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Responses

Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge by Linda Zagzebski

Review by: Linda Zagzebski

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Responses

LINDA ZAGZEBSKI

Loyola Marymount University

RESPONSE TO GRECO

John Greco has obviously done a very careful reading of the book, and I thank him for pressing issues that need to be pressed and for offering his criticisms with a generous spirit.

Obj 1: Greco objects to my position that reliabilist theories are not genuine forms of virtue epistemology. The dispute between them and me, he says, is over the *nature* of intellectual virtue. Mine is inspired by Aristotle, theirs by Plato, but both equally make intellectual virtue central in epistemology. In support of his position Greco quotes a passage from Aquinas in which he claims Aquinas follows Plato in calling natural faculties virtues. In response I would like to say that I think his reading of Aquinas and Plato is arguable, but even if Sosa's and Greco's virtues really are virtues, that answers only one of my objections to calling reliabilists virtue theorists. Nonetheless, there is no point in quibbling over the term "virtue epistemology" anyway. I am happy to give Greco the label if he wishes it and, in fact, have already done so elsewhere.

In Greco's and Sosa's theories the central idea is that of a reliable belief-forming faculty, and they both claim that vision and hearing are virtues. Greco refers to the passage at the end of Book I of the *Republic* as evidence that Plato treated natural faculties as virtues, but on my reading of that passage Plato is treating sight and hearing as functions of the eyes and ears respectively, and virtues as the excellence of those functions (352d–353d). The passage he quotes from Aquinas is taken from the article in which Aquinas defends his view that human virtues are habits. He says there that virtue is a perfection of a power, and a power is perfected by being determined to its act. Natural powers are automatically determined to their acts, and hence are perfected by nature. It is for this reason that they are "called virtues." But the rational powers, those that are properly human, are not naturally perfected, but are perfected by habits. The distinctively human virtues, those that involve our rationality, are therefore habits. So for Aquinas, well-func-

tioning natural faculties are virtues in an extended sense of virtue, and for both Plato and Aquinas, a virtue is not the natural faculty itself, but the excellence or perfection of the faculty. This is consistent with the reliabilist position under the assumption that what they really mean is that *reliable* natural faculties are virtues. On the reliabilist reading of Plato/Aquinas, a virtue is the perfection of a faculty, the perfection of a natural faculty consists in its reliability, and hence, reliable vision, reliable hearing, reliable memory, etc., are the virtues.

I would find it very interesting if Sosa or Greco made a careful use of the work of Plato or Aquinas in their theories, and hope that they will do so. That would answer my second objection to calling reliabilism a form of virtue epistemology: Aside from the issue of whether Sosa or Grecoan virtues are really virtues, their theories are not modeled on a theory of virtue in any of its forms. But in spite of these remarks, I believe that there is nothing to be gained by quibbling over the term “virtue epistemology.” I think that reliabilists made an important advance over evidentialist theories by making the normative properties of persons conceptually prior to the normative properties of beliefs. In previous work I was undecided about whether to consider reliabilism the precursor to virtue epistemology, or an early version of it.¹ But again, I do not think it is a terribly important question and am happy to give reliabilists the label if they want it, as I have done in a subsequent paper.²

Obj 2: Greco argues that acts of intellectual virtue are not necessary for knowledge. In particular, he objects to the requirement that the knower must have a virtuous motivation. As long as a person has a reliable cognitive character he can have knowledge even without the requisite motivation.

Here we seem to have a clash of intuitions that may be difficult to resolve, at least in this short space, for I am not at all inclined to say that the *idiot savant* has knowledge. Mere machine-like reliability in getting to the truth is not sufficient for knowledge, and the situation is even worse if the person is the contrary of fair-minded, open-minded, careful, thorough, and so on. So I would not hesitate to say that the cognitive agent Greco describes at the beginning of section 2a does not have knowledge. But what about the mathematical genius who never engages in acts of intellectual virtue? This is a much more interesting and challenging case and I would like to hear more details about it. To be a mathematical genius presumably is to have a distinctively human power—a cognitive power, and one that we highly value. I think we should not be too hasty in saying the mathematical genius does not

¹ “Virtue Epistemology,” entry in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

² “From Reliabilism to Virtue Epistemology,” invited paper presented at World Congress of Philosophy, Boston, Mass., August 1998.

perform acts of intellectual virtue. It is more likely that she exhibits unusual virtues—better than normal, not less so. But we could not discover that without finding out more about her psychology. Her own description of how she comes to “know” is important. If she can say nothing at all about it, she is no different than the *idiot savant* and she does not have knowledge.

