

Intellectual Virtue

Perspectives from Ethics and Epistemology

Edited by

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Introduction

Linda Zagzebski and Michael DePaul

The concept of a virtue has been enormously important in ethics since its beginning, but it has only recently been adopted by epistemologists. In 1980 Ernest Sosa introduced the idea of virtue into epistemological discourse in his paper 'The Raft and the Pyramid'.¹ Sosa's motive for an interest in virtue arose out of the epistemological concerns of the time, in particular, the dispute between foundationalists and coherentists, and it is quite different from the ethicist's motive. But Sosa's idea signalled the beginning of a movement that came to be called virtue epistemology. At a minimum, virtue epistemology is characterized by a shift in focus from properties of beliefs to the intellectual traits of agents. The primary bearer of epistemic value is a quality of the agent that enables her to act in a cognitively effective and commendable way. Some virtue epistemologists claim that traditional targets of epistemological investigation such as knowledge, rationality, or justification can be defined in terms of intellectual virtue, whereas others argue that the traditional targets themselves ought to be replaced by an investigation of virtue in the cognitive domain.

The earliest form of virtue epistemology was reliabilism. According to theories of this kind, the basic component of knowledge or justified belief is a

¹ Sosa (1980).

reliable belief-forming process² or faculty³ or agent.⁴ More robust forms of virtue epistemology make the fundamental bearer of epistemic value an epistemic or intellectual virtue in the sense of virtue used in ethics,⁵ or they may even model the structure of an epistemological theory on virtue ethics.⁶ The alternatives for this last approach are as diverse as the varieties of virtue ethics and most of them are as yet unexplored. There is also the alternative of eschewing theory altogether and adopting an anti-theory model for epistemology.⁷

Virtue epistemology is a recent movement, but virtue ethics is as old as Western philosophy. Ever since Plato, ethicists and historians of ethics have explored the nature of a virtue and the particular virtues, as well as the relationship between the concept of virtue and other key concepts in ethics such as that of a right act, a good motive, emotion, and happiness. Virtue epistemologists understandably concentrate on the ways the idea of a virtue can help resolve epistemological questions and leave the conceptual work of explaining value to ethics. Clearly, then, virtue epistemology needs virtue ethics. But the editors of this volume believe that virtue ethics also has something important to learn from virtue epistemology. Perhaps due to historical accident, virtue ethicists have had little to say about intellectual virtue. They generally take for granted that the moral and intellectual virtues are not only distinct, but relatively independent. Some may also think that it is the job of some other branch of philosophy to examine the intellectual virtues. Granted, Aristotle linked the moral virtues with the intellectual virtue of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, and for that reason Aristotle scholars and ethicists influenced by Aristotle have attended to *phronesis* in their treatments of virtue, but their interest is generally limited by their concern with the connection of *phronesis* to the distinctively moral virtues. They typically give no attention to

² Alvin Goldman has proposed a form of process reliabilism. He does not use the term 'virtue' very often, but it appears in Goldman (1993a).

³ Ernest Sosa has proposed versions of faculty reliabilism in many places. See Sosa (1991) for a collection of his papers. Alvin Plantinga's theory of warrant as proper function also appears in many places, in particular, Plantinga (1993b). Plantinga is sometimes classified as a virtue epistemologist, although he does not use the term 'virtue' for properly functioning faculties.

⁴ John Greco has recently proposed a theory he calls agent reliabilism in Greco (1999a). In that paper Greco uses the term 'agent reliabilism' for a larger class of theories than his own, including Sosa's, Plantinga's, and Zagzebski's early theory.

⁵ See Code (1987), Montmarquet (1993), and Zagzebski (1996).

⁶ See Zagzebski (1996).

⁷ The anti-theory movement has had a following among virtue ethicists. For a collection of papers on this movement see Clarke and Simpson (1989).

such intellectual virtues as intellectual carefulness, thoroughness, humility, courage, trust, autonomy, or fairness. As a matter of fact, virtue epistemologists have not gone very far in investigating the individual intellectual virtues either, but they have taken the lead in addressing intellectual virtue as a topic of interest and importance apart from the relationship between *phronesis* and moral virtue, and some have begun a study of the relationship between the way in which we form beliefs and the way we conduct ourselves in our moral lives.

We believe that the nature of intellectual virtue and vice is critical for the purposes of both ethicists and epistemologists. It is therefore ironic that there has been so little interaction between them. In an effort to remedy this problem, Michael DePaul organized a conference at the University of Notre Dame in September 2000, which brought ethicists and epistemologists together to investigate the nature of intellectual virtue and its role in resolving disputes in ethics and epistemology. DePaul asked Linda Zagzebski to co-edit a book coming out of the conference, and additional papers by Wayne Riggs and Christine McKinnon were added to the nine papers presented there. This volume is the result of that project. Some of these essays are written by philosophers whose work is primarily in ethics: Julia Annas, David Solomon, Jorge Garcia, and Christine McKinnon. Some are written by philosophers whose work is primarily in epistemology: Ernest Sosa, John Greco, Christopher Hookway, and Wayne Riggs. One author (Linda Zagzebski) works in both epistemology and ethics. The final two chapters are co-authored, with one author in ethics and the other in epistemology (Nancy Sherman and Heath White, and Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood).

The editors believe that intellectual virtue is one of the most promising topics in philosophy, but the literature on the topic is generally splintered into work that is primarily concerned with historical scholarship, work intended for moral philosophers, and work intended for epistemologists. As far as we know, these are the first essays written by virtue epistemologists and virtue ethicists in consultation with each other, including virtue ethicists with a historical orientation. Epistemologists and ethicists bring different knowledge and perspectives to the topic, and we think that the essays collected here demonstrate the benefit of each branch of philosophy to the other.

Traditional virtue ethics is usually associated with Plato and Aristotle, but Stoic virtue ethics gets at least as much attention from the ethicists in this volume (Annas, and Sherman and White), resulting in a chapter adopting a Stoic approach to virtue epistemology (Riggs). Two ethicists address contemporary virtue ethics, either in its debate with consequentialism (Garcia) or in its attempt to be interestingly different from traditional approaches

(Solomon). Advanced discussions by ethicists on virtue ethics and its place in the pantheon of ethical theories (or anti-theories) is important for virtue epistemologists who generally have not gone very far in investigating the place of the different forms of virtue epistemology in the taxonomy of normative epistemological theories.

Moral philosophers have traditionally investigated the individual virtues with great care, and in this volume Roberts and Wood's fascinating chapter on intellectual humility gives a detailed investigation of this virtue for the purposes of epistemology. We look forward to more inquiries of this kind.

The epistemological chapters in the volume focus on a number of questions that expand the topics typically addressed by epistemologists. One issue that gets considerable attention is the nature and scope of epistemic value. Two chapters (Sosa and Zagzebski) address the problem of what makes knowledge more valuable than mere true belief, and one other discusses it briefly (Greco). Some epistemologists are beginning to say that knowledge has received too much attention in contemporary epistemology, and other epistemic values have been neglected. In his chapter in this collection, Riggs argues that there is a need to expand the range of epistemic value to include understanding and wisdom.

The varieties of virtue epistemology and its potential for broadening the standard set of problems in the field are addressed by Christopher Hookway. Some virtue epistemologists have previously argued that the concept of intellectual virtue can be used in solving such traditional epistemological problems as the task of defining knowledge (Zagzebski, Greco, and Sosa) or answering scepticism (Greco), whereas others claim that the real virtue of virtue epistemology is the way it permits us to redefine the central questions. The chapters by Hookway and Riggs defend this position.

Christine McKinnon argues for the advantages of applying feminist ethics to epistemology since it permits an account of a broader range of cases of knowing than those standardly discussed, in particular, knowledge of oneself and others. She argues that a virtue approach in epistemology is better suited to giving an account of knowledge of persons than traditional approaches.

