The unity of virtues in Plato and Aristotle

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Abstract

“Unity of virtues” is the idea that virtues should be understood in holistic terms.

Part I focuses on Plato’s *Protagoras*. It argues that, according to Plato’s Socrates, “unity of virtues” is true in the sense that all the apparently different virtues are in fact the same state of soul, namely the state of knowledge. Knowledge shapes how one perceives, deliberates, chooses, acts, and feels. Socrates’ ideal agent is transparent in the sense that what he knows of himself is the same as the truth about what ought to be the case. Further, the idea that “virtue is one” has important pedagogical significance: in reminding us that virtue cannot be compartmentalised, it demands us to stay vigilant: there is always an opportunity to be virtuous, just as there is always an opportunity to be vicious.

Part II concentrates mainly on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* VI and its relation to II-V. It argues that, according to Aristotle, “unity of virtues” is true because attaining practical truth implies the mutual entailment of the ethical virtues. The different ethical virtues can be seen as different ways to attain practical truth, and these different ways of attaining practical truth are themselves manifestations of our nature as practical rational beings. Aristotle’s ideal agent is transparent in an even deeper sense: the excellent condition of his soul reveals the truth about what it is to live well as a practical rational being. Further, in emphasising the importance of “choice”, Aristotle’s account captures how, *contra* Plato’s Socrates, the well-functioning of the practical intellect is hostage to the well-functioning of the non-rational soul. Aristotle’s theory is just intellectualised enough: the wise practical intellect has its proper role to play, but the ethical virtues are not thereby reduced to wisdom.

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Abbreviations

APo.	Posterior Analytics
Cat.	Categories
DA	De Anima
EE	Eudemian Ethics
HA	History of Animals
MA	Movement of Animals
Meta.	Metaphysics
MM	Magna Moralia
NE	Nicomachean Ethics
Phy.	Physics
Pol.	Politics
Rhet.	Rhetoric
Top.	Topics

General Introduction

This dissertation examines the “unity of virtues” in Plato and Aristotle.

The “unity of virtues” can be further specified in different ways, and I will formulate the relevant claims in more precise terms as I proceed. But the fundamental rationale is fairly simple: to be virtuous in the strict sense is to be good *tout court.* No genuinely virtuous person can be good in some ways but bad in other ways. As such, all the virtues, as virtues, should be considered in holistic terms, i.e. in a non-compartmentalised way. Virtues should not be understood in isolation from each other. The point is not so much that one has to be perfectly virtuous in order to have any virtues as that we should think of “virtue” in more rigorous terms. Virtue is not just any agreeable character trait, but it is what makes us good and praiseworthy as a person - or, indeed, as a human being. One has to be virtuous in the strict sense if one is to practise goodness in one’s life as a person. “Virtue” in the strict sense has to come together or constitute a unity, then, because the commitment to goodness is robust and as such does not tolerate any ambivalence.

There is, naturally, a lot to be said about such a notion. And a lot is indeed said about it, especially in Plato. Aristotle has comparatively few thematic discussions of this thesis - although, as we will see, it touches on many issues central to Aristotle’s practical philosophy. So I will have to be selective. In Part I (chapter 1-3), I will focus on the *Protagoras,* both because it contains the most elaborate topic-specific discussion of the “unity of virtues", and because it gives me a unique opportunity to compare Plato’s and Aristotle’s view. Relevant passages from the so-called Socratic dialogues will also be briefly discussed, especially those from *Laches*, *Meno*, and *Euthyphro*. I will briefly refer to the passages that recall the “unity of virtues” in the *Gorgias* (507a-c), the *Phaedo* (69a-c), and the *Republic* (433a-c, 443c-e), but it is not my aim to read these materials closely.

Nor will I have much chance to explore what is commonly referred to as late Plato. The *Statesman* interestingly suggests that the courageous person and the moderate person have opposing temperaments (306a11-307c2), and that such tension can lead to the downfall of the city (307c2-308b8). The *Laws* claims that the excellent guardian must have knowledge of the nature of virtue as such, and it is only in this way that he can ensure the practice of virtue in the polis (964a-966b). I will note the relevance of these passages whenever appropriate, but a full discussion of them will have to be left to another occasion.

In Part II (chapter 4-6), the focus will be *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, especially VI.12-13. This is not surprising, as VI.13 is the *locus classicus* of Aristotle's discussion of the "unity of virtues". As I try to reconstruct Aristotle's view, I will of course also look at other chapters of the NE - and some parts of the EE, MM, and less frequently the *Politics* - but these materials are included mainly to illustrate how there can be different ways to think of the "unity of virtues" in Aristotle. In this way, I hope the discussion can have a clear focus while at the same time be acceptably comprehensive.

Relatedly, let me say a few words about methodology. My discussion will be devoted to reconstructing different arguments for the "unity of virtues". Typically, I will first try to articulate the premises and the (supposed) conclusions, and then I will proceed to examine the premises themselves (including possible variations of them) and related issues. In Part I where I focus on the *Protagoras*, the discussion will follow fairly closely the flow of the text. I will reconstruct Socrates' various arguments for his claims, while also devoting considerable attention to the surrounding contexts. The plan is to get both the structure of the arguments and the textual details right, and thereby maximise the philosophical potential of Socrates' reasoning. Part II is less straightforward, exegetically speaking. What I will do is to let NE VI.12-13 guide me in setting up the overall framework for Aristotle's argument(s). As I try to articulate the various ways in which Aristotle can defend the "unity of virtues", I will also explain how the different reconstructions are based on different interpretations of VI.12-13. On pain of repetition, as I keep going back to VI.12-13, the hope is that I can thereby separate the different reconstructions in a more fine-grained way and also do better justice to the nuances of the text.

Further, it is commonly understood that Aristotle is responding to the *Protagoras* when he presents his version of the "unity of virtues" in NE VI.13. I intend to take the dialectic between Socrates (or Plato's Socrates) and Aristotle seriously. Accordingly, there will be some comparative analysis of Socrates' view and Aristotle's view. This allows us to appreciate the novelty of Aristotle's position from a unique perspective.

Now that I have explained the scope and the method, let me also make a few remarks on the conceptual themes involved. As I understand it, the "unity of virtues" concerns the holistic and robust character of virtue. Different formulations of and/or arguments for this claim capture the different ways in which virtue(s) should be understood in holistic terms. As we shall see, in the case of the *Protagoras*, the claim is that all the apparently different virtues - such as justice, courage, temperance - are simply expressions of the state of knowledge (I will later call this "the identity of virtues"). Virtue cannot be compartmentalised because the state of knowledge cannot be compartmentalised. In Aristotle's case, the claim is that the ethical virtues are mutually entailing via wisdom (I will later reserve the label "unity of virtues" for this position). In both cases, the central idea is that the ethical virtues are inseparable.

In both Plato and Aristotle, the virtues are holistic in this way because they are essentially connected to an intellectual excellence: wisdom or knowledge. Accordingly, another central theme of my discussion concerns the nature of this intellectual excellence: what is it about wisdom or knowledge that explains the holistic and robust character of the ethical virtues? To anticipate, I shall argue that, in the case of the *Protagoras*, knowledge can play this role because it shapes all the aspects of our soul. In Aristotle's case, I shall argue that ultimately it is practical truth that explains how the ethical virtues are mutually entailing. Relatedly, since wisdom or knowledge is a highly demanding intellectual excellence, another theme that is no less central to my investigation is this: just how intellectualised should we take the ethical virtues to be? According to Socrates in the *Protagoras,* virtue *just is* knowledge. I shall argue that this means right passions express one's state of knowledge. According to Aristotle, things are more complicated. I shall argue that we should also explain how the non-rational aspects of the ethical virtues are mutually entailing. But at the same time genuine ethical virtues attain practical truth, which is a cognitive achievement.

Understood in this way, the study of the "unity of virtues" in Plato and Aristotle does not directly address the following two questions. First, it does not tell us how we should enumerate the virtues. It is one thing to say that the ethical virtues should be understood in holistic and robust terms, it is another to really start to count how many virtues there are given such holistic conception. Consequently, my discussion does not give a definitive answer to the question "but unity of *which* virtues?", at least in the sense that it does not generate an exact list of genuine virtues. Be that as it may, I will explain Plato's and Aristotle's reasoning with the virtues that they explicitly discussed. I hope in this way we can have a more concrete idea of what their claims amount to.

Second, I will not discuss in detail how Aristotle responds to the famous Socratic dictum that "no one does wrong freely" (*Protagoras* 345c4-e6, 358d4).[1] It is true that this dictum is an essential part of the" unity of virtues" thesis in the *Protagoras*. For in the *Protagoras*, failing to do what one ought to do is explained in terms of ignorance (355d; 360b5-c5), and the state of knowledge is powerful enough to shape how one behaves (352b-d). I will discuss the relevant passages in Chapter 3. But according to Aristotle, conditions for whether an action is done freely (voluntarily) are not the same as the conditions for whether an action expresses one's character. An action is voluntary if its origin is in the agent and if the agent knows the particulars of the situation (NE III.1); but for an action to express the agent’s character, it has to be the product of deliberation and choice (III.2-4). Relatedly, a wrong action can be voluntary despite its wrongness, as long as it fulfils the conditions for voluntariness. Vice equally “depends on us” (1113b6-14).[2] The “unity of virtues” in Aristotle concerns virtuous character and actions that express such character, not actions that are merely voluntary. Consequently, the question of whether one can commit wrongdoings willingly recedes in Part II.

