

EPISTEMOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF INTELLECTUAL VIRTUE

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SUMMARY: 1. *The Scope of Epistemology.* 2. *Intellectual Virtue and Knowledge.* 3. *Reliability as an Aretaic Element.* 4. *The Aretaic Significance of Justification.* 5. *Do the Intellectual and the Practical Exhaust the Domain of Virtues?* 6. *A Partial Classification of Intellectual Virtues.*

EPISTEMOLOGY must consider beliefs – usually taken to be the psychological element in knowledge – and also the overall intellectual character of the knower. Much of twentieth-century epistemology might be plausibly considered unbalanced in this matter: excessively atomistic and, metaphorically, bottom-up. It often focuses too much on individual beliefs and instances of knowledge of specific propositions and too little on intellectual character overall. Since at least the 1990s, however, we have seen progressively more theorizing in which the focus is holistic, with elements of intellectual character receiving intensive study, as we can see in works by Sosa (1991, 2007), Zagzebski (1996), and Greco (2000, 2004). This paper concentrates mainly on intellectual character – especially on traits deserving to be considered virtues – but it will also explore connections between virtues as traits and individual elements, such as beliefs, as their manifestations.

1. THE SCOPE OF EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology concerns not only knowledge, but also justification, and epistemologists theorize about both, though ‘rationality’ is a term that, despite its being in most uses normatively weaker, is sometimes used in place of ‘justification’. Knowledge and justification are importantly related but quite distinct notions.¹ The term ‘epistemic’, however, despite its relation to ‘epistemology’ understood broadly, is sometimes used in a narrow sense in which it means

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¹ It is still commonly thought that knowledge entails being justified in believing, but at least since the 1990s externalists regarding knowledge, such as Fred Dretske, William. P. Alston, and me, e.g. (1998) have argued that this is not so – though I grant that knowledge is usually based on grounds that suffice for justification as well.

roughly ‘pertaining to knowledge’. It may also be used in the wider sense of ‘pertaining to knowledge or justification’. On either usage, the question whether a consideration is epistemically important can be raised where the contrast is with importance in a psychological, causal, practical, or other non-epistemic sense. These different contrasts will be kept in view in this essay.

Even those highly conversant with epistemological literature will likely agree that ‘epistemic’ is a technical term and that its meaning lacks the kind of anchoring in everyday discourse characteristic of ‘knowledge’ and ‘justification’ – say, in descriptions, explanations, and narratives.² This does not imply that any particular theorist who relies on the term ‘epistemic’ cannot be adequately clear, but it does suggest that even if (as I think not obvious) we can construct a list of certain “epistemic virtues” widely agreed to be representative of this group, we may do better to find clear cases of what are uncontroversially seen as *intellectual* virtues and explore some of these in relation to both knowledge and justification.

What I propose to do here is consider a limited but important set of traits. I assume that intellectual virtues are traits of a person, in a sense implying being a feature of character as opposed to being a single intellectually good phenomenon (such as being a fast reader) that implies nothing about overall character. Intellectual *abilities*, such as knowing how to prove theorems or understanding Jane Austen’s novels, can also be important, but they do not imply any overall intellectual virtue. The same point holds for knowledge of specific propositions, such as simply knowing that something is logically wrong with a certain argument. Among intellectual virtues conceived as traits, I first consider insightfulness, understanding, clear-headedness, and rigor. If virtues are roughly excellences, these four – when they rise to the status of traits of a person – are included among virtues; and there is no doubt that they are broadly intellectual, in the wide epistemic sense that implies a connection with knowledge or justification or both. I will also explore intellectual virtue through a second set of traits: being reasonable, being intellectually courageous, being open-minded, being judicious, and being critically-minded. Persons of *overall* intellectual virtue must have some virtues on each list, but it will become clear that the two lists differ in ways important for virtue epistemology in particular and, in some respects, for general epistemology as well.

² In (2005) Alston argued that we lack a single concept of justification in epistemological contexts and should instead focus on a variety of “epistemic desiderata,” such as being well evidenced. I have proposed a way to locate a central concept in chs 1-2 of (2001b) but agree that the desiderata Alston instructively describes are important. My point here, however, is that ‘epistemic’ is even less easily anchored in well-understood contexts than is ‘justification’.