1. Summaries of Essays

Julia Annas begins her chapter, 'The Structure of Virtue', by acknowledging the interest of recent efforts to use a rich notion of virtue in epistemology. She is

concerned, however, about reliance on Aristotle's particular version of virtue ethics to the exclusion of the rest of the ancient tradition. She examines two issues: the connection between virtue and skill and the relation of virtue to success. It turns out that the consensus position of ancient virtue ethics on these issues differs from Aristotle's in ways that are significant for the application of the notion of virtue in epistemology. Unlike Aristotle, the rest of the ancient tradition held that moral virtue is a kind of skill, according to the Stoics, the skill of living. Moral virtue shares the same intellectual structure as other skills. Intellectual virtues also share this structure, and hence are skills. But according to Annas the intellectual virtues are also importantly different from the moral virtues. While the moral virtues aim at doing the right thing, the intellectual virtues aim at truth. These aims might converge, but they need not—indeed, they can conflict. Hence, the intellectual virtues cannot simply be subsumed under the moral virtues; the relations between them are more complex. Virtue clearly requires success, but the issue is complicated since the virtuous person has two aims in acting. The overall aim, or *telos*, is to live a certain kind of life, one that is virtuous. But each particular action also has an immediate target, or *skopos*. Which aim must be attained for a person to have the kind of success necessary for virtue? Annas maintains Aristotle was confused here, but the Stoics were clear and answered that it is attainment of the ultimate aim. Knowledge is different. In order to know one must attain the immediate aim of forming a true belief. Hence, one cannot define knowledge simply in terms of virtue.

Nancy Sherman and Heath White point out that virtue epistemologists have underutilized some of the key resources of classical virtue ethics, in particular, the role of affect in intellectual virtue, and the role of luck and external goods in achieving knowledge. Their chapter, 'Intellectual Virtue: Emotions, Luck, and the Ancients', begins by exploring the role of emotion in intellectual virtue, and they defend the Aristotelian position that even though beliefs are not fully voluntary because the emotions that influence them are not fully voluntary, they are within the reach of responsibility. We are not primarily passive with respect to our emotions. Revising the cognitive core of emotions is one of the ways we revise emotions themselves. This is an Aristotelian point, but it is developed by the Stoics whose view of emotions was more thoroughly cognitive. The Stoics viewed emotions as voluntary assents to appearances of good and evil. They are judgements, but they are mistaken. How, then, could the Stoics endorse emotion as a central aspect of cognitive character? The answer, say Sherman and White, is that the sage can resist being taken in by

appearances. Further, there are affective states that dispose the agent to make accurate judgements. To care about truth and certainty, in Stoic terms, is to be non-rash and non-careless in giving and withholding assent to the appearances. Since these are emotional attitudes, the affective component of intellectual virtue found in Aristotle survives even the Stoic revision. Aristotle and the Stoics had contrasting positions on the place of luck in happiness, however, since the Stoics maintained and Aristotle denied that virtue is sufficient for happiness. The Stoics even tried to deny the place of luck in knowledge. Cognitive virtues are sufficient for getting the truth. This position has been given up by modern epistemologists who almost always agree that there is a substantial amount of luck in getting truth. Sherman and White conclude that the difference between truth and happiness in the role of luck limits the extent to which virtue ethics and virtue epistemology can be unified.

In 'Virtue Ethics: Radical or Routine?' *David Solomon* sees the turn to virtue ethics in the latter half of the twentieth century as taking two different forms. One focuses on the ordering of evaluative concepts and argues that the concept of virtue is more basic than the concepts of a right act and a good state of affairs. Solomon calls this routine because of its focus on familiar arguments over theory construction. The other form focuses on deeper questions about the nature and ambition of modern ethics and its ability to satisfy our need for reflective guidance. This more radical approach includes such themes as a suspicion of rules and principles, the importance of the narrative structure of a human life, the importance of community, a critique of modernity, and sometimes a suspicion of moral theory itself. Debates over virtue ethics so far seem unresolvable because they are partly debates over the criteria by which an ethical theory should be judged. Virtue epistemologists should be aware that when they look to virtue ethics for a model, there are two very different models to which they can appeal. Solomon suggests that epistemologists might learn from the experience of moral philosophers about the variety of uses to which the language of virtue can be put and possible confusions about these uses.

Jorge Garcia argues in 'Practical Reason and its Virtues' that the instrumentalist conception of practical reasoning favoured by consequentialists is inadequate and incapable of protecting us against the moral horrors of the twentieth century. This is even true of the sophisticated consequentialism of Amartya Sen, who proposes that human sympathy in combination with instrumental reason is a safeguard against atrocities. But this leaves us with the need to justify acting from sympathy which, from the standpoint of instrumental reason,

may seem imprudent. Sen maintains that the badness of rights-violations is an independent badness which makes acts that produce it wrong if not counter-balanced by good outcomes. Garcia argues that this still leaves us little protection against gross injustice, which almost always is seen as arising from a kind of sympathy—sympathy for humanity as a whole. The problem with that, Garcia argues, is that genuine sympathy is always for individuals, and it is individuals who are the bearers of rights.

Garcia's alternative is a theory of the moral life that has four characteristics: (1) It is role-centred, which means it makes all moral features (rights, virtues, duties) ones that a person has in virtue of being in role-relationships with others: friend, parent, fellow citizen, informant, and so on. (2) It is virtues-based, which means that it makes judgements of right and wrong, rights and duties depend on more fundamental judgements of attitudinal responses that are virtuous or vicious. (3) It is patient-focused in that the fundamental attitudes of virtue are those directed towards the person with whom the agent is related in the relevant role. (4) It is input-driven, which is to say that the moral status of an act is determined by its motivational input, not the physical structure of the act or its consequential output. Garcia argues that these features not only protect against tyranny but are sensitive to the moral significance of differentially demanding roles. This is true of our epistemic roles as well. The intellectual virtues are neither instrumentally nor intrinsically good. Like the moral virtues they are good-making in that they contribute towards our being good reasoners in the roles we have in our epistemic communities.

Two kinds of problem have plagued fallibilists regarding knowledge: the lottery problem and Gettier problems. In 'Knowledge as Credit for True Belief', *John Greco* argues that we can resolve both kinds of problem by attending to the illucutionary force of knowledge attributions, specifically, that they serve to give credit to the believer for getting things right. The idea is that in saying someone knows we are saying that the person has formed a true belief in virtue of her own effort and ability, and not because of some sort of good fortune. Greco begins his essay with sections devoted to each of the two kinds of problem and failed efforts to address them. He then takes up the task of developing his own account. Using work done by Joel Feinberg on blaming, which stresses the assignment of causal responsibility, Greco develops a general account of giving credit. According to this account giving credit crucially involves assigning causal responsibility to the agent, not in the sense that the agent is picked out as the sole cause, but in the sense that the agent is

identified as a salient, or the most salient, part of the cause. Since salience is sensitive to context in various ways, Greco's resolution of Gettier and lottery problems inherits a significant contextual element. In addition to requiring that the agent be causally responsible for something in order to get credit for it, Greco requires that a relevant aspect of the agent's character play a significant causal role. A stumbling athlete who only rarely succeeds at some feat will not get credit even when she does, according to Greco, since the rare success will be attributed to good luck rather than the athlete's skill. What this comes to in the cognitive domain is that a believer's reliable cognitive character, or intellectual virtue, must be an important necessary element in the cause of a true belief for the believer to get credited with the true belief. After presenting his account, Greco tests it against a number of cases and closes with a brief consideration of how his account might help us understand the value of knowledge.

In previous work the editors of this volume have discussed the problem of what makes knowledge better than true belief.⁸ Zagzebski calls this the value problem. In 'Intellectual Motivation and the Good of Truth', *Linda Zagzebski* investigates the value problem further. She distinguishes four ways a belief can be evaluated according to its relation to truth: (1) A belief can have value because truth is its consequence. (2) A belief can have teleological value in the Aristotelian sense, the kind of value something has when it is a component of a good natural end. On this account true belief would be intimately related to the good of *eudaimonia* or a good life. (3) A belief can be valuable in that truth is its end in the sense of an aim. Assuming that true belief is good, it is also good to aim at it. (4) A belief can be good because it arises from good motives, in particular, the motive of valuing truth or disvaluing falsehood. Since motives and aims are not the same thing, the fourth way in which the value of truth is related to the value of a given true belief does not reduce to the third. Zagzebski argues that the fourth way in which a given belief can be related to truth makes the belief better than either the first or the third way. She defends this claim by comparing beliefs to acts. An act that aims at relieving suffering is better than an act that merely leads to the relief of suffering, and an act that is motivated by a disvaluing of suffering is better still. Similarly, a belief that aims at the truth is better than one that merely leads to the truth, and one that is motivated by a valuing of truth is better still. Arguably, a belief that is

⁸ See DePaul (1993: ch. 2) and (2001), and Zagzebski (1999a), expanded and reprinted in Axtell (2000).

motivated by a valuing of truth or a disvaluing of falsehood has the value that makes knowing better than mere true believing. Pursuing the belief/act analogy, Zagzebski concludes that true believing is not an end state analogous to the relief of suffering. Rather, true believing *is* an intellectual act, or at least, it is strongly analogous to an act.