Greco also mentions non-human cognitive agents who do not behave like intellectually virtuous humans behave. I agree that if there are other intelligent species, their virtues may be different from ours, but I say in *Virtues of the Mind* that I am giving a theory of *human* knowledge, not an analysis of the *concept* of knowledge. It is therefore meant to be substantive in the way a virtue theory of ethics is substantive. It is not a conceptual analysis.

Obj 3: Greco also claims that acts of intellectual virtue are not sufficient for knowledge. In particular, these acts are not sufficient in the absence of agent reliability, which Greco considers necessary for knowledge. I find this an interesting and challenging objection, and it shows me the direction in which I want to move to improve the theory. As I see it, the situation is this: Greco thinks that agent-reliability is necessary for each instance of knowledge, but he thinks that an agent can perform acts of intellectual virtue in my sense in the absence of agent reliability. He then says that requiring that the agent possess the virtue in order to perform an act of virtue will answer his objection as long as possessing intellectual virtue is sufficient for agent reliability, and it will be sufficient for agent reliability just in case intellectual virtues are truth-conducive.

Let me begin by saying that Greco is right that my theory can answer the problem he sees if we modify the definition of an act of virtue to require that the agent possess the virtue in question. I claim that we would not consider individual intellectual traits such as open-mindedness, fair-mindedness, and intellectual carefulness and thoroughness virtues unless we thought they were truth-conducive. Truth-conduciveness is part of what makes an intellectual trait a virtue, so if an agent has intellectual virtue in my sense then she is agent reliable. However, I maintained that we should not require that an agent possess the virtue in order to perform acts of virtue. That is because I was assuming requirements for virtue possession as strict as Aristotle's. Aristotle maintains that an agent does not possess the full virtue until it is so entrenched that acting on it is automatic and gives her pleasure. But I think a virtuously motivated person who does what virtuous persons do can still have knowledge even before she fully acquires the virtue. To require full virtue is to require too much. It prevents young children and possibly many adults from having knowledge. So I am unwilling to go the route of requiring the possession of the virtue in order to perform an act of the virtue in question unless we weaken the conditions for virtue possession, and that is, of course, an option.

This brings us to the prior question of whether Greco is right that agent reliability is a necessary condition for knowledge and whether agents can satisfy my definition without being agent reliable. This is a difficult matter to settle since on my view agent reliability is something an agent acquires a little at a time. Greater degrees of reliability generally accompany greater cognitive maturity, but even an immature agent may be as reliable as necessary for knowledge. Can an agent satisfy my definition of knowledge without reaching the minimal degree of reliability necessary for knowledge? To perform an act of intellectual virtue in my sense the agent must be motivated to get the truth and to be open-minded, intellectually fair, careful, thorough, etc. She must do what persons who really do possess those virtues characteristically do in her epistemic circumstances. And she must get to the truth because of these acts and their motives. Does that rule out the kind of accidentality that worries Greco? I think that it rules out the cases he mentions in which the agent adopts a cognitively successful process fleetingly. That is because an act of virtue must get to the truth not only because of the process, but also because of the motive. But Greco does not give any particular cases, so it is hard to know whether my definition needs to be strengthened to meet them. But I have not ruled out the possibility that he may be right.