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[1] All translation of the *Protagoras* is from Taylor 1991.

Let me end by giving an overview of each chapter.

Chapter 1 sets the stage by introducing some key terms. I will also articulate the main thesis and the strategy for Part I.

Chapter 2 discusses the first three of Socrates’ arguments in the *Protagoras*: the argument that justice and piety are nearly identical (330c-331e), the argument that wisdom and temperance are the same (332a-333c), and the (first) argument that courage and wisdom are the same (349e-351a). I end by suggesting that we can detect three different forms of “identity of virtues”.

Chapter 3 discusses Socrates’ argument for the claim that virtue is knowledge, including the long passage on akrasia and hedonism (351b-360e5). I argue that all virtue is one in the sense that the exercise of all the virtues are expressions of the same state of soul, i.e. the state of knowledge.

Chapter 4 examines how one can defend the “unity of virtues” in Aristotle by appealing to the function of wisdom. I discuss two versions of this kind of strategy, both well-represented in Aristotle’s scholarship. Wisdom explains the mutual entailment of the ethical virtues because a) wisdom guides one to act well all things considered, or b) wisdom equips one with holistic evaluative knowledge about the good life. I argue that both are inadequate in terms of establishing the "unity of virtues". The former is inadequate because it fails to explain how both the rational and the non-rational aspects of the ethical virtues are mutually entailing. The latter is inadequate mainly because it does not explain how is it that the human psyche can possess all the ethical virtues.

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[2] All translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is from Broadie and Rowe 2002 (with slight modifications), unless otherwise specified.

Chapter 5 explores how one can defend the “unity of virtues” in Aristotle by appealing to the unity of the soul. The idea, as suggested by some commentators, is that the fully integrated soul implies the possession of all the ethical virtues. This argument captures how the “unity of virtues” should be understood as referring to one’s character as a whole, but it is also inadequate because a) it risks trivialising Aristotle's rejection of Socrates’ position, and b) it does not explain how Aristotle's ideal agent should have the virtue of general justice.

Chapter 6 gives my original interpretation of Aristotle’s version of the “unity of virtues”. I argue that it is practical truth that explains the mutual entailment of the ethical virtues. All the ethical virtues express one’s commitment to practical truth, which is the truth that encapsulates our nature as practical rational beings. So the ethical virtues are holistic and robust because human nature so understood cannot be compartmentalised. I argue that this interpretation fulfils all the desiderata of how we should think of Aristotle’s view on the “unity of virtues”.

Without further ado, then, let us turn to the *Protagoras*.

Part I Plato

Chapter 1: Setting the stage

This chapter sets the stage for the subsequent discussion of Part I. I distinguish between “identity of virtues” and “unity of virtues”. After a brief review of different interpretations of Socrates’ position,[3] I explain why I think if we focus mainly on the *Protagoras*, we do not need to engage too much with the question of whether Socrates thinks virtue has “parts”. My main thesis is that Socrates argues for a specific form of the identity of virtues, which I shall call “Full Identity of Virtues”: “The exercise of all the virtues are expressions of one single state of soul, i.e. knowledge”. I end by sketching my argumentative strategy for Chapter 2 and 3.

1.1 A brief review

The best place to begin our discussion is, arguably, *Protagoras* 329c, right after Protagoras’ Great Speech.[4] In the Great Speech, Protagoras once says: “is there not one quality (τι ἓν) which every citizen must have, if there is to be a city at all?” (324d6-7). Socrates picks it up and his question then becomes the main theme for the rest of the dialogue: “Is virtue a single thing, with justice and temperance and piety its parts, or are the things I have just listed all names for a single entity?” (329c2-d2). Protagoras chooses the former. Socrates then asks to clarify if the part-whole relation is like that of parts of a face or parts of gold (329d2-7). Protagoras chooses the former. Socrates then asks: “so do men possess one of these parts of virtue and some another, or if someone has one, must he have them all?” (329e3-4). Protagoras, again, chooses the former option: “there are many who are courageous but unjust, and many who are just but not wise” (e5).

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[3] I concentrate on Plato’s Socrates, as opposed to the historical Socrates.

[4] In English-language scholarship, the term “Great Speech” is due to Vlastos (1956). It is adapted from the German *eine grosse Rede,* which can mean either a lengthy speech or an important speech. I should follow this common usage without implying any judgment about whether Protagoras’ speech is important or not. Ausland 2017, 52-53.

There is more to be said about these few lines of reasoning (329c-329e), and I will discuss them in more detail in the next chapter. But for now, note that Socrates has introduced two positions that are of utmost importance to us. They represent two ways to further articulate what I have been calling the “unity of virtues” since the General Introduction (as an umbrella term that includes both Plato's and Aristotle's view):

> *The Identity of the Virtues* (IoV): the different names of virtue are all names of the same thing (329d1).
> *The Unity of the Virtues* (UV): if one possesses one of the virtues, one necessarily possesses all the others - the virtues are mutually entailing (329e4).

Socrates’ position is disputed (more in a moment). But - to anticipate Part II - it is commonly understood that Aristotle is arguing for UV (as it is just defined). There is, however, a caveat on the choice of terminology. In the literature on Plato’s ethics, the position that all apparently different virtues are in fact the same thing is typically known as the “Unity of Virtues” thesis (rather than the “Identity of Virtues”). But in the literature on Aristotle’s ethics, the “Unity of Virtues” refers to the claim that if one possesses any of the virtues one must possess them all. To avoid confusion, some commentators call Aristotle’s version “the reciprocity of virtues” (Irwin 1988) or the “biconditionality of virtues” (Vlastos 1981). To my ears, “unity” suggests differences within the unity. This may go well with some of the interpretations of Socrates. But I will argue that all the apparently different virtues are the same thing in a fairly literal sense: they are all the same state of soul. As such, I think “identity of virtue” captures Socrates’ view better (more below). Accordingly, I reserve “Unity of Virtues” for Aristotle’s view that the virtues are mutually entailing. I will stick to these labels from now on.

Socrates’ position is disputed for the following reason. On the one hand, in the *Protagoras,* Socrates appears to be defending the view that all the different names of virtue are “names of one and the same thing” (329d1), i.e. (what I have called) IoV. But on the other, it is also clear that Socrates refers to the different virtues as being distinct from each other. For in several dialogues Socrates refers to the various virtues as being "parts" (μόρια) of a single whole, where these parts are presumably distinct: most notably, *Laches* 190c8-d8, 197e10-198b2; *Meno* 78d-79e; *Euthyphro* 12a-e. In fact, Socrates also refers to the virtues as "parts" once in the *Protagoras,* i.e. 353b2. This can seem like a contradiction: how can the names of the virtues all denote the very same thing if this one thing is also said to have multiple parts that constitute a bigger whole?

In light of this, some commentators argue that Socrates is actually going for UV in the *Protagoras*: there are many virtues and they are mutually entailing.[5] This usually goes together with the view that the various virtues are definitionally distinct, i.e. different virtues call for different definitions. According to this interpretation, when Socrates appears to be defending IoV in the *Protagoras*, he is only asserting UV in a very compressed way. This is a minority view.

Many other commentators argue for *both* IoV and the idea that the virtues are somehow distinct. "Virtue" must then be some complex unity that is both one (since it is a single entity) and many (since it has many parts) at the same time (although no one actually cites this as a reason to use the label "unity of virtues" in describing Socrates' position). There are at least two ways to develop this idea:

> *IoV-A*: The different names of virtue are all names of the same thing, i.e. wisdom. But wisdom can be divided into different parts, in the way that a single system of knowledge can be divided into different sub-branches.[6]

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[5] Manuwald meant to say this only for what is usually called "the argument from self-predication" (330c-331e) (Manuwald 2005, 124, 126). He thinks the *Protagoras* as a whole has an aporetic ending. See also Santas 1964 and Vlastos 1981, 226-8.

[6] This is adapted from Devereux 1992, 774.

IoV-B: The different names of virtue are all names of the same thing, i.e. wisdom. But wisdom can be divided into different parts, and these parts are differentiated by their non-rational aspects.[7]

According to *IoV-A,* all the apparently different virtues are wisdom, understood as the general knowledge of good and evil (*Laches* 199d), but the different virtues can be differentiated in terms of the application of this general knowledge to different specific areas,[8] just as economics can be divided into macro-economics and micro-economics.[9] For instance, courage amounts to the "knowledge of what is to be dared and feared" (*Protagoras* 359a-360d), piety the knowledge of how to treat the gods justly (*Euthyphro* 12e). By contrast, *IoV-B* claims that it is not the different applications of knowledge, but the non-rational aspects associated with the virtues, that make the virtues distinct from each other. For instance, one might think that the "knowledge of what is to be dared and feared" does not adequately capture the nature of courage; rather, one must add that courage involves some sort of "endurance (in the face of danger, etc.)" - it is this non-rational aspect that makes up the distinctive psychological profile of courage.[10]

To complicate things even further, Clark even goes so far as to suggest that Socrates can hold *both UV and IoV*: at the "psychological level of inquiry" (the search for an underlying psychological state), IoV is true, but at the "conceptual level of inquiry” (the search for the real definitions of the various virtues), UV is true.[11]

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[7] Adapted from Devereux 1992, 777.