The issue of how the reliabilist can handle the value problem is the topic of *Ernest Sosa's* essay, 'The Place of Truth in Epistemology'. Suppose we think that knowledge is belief that is both true and derives from intellectual virtue, where what makes a psychological feature an intellectual virtue is the reliable tendency of that feature to give rise to true beliefs. If we also assume that knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief, where does the value of knowledge in addition to truth come from? Sosa offers an answer to this question that retains the idea that truth is the only fundamental epistemic value (with some qualifications for values such as understanding that are not directly connected to knowledge). Sosa proposes that we prefer our own successes, epistemic and otherwise, to be attributable to our own doing, and this value can be intrinsic as well as instrumental. Furthermore, there is also what he calls 'performance value', the value of a belief performance that would normally produce true belief when operating in a suitable environment. A performance can have this value even when the ensuing belief is false. The chief intellectual goods involve hitting the mark of truth through the quality of one's performance.

In 'How to be a Virtue Epistemologist' *Christopher Hookway* begins his reflections with the schematic characterization of virtue epistemology as 'approaches to the most central problems of epistemology which give to states called "intellectual" or "epistemic" virtues a central or "primary" explanatory role'. This characterization contains three elements that require comment: the central problems of epistemology, the nature of epistemic virtue, and the explanatory primacy of virtue. Hookway addresses each of these elements, but what are perhaps his most interesting reflections concern the central problems of epistemology. He points out that standard versions of virtue epistemology accept the typical contemporary view of the central problems, i.e. that they are to analyse the concepts of knowledge and justification and address sceptical challenges by showing that it is possible for us to know, or at least have justified belief. Given this agreement with the rest of contemporary epistemology regarding the central problems, virtue epistemology is distinguished from other epistemologies only by the claim that the concepts of knowledge and justification must be analysed in terms of virtues. The acquiescence of most

virtue epistemologists in the consensus view of the central problems stands in contrast to the position that has driven many contemporary advocates of virtue ethics. Virtue ethicists have tended to reject the contemporary consensus that the central problems of ethics concern the moral 'ought', arguing that we should instead concentrate on what is required to live well. Is there space for virtue epistemologists to mount a similar challenge? Hookway aims to show that there is, arguing that instead of focusing on static states such as belief and the evaluation of these as justified or knowledge, we might instead focus on evaluating and regulating the activities of inquiry and deliberation and the role of virtues in such evaluation and regulation.

Wayne Riggs proposes an alternative to standard truth-directed, success-oriented epistemological theories in 'Understanding "Virtue" and the Virtue of Understanding', arguing that the highest epistemic good is a state that includes much more than the achievement of true beliefs and the avoidance of false beliefs. In fact, it includes much more than knowledge: it requires understanding of important truths. So one way in which contemporary epistemology has been too limited is that it has focused on a less worthy goal than the highest epistemic good. Some of the intellectual virtues are best understood as directed at understanding rather than at truth or knowledge. Intellectual virtues are also usually construed as traits that require reliable success in reaching their goal, but Riggs argues that whether the goal is truth or understanding, reliable success cannot be necessary for intellectual virtue since some of the most intellectually virtuous persons, intellectual giants such as Aristotle, Newton, and Galileo, are not noted for their success. The intellectual virtues should therefore be understood in terms of the values at which they aim, not at the values they reliably bring about. When we give up truth-directed, success-orientated approaches in epistemology, the importance of intellectual virtue becomes much clearer.

Christine McKinnon argues in 'Knowing Cognitive Selves' that the standard epistemological requirements of impartiality on the part of the knower and passivity on the part of the thing under investigation exclude from the purview of epistemology a very important kind of knowledge: knowledge of persons. Feminist philosophers have focused on problems in explaining knowledge of *other* persons, but McKinnon suggests that the same considerations require a reorientation in the way we think of knowledge of ourselves. In this case the subjectivity of the knower is necessarily implicated, and the reflexive nature of the investigation means that what is known is unlikely to remain unaffected by the inquiry. Justifying the knowledge each of us has of

our own selves poses enormous challenges to epistemology. These challenges can be met if we see methods of acquiring knowledge and justifying claims to know ourselves as continuous with the methods of acquiring and justifying our knowledge of other persons. Both are imbedded in social practices and both involve mastery of a theory and responsible exercise of certain cognitive capacities. There are asymmetries between first-person and third-person knowledge, but these asymmetries neither rest on traditional claims of first-person privileged access nor do they undermine the possibility of knowing others. The project of coming to know persons is a project of coming to know their moral and cognitive characters. The case of self-knowledge highlights some interesting points of intersection between virtue ethics and virtue epistemology and may illuminate some methodological issues in contemporary epistemology.

The most interesting parts of works from the virtue ethics tradition are often the detailed, perceptive treatments of specific virtues and vices. Our hope is that contemporary virtue epistemology will eventually produce similarly rich discussions of intellectual virtues and vices. In 'Humility and Epistemic Goods', *Robert Roberts* and *Jay Wood* provide a model for the kind of discussions we hope to see. They begin their treatment of intellectual humility by examining the broader, moral conception of humility. Their strategy is to situate humility in relation to its various opposing vices, which include arrogance, vanity, conceit, egotism, grandiosity, pretentiousness, snobbishness, impertinence, haughtiness, self-righteousness, domination, selfish ambition, and self-complacency. Roberts and Wood focus on vanity and arrogance in particular. They characterize vanity as an excessive concern with how one is regarded by other people and arrogance as a tendency to infer illicit entitlements from one's supposed superiorities. Humble as opposed to vain people are unconcerned with and inattentive to how they appear to others. This does not mean that humble people are ignorant of their good qualities, just that they are not particularly interested to be recognized for having these qualities. The reason for this is that their attention is focused on other, more important things. In the case of intellectual humility, one such thing would typically be the truth. Thus, for example, while vain persons might seek to hide their errors for fear of what others might think of them, the humble will be more concerned that any mistakes be brought to light so that they can correct their errors and get their inquiries back on track. Humble persons are not distinguished from arrogant persons by being unaware of or even unconcerned with entitlements. The distinction turns on what motivates the

awareness or concern. Paradigmatic cases of arrogance involve an excessive interest in entitlements motivated by what Roberts and Wood call their ego-exalting potency. In contrast, when humble people do have an interest in some entitlement, the interest is pure, in the sense that they are concerned with the entitlement because it serves some valuable purpose or project. Roberts and Wood close their essay by considering a wide variety of ways in which intellectual humility promotes the acquisition of epistemic goods.

Over three decades ago Roderick Chisholm observed that ‘many of the characteristics which philosophers and others have thought peculiar to ethical statements also hold of epistemic statements.’⁹ These days we may be less inclined to focus on the linguistic form in which ideas are expressed than on the ideas themselves, but Chisholm’s point still holds. Much of what moral philosophers talk about applies to epistemology, although epistemologists and ethicists usually formulate the problems of their respective fields differently. The problems of epistemology have evolved over the last few decades and the dispute between foundationalism and coherentism no longer dominates the field. Sosa’s suggestion that the idea of an intellectual virtue can illuminate that dispute is no longer the main attraction to virtue in epistemology. The introduction of the idea of virtue into epistemological discourse has led to a new set of problems and issues for discussion in epistemology that overlap with value theory. A number of new directions for research are suggested by the chapters in this volume and we hope that this book will encourage further collaboration between virtue ethicists and virtue epistemologists.

⁹ Chisholm (1969: 4).

2

Intellectual Virtue: Emotions, Luck, and the Ancients

Nancy Sherman and Heath White

Cold theorems and maxims, dry and jejune disputes, lean syllogistical reasonings, could never yet of themselves beget the least glimpse of true heavenly light, the least sap of saving knowledge in any heart.

(Cudworth, *Sermon 92*)

Part of the appeal of virtue epistemology is its shift in focus from the justification of individual beliefs to the overall status of the knower as a person of intellectual virtue. A belief is justified, for a virtue epistemologist, if it is believed in a way that an agent of intellectual virtue would believe it. Put this way, the idea parallels Aristotle's notion that an act is virtuous if the agent is in a certain condition when she does it (*Nicomachean Ethics* (henceforth *NE*) 1105^b1). But the turn to virtue epistemology has underutilized some of the key resources of its analogue in virtue ethics. On the whole, virtue epistemologists have said too little about the role of affects¹ in intellectual virtue,² as well as the role of luck and external goods in achieving its objective of knowledge.