Greco is willing to say that perhaps my account gives the *way* that humans are agent-reliable; it is by having virtues in my sense. If so, Greco says, this is a fact about “the mechanics of cognition rather than the conditions for knowledge.” This is an interesting point of view about what a definition of knowledge is supposed to do. Is it supposed to leave out the empirical facts about human cognition? I already remarked that there seems to be a difference between us in that Greco believes we should aim at a definition of knowledge that applies to knowers other than humans, whereas I do not. Given that reliabilism is in the naturalist tradition, I would be interested to discuss further with Greco the question of why the mechanics of cognition is a separate issue. If he thinks that reliabilism when combined with a theory on the mechanics of cognition leads to a virtue theory of the kind I propose, I would not be at all displeased.

RESPONSE TO ALSTON

Obj 1: Bill Alston says that it is not necessary to insist that motives are emotions, that “emotion is a wheel that is not moving anything” in the epistemic mechanism I describe. Presumably he thinks doing so makes the theory unnecessarily vulnerable to attack. I thank Alston for noticing that the formal structure of the theory does not require that motives be emotions, and my foray into moral psychology may be unnecessary for many epistemological purposes. I have indulged in it because I think that emotion is critical in explaining human behavior, and this is something already of interest to ethicists, particularly virtue ethicists. It may be of less interest to epistemol-

ogists, but I suspect that when a theory of motivation is worked out, it will turn out not only that motives are emotions, but that emotions play the same role in cognitive activity that they play in overt conduct. At this point, however, I am satisfied if epistemologists are convinced of the importance of motivation in epistemic praiseworthiness and knowledge. I do not insist that they accept my view that motives are emotional states. But while my position on the centrality of emotion is more important for my theory as an ethical theory than as an epistemological theory, I hope that further work on motivation will convince epistemologists that emotion is a critical component of cognitive behavior.

Obj 2: Alston objects to my claim that ‘virtue’ is a success term, an objection I have encountered in other fora. In the context of this symposium Alston’s position makes an interesting contrast with that of Rorty, who objects that “virtue” is nothing but a success term. This issue is deep and the contrasting intuitions are hard to shake. So, for example, I would say that a person motivated by kindness, but who is so inept that he systematically hurts other people’s feelings, lacks the virtue of kindness. But I do not expect to make much progress in reaching agreement in this space. All I want to say is that I think that morality serves a dual function. On the one hand, we think of morality as pertaining to the condition of the heart; on the other hand, we think that the point of morality is to make the world a better place. My two components of virtue, the motivation component and the success component, are intended to reflect that dual purpose. To me the most interesting question is how the two are related. I am not much tempted to give up either one. But I also recognize that this is a matter about which reasonable persons differ.

Obj 3: Alston says that on my view of justified belief a belief is something one is motivated to have, and hence is under one’s voluntary control. Alston doubts that beliefs are under effective voluntary control in such a way that one can be motivated to bring them about. In response, let me first point out that it does not follow from my definition that a person is motivated to have the particular beliefs she has. She is motivated in her cognitive activity by the emotion-dispositions that are components of intellectual virtue. So she is motivated to be open-minded and intellectually fair and careful and thorough, and to act in ways that express these qualities, and her deeper motivation is to get the truth. So the motive is not directed towards the particular belief, but to the truth and to the activities that she thinks will get her to that end.

The issue of voluntariness is complex, whether it is about belief or about action, and I do not pretend to have a complete account of either one. In the book my argument was comparative: most beliefs are as voluntary as many acts and other states for which we are responsible. This argument did not

convince Bill and I doubt that I will convince him in this paragraph. So I only want to stress one point. Voluntariness is often confused with choice, and choice is thought to be a discrete event the freedom of which requires the existence of alternate possibilities at the time the choice is made. Since I think that choice even in the realm of action is much less important and occurs much less often than is commonly believed, it does not concern me that we rarely if ever choose our beliefs, and usually cannot do otherwise at the time the belief is formed. While I think that freedom is connected with alternate possibilities, I also think the connection is less direct and more complicated than is usually believed.³ Like Aristotle, I think that the range of the voluntary is wider than the range of choice. We may not choose our beliefs, but we have at least as much voluntary control over them as we do over our character traits, and as much as we do over our emotions and the acts resulting from these emotions. Since I think we are responsible for those emotions and the acts resulting from them, we are responsible for (many of) our beliefs. My position is that the primary locus of voluntariness and responsibility is not the instant of choice or the instant in which the belief is acquired or the act is performed, but is the underlying psychic states and traits out of which the act or belief arises. In the case of intentional acts there may be an additional locus of freedom in the moment of choice, but this is not necessary for voluntariness and responsibility.