[8] Brickhouse and Smith 1997; 2000, 168-173; 2010, 159-167; Ferejohn 1984a, 384-388; Hartman 1984, 115-117; Kraut 1984, 261; McPherran 2000. Woodruff 1976 is perhaps an exception; see section 2.1.5.

[9] The example is from Kraut 1984, 261.

[10] This is how Devereux thinks the *Laches* differs from the *Protagoras* on the topic of courage. In the final passage of the *Protagoras*, courage is characterised as being of "what is to be dared and feared" (360c-d). But in *Laches* 199e, the very same definition of courage (proposed by Nicias) is deemed inadequate, on the ground that it would appear indistinguishable from the "knowledge of good and evil", hence indistinguishable from the whole of virtue. So the proposed definiens fails to define courage as one of the virtues. Devereux then argues that "endurance" (καρτερία) can be seen as part of the definition of courage, and in this way we can distinguish courage from the other virtues (since not all virtues involve "endurance"). This is also how he comes up with the possibility of (what I labelled) IoV-B. See Devereux 1992.

All the positions I mentioned so far try to somehow reconcile Socrates’ explicit position in the *Protagoras* (IoV or UV) on the one hand and the fact that he thinks virtue has “parts” on the other. However, it is also possible to have a deflationary interpretation. Some argue that Socrates does not really mean to embrace the idea that virtue has “parts”. For instance, Rudebusch suggests that the relevant passages are only part of the process that Socrates initiates in order to test his interlocutors.[12] Some commentators take the opposite route: they argue that it is the claim of UV or IoV that Socrates does not mean to embrace. O’Brien suggests that it does not matter whether Socrates argues for UV or IoV, for either suffices to reject Protagoras.[13] Some suggest that Socrates’ arguments in the *Protagoras* are only meant to expose the ignorance of his interlocutors.[14] Some suggest that, in the *Protagoras* at least, Plato deliberately left it ambiguous if UV or IoV is right.[15]

1.2 The context of the Protagoras

Note that all the positions I mentioned in the previous section have a methodological assumption: that we can reconstruct a coherent ethical theory from the various Socratic dialogues alone. Some try to accommodate the talk of “parts” of virtue within the general framework of UV; some try to do this within the framework of IoV; some try to explain away passages on the “parts” of virtues; some try to explain away UV or IoV itself. But all of them assume that the different Socratic dialogues should be made consistent with each other. While I don’t have a knock-down argument against this assumption as a general methodology, I want to emphasise more the differences in contexts and details.

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[11] Clark 2015.

[12] Rudebusch 2011. See also Penner 1973, 60-62; Penner 1992; Rudebusch 2017, 341-345.

[13] See O’Brien 2003, 62-67. But O’Brien thinks that eventually Socrates does go for IoV (O’Brien 2003, 95).

[14] O’Brien 2003. See also Kahn 1976; Manuwald 2005.

[15] Kahn 1996.

Separating the different contexts of the different dialogues helps to neutralise the extra-textual pressure to deal with the potential tension between IoV on the one hand, and the idea that the virtues constitute different "parts" on the other. For most of the passages that refer to the virtues as "parts" come from dialogues other than the *Protagoras*. But still, one might ask: is there any reason internal to the *Protagoras*, philosophical or textual, that demands us to face such tension? After all, as I have said, Socrates refers to courage and "the other parts of virtue" in the *Protagoras*, too (353b2). Further, the way courage is characterised in the *Protagoras* is the same as how courage is characterised in the *Laches*, i.e. as knowledge of what deserves one's confidence and one's fear (*Protagoras* 360d8; *Laches* 195a1, 196d2). In the *Laches,* the interlocutors also end up claiming IoV. For what is to be feared is the expectation of future evils (198b-c), but if one has knowledge of something one has knowledge of that thing regardless of whether it is future, past, or present (198d-199c). So courage is "the knowledge of practically all goods and evils put together" (199d1), which then is equivalent to virtue entire (199e6). But this is regarded as an apparent problem in the *Laches*: for they want to define a specific virtue, courage, not virtue entire (199e12). Now, given how similarly courage is characterised in the *Protagoras* and the *Laches*, one might wonder why the same reasoning does not apply to the *Protagoras*. As Socrates concludes by stating IoV in the Protagoras (361b), we can still ask: so are courage and the other virtues distinct "parts" of virtue or not? And if they are parts, then how are they the same thing, i.e. knowledge? So it seems *Protagoras* itself invites the same question.

But arguably the *Protagoras* and the *Laches* have different concerns. In the *Laches*, the interlocutors are concerned with defining the virtue of courage; their inquiry does not succeed only in the sense that "knowledge of what deserves one's confidence and one's fear" does not suffice to *define* courage. But this, arguably, is not the task of the *Protagoras*. If Socrates is trying to define courage in the *Protagoras*, then indeed we should expect him to conclude that the inquiry failed, because they end up with IoV. But in fact we find something completely different. For near the end of the *Protagoras*, Socrates himself summarises the whole discussion by saying "I should like to follow up our discussion by considering the nature of virtue, and then returning to the question of whether or not it can be taught" (361c5-7). This suggests that Socrates thinks they have not discussed the "nature of virtue" at all in the dialogue. But Socratic inquiry into the definition of X looks for the nature of X. This in turn indicates that Socrates thinks they have not discussed the definition of "virtue" in the *Protagoras.* If so, the claim that "virtue is knowledge" (IoV) should not be taken as a Socratic definition of virtue. In fact, one might argue that IoV in the *Protagoras* is not Socrates' answer to the question "what is virtue?"; rather, it is an answer to the question "what is virtue like?".[16] But if Socrates' conclusion does not state the definition of virtue, then the characterisation of courage in the *Protagoras,* as part of the reasoning that leads to such conclusion, is likely not an attempt to define courage. In fact, the characterisation of courage in the *Protagoras* appears only in passing as part of the argument for the identity of courage and knowledge. That is, courage as knowledge of what is and is not to be feared does not seem to be the main thesis that Socrates is testing, and IoV is not a potential objection to the adequacy of this thesis.

Further, we can also argue that the main point of IoV in the *Protagoras* is the claim that since virtue is knowledge, it must be teachable (361b). It does not matter how such knowledge can or cannot be further divided into different branches. It is the claim that virtue is knowledge that Socrates wants, not how such knowledge can also have different parts. So the *Protagoras* itself does not need to settle the question about the plurality of virtues.[17] I will come back to this point at the end of Chapter 3.

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[16] Politis 2012, 228-230.

[17] Glasscock 2020, 63. See also Penner 1973; Irwin 1977, 86-90.

The upshot is that if our main focus is the *Protagoras*, we have reason not to engage too much with the question of whether Socrates thinks virtue has parts. Chapter 2 and 3 will adopt this interpretive strategy, although I will also briefly discuss relevant passages from the other Socratic dialogues when the opportunity arises.

1.3 The thesis

I now proceed to explain my main thesis (for Part I). As I have briefly indicated, I think Socrates' IoV should be understood as saying that all the apparently different virtues are in fact the same state of soul. What does this mean?

Socrates concludes his arguments by saying "all things are knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), justice, temperance, even courage" (361b). But the notion of "knowledge" is ambiguous between being a state of soul and being a conceptual system. According to IoV-A, all the virtues can be reduced to one system of knowledge, namely that of all goods and evils. But if "knowledge" is understood as a state of soul, then the claim of IoV is that the exercise of all the virtues are underlined by one single state, namely, the state of knowledge.[18] These two notions of "knowledge" should be kept apart. The relation between state(s) of soul and actions is a causal one, and the relation between a system of knowledge and the branches of this knowledge is a logical or conceptual one; one cannot simply assume without any explanation that the two kinds of relation are identical or interchangeable.

Now, knowledge understood as a state of soul fits better with the context of the *Protagoras*. Let us briefly return to how Socrates starts the discussion. After introducing IoV and UV, Socrates asks if each virtue “has its own unique power (δύναμις)” (330a4), and “power” in this context naturally refers to the expression of a state of soul. Socrates then asks if the virtues are “unlike each other, both in themselves and in their powers” (330b1). Protagoras says yes. In effect, Protagoras is committed to:

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[18] Penner helpfully distinguishes between behavioural "tendencies" and "motive force or state of soul". Behavioural "tendencies" are numerically distinct if and only if the kinds of behaviour they lead to are distinct; by contrast, the same state of soul can be expressed in different kinds of behaviour. As such, state of soul should be understood as some kind of underlying substance that is multi-realisable - under different background conditions, the same state of soul can be expressed in different responses if triggered by different immediate causes (Penner 1973, 44-45).