¹ Following Margaret Little we use 'affect' as a generic term to mean desires, emotions, and certain feelings of pleasure or pain that are like emotions, such as feelings of delight or taking pleasure in one's work, etc. Admittedly, the term is not ideal for it often connotes *felt* states, and we mean it to include unconscious emotions and motivations as well. But to speak just of emotions, as the first author has in past writings, excludes other kinds of affective states that are important to Aristotle's discussion and moral psychology, in general.

² Exceptions being Zagzebski (1996), Little (1995), Montmarquet (1992a) and (1987a).

Both themes are central to the ancient discussion of virtue and a matter of considerable debate between Aristotle and the Stoics. In the remarks that follow, we want to explore these themes in the hope of providing a more robust account of intellectual virtue.

In particular, we take up in section I the role emotions play in an Aristotelian account of moral virtue and what we might infer their role to be in the case of intellectual virtue. We also raise questions about the way we can be held responsible for our affects and how this bears on the notion of being responsible for beliefs. In section II, we explore the Stoics on affect and suggest that despite their inveighing against a life of emotional attachment, they still hold onto an element of affective sensitivity that has important implications for virtue epistemology. Finally, in section III we look at a tension between Aristotle and the Stoics on the role of success in happiness and discuss this in light of the role of extrinsic factors in the production of knowledge.

I. Aristotle on intellectual virtues and affect

As is familiar to readers of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle insists that moral virtue is concerned with right affect as well as right action. The virtuous person characteristically hits the mean with regard to both. So Aristotle states the formula: the virtuous person is one who feels 'both fear and confidence and appetite and anger and pity and in general pleasure and pain... at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right aim, and in the right way' (*NE* 1106^b15–22).³ 'To stand well toward the affects', i.e. to have affects that are regulated and cultivated in the above ways, is characteristic of moral excellence. Aristotle tells us of the specific emotions concerned with specific virtues, e.g. courage with fear and confidence, and temperance with bodily appetite and pleasures and pains. And he insists that the habituation of affects will be as important to the project of moral education as the development of capacities of practical choice and reasoning.⁴ But he doesn't specify the roles emotions like fear and confidence, delight and pity play in virtue such that they require regulation and cultivation. Still, we can fill in the lacunae along lines argued for elsewhere and here briefly summarized.⁵

³ See also *NE* 1105^b26–8 for a list of emotions, and *Rhetoric* II for a fuller discussion of specific emotions and their analysis.

⁴ See Sherman (1989: ch. 5).

⁵ See Sherman (1997: ch. 2).

But first a note of caution: to include emotions in the constitution of intellectual virtue does not require that we think of emotions as always conscious states. Emotions can operate both consciously and unconsciously.⁶ Indeed, to think of emotions as always conscious or as paradigmatically intense moments of affective peaks and troughs is to fail to appreciate the subtle flavour of most of our emotional life.

One primary role of emotions in the case of moral virtue is perceptual. Emotional sensitivities poise us to track moral saliences. If we have a sense of pity or compassion we are likely to notice suffering in a way that those who lack the sensitivity cannot. Moreover, as psychological research now suggests, we are likely to notice quickly and with a sense of urgency that may be requisite for action.⁷ Generally put, emotions cue us to perceptual features of the external world—that there is something dangerous, or appealing, or worrisome, or threatening in our environment. To have emotions is to have antennae that track, not infallibly and not without proper tutoring, salience. In some cases, emotional cues will be self-disclosing, bringing to consciousness thoughts that we were not quite aware of before. For example, they may disclose that we are in fact bothered by how someone acted though we didn't think we were, that we are worried about a child's well-being, though we have been reassuring ourselves that all is okay, that a deadline is nagging at us, though it is vacation and we have resolved to put work aside. Without the trail of emotional feelings we might not access what is on our minds, and without their sensitivities we might not recognize the requirements situations impose on us.⁸ We can bring these points back to Aristotle. Virtue requires a discernment of the particulars. Emotions as recognitional capacities or modes of attention are likely candidates to share the perceptual function of virtue.

Emotions are ways of noticing but they are also, simply put, ways of expressing ourselves. We undertake activities *with* certain manifest attitudes, which are sometimes in sync with our actions and choices, and sometimes in conflict with them. So we show delight, resentment, passion, annoyance, coolness, congeniality, interest, etc. The emotions convey to others what we care about and, to some extent, who we are. They convey the state of mind from which we perform an action. On an Aristotelian view, virtue requires

⁶ See Freud (1926) on unconscious signal anxiety and its function as an early warning alarm system that allows us to defend against perceived danger.

⁷ Oatley (1992).

⁸ So McDowell (1979: 124) says virtue is 'an ability to recognize requirements which situations impose on one's behavior'. Our claim is that emotions help constitute these recognitional capacities.

that actions and overall bearing have the right emotional tone. How we comport ourselves emotionally matters morally.

Emotions are modes of attention and expression, but they are also modes of motivation. Thus, we often act ‘from’ or ‘out of’ an emotion. In a common-sense way, emotions seem to give us the ‘oomph’ or impulse that propels many actions. As Aristotle puts it in the *Rhetoric* II, emotions are beliefs, *phantasiai*, or construals about something, accompanied by pleasure and pain, and typically involving a desire to act. Of course, emotional motivations can be rash and impetuous, as in the case of a person who, hot with anger, desires to take immediate revenge. But the Aristotelian claim is that properly habituated emotional propensities will involve motivations to act⁹ that are endorsed by later deliberation and reflection.

Much of the story about the role of emotions in moral virtue has become familiar territory. Less charted is how emotions, and affects, in general, figure in intellectual virtue. Before we take this up, however, let’s quickly review some textual background. At the end of *NE I* Aristotle divides the psyche into rational and non-rational parts to which correspond excellences of intellect (practical and theoretical) and of character (i.e. moral virtues). Aristotle explicitly tells us that the non-rational part partakes of the rational in so far as the affects of the non-rational part can be brought under reason’s sway (and we might add, following the *Rhetoric*, in so far as emotions are themselves partially cognitive states).¹⁰ Left unstated is how the excellences of the rational part might themselves depend on the affects of the non-rational part. Aristotle makes explicit later that practical wisdom will involve deliberative desire and will itself be a part of the full constitution of each moral virtue.¹¹ But there is little anticipation here of the point that excellences of the theoretical or scientific intellect might also involve affective elements.

Apart from his account of deliberative choice in Book III, Aristotle postpones further discussion of the intellectual virtues until Book VI. There he offers a brief account of the virtues of practical and theoretical intellect. Under the first fall craft (*technē*), practical wisdom (*phronēsis*), judgement (*gnōmē*) and equity (*suggnōmē*); under the second, scientific understanding (*epistēmē*) involving inductive and deductive reasoning about necessary truths, comprehension

⁹ Zagzebski’s (1996) Aristotelian-inspired account of intellectual virtue capitalizes on this aspect of emotions. Thus, on her view, the emotional element of virtue is an action-directing motive. Emotional dispositions are the motivational component of virtue.

¹⁰ Even more strongly, the virtues of the non-rational part are character states that themselves involve practical wisdom.

¹¹ *NE* 1113^a10ff.; 1144^b18ff.

(*nous*) involving a grasp of first principles, and contemplative wisdom (*sophia*), involving a combination of scientific understanding and comprehension. The *ergon* or function of these latter, in virtue of which they are excellences, is to grasp the truth.¹² They are concerned with ‘affirmation and negation’. A ‘good state’ of intellect is one that arrives at the truth; a ‘bad state’ leads to falsehood or error.¹³ Aristotle makes no mention of infallibility or even of the constancy or reliability of intellectual virtue to deliver the truth.

The list is fairly limited. As Linda Zagzebski notes, apart from the notions of calculative or deliberative reason, there is no specific discussion of the intellectual virtues of assessing contingent truths.¹⁴ Aristotle’s own focus within the theoretical sphere is on the unchanging and what cannot be otherwise. Moreover, Aristotle’s list excludes mention of natural faculties (good memory or good eyesight) and cognitive processes that reliabilists tend to point to as intellectual virtues.¹⁵ Nor does he mention character traits other contemporary virtue epistemologists point to as involved in the process of acquiring justified beliefs, such as fair-mindedness, perseverance, curiosity, impartiality before the evidence, conscientiousness, and autonomous judgement; nor intellectual forms of moral virtues, such as the courage of one’s convictions or humility before the truth.¹⁶ And, also, there is silence about the emotional dispositions we think of as typically associated with intellectual virtue, such as a passion for the truth, a delight in learning, excitement in discovery, pride in one’s accomplishments, respect for good argument, repugnance at intellectual dishonesty, and in the case of empirical science, surprise at the disconfirmation of one’s theory and joy at its verification.¹⁷ Rather than regarding intellectual excellences as the competencies or traits or affects by which we are best positioned to pursue the truth, he views them as states that mark an intellectual grasp of the truth, in the sense of having arrived at scientific understanding, or wisdom of various sorts, or a grasp of foundational first principles. The emphasis on

¹² NE 1139^a29; 1139^b12.