2. INTELLECTUAL VIRTUE AND KNOWLEDGE

I propose to describe the virtues of insightfulness, understanding, clear-headedness, and rigor as knowledge-based. They are knowledge-based not only because possessing these as virtues implies *having* a kind of knowledge, but also because that knowledge figures in their distinctive behavioral manifestations of intellect. Here I presuppose the notion of a trait and concentrate on what makes a trait an intellectual virtue.³

Knowledge-based traits, when they are virtues, have at least the following in common. First, they are (partly) constituted by knowledge: as with insightfulness and understanding, they essentially embody knowledge. Part of what it is to be insightful, for instance, is to have appropriately “deep” knowledge. Second, as section 3 will explain, because these virtues are (partly) constituted by *knowledge*, as opposed to mere justification, they also entail reliability. Understanding, for instance, entails reliability regarding what *explains* certain phenomena: those who understand a phenomenon are (in principle) reliable (which is not to say infallible) in providing an explanation of the phenomenon understood. Third, these traits dispose their possessors both to acquire and to manifest knowledge, as where insightful people perceive (and thereby know) underlying truths about people and, on certain occasions, speak accordingly. Let us consider such traits in some detail.

Insightfulness. A person is not insightful without having any insights, and those are characteristically instances of knowledge. There may be insights constituted by true beliefs that are not knowledge, as where an intuitive hunch is an insight without the grounding needed for knowledge, but such hunches cannot be the norm for insights in an insightful person. As trait of character, insightfulness must generally manifest the kind of “seeing” – typically a kind of discernment – that justifies the analogy with the counterpart visual cases that yield knowledge: seeing that some fact holds. (The seeing may or may not constitute a priori knowledge.) Moreover, a person in whom there is characteristically insight may be credited with the virtue, at least where there is a good enough ratio of insights relative to the person’s opportunities for appropriate discernment. Relativity of manifestations to opportunity – or what might be called eliciting conditions – is common to all cases of virtue.

Understanding. Understanding, as manifested in being a person of understanding, has as objects both single propositions and a variety of non-prop-

³ I do not presuppose any particular empirical “measure” of trait-possession, nor even that trait-ascriptions are highly predictive. Traits that constitute virtues are conceptually, normatively, and philosophically important, though highly limited in predictive power. For recent critical discussion of literature (e.g. by Mark Alfano, John Doris, Gilbert Harman, and Christian Miller) arguing that trait-ascriptions have little if any predictive or explanatory power, see Upton (forthcoming).

ositional items, from persons to techniques to subject-matters. Hence, understanding must be viewed more broadly than insight. But, as a virtue, understanding may have one particular subject-matter restriction not applicable to insightfulness as a virtue. One cannot have the virtue of understanding without having some degree of understanding of persons. Similarly, there must be understanding of why certain important propositions are true, including some reporting actions (or hypothetical actions) by others or indeed oneself. Granted, insightful people typically do have insight into persons, but, unlike the virtue of understanding, the virtue of insightfulness could exist, if less full-bloodedly, without this dimension if there were enough other dimensions. Insightfulness requires perceptiveness but not necessarily a significant degree of understanding: it is more a matter of seeing *that* and of seeing *what* than of the kind of seeing central for understanding: seeing *why*. Seeing why is crucial even for understanding an object, such as a poem, policy, or other person: it implies understanding why some proposition concerning the thing or person holds. Often, what gives rise to an instance of understanding is acquiring knowledge, but even apart from this genetic role, knowledge is a central constituent in understanding. If, for instance, you know that the fact that *p* explains the fact that *q*, you know both that *p* and that *q* and also have *explanational knowledge: knowledge why q holds*, which implies a kind of understanding of *q*. Plainly, insight and understanding are intimately related, and both are intimately related to explanation. Understanding *why* and insight are each possible without the other; but insights without understanding are commonly isolated, and understanding without insight is likely to lack depth and unlikely to yield creative thought.

Clear-headedness. Clear-headedness is an altogether different case. Here knowing differences is crucial, and there we can see that knowledge *of*, for instance of a text, in the sense of familiarity with the thing in question at a certain level of understanding, is as important as knowledge *that*, say that the thesis of a book is a certain claim. Clear-headedness (when it characterizes a person comprehensively) has both internal and external manifestations. People with this virtue tend to avoid ambiguity and excessive vagueness in speaking and writing and tend to see a wide range of discernible dimensions of a problem presented to them. A clear-headed person, e.g., will not confuse the question whether an action was right with that of whether it was morally motivated, and such a person will succeed in this from a kind of knowledge of the difference. A clear-headed teacher will not blur this difference in teaching ethics. Some sense of probability is also implicit in clear-headedness. Consider clear-headed people who look carefully at the design of a roulette wheel and note that fewer than half the slots that capture the ball are red. They will avoid thinking that (on the assumption of random spins) their chance of red on the next spin is better than even.