Obj 4: Alston thinks I cannot explain how perceptual beliefs are both justified and instances of knowledge. He does not think such beliefs are preceded by acts of intellectual virtue. In fact, he thinks they are not preceded by acts at all, much less acts that are conscious and voluntary. Now I do not have a theory of perception, but I do think that it is unlikely that perception is purely passive. At least, the processes leading up to the acquisition of perceptual *knowledge* are not purely passive. So there is mental activity going on in perceptual knowledge, and I would be willing to claim that there are mental acts involved. Whether these acts are conscious and voluntary is problematic. It seems to me that perception typically takes place at the boundaries of consciousness and voluntariness. It is a blend of the conscious/unconscious and the voluntary/involuntary. We can, after all, pay attention, or notice, or reflect about what we just saw or heard, and reasonable people do that to the extent they have learned is necessary for veridical perception. And even when they do not do it, they *would* do it in the relevant counterfactual circumstances. In the book I called these cases of perception low-grade knowledge. The limiting case would be one in which there is nothing conscious or voluntary at all going on, not even in the relevant counterfactual

³ I am attempting to work out some of the ways alternate possibilities affect both moral and epistemic responsibility in "Agency, Alternate Possibilities, and Determinism," forthcoming, *Philosophical Perspectives*, and "Must Knowers Be Agents," unpublished.

circumstances. I do not know how often this happens or even if it ever happens, and if it does, I cannot say whether it is low-grade knowledge or so low that it ceases to be knowledge at all. Actually, I'm not convinced that that is a terribly important question because I do not think it is critical that the perceptual states underlying high-grade knowledge count as knowledge themselves. And here there may be an important difference between me and Bill since he, and probably others as well, may think of the perceptual cases as *better* candidates for knowledge than general beliefs about the way the world is put together and beliefs in science or history or philosophy. So perhaps we have different models of the mind and different paradigm cases of knowledge.

RESPONSE TO KVANVIG

Obj 1: Most of Kvanvig's objection is based on a metatheoretical principle, that justification attaches both to beliefs and to propositions. I am not inclined to accept this principle, but if Kvanvig is right, I would consider it one more example of the fact that the concept of justification has been made to serve too many purposes, a situation that provided one of my motives for proposing that we shift our focus away from justification to traits of persons. When we make that shift, I doubt that the account of justified belief that falls out can serve all of the various functions that have been proposed in its name. The concept of justification is in trouble. I have suggested that it's time it were given a more modest role in epistemic evaluation and many of its uses replaced by other concepts of epistemic evaluation. I am therefore not tempted to give a definition of what Kvanvig calls propositional justification in terms of doxastic justification, much less the other way around, nor do I believe that we have to choose between one or the other. I'm not even convinced that propositional justification is meaningful since it appears to be a logical concept, not an epistemic one. But, of course, if it can be shown that it exists and that it bears interesting connections to doxastic justification, as Kvanvig suggests, then I welcome his work on such a project.

Obj 2: Kvanvig objects to the clause in my definition of justification that relativizes it to the understanding a virtuous person would have in the situation, and he objects that there is no unique understanding. Further, Kvanvig says, "Yet, surely, whether my beliefs are justified depends on my understanding of the situation I am in, not on the understanding I would have if I were virtuous." Kornblith offers this objection as well.