¹³ NE 1139^a22. Dancy (1995) raises the question of how reliabilist a gloss this definition demands. On the face of it, to say, as Aristotle does, that these virtues have truth as their function does seem another way of saying their end is to grasp the truth. Dancy, however, suggests that we might simply think of them as ‘related’ to the truth in a way that doesn’t demand consequentialism and that allows for the inclusion of other kinds of intellectual virtues that are not at all related to bringing about the truth. The suggestion is appealing, though, as he himself acknowledges, it doesn’t seem to be Aristotle’s.

¹⁴ Zagzebski (1996: 216).

¹⁵ See Sosa (1991: ch. 8).

¹⁶ Zagzebski (1996), Montmarquet (1987a), (1992a), (1992b), Dancy (1995).

¹⁷ See I. Scheffler (1982), Polanyi (1958), Wood (1998).

achievement underscores a basic Aristotelian point about virtue, namely, that virtue is a cultivated and acquired state. Intellectual excellences will depend on natural powers, faculties, and receptivities as moral virtue does. But full virtue of either sort is never just a disposition or capacity;¹⁸ it is a way of ‘standing toward’ dispositions and faculties that involve conscious shaping, regulation, and valuing as component parts in living well.

Aristotle claims that the acquisition of moral and intellectual virtues will differ in that the former are habituated, the latter acquired more didactically through teaching and study. The point is overdrawn.¹⁹ Intellectual virtue will itself involve the example following and habituation of moral virtue: inspiration by role models will be important as will be learning through critical practice the habits of careful reasoning, methodical argument, and assessment of data. We study modes of reasoning and research, but we also practise them and model them.

We are now in a position to return to our primary question of how, despite Aristotle’s silence, affect might figure in an Aristotelian account of intellectual virtue. First, are there supplemental texts we might draw on to fill out the picture? Second, can we apply his remarks about the affective components of moral virtue to those of intellectual virtue without damage to his overall view?

With respect to the first question, a few important texts help fill the lacunae. The *Metaphysics* famously opens with a statement of the delight humans take in using their discriminatory skills and suggests something of a natural human propensity for curiosity: ‘All humans by nature desire to know. An indication of this is the delight we take in our senses; for even apart from their usefulness they are loved for themselves’ (9080^a22 ff.) In *NE* X. 3 Aristotle goes further, suggesting that even if we received no particular pleasure from exercising our discriminatory powers, the best life is still one in which those powers are cultivated and exercised: ‘There are many things we would be keen about (*spoudēn poiēsaimeth’an*) even if they brought no pleasure, e.g., seeing, remembering, knowing, possessing the excellences’ (1174^a4–6). And again: ‘No one would choose to live with the intellect of a child throughout his life, however much he were to be pleased at the things that children are pleased at’ (1174^a1–3). The suggestion, then, is that humans find intrinsic value in the activity of intellectual and sensory discrimination. In the best life, individuals take an interest in and

¹⁸ *NE* II. 1; II. 6. As Aristotle puts it, it is a *hexis* (character state), not a *dunamis* (faculty).

¹⁹ Zagzebski (1996) appreciates this. See Sherman (1989: ch. 5), which argues for an understanding of habituation that is more cognitive and instruction-based than our own notion of forming habits implies.

are committed to (*spoudēn*) the exercise and cultivation of these capacities. Here, interestingly, we do have mention of the more fundamental cognitive and sensory competencies as valued in the intellectual life in the way we value virtues. Though Aristotle has reason not to call them virtues, as we discussed above, he suggests that they are to be developed as part of the life of a good knower.

Aristotle's remarks on pleasure in Book X add to the picture. An activity performed in the best way and in optimal circumstances yields pleasure specific to and supervenient upon that activity. As Aristotle puts it, the pleasure completes and intensifies the activity: 'An activity is intensified by its proper pleasure, since each class of things is better judged of and brought to precision by those who engage in the activity with pleasure' (1175^a30). Moreover, to engage in an activity in a way that produces pleasure is to be focused, undistracted by competing activities, motivated to continue and pursue the activity more intensely. 'That is why when we enjoy anything very much we do not throw ourselves into anything else' (1175^b9–11).

The remarks are general but their application to intellectual activity is clear. To take delight in working out an argument, to find, on balance, more pleasure than pain in a day of writing, to be thrilled with the incremental discoveries of genome research is to be motivated to continue to invest one's energies and, in certain kinds of cases, to seek higher and more challenging levels of engagement.²⁰ Moreover, to be engaged in a way that yields pleasure is typically to be alive to one's work, alert to its challenges, attentive to its demands. In this sense, pleasure or delight exhibits the motivational and attentional roles of emotion, in general.

However, the pleasure supervenient on intellectual activity is, of course, only one small piece of an account of the affective components of intellectual virtue. Some points we can easily fill in from Aristotle's general positions. For example, it takes little to show Aristotle's commitment to the social nature of intellectual life and, correspondingly, to the social emotions of friendliness, mutuality, cooperativeness, perhaps trust and the reliance on mutual interest, requisite for discourse and understanding in general. Suggestive here are his books on friendship and his revealing remark in Book X that even leisurely contemplation, removed from the circles of social life, is most productive and continuous when it is pursued with others.²¹ Indeed, one could easily interpret

²⁰ The psychological principle is what Rawls aptly called the Aristotelian principle.

²¹ See *NE* 1175^a35. Also, Sherman (1997: ch. 5).

his more general remarks that the best kind of life is one lived in the company of critical and reflective partners as a comment about the best kind of intellectual life.

But other remarks about the emotional quality of our lives as knowers are less forthcoming. That our lives as excellent knowers are emotionally laden,²² filled with surprise and disappointment, competitive spirit and pride, eagerness and a degree of impatience, a zeal for truth and repugnance at deception, a healthy love of self and a zest for reaching what is humanly knowable is not something Aristotle hammers home, except in the few texts mentioned. Perhaps this absence of emotional talk in the intellectual sphere has to do with thinking of moral virtue as whipping the non-rational, affective (and sometimes animal) side of the self into shape in a way that Aristotle doesn't think has application when we are grasping for the truth (especially the lofty truth of what is unchanging), rather than our happiness. But clearly many of the emotions we experience as pursuers of the good, regarding having and losing, and what we wish for ourselves and others, and how aggressive or passive we are in pursuing our goals will also have their day as we apply ourselves as knowers.²³

Still, Aristotle doesn't make the point. But would it misrepresent his view to make the point for him—to say, loosely speaking, that intellectual excellence is a way of comporting oneself well (i.e. in a way conducive to the function of grasping the truth) both with respect to beliefs *and* emotions? As such, to return to the familiar formula, intellectual excellence, like moral excellence, would require, among other things, that emotions be expressed in the right way, at the right time, towards the right persons, and so forth. At first glance, the point might seem strained. Take the case of a scientist on the verge of making an important breakthrough, whose diffidence holds him back from taking the last critical step. The step is within his reach, but he resists it because of not wanting to be in the limelight, or perhaps not wanting to discredit reigning authorities to whom he feels deferential. Our first reaction might be to fault him more for his overall moral character than for his intellectual character, *qua* scientist. He is a reasonable bench scientist, we might say; after all, he's careful, conscientious, judicious in assessing data and in subjecting his hypotheses to rigorous attempts at refutation. His problem is just that he is

²² Aristotle of course makes the points with respect to practical wisdom.

²³ Perhaps some of Freud's remarks about transference have application here.

diffident. And this is more a flaw in his general character than in how he handles research.