Rigor. Clear-headedness is connected with rigor: the latter virtue apparently requires the former one, even if the converse need not hold. This is a good point at which to note that virtues may be possessed to differing degrees. Moreover, the highest degree of some virtues might require at least the minimal degree of another virtue. A signally high degree of (intellectual) rigor would require at least minimal clear-headedness. But rigor (as a virtue) implies skill in reasoning, and it may be that someone could be quite clear-headed but lack overall strength in reasoning. Clear-headedness might require, however, abstention from certain kinds of reasoning, as required by a sense of one's limitations. Rigor might imply some kind of awareness of a similar limitation. As this suggests, those with the virtue of rigor must know how to reason in certain basic ways, will tend to avoid kinds of reasoning beyond their ability, and must know the difference between good and bad reasoning for a significant range of cases. The know-how required for the virtue of rigor implies reliability of at least two kinds. First, given certain stimuli, such as reasoning presented to the person, we may rely on (roughly, take as quite probable) appropriate critical consideration. Second, the reasoning the person does is characteristically good, in the sense of avoiding logical or probabilistic errors. In both cases, the person will have some propositional knowledge – at least of logical and conceptual truths – as well as a significant degree of know-how, especially in approaching intellectual problems.

3. RELIABILITY AS AN ARETAIC ELEMENT

It is widely known that where knowledge is taken to exist, skeptics tend to cast doubt on claims to possess it. If we hold (as I have) that knowledge is required for possessing certain virtues, we can expect skepticism to enter the discussion. It does not even require a skeptic to point out what might be called a Cartesian scenario. Suppose that an almost omnipotent Cartesian demon has us all hallucinating and that I therefore make myriad errors. If we hallucinate in concert, sharing exactly similar hallucinations given the same circumstances, none of us one need ever think I cannot be counted on in judgments based on my experience – and indeed, I might in fact be successfully counted on so long as the demon is suitably beneficent, say ensuring that my important beliefs that do not constitute knowledge are in any case true. Yet surely such 'success' would not bespeak reliability as a virtue in the victim. Since reliability is necessary for knowledge, we would not here have knowledge-based virtue. Granted, we might call the lucky prevalence of true beliefs *quasi-reliability* in the victim. But having true beliefs by good luck does not give one reliability as a virtue or render those beliefs knowledge.⁴ Even if we imagine that my

⁴ There is no good way to be precise about how often a reliable person must succeed in

beliefs are true because (say) the demon has me having *veridical* hallucinations as a basis of the crucial beliefs, such ill-grounded beliefs still do not constitute knowledge, and my having them would not suffice for my possessing the virtue of insightfulness.⁵ The same holds for the similar virtues of understanding, clear-headedness, and rigor and for the global virtue of wisdom (where this differs from prudence). This is because reliability as a virtue entails a good measure of genuine knowledge (for cases in which the person forms beliefs, as in normal cases).

To be sure, the view that certain virtues require knowledge or a certain potential for achieving it is not evident apart from a clear conception of knowledge. Providing such a conception is not possible here. Elsewhere I have argued for an externalist conception of knowledge that can serve.⁶ But on any plausible conception of knowledge, if a kind of reliability is to be an *intellectual virtue* – as opposed to an *intellectual power* that manifests itself in regularly knowing certain kinds of truths⁷ – then it must meet at least two further conditions. It must be a trait of character, and it must be one for which a person as such deserves a certain kind of praise. Virtues are good things in people, and they are inherent goods, not merely instrumental ones.

Reflection on the representative knowledge-based virtues just considered will indicate that even though *knowledge of some kind* is crucial for any particular case or manifestation of such a virtue, there are at most a few specific propositions that must be known by all who have those virtues. Perhaps some self-evident propositions, must be known by a person with the virtue of, say, understanding, but there may be only a limited number one could list, such as elementary logical truths⁸. The general point this brings out is that a virtue

the relevant matter, or just how probable a reliable (or reliably grounded) belief must be. See Sosa's appeal, in developing his virtue epistemology, to the idea of what would "not easily" fail: "What is required for the safety of a belief is that not easily would it fail by being false" (Sosa 2007: 250). Demonic influence can also affect our level of rigor; and counterparts of the points made here, though perhaps even more complex, apply to that case.