Relativizing justification to the agent's actual background beliefs, as Kvanvig proposes, fails to account for the fact that lack of justification is transmissible. If p is believed on the basis of q but q is unjustified, p is unjustified as well. So p might be the belief that a UFO has landed in my backyard, where q is a set of crazy beliefs about the ubiquity of UFOs and

their propensity for landing in the backyards of philosophers. But even if p would be justified on the basis of q , surely p is unjustified. Instead, we want the definition of justification to have the consequence that the justification of a belief depends upon the justification of other beliefs of the agent, and my definition does that. I define justified belief and the stronger concepts of belief evaluation by imagining a virtuous person (the *phronimos* or *phronimē*) entering the agent's epistemic situation, or what amounts to the same thing, imagining the agent herself becoming virtuous. The justifiedness or praiseworthiness of the given belief is determined by what she would or might do in that situation. But some of the agent's other beliefs may be incompatible with *phronesis*. In other words, it might be that the *phronimos* or *phronimē* simply wouldn't *be* in the agent's epistemic situation if its description includes all of her actual beliefs. If she herself became phronetic she might give up some of her background beliefs. In such a case we can not simply imagine the agent becoming phronetic with all her other beliefs intact, and then ask of some particular belief p whether the *phronimē* would believe p . The epistemic background, then, should include all of the agent's beliefs that the *phronimos* or *phronimē* might believe, should eliminate any of the agent's beliefs that the *phronimos* would not believe, and should include any beliefs that the *phronimos* would have that the agent does not have. In typical cases, although not all cases, the beliefs in the first category would be by far the largest, so the agent's belief would be evaluated against a background of beliefs not very distant from the ones she actually has.

It follows that there is no unique *comprehensive* understanding that the *phronimos* would have, but what the *phronimos* brings to the situation *qua phronimos* is just what *any phronimos* would believe when put in the agent's shoes. But, of course, if the agent is irrational enough that she has mostly beliefs no *phronimos* would have, it is unlikely that the given belief is justified, and that is just what we would expect. So Kvanvig misunderstands what I mean by "the understanding of the cognitive situation a virtuous person would have" since the constraint does not imply a unique understanding. This leads to a point made by Kornblith when he raises the same objection. Let me, then, proceed directly to Kornblith's paper.

RESPONSE TO KORNBLITH

Hilary Kornblith's remarks are helpful and generous, displaying a good sense of the purpose of my overall project. His first objection is the one I have just discussed from Kvanvig—that I am mistaken in relativizing justification to the understanding a virtuous person would have in the agent's epistemic situation. Kornblith adds his concern over the fact that my account has the consequence that a belief of mine can be justified even though I do not believe it for the right reasons, whereas a *phronimos* in my situation would. But I think Kornblith finds this objectionable only because he misinterprets

the concept I am defining. It is not the concept of being praiseworthy for having a belief, but the concept of having a belief permissibly. The example Kornblith gives in footnote 3 shows this misinterpretation. He proposes that if the virtuous person would conclude that determinism is false based on the views of the experts, then it follows from my view that Jack is justified in believing that determinism is false even though he is ignorant of the experts' views. But, in the first place, the relevant background beliefs of the virtuous person include awareness of expert opinion on this matter only if it is not the case that the virtuous might be ignorant of such views, and that is arguable. But even assuming that the virtuous would be aware of such opinion and would believe determinism is false, I see no problem in concluding that Jack *is* justified in believing determinism is false. That only seems unacceptable when justification is construed as epistemic praiseworthiness, not epistemic permissibility. And surely Jack is epistemically permitted to believe that determinism is false if all the experts do, whether or not he knows their opinions.

Obj 2: Kornblith says that given that there are intellectual virtues that are polar opposites—intellectual autonomy vs. deference to others, intellectual boldness vs. caution—almost any belief will be justified according to some virtue, and for the same reason, almost any belief will not be justified according to some other virtue. Kornblith's concern is that the theory does not provide any constraints on epistemic evaluation, nor does it give guidance to the epistemic agent who seeks advice.