> *Distinctness of Virtues*. For each virtue there is one power associated with it, such that each virtue and its power is distinct from another virtue and the power of that virtue.

This appears to be the logical basis of Protagoras’ rejection of UV. To reconstruct, Protagoras’ argument against UV is simply this: a) *Distinctness of Virtues* is true, b) by observation, if *Distinctness of Virtues* is true, it is highly likely that a person can have one virtue without the other, so c) it is not the case that if one possesses one virtue one necessarily possesses others, i.e. UV is false.

Rather than focusing on Protagoras’ rejection of UV, Socrates wants to argue against *Distinctness of Virtues*. This seems like a good strategy since Socrates is aiming at IoV. For if *Distinctness of Virtues* is false, then the virtues are not distinct in themselves and in their powers. To argue for IoV, one then only has to push one step further - that the virtues are not just not distinct, but are in fact identical. But at least two possibilities suggest themselves:

> *Limited-IoV.* For some set of virtues (say, justice and piety) there is one underling power, and for another set of virtues (say, temperance and wisdom) there is another underlying power, but there is no one single power that underlies all the virtues.
> *Full-IoV.* The exercise of all the virtues are expressions of one single state of soul, i.e. knowledge.

My claim is that Socrates’ arguments are meant to establish *Full-IoV.* While one can exercise this state of soul in many different scenarios, “virtue” is the same state throughout all the different manifestations. Interpreted in this way, the thesis is that the state of soul (knowledge) that explains, say, the expression of justice is also the state of soul that explains, say, the expression of courage. Ditto for other virtues. In other words, "virtue" is not a complex unity with many different parts. Hence we should not attribute IoV-A - that virtue has parts as a system of knowledge has branches - to Socrates. (By the same token, I think the label "identity of virtues" captures Socrates' view better.) As for IoV-B - it is controversial if Socrates also recognises the existence of the non-rational parts of the soul. Ultimately, I think it does not matter for my purposes. I will come back to this point in section 3.3.

With Socrates' view more carefully formulated, let us also complete the taxonomy of different positions. Just as IoV can be differentiated into IoV-A and IoV-B, so can UV:

> *UV-A:* If one possesses one of the ethical virtues, one necessarily possesses all the others, because all are united through an elite virtue (viz. wisdom), just as different branches of knowledge are all united under one single system of knowledge.[19]
>
> *UV-B:* If one possesses one of the ethical virtues, one necessarily possesses all the others, because all are united through an elite virtue (viz. wisdom), in the sense that all the virtues must be associated with this elite virtue, but the various virtues can be differentiated by their non-rational aspects.

I will not discuss UV-A, but it is useful to keep it as a point of contrast. In Part II, I will discuss how Aristotle argues for UV-B. So we now have Socrates' view and Aristotle's view on the table already: while Socrates argues that the virtues are all expressions of one single state of soul (Full-IoV), Aristotle argues that the virtues are united by a single elite virtue, though differentiated by their non-rational aspects (UV-B).

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[19] Adapted from Devereux 1992, 778, 786. By "united through" Devereux means two things: a) the elite virtue (wisdom) is the only thing that is *immediately* related to *all* virtues. Wisdom is immediately related to courage, justice, piety, etc., but courage is related to, say, justice only *via* wisdom; b) the elite virtue is the only virtue that is simultaneously expressed in all virtuous actions.

1.4 The strategy (for Part I)

Let me end this chapter by noting more nuances in Socrates' reasoning, and thereby anticipating the argumentative strategy of Chapter 2 and 3. Socrates has four major arguments for his conclusion. For ease of discussion, let us refer to the arguments as:

a. the argument from self-predication (330c-331e)
b. the argument from opposites (332a-333c)
c. the argument from expert knowledge (349e-351a)
d. the argument from akrasia (351b-360e5)

Now, Socrates does not jump directly to *Full-IoV*. Rather, different arguments target different set of virtues, and Socrates concludes that all virtues are knowledge only near the end of the dialogue (361b). One should ask: how are the different arguments related to the final conclusion?

Penner (1973) argues that all but the first argument aim at establishing *Full-IoV*. (By contrast, Vlastos (1981) famously argues that all four arguments are meant to establish UV - more on his interpretation below.) But this fails to recognise that there is a certain sense of “development” as the arguments proceed: how, for instance, the last argument is much more elaborate.

Allen (2006) does better in this respect, as he argues that the last argument improves on the first three of them insofar it “provides . . . at least the beginnings of an understanding of virtue, virtuous action and human good and their systematic relations”.[20] The first three arguments operate with a high level of abstractness and generality, but the axiology and the moral psychology that shape the last argument (351b-358d) help to put flesh on bones.[21] I think this is right. But I also think we can pay more attention to the contextual details of the arguments. Following Stokes (1986), I shall explore how Socrates’ arguments can be understood as responding to the Great Speech. In this way, we can appreciate these arguments in a more dialectical and concrete way. As I proceed, I will explain the ways in which I am indebted to Stokes, and the ways in which I depart from his interpretation.

In Chapter 2, I will argue that the first three arguments indicate *different* forms of identity (or near identity) of virtues. This is a claim that, as far as I know, no one has made before. In particular, I shall argue for the following. According to the “the argument from self-predication”, justice and piety form a near identity because the two virtues share their essential properties. According to “the argument from opposites”, wisdom and temperance form an identity because they share the same task, the task of deliberating well about the common good. According to “the argument from expert knowledge”, courage and knowledge form an identity because they commit the agent to the same ideal, the ideal of acting finely in dangerous situation.

But if there are different forms of identity, then it looks as though *Limited-IoV* can be true. Wisdom and temperance share the same power, and wisdom and courage share another power. But then this invites the question: if wisdom and temperance form an identity that is different from the identity formed by wisdom and courage, in what sense is “wisdom” one single virtue? Chapter 3 will explain how “the argument from akrasia” ties everything together. I will show how this last argument incorporates the three forms of identity of virtues in its attempt to defend *Full-IoV* (section 3.8). This allows us to appreciate the complexity of Socrates’ final position (that virtue is knowledge) in a way that is not noted before. I will argue that the virtues are one because knowledge/wisdom as a state of soul is supposed to permeate through all aspects of the soul, i.e. how one perceives, calculates (deliberates), chooses, acts, and feels. “Wisdom” and “temperance” refer to the state of soul that allows us to judge and deliberate well (with a view to the fine, the good, the pleasant), and “courage” refer to the same state of soul because this state of soul in fact orients the whole agent to commit himself to what is fine, good, and pleasant, especially in dangerous situations (i.e. those that call for courage).

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[20] Allen 2006, 28.
[21] Allen 2006, 30-31.

Let me now turn to Socrates’ arguments themselves.

Chapter 2: The Unity (Identity) of Virtues in the Protagoras (I)

Introduction

This chapter discusses the first three of Socrates' arguments, and Chapter 3 continues to discuss the last one. The two chapters are divided in this way partly for pragmatic reason: the last argument simply contains much more material to work on. But it is also partly philosophical: at the end of this chapter, I will argue that the first three arguments actually indicate three different ways in which the apparently different virtues can form an identity (or a near identity). At the end of the next chapter, I then show how the last argument incorporates these three forms of identity. So the last argument deserves a chapter of its own because it is complex and rich enough to tie everything together. In my following discussion, I will begin each section by giving an overview of how I will interpret each argument.

2.1 The argument from self-predication

This section takes a closer look at "the argument from self-predication" (330c331e), where Socrates concludes that "justice is either the same as piety or very similar" (331b5). I start by explaining the immediate context of the argument (329d-e) (section 2.1.1). After briefly explaining the notion of the "powers" of virtues (section 2.1.2), I proceed to discuss the logic of self-predication in this argument (section 2.1.3). In section 2.1.4, I try to interpret Socrates' argument in light of what is said in Protagoras' Great Speech. I suggest that piety can be understood as the virtue that demands us to observe the divine character of the virtues of justice and conscience (for these are gifts from Zeus). In this way, Socrates can claim that the state of justice gives rise to the power to act justly by *both* being just and being pious (similarly for piety). I explain how this exposes possible inconsistencies in Protagoras' thinking. I end by explaining Socrates' insights behind the argument (section 2.1.5).

2.1.1 The two analogies

Before he begins this argument, Socrates asks Protagoras a few questions. First, he asks if "virtue is one thing, and justice and temperance (soundness of mind) and piety (holiness) parts of it", or if the different virtues are merely "different names of one and the same thing" (329c6-d1). The latter option amounts to IoV. Second, after Protagoras chooses the former (in effect rejecting IoV), Socrates asks Protagoras to further clarify the part/whole relation: "do you mean in the way that parts of a face, mouth, nose, eyes, and ears, are parts of the whole…or like parts of gold, none of which differs any of the others or from the whole, except in size?" (d2-7). Protagoras thinks the different virtues are like different parts of a face (329e1). Finally, Socrates asks if one can have one virtue without having others, or if one must have all the virtues if one is to have any (UV). Protagoras chooses the former (rejecting UV) (329e5-6).