⁵ For theists there is the related question of whether our *de facto* reliability is always dependent on God's sustaining the truth-preserving character of the path from the facts to our beliefs that epistemically reflect them (as knowledge paradigmatically does). This interesting question leads to the further question whether, even for God, it is possible to design a world that is systematically misleading in the way a demon world is. One plausible answer is Descartes's well-known denial that God would allow such a world, but I cannot pursue it here.

⁶ See the chapters in Audi (2010), on knowledge, which clarify the general, somewhat schematic conception of knowledge as true belief based in the right kind of way on the right kind of ground.

⁷ My (2004) distinguishes epistemic virtues from epistemic powers in discussing Sosa's virtue perspectivism.

⁸ The distinction between dispositions to believe and dispositional beliefs (the latter be-

may be knowledge-based in the sense sketched yet not *knowledge-specific*, in the sense of dependence on having knowledge of specific propositions. This point might also hold for certain moral virtues, say beneficence and justice, though they may require some general knowledge of what is good for persons and of what is fair to them.

The question how much specific knowledge a given virtue may require is difficult: much depends on the circumstances in which the virtue exists. Suppose that a virtuous person has amnesia and no longer has beliefs about the person's past, nor any but broad framework beliefs about human life – but does have dispositions that lead, in a reliable way, to *acquiring* knowledge in important cases, say knowledge that people should be equally rewarded for comparable work under comparable conditions. Such cases are difficult to describe. But they suggest that at least some virtues, such as being analytical, may be more matters of knowing *how*, and of being disposed to learn important information, than of knowing *that*, for many of the kinds of propositions we think of as partly constituting the kind of practical or even theoretical wisdom that commonly goes with possession of virtues.

4. THE ARETAIC SIGNIFICANCE OF JUSTIFICATION

It should already be apparent that many virtues are not knowledge-specific. This holds quite clearly for what I call justification-based virtues. A still more general point here is that intellectual virtues of the global kind we are considering – and arguably any virtue of character is global – are largely subject-matter neutral. Granting that the “specialized” virtues we might term *sectorial*, such as expertise in mathematics or in translating from English to Hindi, are good things concerning a person's mental powers and are knowledge-specific, they are not intellectual virtues in the sense that concerns us. Let us consider being reasonable, having intellectual courage, being open-minded, being judicious, and being critically-minded.

Reasonableness. The virtue of reasonableness is quite comprehensive; indeed, ascribed without qualification, it implies action tendencies and tendencies involving emotion and is far from being entirely intellectual. Still, reasonableness in intellectual matters has sufficient breadth, normative significance, and connection with truth and falsehood to count as an intellectual virtue in its own right. It is mainly a trait that leads one to tend to accept plausible claims and, on the negative side, to avoid making implausible ones or draw-

ing the form of most of what we believe, and also the related notion of virtual knowledge, are explained briefly in my (2010). We virtually know, and are disposed to believe upon considering, many of the self-evidently entailed consequences of what we believe. (A moment ago I virtually knew that I am under 101 years of age, but did not believe this until I sought an example).

ing the kinds of inferences that merit such terms as ‘jumping to conclusions’. What about knowledge? It seems clear that, even apart from the possibility of deception by a Cartesian demon, a reasonable person can be mistaken in a huge proportion of important cases – so long as the mistakes occur where the person has sufficient justification for the falsehoods. Granted, a person with the *virtue* of reasonableness will check on evidence in certain important matters. But some mistakes are not detectable even by a reasonable person making a conscientious check.

Intellectual courage. This, like overall courage, is a kind of responsiveness to a tension between the positive and the negative, say demands to uphold certain standards and dangers in so doing. Intellectual courage concerns such tensions in intellectual matters, e.g. defending an unpopular view. One might think that being reasonable entails intellectual courage, but even reasonable persons can be too easily intimidated. Should we consider intellectual courage an intellectual virtue at all? It is one, if less purely so than certain others. Without intellectual courage one too easily gives up a view under the pressure of counterargument – an intellectual failing – or, especially, the fear of disapproval that comes with certain kinds of steadfast disagreement. This is *not* to say one ceases to express or act on the view; that might exhibit lack of courage overall, for instance capitulation to fear of being found inconsistent. The point is rather that a certain kind of self-trust is a good thing and may sustain a certain risk-taking in what one asserts or defends. In the right degree and application, it is central for intellectual courage. A reasonable person can fall short of intellectual courage as a virtue; but without some degree of self-trust the reasonable judgments such a person forms may be so vulnerable to defeat by, for instance, plausible but misleading objections, as to be of little use in guiding thought and action. Self-trust may be excessive, however, just as beliefs may be unreasonably strong. A person with intellectual courage *as a virtue* is one who reaches a kind of mean: a suitably strong tendency to maintain one’s position in the right range of cases, avoiding both frailty in conviction and hastiness in assertion. That range, however, is not mainly a matter of what one knows but of what one is justified in believing.