But this misses the very point of virtue epistemology's reorientation. To focus on the criteria of a good knower rather than on knowledge is to open the door to new kinds of considerations, relevant to what it means to be in a position to know. If diffidence or caution stands in the way of exploring new frontiers, of asking bold questions, of submitting one's work to public scrutiny or acclaim, then it is an emotional defect in a knower. Similarly, if love of self turns into a grandiosity that makes listening to competing viewpoints difficult, if it squashes collaborative effort and makes teamwork a matter of hierarchical command, then such narcissism is, again, an emotional defect in a knower. Put this way, to require of the knower that she hit the mean with respect to emotions seems itself on the mark. Similar points can be made about emotional attitudes we typically take to be unequivocally conducive to the truth. Even a passion for the truth can lead one to distort evidence, to jump to conclusions, to be overly confident in a way that leads to dogmatism.²⁴ So too a zeal to know can lead to an impatience that cuts short discourse or frustrates the slow and methodical study often necessary for serious inquiry.²⁵ Thus, even putatively positive emotions crucial to the life of a knower can become excessive and counterproductive. They too may require the modulation and self-reflection requisite for apt or 'medial' emotions. The general point is that the Aristotelian claim that virtue is characterized by apt emotions holds in the intellectual sphere as well. Granted, hitting the mean with regard to emotions will be an individual matter, relative to external and internal circumstances, e.g. in the case of fear, how difficult the objective challenges are and whether one naturally leans towards bravado or caution. But this is no different from assessment in the case of moral virtue.

Still there may be a general worry, which we haven't yet addressed, in assigning emotions a central role in intellectual virtue. The worry is that it diminishes our responsibility as epistemic agents.²⁶ For emotions often seem to 'happen' to us, to be passive states we suffer. We can't easily start or stop emotions 'on a dime' as we think we can many actions. If, as we have been

²⁴ See Montmarquet (1987a).

²⁵ See Zagzebski (1996: 146–8) where she claims that a distinction between moral and intellectual virtue cannot rest on the notion that the former is involved in 'handling feelings' but the latter is not.

²⁶ But perhaps we might say no more so than in holding biological powers and cognitive processes to be intellectual virtues.

arguing, emotional character is an important part of intellectual character, then the non-voluntary quality of emotions might seem to indicate that our intellectual character is non-voluntary too. And this, in turn, might seem to remove responsibility for belief from the epistemic agent. Even if we concede that emotions are not fully voluntary, are the beliefs they influence outside the reach of our responsibility? With Aristotle, we suggest no.

On an Aristotelian view, responsibility for emotions, in general, will be indirect in so far as emotional habits follow from actions. In his lingo, we become by doing. We make ourselves into certain kinds of emotional creatures, not whole cloth, but by mediating our constitutions and natural receptivities. The idea that we are primarily passive with respect to our emotions is simply neither Aristotle's view nor that of contemporary developmental psychology. As young children we work on ways to self-soothe, ways to regulate our emotions through the sublimation of language, ways to play and pretend that help us come to know and experiment with our feelings. Even the youngest of infants, in early relationships with parents, struggle to learn ways to internalize images of parents and their positive feelings as ways of managing their own more destructive and fragmenting negative feelings. They learn ways of sustaining their good feelings, and ways of sharing them as parts of mutual and reciprocal games with parents. As adults, we shape our emotions in conscious ways, through reflection and self-study, through decisions to tweak this or watch out for that, through resolutions and self-monitoring. Friendships, as well as more explicitly therapeutic contexts, become places in which we assess not just what we have done, but what we feel, and the kinds of situations that make us happy or sad, proud or shameful, guilty or anxious. Revising the thoughts and beliefs that constitute our emotions are among the ways we revise emotions themselves. The point is an Aristotelian one, implicit in his claims about the cognitive core of emotion in the *Rhetoric*. It is a point that the Stoics develop more robustly, as they go on to define emotions as thoroughly cognitive.

The general point has application in the epistemological arena. Emotional habits that affect one's effectiveness as a knower needn't be best construed as fixed traits. Diffidence, narcissism, or impatience to reach the truth may be entrenched, but that is not the same as unbudgeable.

Of course, *wanting to change* emotional habits is another story, and the social pressure to do so yet a further factor. Emotional habits may not change for the better simply because we often lack a social practice, outside circles of intimacy, of passing judgement on others' emotional characters. Even if we

routinely judge others' intellectual characters, we seem a tad more guarded about assessing emotional traits that we view as epistemic boons or handicaps. So we openly talk about people's raw smartness or cleverness, their diligence or laziness, their conscientiousness or sloppiness. But do we freely talk about their zeal or cautiousness, their impetuosity or diffidence, their passion or lack of engagement? We think less so, and it probably has to do with the fact that we think that we are overstepping etiquette boundaries when we engage in these kinds of assessments. Moreover, we think these factors have less to do with intellectual output than more narrowly construed aspects of intellect.

However, we should not underestimate the emotional factors. How we approach our work—that is, with what emotional palette and appetite—has much to do with what we produce. Granted, we all have different emotional styles by which we conduct ourselves as learners and knowers. But it seems fair to say that some are more effective than others. Grandiosity is not a big win in a collaborative effort, nor timidity in most efforts that require taking on challenges and exploring new terrain.

In suggesting that emotions are constitutive of character, both moral and, as we have urged, intellectual, Aristotle implies that assessments of *emotional* character ought to be a part of general character appraisal. Moreover, the Aristotelian claim is that we can do things, through effort, study, discipline, and care, to shape our emotional lives, whether within the epistemic or ethical arena. On an Aristotelian reading, to include the emotions in a conception of intellectual virtue does not in an obvious way compromise our responsibility as epistemic agents.

II. Stoic virtue and the emotions

The Stoics represent a historical development of Aristotelian ideas of virtue, and it will be worthwhile to examine what they have to say about the emotional aspect of intellectual character. At first, such an examination seems unpromising—after all, the Stoics advocate a life of *apatheia*, or freedom from the passions, precisely because, on their view, the emotions represent judgments that are mistaken, and once made, hard to let go of. We might think of the Stoic sage as the master of 'cold'—that is, unemotional—cognition. However, a closer examination of selected Stoic texts suggest that the Stoics do not fully renounce the emotions or the informational function they can serve. They recognize that interest and attention, that is, the recording of

salience in general, are often emotionally processed, and that 'fine' or 'well-reasoned' versions of these capacities are worth cultivating. Even the sage has reason to cultivate these sensitivities as a part of the cultivation of wisdom.

Before going into this account, however, it is important to understand the Stoic position on the emotions more generally and its relation to their doctrine of indifferents. The Stoics view emotions as judgments (or beliefs) in so far as they are voluntary assents to appearances regarding goods and evils. Positive emotions, such as joy and desire, are directed at the appearance of a past, present, or future good; negative emotions, fear and distress, are directed at evils, again in the past, present, or future. All emotions are subspecies of these four.²⁷ Though emotions are cognitive on the Stoic view, they are nonetheless experienced with a kind of flutter or contraction of the mind, a cognitive arousal, that triggers *hormai*, or impulses to act on an emotion. Some accounts add that the judgement constitutive of an emotion is 'fresh' (*prospaton*) or as the Latins put it, 'green', to capture the idea of immediacy and urgency of emotional experience.²⁸

Now the emotions are judgements, but mistaken judgements. Put simply, they misappraise what is genuinely good and evil. Paradigmatically, they are judgements that express attachment to external items, such as health, wealth, fame, and friends, in ways that suggest those items matter to one's happiness. So to fear is to care about threats to one's health or property, to pity is to view undeserved loss as evils that diminish a person's well being, to love is to invest in something outside oneself which one cannot fully control. The Stoic claim is that while these items are natural advantages to be preferred (*elektion, seligendum: Fin. III. 22*), they are not genuine goods or to be chosen as constitutive of happiness. For genuine happiness, only virtue matters. The other advantages are 'indifferents'.²⁹ 'To prefer' rather than 'to choose' signals the demoted status. Thus a Stoic like Chrysippus demands a therapy to cure the soul of its emotional ills. *Apatheia* becomes a way of ridding the soul of false appraisals and attachments.

Yet there are significant texts that suggest Stoic education of the soul does not aim fully to root out the passions. And the claim is not just that some emotional residue is inevitable, but that emotional sensitivity can be a good thing. For the sage, no less than the plebeian, needs to be alerted to what is

²⁷ Stobaeus 2. 88, 8–90, 6 = L and S 65A.

²⁸ Andronicus, *On Passions* I = L and S 65B.

²⁹ Diogenes Laertius 7. 101–3 = L and S 58A. Stobaeus 2. 79, 18–80–13; 82, 20–1 = L and S 58C.

salient in his environment, to what is threatening or aberrant, to what is attractive or novel.