In *Virtues of the Mind* I argue that intellectual virtues, like moral virtues, are means between extremes. So the virtue of autonomy is not the antithesis of the virtue of proper reliance on others, nor is the virtue of boldness the antithesis of the virtue of caution. In each case the virtue is the mean between extremes of behavior. But even so, Hilary is right that each pair of virtues is in tension since autonomy is not simply the same thing as proper reliance on authority; they are not simply the same virtue under two names. It is reasonable to think that the same behavior will appear differently when viewed under the aspect of autonomy rather than the aspect of proper trust in authority. This is one of the reasons for the centrality of *phronesis*, a virtue that is highly context sensitive. Why are both boldness and caution virtues? One reason is that while both characterize the ideal mind, some temperaments do better if they are bold and others if they are cautious. Different traits are also needed for different subject-matter and different stages of inquiry. A beginner must be cautious; an expert may be more bold. In the case of autonomy vs. intellectual trust, the latter may be appropriate and time-saving 95% of the time, but there ought to be some people who are intellectually independent in an intellectual community; otherwise, the entire community stagnates. The upshot is that we cannot tie evaluations of acts/beliefs to what would be

done/believed by some one ideal virtuous agent. If Sally is more successful when cautious but the *phronimē* would be more successful if bold, it does not follow that Sally should be bold.⁴ Nonetheless, what the *phronimē* would do if *she* were in Sally's shoes is what Sally should do/believe. It does not follow that just any epistemic behavior is justified, much less praiseworthy, because it comes under some virtue or other. Still, it is true that what falls under one virtue or other will vary widely with context. This gives the theory a degree of vagueness that needs to be resolved in further work, but I do not think it makes it counterintuitive.

Obj 3: Kornblith says "to my mind, the prospect of an epistemology modeled on virtue ethics seems exciting in large part because it might change our conception of what the important epistemic projects are and revise our understanding of which epistemic notions ought to be at the center of our concern." He faults me for focusing too much on traditional projects and not being radical enough. This objection is both interesting and generous, given that if I followed his advice I would have to take his own theory less seriously than I do. My approach at this stage is admittedly conservative. I want to connect my work as much as possible with contemporary work in epistemology, the vitality of which should not be ignored. I think knowledge always will be a central concern; not so justification. So I am willing to forego attention to much of the work on the latter, but not the former. In general, however, I try to integrate the work of others into my own even when urging a new approach. This attitude may be partly a matter of temperament. So I can only say that I am not opposed to being bolder... but not yet.

RESPONSE TO RORTY

Amelie Rorty's comments focus on the part of the book on ethics. She begins by saying I overstate my case by subsuming epistemological evaluation under "what looks suspiciously like a post-Kantian conception of moral evaluation." She calls it post-Kantian because I make motivation primary, and her own understanding of motivation is that it is a condition of the will. But what I mean by a motivation is an emotion-disposition, not a condition of the will. In fact, I do not discuss the will at all in this book since I doubt that it exists. This looks to me to be very far removed from Kant, although there is a structural similarity. But Rorty's deeper objection is that epistemic evaluation is not a form of moral evaluation, whether or not the latter is post-Kantian. I claim that a person's intellectual virtues are part of her moral character, and defend that by arguing that the standard ways of distinguishing

⁴ Bernard Williams makes this point as an objection to virtue ethics in his reply to McDowell, in *World, Mind, and Ethics*, ed. J. E. J. Altham and Ross Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 186–94.

intellectual from moral virtues are mistaken. In rejecting my claim, Rorty does not discuss the arguments, but focuses her attention on my general account of a virtue according to which the primary component is a motivation. Rorty thinks motivation is irrelevant; her position is that “virtues are reliable habits *tout court*,” and she maintains that this is the case for both moral and intellectual virtues. This is an interesting position on the nature of virtue, but notice that it goes no distance at all towards denying that intellectual virtues are moral virtues; in fact, it might even make that position easier to establish.

This brings me to the real issue between us and that is the place of motivation in virtue. Rorty says that there is no correlation between the “talent” for discovering truth and motivation, and virtue should be identified with the former, not the latter. She does not object to the idea of making the *phronimos* the standard for good behavior, cognitive or otherwise, but she says that my position that motivation is part of what makes him the *phronimos* is either redundant or inadequate.

It is redundant because the *phronimos* desires what is desirable: he doesn’t have to have a special motive to direct his desires appropriately, and it is inadequate, because unless a person’s understanding, habits and skills are characteristically integrated, all the motives in the world won’t make his actions reliably admirable.

