35)*

> (H)armony is achieved through close and sympathetic social relations within the group.
>
> *(Mokgoro 1998: 17)*

Tutu and Mokgoro both mention two distinct ways of relating as constitutive of harmony, as do others in the literature (on which see Metz 2013 for a fuller reconstruction). One is participating or being close, which is usefully understood not merely as refraining from isolation, but also something like sustaining a common sense of self with others. So, for example, it means liking being together, taking pride in others' accomplishments, avoiding coercive, deceptive, or exploitive interaction, and realizing others' ends. Another phrase to capture this first element of harmony is 'sharing a way of life'.

The second element of harmony could be summed up as 'caring for others' quality of life'. It centrally includes doing what is at least likely to make others' lives go objectively better, i.e., in terms of their needs, and not so much their feelings or wants. These needs include the socio-moral imperative to develop one's humanness, meaning that one way to realize oneself by relating harmoniously with others is to help them realize themselves—by in turn relating harmoniously. In addition to giving to others in ways expected to improve their lives, caring for them means characteristically doing so consequent to certain positive attitudes, such out of sympathy and for their own sake.

Roughly speaking, sharing a way of life with others captures the virtues of respect, solidarity, and unity, while caring for them is what generosity, hospitality, care, and compassion have in common. And although there are still two distinct properties here, of sharing and caring, they are naturally viewed as a pair, for together they constitute what many English-speakers would call 'friendliness' or even a broad sense of 'love'. To relate in a friendly manner is more or less to enjoy a sense of togetherness, to engage in cooperative projects, to help one another, and to do so for reasons beyond self-interest.

In sum, a powerful way to understand one major strain of African thought about morality is in terms of a prescription to live in a way that prizes harmony or friendliness, or, more carefully, treats individuals with respect insofar as they are, in principle, capable of being party to such ways of relating. By this latter phrasing, a person who can by her nature be friendly and be befriended has a dignity that demands honoring, with one key way to do so being to cultivate or sustain friendly relationships with her. Although neither Tutu nor Mokgoro mentions dignity in the above quotations, a number of African philosophers have maintained that sub-Saharan

peoples typically ascribe dignity to human beings (e.g., Wiredu 1996: 158; Bujo 2001: 2, 138–139, 142; Deng 2004: 501; Gyekye 2010: section 6). Often the thought has been that everyone has dignity because she is a child of God, but here the link with harmony is tightened up, so that it is roughly the capacity to love and be loved in which our dignity inheres. As Tutu suggests at one point, 'The completely self-sufficient person would be subhuman' (1999: 214). Such a relational approach to morality differs from a focus on not merely autonomy or pleasure but also care, which standardly neglects both the sharing a way of life element and the relevance of dignity.

As with the nature of humility, there is more one could say about an *ubuntu* ethic, construed as prescribing one to realize oneself by prizing harmonious or friendly ways of relating. On the one hand, many will want to know why the 'African' label is apt for this principle, beyond the fact that it is grounded on the remarks of two African intellectuals from South Africa. The brief answer, and the only one space allows for here, is that something counts as 'African' if it has been characteristic of—not necessarily unique or essential to—much of that place and for a long time in a way that differentiates it from many other locales (Metz 2015), and that harmony indeed captures a wide array of beliefs and practices salient below the Sahara desert (Paris 1995; Metz 2017a; Ejizu n.d.).

On the other hand, readers will hanker for more specifics about the nature of the ethic. Is one to relate that way only with human persons, or do some other parts of nature, such as animals, count? Does an ethic prescribing harmony categorically forbid the use of force, and, if not, under what conditions does it permit force? How is one to balance actual harmonious relationships of which one is a part with merely potential ones with strangers? These are important questions, but we do not need answers in order to make headway on the ethic's implications for humility.

22.3.2 Ubuntu *and humility*

There are a number of ways in which an ethic instructing agents to respect others in virtue of their capacity for harmonious relationships, and hence characteristically to relate harmoniously, plausibly includes some form of humility, whether that means tempering claims, avoiding presumptuousness, or eschewing extravagance. This section highlights some major respects in which this is so.