The exact significance of the two analogies is not entirely clear. O'Brien argues that the gold analogy is an analogy for UV. As O'Brien reads it, since in the context the face analogy is meant to illustrate the point that one can have one virtue without having another (330b1), then, if the choice between the two images is to be a real one, the gold analogy must illustrate the opposite claim, i.e. that one *cannot* have one virtue without having other virtues (=UV).[22] If so, Protagoras arrives at his position by first rejecting IoV, and next rejecting UV. One interesting implication is this: for Socrates to argue against Protagoras, he can settle for either of the alternatives, that is, either IoV or UV. This is why, argues O'Brien, Socrates concludes the argument by saying "justice is either the same as piety or very similar" (331b5).

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[22] O'Brien 2003, 62-65, 94; Vlastos 1981, 246-252.

However, I don’t think the choice is between “the gold analogy/UV” on the one hand and “the face analogy/rejection of UV” on the other. For if the gold analogy represents UV, and the face analogy represents the rejection of UV, then it should be clear by the time Protagoras has chosen the face analogy that he rejects UV. If so, there is no need for Socrates to ask for further clarification if Protagoras accepts or rejects UV. But right after Protagoras has chosen the face analogy, Socrates asks if Protagoras also thinks UV is true (329e2-3). Socrates does not think the face analogy necessarily entails the negation of UV. Rather, the face analogy is an analogy for *Distinctness of Virtues* (that each virtue and its power is distinct from another virtue and the power of that virtue), and Protagoras’ rejection of UV is a further step that he took.

Many other commentators argue that the gold analogy represents IoV. For instance, as Ferejohn reads the two analogies, the contrast concerns whether the “parts” are *functionally* distinct: parts of a face are, but parts of a piece of gold are not. Accordingly, the virtues resemble the parts of a piece of gold in being functionally identical, i.e. in expressing the function of knowledge. This coheres with Socrates’ alleged conclusion that virtue is knowledge (361b).[23] But this seems to distort Socrates' reasoning. Note that in the passage right after Protagoras rejects UV (329e4) and right before Socrates finally begins his argument (330c), the gold analogy does not come up again. In fact, the whole series of reasoning from 329c to 330c feels more like Socrates is *narrowing down the different possible options.* That is, Socrates first secures that Protagoras does not mean to say all the different names of the virtues are all just names of the same thing (IoV), then Socrates secures that Protagoras also does not mean to say the parts of virtues are like the parts of gold, and then Socrates further secures that Protagoras does not mean to accept UV, and finally Socrates secures Protagoras’ agreement to *Distinctness of Virtues*. The gold analogy is one of the options at one stage in this series of reasoning; it does not represent Socrates' alleged conclusion. If the gold analogy is what Socrates eventually argues for, then it is hard to explain why the last two steps in this series of reasoning are necessary, given that the gold analogy does not come up in these few lines at all (329e4-330b1).

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[23] Ferejohn 1984a, 381; Brickhouse and Smith 2000, 168; McPherran 2000, 314. I should add that according to Ferejohn’s interpretation, the gold analogy illustrates both IoV *and* the idea that there are different “parts” of virtues. The virtues are numerically identical in being the same state of soul, but there are also different “parts” because the state of knowledge can be applied to different domains (Ferejohn 1984a, 382-385).

So, the gold analogy does not represent UV (*pace* O'Brien), nor IoV (*pace* Ferejohn and others). How should we understand the gold analogy, then? Socrates does not say this, but perhaps the point of the analogy is this: none of the parts can dictate, by its "nature", which way of dividing the whole is more appropriate.[24] This captures the difference between the gold analogy and the face analogy quite nicely: presumably each organ of the face - eyes, nose, etc. - has its own function, so the distinction between them is not arbitrary, but is instead dictated by the nature of each of the part itself.[25] This is the fundamental rationale behind *Distinctness of Virtues* (see below).

This suggests that the parts of gold must constitute some kind of homogeneous whole, i.e. that, despite differences in sizes,[26] they do not differ in essence. Note that the supposed homogeneity of virtues is not immediately a representation of IoV, for the different parts are still distinguishable by size. Nor is it a representation of UV, for it does not follow from the virtues' identity in essence that they are mutually entailing.

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[24] Hartman argues that the gold analogy is unhelpful because "the multiplicity of virtues, however, is not created by dividing the whole, episteme". Instead, "the multiplicity of virtues is created by having the same power function in different sphere" (Hartman 1984, 117). As I read it, the lesson Socrates wants us to learn from the analogy is precisely that there is no non-arbitrary way to divide the gold.

[25] Kahn 1996, 220; Woodruff 1976, 109.

[26] What do the differences in sizes stand for? Perhaps the differences in the *practical significance* of the virtues. In the Great Speech, two virtues seem particularly important: justice and conscience (αἰδώς). They can be understood as "larger" in size because they are practically more significant: without them humans would still live in "scattered isolation" (322b1). By contrast, one might say that temperance, though still important, is not as significant as justice, and is in this sense "smaller". For while justice addresses the polis as a whole, temperance rather focuses on particular judgments of a set of individuals (323a). Similarly, virtue as a whole is the "largest" in size because, unsurprisingly, all virtues joined together are necessarily more significant than any individual virtues. Perhaps *Republic* IV makes this point even clearer: the wisdom of a city relies in the wisdom of the ruler(s) (428b-429a), but justice of the city permeates through the whole polis (433a-c).

Now we have a better understanding of Socrates' reasoning at 329d-e. Protagoras first rejects IoV, then rejects the homogeneity of virtues: each virtue has different essence and function. It then seems natural to ask if someone might have only some of the virtues but not all of them (329e2-3) - not because, as in the image of the face, it is "natural" to have one organ without another, but because, since each virtue has a different essence and function, they may not overlap or interact much. The face analogy by itself does not necessarily lead to UV or its negation, but it is this (supposed) heterogeneity of virtues that invites the question of whether UV is also true.

2.1.2 The powers of virtues

After Protagoras rejected UV, Protagoras further agrees that the virtues are "unlike each other, both in themselves and in their powers" (330b1), i.e. (what I called) *Distinctness of Virtues.* How should we understand the distinction between the "virtues themselves" and their corresponding "powers"? Making use of the face analogy, it is not unreasonable to suggest that each virtue has its own structure or constitution that gives rise to the corresponding power to act accordingly. Just as the eye has a certain structure that gives rise to the power to see, the state of (say) being just gives rise to the power to act justly.[27]

Socrates then asks "is justice a thing (πρᾶγμα) or not a thing"? (330c1) The same question is asked in relation to piety (d1). The exact meaning of this is not clear. But Clark (2015) notices a pattern. When the *Protagoras* and the *Laches* discuss the virtues, the main terminologies are "power" (δύναμις; e.g. 330a6, 330a4, 330b1, 331d6, 349b5, 349c5, 351a1, 351a2, 351b1, 356d4, 359a7) and "thing" (πρᾶγμα; e.g. 349b3, 349b3, 349c1, 355d, 347e, etc), and the contexts suggest that these terms refer to something concrete in the world, perhaps even something equipped with causal power. This echoes the face analogy: each virtue has its own structure that gives rise to such causal power. (By contrast, the *Euthyphro* never mentions δύναμις and πρᾶγμα in the context of trying to define the virtue of piety, but uses mainly εἶδος (forms) and οὐσία (essence) instead. *Laches* does not use εἶδος and οὐσία at all. *Protagoras* mentions οὐσία only once, at 349b, but is never picked up again.)[28]

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[27] Wakefield 1987, 269-271.

Protagoras' claim, then, is that the state of (say) courage that gives rise to the power to act courageously is unlike the state of justice that gives rise to the power to act justly. Correspondingly, Socrates' aim is to argue that the state of justice (that gives rise to the power to act justly) and the state of piety (that gives rise to the power to act piously) are either the same or very similar.

Now that we have clarified the immediate context, let us proceed to the argument itself.

2.1.3 Self-predication

"The argument from self-predication" can be reconstructed as follows:

1. All virtues are unlike each other, both in themselves and in their powers (330a4-b6) (this is Protagoras' claim).
2. Justice is the sort of thing that is just (330c7-d1).[29]
3. Piety is the sort of thing that is pious (330d5-e2).
4. Since virtues are unlike each other, justice is not the sort of thing that is pious (only piety is such as to be pious); it is not-pious (from 1,3).
5. If justice is not-pious, then it is impious (331a8-9).

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[28] See Clark 2015, 452, 454, 466 n.29.

[29] Socrates first asks a simpler question: "this thing you just named, justice, is it just or unjust?" (330c5). But then his answer to the imaginary questioner invokes sortal terms: "ἔστιν ἄρα τοιοῦτον ἡ δικαιοσύνη οἷον δίκαιον εἶναι". Literally, it says: "justice is such as to be just" (330d1). The argument then proceeds using similar formulation: regarding piety, Socrates asks, "is this thing the sort of thing that is by nature pious or impious?" (330d7). Similar construction is used when piety is predicated of justice and justice of piety (331a6).