Open-mindedness. This implies a general willingness to consider the unfamiliar and even the implausible, if only to avoid premature rejection. I take open-mindedness to be both subject-matter neutral and chiefly a trait characteristically manifested in accepting what one is told or reads on the basis of its plausibility or on the basis of what counts toward justification of it. Open-mindedness must not be conflated with gullibility – which is a deficiency in reasonable intellectual scrutiny or at least in filtering. But it also does not imply accepting only what is true or known, or rejecting only what is false or known to be false. It is based on grounds of justification, not on knowledge (which is not to say that it is compatible with knowing nothing at all). It does

imply at least minimal judiciousness, but that too seems more a justification-based virtue than a knowledge-based one. Let us consider judiciousness more closely.

Judiciousness. The judicious are also reasonable, but being reasonable need not rise to being judicious. Judiciousness is like reasonableness, however, in being a trait that may be sufficiently developed in someone to be an intellectual virtue even if the person is deceived in many important matters. The judicious are not beyond being deceived, nor are they free from sometimes being excessively skeptical. Reasonableness tolerates more misjudgment than does judiciousness, which makes misjudgment highly uncharacteristic. The crucial point about both on this score is their possessors' having appropriate justification for what they believe and for what they accept or reject. Granted, in trivial matters, having unjustified beliefs counts less against being judicious than it does in important matters, say whether to make a major personal commitment in a long-term project. But the judicious are sensitive to the need for a basis of belief, and the trait of judiciousness – at least possessed in the full-blooded way required for virtue – implies a tendency to harbor few unjustified beliefs and limits their range and extent. The judicious are not immune to being deceived, nor are they free from sometimes being excessively skeptical. The crucial characteristic of both on this score is their being (typically) justified in what they believe, accept, or reject.

Critical-mindedness. Being critically-minded requires some measure of reasonableness, but is not entailed by that virtue alone. A critical person – at least one with the virtue of being critically-minded – may be open-minded, but not gullible, and achieving the mean between these requires some degree of judiciousness. The critically-minded also tend to be analytical, though that trait is even more far-reaching, but someone who is “unreasonably critical” may have the trait of critical-mindedness, but not the virtue. The critically-minded may demand reasons, are able to judge (within limits) how good they are, and have a sense – whose strength is considerable though relative to their capacities and general beliefs – of what is plausible or implausible. In the world as we know it, they will have much knowledge, but the only necessary kind of knowledge here is subject-matter neutral, in the way logical truths and some common-sense methodological principles are. A person may be virtuously critical even given little substantive knowledge, but critical judgments and withholding of propositions presented must be justified if they are to be manifestations of the virtue in question and not, say, of an easy skepticism. A critically minded person must be to some degree rigorous, but perhaps need not have the kind of rigorous character that rises to an intellectual virtue. In any case, whereas critical-mindedness implies a tendency to undertake certain kinds of reflection, rigor does not imply the same kind of motivation to reflect, as opposed to a kind of intellectual reactivity given certain stimuli or experiences.

Nothing said here implies that, where justified belief that does *not* constitute knowledge plays a role in the constitution or manifestation of an intellectual virtue, the person would not be intellectually in a better position (or at least in some way better off) if that belief *did* constitute knowledge. Nor should we underestimate the extent to which what grounds justification for belief commonly also grounds knowledge, provided the belief is true. The main point here is that the realm of intellectual virtues includes important traits that are in a certain sense not subordinate to the requirements of knowledge. What justifies beliefs can count toward the intellectual virtue of a person even in unusual or abnormal situations in which, even if those beliefs are true, they do not constitute knowledge.

An intellectual virtue that does not require knowledge as opposed to reasonable belief may still require reliability in the behavioral sense in which reliability is an integrated pattern that has a kind of consistency. A critically minded person could doubt many true propositions and believe many false ones; but reliability in exercising critical faculties in the way that counts toward intellectual virtue implies having internalized *standards* concerning the relevant subject. Such people must perhaps *know how* to think about it. This is not just propositional knowledge, and any propositions that must be known in order to have the relevant ability are of a quite general kind. The will also has a role in intellectual virtue. There are things critically-minded persons tend to do, at least mentally, that are intellectually good things to do, for instance pursuing implications of a significant point. This tendency may partly explain why we should regard the person as *praiseworthy* in a normative sense and not just as instrumentally good as a source of information.