The relationship between harmony and humility that is probably the most tempting to note is a causal one. That is, one naturally judges that a lack of humility, say, in the form of arrogance or self-centeredness, would likely discourage people from entering into or sustaining ties with those who manifest these traits. Instead, such attitudes can be expected to prompt discord, roughly understood as division and ill-will between people. Conversely, as Nelson Mandela (2000) has pointed out in an interview, if one is humble and so not a threat to others, then one will be in a good position not merely to avoid, but also to resolve, discord between others.

These claims are true, but they are also weak, in the sense that they ground no necessary relation between harmony and humility. *Often* haughtiness or selfishness will lead to alienation between people down the road, and is to be discouraged for that reason, but not invariably. Whether a certain attitude, or even its expression, brings about particular results or not depends on contexts that vary, for instance, on whether others have noticed it or not. If you did not hear another person gratuitously disparage you, his attitude will not on that occasion lead you to put more distance between yourself and him. Similarly, even if one is in fact humble, if people perceive one otherwise, then one's ability to resolve conflict amongst them will be hindered.

Here are some connections between harmony and humility that are stronger for being constitutive and not merely causal. To begin, consider that an ethic that ascribes a dignity to at least human persons straightforwardly forbids treating others as worth less than oneself. To have dignity is to possess superlative final value, and, by most interpretations of it these days, everyone has equal dignity if they have enough of the requisite property, in this case, the capacity to be party to harmonious relationships. Such an approach to morality rules out not only discrimination on grounds such as race or gender, but also arrogance. Having an equal worth when it comes to moral treatment easily entails a kind of humility in which one tempers one's claims on others and does not presume to impose on them (at least when it comes to non-intimates).

One way to avoid discrimination and arrogance would be to remove oneself from society. However, an ethic of harmony also forbids doing so. This ethic implies that the value of others is such as to require one to come closer to them, typically interpreted to require reconciliation between victims and those who have committed crimes against them, for instance (e.g., Tutu 1999; Krog 2008). If one were to isolate oneself, one would be failing to recognize other people's worth adequately and so failing to be humble before them. Paying attention to only oneself would amount to ascribing a certain kind of importance to oneself that one does not in fact have. It would mean that others do not matter enough for one to go out of one's way for them, but their dignity calls for more than that. If we have dignity by virtue of our ability to relate harmoniously, then the default mode of engagement (viz., with innocent parties) should be to relate in that way.

More specifically, by the present ethic, one is obligated to acknowledge the importance of others in two major ways. First, one must come closer to them by participating with them cooperatively. One must rein in one's ends so that they are at least substantially consistent with those of others, if not shared with them. One may not spend so much time, labor, money, and the like on oneself that one is left unable to advance other people's projects. Second, one should advance certain kinds of ends, ones that are at least unlikely to make people's lives objectively worse, and ideally those likely to make them better. Indeed, according to what is probably the dominant strain of thought about African morality, there is no category of supererogation, a view that is sometimes explicit (e.g., Gyekye 1997: 70–75) and other times implicit in the principles advanced (consider, say, the Golden Rule in Wiredu 1992: 198). In the African tradition, it is imperative to curb one's demands on others and instead to go out of one's way for them, especially for extended family members, to the point where, in some cultures, having slaughtered an animal and not offered some to relatives would be considered theft (Metz and Gaie 2010: 278).

There is an additional respect in which *ubuntu* as an ethic prescribes humility, which concerns not how one should treat others, a first-order virtue, but how one should regard oneself in respect of how one has treated others, a second-order virtue. In brief, one should be humble about one's having been humble.[3] It is one thing to be presumptuous in respect of others' interests and thereby lack virtue, and another to be presumptuous in respect of one's own virtue, another type of a lack of virtue. M. K. Gandhi accepts this point when he says, 'A humble person is not himself conscious of his humility .... (A) man who is proud of his virtue often becomes a curse to society' (1932: 30).[4]

How would failing to be humble about one's humility, or one's virtue more generally, show disrespect of others' ability to be party to relationships of harmony? One idea, suggested by Gandhi above, is that if one were to label oneself as 'humble' or 'virtuous', then one would rest on one's laurels and be disinclined to reflect critically on oneself. There is always room for growth as a moral person, or at the very least decline for one to ward off, both of which seem to prescribe erring on the side of underestimating the extent to which one has realized virtue. Notice, though, the 'often' in Gandhi's formulation: this rationale cannot explain why it is always a vice to some degree to fail to be humble about one's virtue, as sometimes being proud about it will not be expected to have bad consequences for others.