6. Justice is impious (from 4,5).
   (Ditto for piety, thus:)
7. Piety is the sort of thing that is not-just (from 1,2).
8. If piety is not-just, then it is unjust (331a9-b1).
9. Piety is unjust (from 7,8).
10. But (6) and (9) are unacceptable (understood, 331b1-3).
11. Hence, (1) is false, justice and piety are like each other (by *reductio ad absurdum*; 331b3-6).
    Conclusion: Justice is either the same thing as piety or very similar (b5-7).

If this argument succeeds, the *Distinctness of Virtues* is false at least with respect to justice and piety: it is not the case that justice and piety and their powers are distinct from each other. But does this argument succeed? Let us start with (2) and (3): what is it for justice and piety to self-predicate?

Some commentators take “justice” and “piety” in this argument to refer to Platonic Forms. For self-predication is characteristic of Forms. For instance, the Beautiful itself is beautiful (*Phaedo* 100c4-6), the Large itself is large (*Sophist* 258c1), Being itself has being (*Parmenides* 162a7-b1). Since the Form of Justice and the Form of Piety must be different, Manuwald takes this to be evidence that this argument cannot be arguing for IoV.[30]

Within the framework of Platonic Forms, Vlastos suggests that Socrates is actually arguing for UV. According to Vlastos, when Socrates says “Justice is pious and Piety is just” (331b1-3), he is really saying that all *instances* of Justice (the Form) are pious and all *instances* of Piety (the Form) are just.[31] And since *all* the instances can be predicated in this way, it follows by existential generalisation that the Forms in question can also be predicated in that way.[32] This explains how the Form of Justice and the Form of Piety can be identical: if “just” can be ascribed to (instances of) Piety and “pious” to (instances of) Justice, then the two are similar *in that each of them* are *both* just and pious.[33] Accordingly, Socrates is arguing for UV in the sense that all the *instances* of the Forms of all the virtues are *necessarily co-extensive* (all the instances of Justice are just and courageous and pious…etc.).[34]

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[30] Manuwald 2005, 124.
[31] Vlastos 1981, 234-235.
[32] Vlastos 1981, 237.

However, given the previous discussion of the face analogy and the relevance of the notion of “powers” (329d-330b), it seems more plausible to say that “justice” and “piety” in this argument refer to states of soul, rather than Platonic Forms.[35] It is hard to see how the Form of Piety and the Form of Justice can be said to have “powers” (δυνάμεις).[36] At any rate, one should not expect Protagoras to swallow the whole theory of Forms in just one and a half Stephanus page. This is so especially when we notice that there is no mention of Forms before this passage, and there does not seem to be any discussion of Forms in the rest of the dialogue.

As we saw in the previous section, virtues have powers in the sense that each virtue has a certain structure that gives rise to the corresponding virtuous act. We need to understand self-predication within this framework. I suggest, then, the following interpretation of (2) and (3): justice is just in the sense that the state of justice gives rise to the power to act justly *by being just*; similarly, piety is pious in the sense that the state of piety gives rise to the power to act piously *by being*

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[33] Vlastos 1981, 250.

[34] One major motivation behind Vlastos’ account is to preserve the definitional distinctness of the virtues. Vlastos worries that if IoV is true, then all the virtues would have the same definition, in which case it is hard to make sense of Socrates’ attempts to define the various virtues individually and separately in the early dialogues - most notably, in *Laches*, *Euthyphro* and *Charmides*. But arguably Socrates does not attempt to give a definition of virtue in the *Protagoras* (see section 1.1 above). If this is true, then there is no worry that IoV will conflate the definitional distinctness of the various virtues (or at least Socrates does not intend to conflate them). It remains to be seen how the attempts to define the individual virtues in the Socratic dialogues cohere with IoV. On the other hand, Woodruff 1976 argues that Socrates thinks that all virtues share one real definition.

[35] See, e.g. Denyer 2008, 124; Penner 1973; Stokes 1986, 268-270.

[36] A famous exception where Form is said to have “power” concerns the Form of the Good, e.g. 509b9.

pious. The logic of self-predication helps to articulate the distinctness of each virtue. If justice gives rise to the power to act justly by being just, then it should be clear that justice as such is a distinct virtue. Similarly for piety. Protagoras should welcome this point: after all, he already agreed to the claim that each virtue is like a part of the face, different from other parts both in itself and in its power (i.e. *Distinctness of Virtues)*. No surprise that Protagoras would grant the self-predication of justice (and piety) so quickly.

2.1.4 Justice and piety

Let us proceed to premise (4), that justice is not-pious, and (7), that piety is not-just. This might just be a way to reinforce the idea that justice as a virtue is distinct from the virtue of piety. But perhaps more is at stake. I should now give my original interpretation of these premises. I want to suggest that these two premises expose possible inconsistencies in Protagoras' thinking. On the one hand, premise (4) and (7) are supposedly the implications of *Distinctness of Virtues*, which Protagoras has already agreed to. But on the other, something in the Great Speech implies that one should not expect (4) and (7) to be true.

In the Great Speech, Protagoras claims that justice and conscience have divine origins (322c).[37] One might then suggest that piety is not an additional virtue over and above justice and conscience, but is rather the divine character of justice and conscience. After all, it is Zeus' wish that all citizens should have the virtues of justice and conscience, for otherwise cities would never exist (322d).[38] But if justice and piety are similar in this way, one should expect the scope of justice and the scope of piety to largely (if not completely) overlap: in being just, one is also being pious; and in being pious, one is also being just. So one should not expect (4) and (7) to be true: it is not the case that (the exercise of) justice is not-pious, nor is it the case that (the exercise of) piety is not-just.

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[37] Manuwald 2013, 174.

[38] Calef (1995a, 15-17) interestingly argues that, in the *Euthyphro*, Socrates implicitly agrees that the gods' *ergon* concerns the preservation of private houses and public affairs of state (14b). Accordingly, to be pious is to assist the gods in achieving this goal, which, as Socrates understands it, is to practice philosophy (*Apology* 30a). This makes the *Euthyphro,* despite referring to piety as being only "part of" justice (12e), relatively friendly to IoV: if to be pious is to assist the gods in preserving families and states, then to be pious is *ipso facto* also to be just, for justice also concerns the preservation of families and states (see also *Republic* 351d, 351e-352b, 580a). As Calef reads it, when Socrates refers to piety as "part of justice", he is only helping Euthyphro to articulate his thoughts, i.e. Socrates is not committing himself to the part/whole thesis. See Calef

Now, suppose one rejects this account of piety I just mentioned, and develops an account of piety that has nothing to do with the fact that the civic virtues are gifts of Zeus. For instance, suppose that piety is limited to religious sacrifices and rituals (a possibility suggested in *Euthyphro* 14b-d). One might then be just but not-pious (when these rituals are not called for). And suppose one can equally envisage the possibility of piety being not-just (although this may not be the case in the *Euthyphro*). Piety and justice, then, will not overlap. But then one might ask: why should the parents teach their children to be pious, according to Protagoras (325d5)? And why is impiety, together with injustice, the opposite of civic virtues (324a1)? As Protagoras has presented things in the Great Speech, if piety is one of the human virtues at all,[39] it is hard to see how it can be unrelated (in one way or another) to justice (as Protagoras conceives of it). For justice is all-encompassing: it is a precondition of the civic way of life. Nor can Protagoras change his conception of justice easily: for the Great Speech is his answer to the question of the teachability of virtues, and the most fundamental rationale of the Great Speech is that the virtues are teachable because successfully teaching them is *indispensable* for human society. One might question the validity of Protagoras' answer,[40] but given this logic, if piety is one of the virtues at all, it has to overlap with the whole of justice.[41]

1995a, 6-10; Calef 1995b, 38. See also criticisms in McPherran 1995 and Calef's reply in Calef 1995b.

[39] But perhaps Protagoras can say that piety is not a virtue? But the importance of piety is well recognised in ancient Greece. Dover 1974, 246-261.

[40] Morgan argues that this at most proves that everyone *believes* that the virtues are teachable, not that they are, in fact, teachable (Morgan 2000, 142).

[41] Can Protagoras separate different parts of justice, such that one part of it overlaps with piety, but another part does not? But then how should we understand the alleged function of justice to form cities and preserve the human species? Which part of justice has this function?

It appears that Protagoras is trapped by his own rhetoric: when he explains how the human virtues serve the general function of preserving the human species, all the virtues are packed together as a group, in which case it is hard for him to reject UV (it is hard to claim that one can have some virtues without another if one cannot distinguish the virtues adequately in the first place). If he wants to refer to the variety of virtues and think of some of them as separable from justice, then he risks depriving the virtue in question of its practical relevance: if it is distinct from the all-pervasive virtue of justice (and conscience), then it is hard to see how it must be part of the civic way of life. If the non-just virtue is dispensable in this way, then his answer to the teachability of virtue (or at least: the teachability of that specific virtue) fails.