The doctrine of *eupatheiai* provides a way to understand how the Stoics could endorse emotions as a central part of virtuous intellectual character. The Stoics hold the view that there are good affective states that are themselves complete and well-reasoned responses to the external world. As Diogenes Laertius reports, the Stoics

say that there are three good feelings (*eupatheiai*): joy (*charan*), watchfulness (*eulabeian*), wishing (*boulêsin*). Joy, they say, is the opposite of pleasure, consisting in well-reasoned swelling; and watchfulness is the opposite of fear, consisting in well-reasoned shrinking. For the wise man will not be afraid at all, but he will be watchful. They say that wishing is the opposite of appetite, consisting in well-reasoned stretching. Just as certain passions fall under the primary ones, so too with the primary good feelings. Under wishing: kindness, generosity, warmth, affection. Under watchfulness: respect, cleanliness. Under joy: delight, sociability, cheerfulness.³⁰

The *eupatheiai* are emotional dispositions to make judgements that are not mistaken, like ordinary emotions, but accurate appraisals of what is truly good and evil. The sage, then, will have the *eupatheiai*—well-reasoned affective responses to the world—as part of his intellectual character.

There is a second doctrine, however, which is also important for understanding the Stoic's attitude to the role of emotions in intellectual virtue. Emotional preludes, or proto-emotions (*proludentia*), are preliminary tendencies to feel the early stages of an emotion. At such moments, the sage is involuntarily affected by the (false) appearances of external goods as real goods and evils, though he refrains from giving voluntary assent. That is, he resists being fully taken in by the appearance. In his analysis of the sequential stages of anger, Seneca suggests the possibility:

Anger is undoubtedly set in motion by an appearance received of a wrong. But does it follow immediately on the appearance itself and break out without involvement of the mind? Or is some assent by the mind required for it to be set in motion? Our view is that it undertakes nothing on its own, but only with the mind's approval.

Seneca goes on to say that although the sage may involuntarily suffer 'that first mental jolt which affects us when we think ourselves wronged', he withholds voluntary assent from the appearance of injury. Indeed, he suggests that

³⁰ Diogenes Laertius 7. 116 = L and S 65f.

the sage resists the full-fledged emotion on many occasions. So he says, a prelude to anger

steals upon us even while we are watching a performance on stage or reading of things that happened long ago. We have often a sense of being angry with Clodius as he drives Cicero into exile or with Antony as he kills him. Who remains unprovoked by the arms which Marius took up or by Sulla's proscriptions?... But these are not cases of anger, any more than it is grief which makes us frown at the sight of a shipwreck on stage or fear that runs through the reader's mind as Hannibal blockades the walls after the battle of Cannae... They are not emotions, but the preliminaries, the preludes (*proluentia*) to emotions... Thus, it is that even the bravest man often turns pale as he puts on his armour, that the knees of even the fiercest soldier tremble a little as the signal is given for battle.³¹

Thus, even the sage can be taken in by the appearances, manifest in a tremble of the knee or a pallor that falls on his face as he prepares for deadly battle. But it is important to be clear just what appearances the sage is reacting to. In so far as he *withholds* consent (*sunkatathesis*) to appearance, the appearances are presumably untutored appearances of good and evil, that is, views of the external goods as real benefits or harms to one's happiness. Thus, in the above cases, there is a gap between how things appear and how the sage knows they ought to be critically appraised. Even for the sage, the old ways of seeing things can insinuate themselves. At such times, virtue is only fortitude, a point Kant will exploit. For the Stoics, fortitude involves, among other things, active resistance to the suggestibility of certain impressions.³²

From the point of view of a thoroughgoing Stoicism, we might think this a rather disappointing response. For it concedes that the sage cannot fully retool his perceptions of the world. If, as Aristotle says, 'the discrimination rests in perception', and if we are in some sense 'responsible for how things

³¹ *De Ira*, II. 1–3 in Cooper and Procopé (1995). We have changed 'impression' to 'appearance'.

³² The view is confirmed by Epictetus. He takes up the question of how a true sage can turn pale at the prospect of a shipwreck. He answers: 'Even the mind of a sage must necessarily be disturbed, must shrink and feel alarm, not from a preconceived idea of any danger, but from certain swift and unexpected attacks which overthrow the power of the mind and reason... They say that there is this difference between the mind of a foolish man and that of a wise man, that the foolish man thinks that such visions are in fact as dreadful and terrifying as they appear at the original impact of them on his mind, and by his assent he approves of such ideas as if they were rightly to be feared... But the wise man, after being affected for a short time and slightly in his colour and expression, does not assent, but retains the steadfastness and strength of the opinion which he has always had about visions of this kind, namely that they are in no wise to be feared but excite terror by a false appearance and vain alarms' (Rolfe 1927: XIX. 1. 17–18).

appear to us', then the above sorts of concessions suggest that the training of the emotions for virtue can only go so far. Transformation of the perceptual (or 'appearance') component of emotions will often lag behind the sage's more cognitive appraisals; in such cases, the sage must stand his ground through vigilant control and regulation. He must not succumb to first impressions or to the arousals and impulses they inspire. Even the sage must at times settle for a life of only continence.

But if at times, for the Stoic sage, fortitude is the only virtue, because of the incorrigibility of her proto-emotional responses, other Stoic epistemic virtues can make sure that fortitude at least is exercised. Consider 'non-precipitancy' and 'uncarelessness', characterized as virtues in the dialectical sphere.³³ Non-precipitancy (*aprotōsian*) is 'a disposition not to assent in advance of cognition'. One who is non-precipitate 'keeps control over his assents'.³⁴ Essentially, it is the 'science of when one should and not assent'.³⁵ Uncarelessness (*aneikaiotēta*) is a 'strong rational principle' involved in not 'giving in to what is merely plausible'.³⁶ The sage, then, whether engaged in dialectical argument or in the assessment of appearances relevant to the emotions, may entertain and be attracted by certain impressions, and even physiologically respond to them. Through the cultivation of virtues such as the above ones, however, he refrains from full assent.

As Seneca paints the picture with respect to the emotions, the sage engages in a two-step sequence—he is initially taken in by appearances, but then shows control in not actualizing the full emotional response. Still, to say the sage is 'taken in by the appearances' puts it somewhat misleadingly. For after all, the sage must remain alive to things that are important for his survival, namely the indifferents. It is just that he can't assent to them as proper goods or evils. The crucial difference between the sage and the plebeian is that the sage knows how to calibrate salience: he knows that not everything that is salient, or even important, in fact contributes to his happiness. He knows how to be guided by the emotions without being seduced by them.

If we integrate the earlier remarks about *eupatheia* with the discussion of emotional preludes, then we get what is probably a fairly developmentally

³³ Note that, on the Stoic view, dialectical argument is not primarily the art of persuasion, but the art of speaking what is 'true and fitting', and as such, is the proper profession only of the sage (Alexander, *On Aristotle's Topics* I. 89–14 = L and S 31D).

³⁴ Anonymous Stoic treatise (Herculaneum papyrus 1020 col. 4, col. 1) = L and S 41D.

³⁵ Diogenes Laertius 7. 46–8 = L and S 31B.

³⁶ *Ibid.* For further suggestive remarks, see Plutarch *On Stoic Self-contradictions* 1047A–B = L and S 31H. See Epictetus, *Discourses* 1. 7. 2–5, 10 = L and S 31R.

accurate picture: the sage who emerges is one who still, on occasion, has gut responses he must catch himself from fully indulging. (Perhaps they represent his blindspots or points of vulnerability. Perhaps they represent moments of regression that are part of the ebb and flow of human emotional life.) But in addition, he has moments when he sees and feels things immediately in a way that gets their valuation right. Thus, transformed emotional sensitivities will exist alongside more regressive emotional tendencies, which need to be kept in check by watchful observation. The upshot is that even a sage may, at times, be ambivalent, oscillating between appearances of, say, a shipwreck as really evil but also as merely dispreferred. More generally, even the sage must retain and cultivate emotional sensitivity to be able to navigate in the world. The epistemic and social advantages of living with the emotions appear to be still available to the sage, even at the end of an education that drastically reduces emotional vulnerability.

The point has application to the conduct of intellectual life, though the Stoics do not make it explicitly.³⁷ To investigate the world, to engage in dialectical argument with others, to understand theoretically and practically requires a responsiveness to emotional cues and emotionally conveyed information; cold cognition will simply not allow proper cognitive contact. However, it may be that the emotional aspects of cognition are never perfect. To counter this necessary imperfection, however, what are needed are not fewer affective dispositions but more. Indeed, to care about truth and certainty, in Stoic terms, to be non-rash and non-careless in the giving and withholding of assent to the appearances, are themselves emotional attitudes. The affective component of intellectual virtue, so important on an Aristotelian understanding of intellectual character, survives even a Stoic revision.