Reflecting on Nelson Mandela's virtue occasions awareness of other, stronger reasons for thinking that one should be humble about one's humility and, more generally, one's virtue. Mandela is famous for having illustrated humility about his moral accomplishments, and it is reasonable to think that it is a function of the *ubuntu* ethic to which he subscribed (Mandela 2012: 147, 155, 2013a: 227). Mandela would, for instance, often pay tribute to others beyond himself, such as the South African people, for major positive changes to their country's socio-political structure, and he also recommended doing so as an ideal form of leadership (Mandela 2013b). Here, it is plausible to think of sharing credit and praise with others as an instantiation of *ubuntu*; it is another way to give to others, instead of directing good things to oneself.

For another respect in which Mandela was humble about his achievements, consider that he avoided comparing them to those of others, instead being known for having referred to all the greater tasks he had yet to accomplish. In the last paragraph of his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela famously remarks, 'I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb' (1994: 751). By focusing not on how great his achievements were relative to most people's, but instead on how many more achievements he had yet to make, Mandela respects others, in two ways. He avoids making people feel inadequate, and prompts himself to do all the more for human beings, the sole relevant achievement by an *ubuntu* morality.

22.4 African moral epistemology and humility

Whereas the previous section addressed respects in which humility is prescribed by an ethic of respect for individuals' capacity for harmonious relationships, the present one considers some ways that humility figures into the African epistemology that is the common companion to this ethic. In particular, this section notes some respects in which individuals should be humble when it comes to knowing which acts are right and attitudes are virtuous.

Very broadly speaking, the Western tradition encourages an individual to use his own rational powers to evaluate a given subject matter, including morality; methods such as *a priori* reflection and coherentist justification in the light of one's intuitions are common. In contrast, the African tradition is much less sanguine about what can be known about morality by a typical human being cogitating on his own. Roughly, although the Western tradition has recently acknowledged the importance of expert testimony as a source of knowledge, debate is ongoing about the aptness of moral testimony, and the African tradition makes reliance on epistemic authority and collective enquiry more central, and especially for moral matters.

Probably most indigenous African peoples believe in God, such that it is much too narrow to think of monotheism merely in terms of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic religions.[5] Whereas the Abrahamic faiths are revelatory, traditional African religion is not (Gyekye 1995: 129–146; Wiredu 1996: 61–77). That is, according to the Abrahamic faiths, God's benevolent and just will has been directly communicated to human beings via certain texts or prophets. If you read a certain book, or hear what a certain person has said, then you can know what God's moral purpose is. In contrast, from a characteristic sub-Saharan perspective, God is 'too big' or 'too distant' for us to be able to apprehend His mind, so that we require a mediator in order to convey God's intentions to us. For the African tradition, we must be humble in respect of knowing God's mind, including His moral commands—indeed, we have no hope of becoming directly acquainted with the thoughts of an infinite being.

As for the mediator who can become acquainted with God's will, the standard view amongst indigenous sub-Saharan peoples is that it must be an ancestor, a wise founder of a clan who has survived the death of his body, continues to reside on earth in an imperceptible realm, and

instructs the clan on how to behave, which includes dishing out penalties for moral infractions. How, then, is a human being to know the mind of an ancestor? Here, again, humility is warranted on the part of a typical human person. It is not just any individual who is deemed to have the ability to access the ancestral world, but rather those who have undergone years of training in how to interpret dreams, enter trances, detect reincarnated persons, and the like.

In the African tradition, there are also less 'spiritual' mediums through which to access judgements about who did wrong and what morally should be done now. Even these more naturalist methods, however, tend to eschew reliance on individual reflection, intuition, etc. Particularly common is the thought that one should defer to the judgement of elders, and especially to consensus amongst them, about moral matters, such that moral education ought to center around apprehending, and not particularly questioning, their views (for a robust articulation and defense of this position, see Ikuenobe 2006). A young person challenging a much older one about morality would be viewed as lacking the requisite epistemic humility; specifically, the young person would be viewed as being presumptuous.