There is a tangle of misunderstandings here that needs to be sorted out before I reply. I do not claim that virtuous motivation is sufficient either for virtue or for praiseworthy behavior, nor do I claim that the proper motive guarantees moral or cognitive success. I do not even say that the virtuous motive makes success likely. That is why I claim that virtue has two components, a motivational component and a component of reliable success. So I heartily agree with Rorty that “all the motives in the world won’t make his actions reliably admirable.” Reliability requires perceptual and cognitive abilities, as well as luck. So I also agree with Rorty that “a person can have superb motives directed to the right ends, but unless she can reliably integrate an acute, detailed understanding of what should be done with the active habit of doing it well, all the superb motivation in the world won’t help her.”

So we agree that good motivation is not sufficient, but we seem to disagree about whether it is necessary. But even here there may be no disagreement since Rorty misunderstands what I mean by a motive. I would certainly not claim that the *phronimos* needs “a special motive to direct his desires appropriately” since a motive *is* a desire; it is not, to repeat, a condition of the will. I have defined a motivation as a disposition to have an emotion that initiates and directs action towards an end. That qualifies as desire on many views, although I do not know Rorty’s view of desire. In any case, since she agrees that the *phronimos* desires the desirable, it is not clear

that that differs in any important way from my view that the *phronimos* is properly motivated.

There may be another misunderstanding in Rorty's remark that "[t]here are often good reasons to bracket a person's ethical character in deciding whether to place her in a position of epistemologically relevant responsible authority." To illustrate, she remarks that the best attorney may be motivated by greed or ambition. And that is certainly true, but that's because we do not care about the epistemic status of the attorney's beliefs, much less about whether she has knowledge, when we engage her services. We care only about the likelihood that she will be successful at what we hired her to do. So this is no objection, but perhaps it leads to an objection: Why can't a person with vicious motives and no intellectually virtuous motives at all have knowledge? I bring up this problem in *Virtues of the Mind* Part III, section 4.2, when I discuss the examples of the nosey neighbor and the medical researcher motivated by pride. My reply, in brief, is this: We first need to be careful that when any such case is filled out it is clear that the nosey neighbor and the ambitious researcher really are doing what virtuous persons do since beliefs formed out of ambition or nosiness are *not* generally reliable. This raises the so-called generality problem, but to give the objector the benefit of the doubt, let's say that the proud, ambitious, or greedy person's belief-forming activities are reliable in some case. If so, it is not clear that they do not pass my definition of knowledge. The definition requires that the knower be motivated out of a desire for truth, but it does not require that the agent value the truth for its own sake, nor does it require that the agent's other motives be pure. Having knowledge in my sense is compatible with having an ulterior motive such as the desire for praise, money, or social status. In that case the knower may be like the Laconians, whom Aristotle describes as being motivated to be virtuous for the sake of natural goods like honor. It is interesting that Aristotle is willing to say they are good (*agathos*), but they are not noble (*kalos*). In *Virtues of the Mind* I applied Aristotle's point to their intellectual activities as well. As long as they are motivated to get the truth, their motive may qualify as virtuous even though if they were asked why they desire truth, they will not say that they value truth for its own sake, nor that knowledge is an intrinsic part of a life of *eudaimonia*, but that it is a means to such things as money or fame. Hence, the greedy lawyer, like the ambitious researcher or the nosey neighbor, may have knowledge on my definition.

Lastly, Rorty argues that we should keep epistemological and ethical evaluation distinct because we look for different things in different contexts. Sometimes all that counts is that a belief is true or validly derived, sometimes the reliability of the agent is important, sometimes the salient feature is her attitudes. I cannot tell what evaluative judgments she is referring to in these contexts, but even if she is right, I do not see that it follows that the evaluations she is discussing are not ethical. After all, she would probably

say the same thing in explicitly ethical contexts: Sometimes all that counts is that the morally preferable state of affairs is produced, sometimes all we look for is reliability in producing such states of affairs, sometimes what is most salient is the right moral attitudes, etc. I am not claiming that the contextual precludes a single account of rightness or praiseworthiness, only that the different features of a situation that are important in different contexts do not distinguish epistemic evaluation from moral evaluation.