What about premises (5) and (8)? As is often pointed out, the inference here is fallacious. For something can be not-just (or not-pious) without being unjust (or impious).[42] But if the above interpretation is correct, then Protagoras is already in trouble before this step. That justice is not-pious and piety is not-just already reveal possible inconsistencies in Protagoras' thinking.

So we arrived at premise (6), that justice is impious, and (9), that piety is unjust. They are not the beginning of Protagoras' problems, but they do add extra pressure on him. For they render the virtue of justice as gift of Zeus almost unintelligible: what are we supposed to make of Zeus' wish that all citizens should have justice and conscience (322d), if the actions that the virtue of justice leads to by being just are, in fact, *impious* actions?

So premises (4), (5), (7), (8) expose Protagoras' inconsistencies. But I also think that Socrates' argument is not a purely dialectical device designed to attack Protagoras. I should now explain Socrates' insight behind this argument.

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[42] See, e.g. Allen 2006, 10; Denyer 2008, 127.

2.1.5 Socrates' insights

When Protagoras rejects UV, he says there can be courageous but unjust persons (329e). Note that he does not just say many are courageous but *lack* justice; he says some courageous people have the *vice* of injustice. So his counter-examples do not just illustrate the claim that one can have some virtues without another, but the stronger claim that some virtues coexist with some other vices.[43]

I want to suggest that Socrates wants to respond to this stronger claim too in this argument. As I have interpreted it, justice self-predicates in the sense that the state of justice gives rise to the power to act justly *by being just* (similarly for piety). But if (6) is true, that means justice *leads to impious actions by being just.* That is, justice results in violating piety merely because it has its own property. This is unacceptable presumably because *no virtue should be incompatible or in conflict with another virtue merely by being itself*.

In fact, there may even be a stronger claim. Arguably, the self-predication of a virtue makes explicit the *nature* of that virtue. So piety (or justice) itself must be intrinsically and necessarily pious (or just), otherwise one cannot explain why anything can be pious (or just) by having the property of piety.[44] Socrates can be seen as articulating this point when he says "how could anything else be pious if piety itself is not?" (330e1). If this is true, then Socrates' point is that any potential incompatibility between the virtues must be due to external circumstances, not to anything that pertains to the nature of each of the virtues.[45] Virtues as such cannot coexist with vices.[46] Charitably interpreted in this way, Socrates' argument against Protagoras turns out to be this: the doctrine that the virtues are unlike each other (both in themselves and in their powers) licensed essential incompatibility between the virtues.

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[43] Allen 2006, 9.

[44] Denyer 2008, 125.

[45] This echoes what I have said about the gold analogy: that the virtues are homogeneous (same in essence). Perhaps this is why so many commentators felt the pressure to interpret Socrates' alleged conclusion in terms of the gold analogy. But notably Socrates does not bring up this analogy again when he tries to summarise what his arguments achieved (361b). Also note that claiming that all virtues constitute a homogeneous whole is not the same as claiming that all virtues are the same state. At any rate, I have already argued that the gold analogy is just one step of a long series of reasoning where Socrates tries to narrow down the options.

To recap: Socrates' conclusion is that the state of justice gives rise to the power to act justly both by being just and by being pious; similarly, the state of piety gives rise to the power to act piously both by being pious and by being just. Justice is both just and pious, piety is both pious and just. But note that this does not entail that justice is completely identical with piety: for all the argument says is that they share their essential properties (being just and being pious). This is compatible with the possibility that the state of justice and the state of piety are distinct. (It is only in the last argument at 351b-360e that Socrates argues all virtues are identical with the state of knowledge). Perhaps this is why Socrates' conclusion is disjunctive: "justice is either the same as piety or very similar" (331b5).

2.2 The argument from opposites

Let us now turn to "the argument from opposites" (332a-333b). As I interpret it, this argues that wisdom and temperance (σωφροσύνη) are the same state of soul, understood as the ability to deliberate well about the common good. In what follows, I will first articulate the structure of the argument. I will then examine the different premises. The crux is that the virtue that the names "wisdom" and "temperance" refer to is both intellectual and moral. I will end by explaining how this argument is related to "the argument from self-predication".

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[46] Woodruff articulates the same idea in the process of illustrating a more general claim: "to have one virtue is to have the essence of every virtue" (Woodruff 1976, 104; cf. *Laws* 963d-e). But Woodruff does not explain how this can fit into the context of "the argument from self-predication".

2.2.1 The argument

The whole argument's structure is as follows:

1. Wisdom (σοφία) and folly (ἀφροσύνη) are opposite to each other.
2. Temperance/good sense (σωφροσύνη) and folly are opposite to each other.[47]
3. To each thing that can have an opposite, there is only one opposite.
4. (Folly is a single thing.)
5. Wisdom and σωφροσύνη are both opposite of folly (from 1,2).

   Hence, wisdom and σωφροσύνη must be one (from 3,5).

If this argument succeeds, then *Distinctness of Virtues* is false with respect to wisdom and temperance: it is not the case that wisdom and temperance (and their powers) are distinct from each other. But does the argument succeed?

Now, one common criticism is that this argument is guilty of equivocation: "folly" in (1) (ignorance) and "folly" in (2) (lack of good sense) have different meanings, but the inference from (3) and (5) to the conclusion requires that one conflates such differences in meaning.[48] So the argument is invalid. This criticism presupposes that what is "opposite" is determined by the meaning of the terms. According to this reasoning, "folly" as the opposite of wisdom refers to ignorance because ignorance is the opposite meaning of "wisdom". Similarly, "folly" as the opposite of temperance or good sense refers to the lack of good sense because this is the opposite meaning of "good sense".

However, I should argue that Socrates is not just making semantic claims. Rather, he is arguing for something more substantial: wisdom and σωφροσύνη are one single state of soul, in the sense that the same state of soul underlies and causes wise and temperate/sensible behaviour. Accordingly, the argument is saying that wisdom-σωφροσύνη is the opposite state of folly. If that is true, then accusing Socrates of equivocating the meanings of "folly" is beside the point; for one can refer to the same state of soul with terms that carry different literal meanings.[49]

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[47] I skipped 332b7-c2 for now, where Socrates argues that when something is done in a certain way, it is done from or with the corresponding quality, and things done oppositely are done from or with the opposite quality. As I interpret it, that passage is a sub-argument for premise (2), not one of the main premises for the identity of wisdom and temperance. See below.

[48] See, e.g. Sullivan 1961, 15; Manuwald 2005, 121; Ausland 2017, 61-62.

As with the last section, I am going to interpret this argument in light of what is said about σωφροσύνη - and what is implied about wisdom - in Protagoras' Great Speech. To begin, note that σωφροσύνη in the Great Speech is a virtue that guides political deliberation: "when it comes to consideration of how to do well in running the city, which must proceed entirely through justice and σωφροσύνη" (323a1-2). The context suggests that σωφροσύνη must somehow involve good judgments, for one needs good judgments in (good) political deliberation. This in turn indicates that σωφροσύνη here must somehow already include both "good sense" and "temperance" (the virtue in charge of one's appetites). For one needs good sense to make good judgments, and not indulging one's appetites is also important for judging correctly (say, to judge that one should not build an excessively large empire; see also *Gorgias* 519a). By itself, this does not mean wisdom and σωφροσύνη are identical: "wisdom" suggests intellectual distinction and as such is a fairly demanding virtue; one cannot simply build it into the notion of σωφροσύνη. But it already makes wisdom and σωφροσύνη look much closer: both virtues are understood as intellectual qualities.

However, the Great Speech says notoriously little about the virtue of wisdom. So some further remarks are needed if we are to fully appreciate the context of "the argument from opposites". First, as Protagoras calls himself a "sophist" - or more literally, a wise person - one might expect that he possesses wisdom or at least knows something about such a demanding virtue. It would be surprising if Socrates can prove otherwise; so Protagoras has some sort of personal stake in this. Second, also note that, before the Great Speech, Socrates brings up

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[49] In this I am in agreement with Penner 1973, 51.

Pericles the statesman as an example of the virtuous person (320a1).[50] But if a statesman is virtuous at all, the virtue that he most notably exemplifies is arguably the virtue of wisdom.

2.2.2 Temperance: moral or intellectual?

With this background in mind, let us turn to the individual premises of the argument. Premise (1) says “wisdom and folly (ἀφροσύνη) are opposite to each other”. It is established in just two lines (332a4-5). Presumably, one can take it for granted given the natural understanding of the virtues/vices in question: ἀφροσύνη means foolishness/senseless and σοφία means wisdom, and it’s natural to say that wisdom and foolishness are opposite to each other.

Let’s move on to (2): “σωφροσύνη and folly are opposite to each other”. Socrates spends considerable time on this. It is established in two steps. The first step is to argue that acting sensibly is the opposite of acting foolishly. The second step is to argue that if the actions are opposites, then the actions are done from opposites. Let me explain them one by one. The argumentative structure of the first step seems to be this:

2a. Those who act rightly act sensibly (332a6-7).
2b. Those who act not sensibly act not rightly (contraposition of 2a).
2c. Those who act not rightly act foolishly (ἀφρόνως) (332b1).
2d. Hence, those who act not sensibly act foolishly (from 2b, 2c).
2e. Those who act foolishly, insofar as they act foolishly,[51] act not sensibly (332b1-2).
2f. Acting foolishly and acting not sensibly mutually imply each other (from 2d, 2e).
Hence, acting foolishly is the contradictory of acting sensibly.[52]

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[50] Socrates’ attitude towards Pericles here need not be genuine; cf. *Gorgias* 515d.