Although it is possible for an aged person not to count as an 'elder', for evincing poor judgement, the default position is that with age comes wisdom and hence the authority to speak about moral matters. The notion that some people in their 20s or 30s could reach the highest stage of moral appraisal, a view advanced by the influential American psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (1984: 272–273), is quite out of place amongst African philosophers. Instead, as an influential Nigerian ethicist remarks of an Igbo African proverb:

> 'What an old man sees sitting down, a young man cannot see standing up' … . (A)lthough we would not have a great deal of difficulty talking about an 18-year-old mathematical giant, we would have a great deal of difficulty talking about an 18-year-old moral giant.
>
> *(Menkiti 2004: 325)*

This view is plausible insofar as an ethic of the sort analyzed in the previous section is accepted; for it takes substantial experience to learn how to navigate the complexities and challenges of interpersonal relationships (for more on the point, see Metz and Gaie 2010: 286).

Furthermore, it is common in the African tradition to maintain that moral knowledge is most likely to emerge from consensus amongst at least a group of elders, if not all those affected by the controversy, and not so much from the pronouncement of a single person. Although many indigenous African societies were led by a monarch, it was routine for him to defer to the collective judgement of a group of elders, or perhaps all those involved, about how to resolve conflicts or otherwise proceed with contentious matters. Part of the reason for being inclusionary is practical, e.g., making people more likely to enjoy a sense of togetherness, but another part is clearly epistemic, the rough idea being that two heads are better than one (one finds discussion of both in Bujo 1997: 43–57, 2001: 45–71, 2005: 427–431). If kings deem themselves unqualified to make ethical judgements on their own, so much the worse for a typical individual member of society. Instead, from this standpoint, she must be humble in respect of her own ability to determine what the best course of action is in a relational context.

22.5 Conclusion

This chapter has expounded one major strain of African thought about normative ethics, which is relational, and brought out what it means for humility in both normative ethical and moral epistemological matters. Broadly speaking, supposing that a good person, i.e., one with *ubuntu*, is

one whose attitudes and actions express respect for people's dignified ability to relate harmoniously, one must not be discriminatory, arrogant, or selfish when it comes to the way one treats others, and one must consult routinely with elders about how to sustain, deepen, and otherwise honor relationships. Failing to live harmoniously would often consist of failing to manifest humility, as would believing that one can routinely ascertain how to exemplify *ubuntu* without the input of older and wiser people.

There are other accounts of African morality that contemporary philosophers have expounded that this chapter has not addressed. Instead of taking relational features to be foundational, most of the other views instead deem either vitality (e.g., Dzobo 1992; Magesa 1997) or the common good (Gyekye 1997, 2010) to be what ultimately matters for ethics (but see Wiredu 1992 for a somewhat different view). However, even by these approaches, harmonious relationships are nearly always deemed to be particularly reliable, if not essential, means by which to promote life or well-being. That is, sharing a way of life and caring for others' quality of life, even if not deemed to be relationships to pursue as ends, are thought quite likely to make other people more lively or to improve their welfare. Insofar as that is the case, the considerations about how humility figures into a relational ethic will, *mutatis mutandis*, apply with comparable force to these other African ethics. One may therefore conclude that humility is central to African moral philosophy, not merely the *ubuntu* variant on which this chapter has focused.

Notes

1 Is there an aesthetic humility that would complement the ethic and epistemic? Although the literature does not speak of one, it would be worth pursuing the idea that there is a humility possible in the realm of the beautiful, and not just in the good and the true. One thought is that, while aesthetic judgments might have an objective dimension, humility counsels against typically deeming them to be universally valid (for such a view, see Miller 1998).

2 But not only them—there are many from the rest of the continent who also place notions of harmony, cohesion, community, and the like at the heart of self-realization, just two examples of which include Paris (1995); and Ejizu (n.d.).

3 For this 'self-attribution problem', see Driver (1989); Kellenberger (2010: 328–331); and Whitcomb et al. (2017). The point is similar to the familiar idea that a person is wise (partly) insofar as she is disinclined to think of herself as wise (or at least to proclaim herself wise to others).

4 But perhaps not so much when Gandhi had earlier said, 'I claim to be a simple individual liable to err like any other fellow mortal. I own, however, that I have humility enough to confess my errors and to retrace my steps' (1926/1999: 195).

5 The rest of this paragraph borrows from Metz (2017b: 804).

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