5. DO THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE PRACTICAL EXHAUST THE DOMAIN OF VIRTUES?

The diversity of the intellectual virtues – indeed of virtues of character in general – should be apparent from examples we have already considered. Reflection shows that not all virtues are adequately classified as either intellectual or practical. We might think of practical virtues as action-directed, in the sense that their primary exercises are in doing things, typically in interpersonal activity, rather than in such intellectual matters as appraising evidence or acquiring knowledge. Indeed, there may be no one way of describing and classifying virtues that is without some disadvantages. If we take the intellectual and the practical as the two most important highly general categories of virtue, then a number of virtues are, in a significant way, *cross-categorical*. (There are of course many kinds of categories, and many virtues cross some of them). Take judgment, sensitivity, and consistency, understood as either practical, say moral, or as intellectual, or as both. Given the way in which

sensitivity and good judgment (as traits) figure in both intellectual and moral matters, it seems artificial to posit two distinct virtues here under the same name – say, intellectual sensitivity and moral sensitivity – rather than two aspects of a single virtue that involves discernment, comparison, weighting, and, often, selecting.

Creativity and, for similar reasons, inventiveness might also be considered cross-categorical virtues. Given that creativity may be exhibited in arts that need not have cognitive content – as with abstract paintings and most kinds of instrumental music – one might wonder why creativity should be considered an intellectual virtue at all. In part, this is because, at least where creativity is a virtue and not just a trait manifesting itself in producing novel things, the agent observes requirements of *reasons-guidedness*, where some of the reasons are of a broadly intellectual kind.

Related to its being reason-guided is the point that the virtue of creativity is sensitive to differences between what works and what does not, what is coherent and not, aesthetically rewarding or ill-constructed, and so forth. The sensitivity in question is not limited to particular reasons; creativity exhibits a kind of *reasons-essentiality*, but does not require a determinate collection of essential reasons. That kind of freedom from limitation goes with the subject-matter neutrality of intellectual virtue – indeed (apart from special exceptions) with virtue in general.

In suggesting that creativity as a virtue requires sensitivity to the value of the relevant objects created, I do not mean to give the impression that it is (even in part) a broadly *moral* virtue. Moral values are not the only kind of value, not even the only kind of intrinsic value. I would also stress that, given how many important domains of creativity there are, creativity, even as a virtue, may be sectorial in a way many virtues may not be. One could be creative intellectually but in no other way; creative just in mathematics but not in other intellectual endeavors; creative in poetry but in nothing else. But each of these realms is both broad and important, and for each there are intellectual standards as well as other kinds.

In addition to being sectorially describable, creativity and imaginativeness, as cross-categorical, are not just intellectual or practical (I assume for convenience that the intellectual and practical dimensions represent the most important kinds of virtue). We should also note, however, that some virtues lying in only one of the broad categories, such as rigor, can be mixed in significant ways corresponding to their different dimensions. When creativity and imaginativeness are possessed *globally*, as where a person is creative without qualification, manifestations of both theoretical and practical kinds are expectable (perhaps entailed). There must normally be at least one sector in each of the two broad realms in which creativity is manifested. The more sectors, the more creative the person (other things equal).

Creativity is possible in the mind alone. Moreover, even producing physical creations of the kind that count toward creativity typically manifests a kind of high-level intellectual capacity. All the virtues require some degree of intellectual guidance,⁹ and with that in mind one might conceive creativity not as cross-categorical but as an intellectual virtue. If, however, we distinguish between external and internal *products* of creativity, and if we can agree that intellectual virtues do not require solely *cognitive* products such as instances of knowledge, insight, and recognition, then we will find it quite reasonable to attribute a practical side to creativity and thus to view it cross-categorially, as a mixed virtue. It is true that the virtue can be possessed by people who “live in their heads” and produce nothing external; but the point is that the virtue is of a *productive* kind, where creating, which is action, is crucial rather than just knowing or understanding, which, central as they are for such virtues as insight, are not.