III. Luck and knowledge

The ancient discussion of the role of emotions in virtue is a resource for contemporary virtue epistemology. But so too is the ancient debate about the role of luck and external goods in happiness. In what follows we want to suggest

³⁷ See the suggestive remarks about Chrysippus and the emotional tenor of dialectic in Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-contradictions* 1047A–B = L and S 31H. ‘Furthermore, in Book 1 he [Chrysippus] has even written the following: “I think one should cultivate not just a frank and unaffected order but also, apart from the speech, the appropriate kinds of delivery in relation to the fitting tones of voice, facial expressions and gestures.”’

that there is a revealing lack of parallelism in common-sense views about the luck requisite for happiness and the luck requisite for knowledge. By reflecting on a tension in Aristotle addressed by the Stoics, implications for the epistemological realm will emerge.

Aristotle's task in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is to specify the constituents of happiness. On the one hand, he is pulled by the Socratic view that happiness must reflect, above all else, our 'study and care'. It is the result of 'learning and training'. As he puts it, 'to enlist to chance what is greatest and most noble would be a defective arrangement'.³⁸ The consequence is that happiness will be predominantly constituted by virtue, or excellence, by the cultivation of our human nature in a way that involves the active exercise of our reason and is under our own control. On the other hand, Aristotle never fully rejects the archaic view, characterized by the Homeric heroes, that happiness is *eudaimonia* in a literal sense, having a good daimon or lucky charm. It cannot be devoid of a certain degree of unguaranteed success, prosperity, and fruition. Thus, on his view, external goods and luck find their way into a complete conception of happiness, both as instrumental means to the exercise of virtue and in some cases (as in having good children or good friends), as intrinsically valued goods in their own right, the lack of which would mar happiness.³⁹

There are a few points to notice. First, on the Aristotelian view happiness, as the *telos* of moral virtue, is not antecedently specified. Correlatively, while virtue is conducive to happiness, it is not so as a means, but as a part or constituent that is itself intrinsically valuable. Thus his view of virtue is teleological—it has as its end the human good. But it is not consequentialist or externalist. There is no independently specified external end to which virtue conduces. Rather, happiness or the human good is something we dialectically set out to specify as reflective agents living a meaningful life. The *Nicomachean Ethics* is an example of that pursuit. This is not to suggest that the concept of happiness is fully open-ended. Aristotle takes it as a given that it will involve the flowering (or excellence) of our peculiarly human nature and in moderation, resources outside our nature—in the form of friendships, political structures, and goods, etc.—that allow for achieving our goals and in general enhance our well-being.

Second, while things outside our control will have a role in happiness, Aristotle struggles to minimize their impact. He agrees with common sense

³⁸ NE 1099^b10–25.

³⁹ NE I. 8–12, Irwin (1985*b*), Cooper (1985), Nussbaum (1986: chs. 11–12), Annas (1993: 364–84).

that happiness is a kind of prosperity, a kind of fruition or flourishing. And this typically involves luck. But happiness can't be only a matter of luck, or be snatched from someone by some slight piece of misfortune.⁴⁰ 'Small pieces of good fortune or of its opposite clearly do not weigh down the scales of life one way or the other, but a multitude of great events if they turn out well will make life more happy..., while if they turn out ill they crush and maim happiness.'⁴¹ Thus while happiness is vulnerable to what is outside one's dominion, those external influences must be great in order to make a difference.

The Stoics, as we have seen, advance the Socratic half of Aristotle's picture in the extreme. Virtue, as the excellent use of our divine reason, is exhaustively constitutive of happiness. The indifferents that are according to nature—prosperity and flourishing, external goods of various kinds—are important to have, and virtue is a matter of wise selection of them. But they are not themselves constituents of happiness. Happiness resides in the life of virtue alone, and virtue is a matter of one's own effort. On the Stoic picture, happiness is not a matter of luck at all.

Now however counter-intuitive the Stoic position initially seems, there is still something terribly attractive about it. We do believe, with good reason, that while we suffer loss, we can (often) learn ways to survive loss that are healthy and not self-destructive; that while we become emotionally attached to ideas and people and causes, we can learn ways to detach, to get unstuck when and if it becomes reasonable. We think that there are internal victories in performing a skill flawlessly, or doing our duty unimpeachably, even when external victories have been snatched from us or are out of reach; that the yardstick for full success in certain parts of life is just our doing them well.⁴² We may feel the tension Aristotle expresses—that this is not the whole of happiness—that how we are viewed by others, that whether our friends survive or regimes we live under are politically conducive to our welfare, that all this matters too; that earthquakes and wars, prisoner camps and inhuman treatment can reverse our fortunes and rob us of dignity in the matter of seconds. But still, even when we think of the worst, we often think we have some say in our happiness, that how we adapt and cope is still ours to contribute. Exhortations of Epictetus' type are not just edifying. We think they are true. We think we can often act well the part we are given, and that this is enough for happiness.

⁴⁰ NE 1100^a9–10.

⁴¹ NE 1100^b22–25.

⁴² This calls to mind the Stoic distinction between stochastic and non-stochastic virtues. On this, see Irwin (1998: 164–8) and Inwood (1986).

But the parallel point in virtue epistemology seems less feasible. The Stoics indeed try to make the parallel. They hold that cognitive skills can be honed in the right way as sufficient for the truth, that if we are non-careless and non-precipitous, non-casual and non-random in our assent to appearances, we can be infallible in our grasp of the truth.⁴³ So just as the sage's moral virtue is sufficient for his happiness, so too his epistemic virtue is sufficient for the truth. He will be free of error and infallibly avoid assent to mistaken appearances; he will be impervious to bad reasoning and unreliable sources; he will always have the internal powers and external place in history to access the truth perfectly.

Modern and contemporary epistemologists have felt the temptation of a Stoic view of knowledge and truth. Descartes, for instance, thought that attention to the clarity and distinctness of our ideas would be an infallible guide to avoiding error and assenting only to the truth. The appeal of such a view is that it places great power in the hands of the knower. The conclusion of the *Meditations* is that anyone, given proper leisure, can sit down and discover the deepest truths of the universe. But with such power comes responsibility; for a Cartesian, any assent to a falsehood is culpable, because it must have come about through insufficient attention to the clarity and distinctness of one's impressions. In short, on the Cartesian view as well as the Stoics', the availability of an infallible means for discerning the truth places knowledge squarely within the sphere of our own control.

Most contemporary epistemologists have given up on the idea that there is some method of justification, such as the Cartesian attention to clarity and distinctness, which guarantees truth. A different tactic has sometimes been advanced, however, for placing knowledge within our own power: defining truth in terms of some property we are able to control. For example, the coherence theory of truth holds, roughly, that a belief is true if it coheres (well enough) with other beliefs.⁴⁴ Presumably, anyone epistemically aware can tell if their beliefs are incoherent, and take steps to correct the mistake. Putnam and Dummett,⁴⁵ in their individual ways, have put forth the view that truth is a function of justification or verifiability—that whether a statement is true depends, in some sense, on whether (in suitably idealized settings) we can tell if it is true. On such views, like the Stoics', the ideal epistemic agent is infallible.

⁴³ Not that we can know every truth, but that we can avoid believing any falsehoods.

⁴⁴ See e.g. Bradley (1914). ⁴⁵ Putnam (1981); Dummett (1978).

The common thread running through all these epistemologies is that there need be no *luck* involved in believing the truth.

These views, and others like them, have had currency in contemporary epistemology. But the broad range of philosophers and laypersons have never been especially attracted to them; not attracted, that is, in the way that they are to the parallel Stoic picture of happiness. In the epistemological realm, by and large, we are naive realists about the external world. Truth is outside us to be grasped. And while justification and good reasoning, conscientiousness and care, good eyes and good memory, are our best shots at grasping the truth, they are only reliable, not infallible guides. We make mistakes and misperceive, we lack optimal techniques or placement in the power structure and history of theories, and we see from limited vantage points. Intellectual development is not the same as scientific progress.⁴⁶ As active and conscientious as we can be as knowers and informants, and as strengthened as we are by the social practices of knowledge, we still are vulnerable to error in our pursuit of knowledge. The stronger the realist we are, the more accepting we are of our passivity and our luck.

In contrast, we think happiness can be to a larger degree a matter of our making, that we can diminish the effect of luck without engaging in omnipotent thought or self-deception about our powers. We can conceive of happy people who have faced unspeakable tragedies and who have yet found ways of coping and even thriving; the Stoic conception of happiness, at least in its broad brushstroke, is something many of us embrace. Though the Stoics themselves argue for a unified thesis that demands a parallel between truth and happiness, we suggest that, at least on this issue, we do well to separate virtue epistemology from virtue ethics.

⁴⁶ Montmarquet makes the point in Montmarquet (1987a).