Neither creativity nor imaginativeness need be, in all their forms, virtues, in the usual sense in which these are traits of character. They may, for instance, be episodic, as where we praise someone’s creativity in a project, though we do not believe creativity to be characteristic of the person. They may also be manifested in products of low quality. By contrast, if creativity is a virtue rather than just a characteristic in someone, a significant degree of quality is apparently required in the creative activities or products. A virtue must yield a measure of success in its characteristic expressions, though for creativity there is no closed list of even flexible criteria for success. It may be a mark of the highest kind of creativity to yield something of value that forces a revision of any list of desiderata we might have previously devised. Creativity has a way of transcending definitions of it.

Prudence is an especially interesting cross-categorical virtue. In relation to action, it has been taken so broadly as to be considered an equivalent of practical wisdom, but Aquinas called it “in essence an intellectual virtue,” though the same passage also describes it in practical terms as “right reasoning *about things to be done*.”¹⁰ In contemporary usage ‘prudence’ is often taken to be anchored in self-interest, and this may be mistakenly thought to confine its scope to achieving goals of action; but even achieving just instrumental rationality in action requires intellectual competence. Consider also something not directly connected with self-interest. Might not a passage in an essay be

⁹ For many examples of this point, including application to moral virtues, see Annas (2011).

¹⁰ See Question LVIII, Art 3, in John A. Oesterly, trans., *Treatise on the Virtues* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 84 (my italics). This passage is quite Aristotelian, but Aquinas should not be taken to follow Aristotle on every major point the former makes about virtue. For an indication of this point that applies to prudence, see Pinsent (2015).

imprudent on aesthetic grounds even where the author is aiming at entertaining readers and not at aesthetic merit? It may be that prudence is in some way *goal-relative*. If so, this would leave open whether the relevant goal is broadly intellectual, rather than “practical.”

6. A PARTIAL CLASSIFICATION OF INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES

As philosophers well know, thinking can be a kind of doing, even a quite labored and systematic kind. Yet thinking can be intellectual, and intellectual virtue may call for much thinking, hence for certain mental activity. Might there not be virtues that require for their constitution both practical and intellectual elements and for their expression both doing and, at least when things go well, knowing? Here we come to another case of a cross-categorical virtue: intellectual curiosity. The term may designate a trait that does not constitute a virtue, but when the trait is a virtue, it is guided by a sense of questions worth posing and of good ways of approaching them (an intellectual skill manifested in forming reasonable beliefs). But clearly this trait is (categorially) mixed in having an essential motivational component (hence action-tendencies) as well as an intellectual character. One might call it a *virtue of pursuit*. The intellectually curious tend to seek knowledge (or at least information). This is an action-tendency, even if sometimes realizable in the mind alone, though curiosity by itself does not require tending to seek any particular *kind* of knowledge. Even when it is a virtue and implies a tendency to seek only worthwhile information (or knowledge or information plausibly taken to be valuable by the person in question), it leaves much latitude about the kind in question. This point accounts for such ascriptions as ‘intellectual curiosity’. Intellectual curiosity falls on the broad side of a sectorial trait; scientific curiosity would be less so, genealogical curiosity still less so (and is at least not commonly considered virtuous).

In many ways, curiosity contrasts with open-mindedness, which might be called a *virtue of responsiveness*. The characteristic kind of response that manifests open-mindedness is serious entertaining of plausible propositions or promising prospects presented to one, with belief-formation as a common result, or at least abstention from rejection out of hand. By contrast with both virtues of pursuit and of responsiveness, creativity is a *virtue of production*.¹¹ Even where open-mindedness is a virtue and not a mere receptivity to new ideas or information – as may occur with credulity – it does not imply a tendency to pursue them. The open-minded need not be curious. Creativity may

¹¹ Allied cases would be *virtues of expression*, say elegance in speech and movement. The case illustrates that some virtues are dependent in a way others are not: such overall elegance presupposes (at least for its manifestation as opposed to its mere possession) overt activity whereas some of the virtues we have considered do not.

also be manifested spontaneously – not without any causal basis, to be sure, but also not as a response to a stimulus such as the kind of assertion that requires an open-minded response.

As a virtue of production, creativity differs from both virtues of pursuit and virtues of responsiveness in being toward something that is an output of what one does rather than simply an intelligent response to actions or circumstances or just an intelligent attempt to reach a determinate goal. The very term implies a tendency to produce something, even if just in the mind, and of course creativity may manifest itself in responding to others' words or deeds and in pursuing, say, knowledge or a just distribution. Moreover, any virtue embodies a responsiveness to reasons and a tendency to pursue something or other *given* certain conditions. A person with intellectual curiosity, for instance, will tend to respond with interest to descriptions of problems or issues that are reasonably considered intriguing. Arguably, *any* constitutive expression of a virtue, as opposed to an event that simply indicates it, is a response to a reason; but the virtues of responsiveness also have characteristic manifestations that are responses to external phenomena in a way curiosity and, especially, creativity are not (if a goal one pursues is highly determinate, there is an occasion for technique, which may be mechanical even if elaborate, but there may be little room for creativity).

The threefold contrast I am drawing here may, then, be developed within the broad reasons-responsiveness constraint on virtues in general.¹² Many virtues combine these three tendencies (there are also other important kinds of tendencies that a full taxonomy should recognize). In some virtues in which two or more of the tendencies are present, moreover, one is stronger than any other. Critical-mindedness, for instance, is mainly a virtue of responsiveness; it tends to yield judgments as responses and may well incline its possessors toward certain intellectual pursuits, such as scrutinizing claims. Still, it is more a virtue manifested in one's responses to what is presented to one than of pursuit of certain aims. Here it contrasts with virtues such as intellectual curiosity, which have an essential motivational element. Clearly reason operates crucially in all of the virtues. But some are more intellectual than others, and those we might consider almost pure intellectual virtues are more tied than others to knowledge and justified belief.

★

The intellectual domain is both wide and highly diverse in content: it encompasses thinking, knowing, and various kinds of activities that require some intellectual element. This paper has illustrated the breadth of the intellectual

¹² For an account of the importance of reasons-responsiveness for understanding virtue in general, see Cullity (2016).

domain through exploring some the virtues naturally called intellectual, as well as some that one might consider perhaps as action-oriented as belief-oriented or knowledge-oriented. We have seen that intellectual virtues – now commonly called “epistemic” by many writers – may be of more than one kind, and it should now be evident that the term ‘intellectual’ better captures their diversity than does ‘epistemic’, which is too easily associated with knowledge rather than justification. Some virtues, to be sure, are knowledge-based; but others are justification-based, and some, such as creativity and intellectual curiosity, are significantly connected with both justification and knowledge but not plausibly considered based on either, even in the limited sense of ‘based on’ employed here.

Some of the intellectual virtues – including some connected chiefly with knowledge, some connected chiefly with justification, and some intimately connected with both – have essential intellectual and practical (roughly behavioral) dimensions. The distinction between the knowledge-based and justification-based virtues is important in part because the former are vulnerable to skepticism in a way the latter are not. This, in turn, is partly because the former require a kind and degree of reliability not required by the latter. There is a sense in which the more we know, at least of significant truths, the better off we are; but it is also true that we can be intellectually virtuous even if we are mistaken about a great deal and have much more limited knowledge than common-sense usually presupposes.

It should be no surprise that our exploration of intellectual virtue confirms the view that *why* we believe what we do – in particular the quality of our grounds and of our reasons for our beliefs – and the integration of justifying elements with our intellectual character, determine more about how good we are intellectually than does the extent of our knowledge. In this respect, intellectual virtue is like moral virtue: there, too, why we do the things we do, and the quality of our grounds and of our reasons for action, determine more about how good we are morally than does our objective successes. These parallel points do not imply that there is nothing more to how good we are morally; but they go some distance to explaining the sense in which it is true that virtue is its own reward.¹³

¹³ This paper has benefited from presentation of earlier drafts of predecessor papers at Macquarie University and the University of Denver and from fruitful discussions with colleagues and students. I would also like to thank Heather Battaly for detailed comments on the somewhat different version to appear in 2018 or 2019 in her edited collection, *The Routledge Handbook of Virtue Epistemology* (under the title “Intellectual, Virtue, Knowledge, and Justification”) and for her permission (with that of Routledge) to use the material composed for that paper in this expanded essay.

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ABSTRACT · Epistemological Dimensions of Intellectual Virtue · *This paper explores the variety and normative foundations of intellectual virtues. Although it does not provide a virtue-theoretic account of knowledge or justification, it indicates in detail how knowledge and justification may be crucial for understanding intellectual virtues. Some of these virtues are in a certain way based on knowledge, whereas others are based in a certain way on justification. But there are still others, such as creativity, that have a more complicated basis. In the light of the cases examined, the paper provides a partial account of intellectual virtue.*

KEYWORDS: *creativity, epistemic, intellectual character, justification, knowledge, reasonableness, reasons-responsiveness, reliability.*