[51] I assume that the reference of “in so acting” (οὕτω πράττοντες) is “acting foolishly” rather than “acting wrongly”. Taylor 1991, 124.

[52] Reconstructed in Taylor 1991, 125.

(That is, if one acts sensibly, then one acts not foolishly (contraposition of 2e)
and if one acts foolishly, one acts not sensibly (=2e))

Assuming that one standard reading of "opposite" is "contradictory", this argument establishes that acting foolishly is the opposite of acting sensibly.

(2a) seem to rely on an intuitive understanding of σωφροσύνη: as I noted above, this word can also be translated as "good sense" or "soundness of mind" (this is how, for instance, Taylor translates it). Reasonable enough, those who act with soundness of mind can be said to be acting rightly. Conversely, those who act without soundness of mind can be said to be acting wrongly (2b). It seems (2c) is established in a similar way: the word for foolish, ἀφρόνως, suggests the reading of "senseless" (literally, ἀ-φρόνως, without sense). Those who act not correctly can also be called acting senselessly. So, (2b) and (2c) jointly imply that those who act without soundness of mind act senselessly (2d). Finally, (2e) is the counterpart of (2d): those who act senselessly act without soundness of mind.

All this sounds plausible, considered in the abstract. Socrates seems to be just making a semantic point. However, if these premises are understood as giving some standard of evaluation of the relevant kind of action, and if this is understood in relation to what Protagoras has said previously, then matters are not that simple. Premise (2c), for example, may not be as innocent as it might seem. For it can be read as saying that "being folly" is the correct diagnosis of the wrongness of actions, and Protagoras need not agree that this is true in all cases.[53] Some actions are not right in other ways, such as by being unjust.[54] Whether unjust actions are necessarily folly is a different matter, about which

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[53] The Greek does not tell if Socrates was just making a (relatively innocent) point about the conceptual relation between "acting not rightly" and "acting foolishly" or if he was giving a more substantial diagnosis about actions not right: "οἱ μὴ ὀρθῶς πράττοντες ἀφρόνως πράττουσιν" (332c1).

[54] This interpretation is suggested by Stokes 1986, 298. But he does not make it clear that Socrates can also be seen as just making a point about the concept of acting foolishly.

Protagoras may not have a very well-developed view. But the point is that if this is what Protagoras has agreed to, then he is slowly walking into Socrates' trap. For if foolishness is somehow involved in all cases of acting not right, then it seems intellectual vice - in this case, folly - is much more common than one thought. All Socrates needs to do, then, is to prove that the same is true in the case of actions without σωφροσύνη.

And so this is what we can find: premise (2d) says "those who act not sensibly act foolishly". It turns out acting without σωφροσύνη also involves an intellectual vice as well. That this is not obviously true is suggested by how traditionally σωφροσύνη is associated with another virtue Protagoras mentioned, namely "conscience" or "sense of shame" (αἰδώς).[55] As the translation makes clear, αἰδώς is more a "moral", as opposed to intellectual, virtue. The key idea seems to be that possessing αἰδώς allows the agent to refrain from committing wrong actions. Perhaps this is why in the Great Speech Protagoras says αἰδώς and justice are sent to humans so that they can stop wronging each other and thereby form cities (322c-d). But why should lacking this virtue involve the intellectual vice folly? Perhaps this is suggested by what Protagoras himself has said. As we have seen, σωφροσύνη is needed to deliberate well about running the city (323a1-2). It's natural to interpret this line as saying that any failure to rule the city well is the result of lacking σωφροσύνη (and justice). Here, σωφροσύνη is much more intellectualised, so perhaps lacking this virtue does somehow involve folly. Protagoras agrees to premise (2a) and (2c) which commit him to (2d) without making any fuss. I will suggest below that Socrates' strategy is precisely to manipulate such ambiguities.

Premise (2e) now seems even stranger. Why should acting with the intellectual vice of folly involve lacking the (moral) virtue σωφροσύνη? Premise (2f) even says that all acts of folly are without σωφροσύνη and all actions without σωφροσύνη are foolish. If σωφροσύνη is understood as the virtue that helps deliberation, then (2f) sounds less problematic; but if σωφροσύνη is understood as some sort of moral quality, then it is not entirely clear why and how acting without this quality should imply and be implied by foolish actions. We still need some independent explanation of how σωφροσύνη - or any virtue - can be both intellectual and moral.

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[55] Denyer 2008, 108.

So much for the first step. The second step to establish premise (2) is by appealing to the principle "whatever is done in a certain way is done from (ὑπὸ) a certain quality, and whatever is done in the opposite way is done from (ὑπὸ) its opposite" (332c1-2). Put more formally, the claim is that: if X is done F-ly, it is done from F-ness; and if Y is done oppositely, say, G-ly, then F-ness is the opposite of G-ness. This is to infer from certain action to some property or cause of such action.[56] Since we have already established that acting temperately is the opposite of acting foolishly, according to this principle, then, temperance and foolishness must be opposite.

So, according to premise (2), temperance/good sense and foolishness are opposite (contradictory) states that give rise to opposite actions. More specifically, (2) says: whenever one acts from the state of good sense, one is not acting from the state of foolishness/senselessness; and whenever one acts from the state of foolishness, one is not acting from the state of good sense. But at least one point is still unclear: it is unclear whether “sensible” (σωφροσύνη) is understood as an intellectual quality or a moral quality. Understood as an intellectual virtue, it is easier to see how it can be the opposite of foolishness. But at the same time it is also closely related to the notion of “conscience” (αἰδώς), which has strong moral connotation - understood in this way, it is not clear how or why it should be the opposite of foolishness.

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[56] The sense of "from" in "done from F/G-ness" is ambiguous. Judging by the linguistic constructions Socrates uses, it is ambiguous between "action accompanied by certain quality" and "actions caused by (the agent having) certain quality". In the example of speed and slowness (332b8-c1), the construction "μετα + genitive case" is used, which typically suggests a characterisation or description. This gives us something like "actions that are slow/swift", rather than "actions done from the power or lack of power of swiftness". In the case of virtuous actions, the point would be that temperance and folly are opposites because "actions characterised by good sense" are opposite to "actions characterised by folly". However, when Socrates states the principle (332c1-2), the construction "ὑπὸ + genitive" is used, which typically suggests a causal or explanatory account. In our case, this should be construed as: "actions done from the power of …" or "actions done as a result of certain mental states". In the case of virtuous actions, the point would then be that good sense and folly are opposites because "actions done from the state of good sense" are opposite to "actions done from the state of folly". But perhaps we do not really need to choose between the two formulations. For it is natural to characterise an action as action X if it is caused by the power of X (or power to do X): for instance, it is natural to characterise the exercise of sight as an act of seeing since it is caused by the power to see.

2.2.3 How wisdom and σωφροσύνη are one

Premise (3) to (4) give us the crucial steps in arguing for the identity of wisdom and σωφροσύνη. Premise (3) says “To each thing that can have an opposite, there is only one opposite.” How should we understand this premise? In what follows I will give a fairly complicated explanation, so let me state the conclusion first. I suggest that the notion of “opposites” here should be understood as polar extremes of some spectrum,[57] and that wisdom and σωφροσύνη are one because they occupy the same pole of the same spectrum. More specifically, the two names refer to the same ability to deliberate well about the common good.

As I said, σωφροσύνη is ambiguous between being a moral quality and an intellectual quality. Now, note that Protagoras cannot afford to say the σωφροσύνη that helps us to run the city well (323a1-2) is completely without moral connotation, i.e. completely separated from αἰδώς or conscience. For σωφροσύνη is part of the political art that he claims to be able to teach, and if this virtue is morally neutral then he would be in effect saying that he is teaching the art that can lead Athens into bad or immoral ends.[58]

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[57] Taylor points out that if this is the right way to interpret premise (3), then “the argument from opposites” is (still) guilty of the fallacy of equivocation. For while “opposite” in premise (3) means polar opposites, “opposite” in premise (2) means not polar opposites, but contradictories (this is how (2a)-(2f) is valid). This is very likely true, but arguably Protagoras does not have the logical skills/concepts to detect such equivocation. Taylor 1991, 128; cf. Stokes 1986, 302-303.

[58] In the next argument that concerns justice and σωφροσύνη, Socrates asks “Do you think some people…have good management (εὖ βουλεύεσθαι) in acting unjustly?”(333d). Stokes (1986, 308) acutely observed that Socrates’ choice of words here is reminiscent of 319a, where Protagoras says he can teach people “good management” (εὐβουλία). Socrates’ series of question has Protagoras agreed that “good management” is a manifestation of σωφροσύνη (333c-d). So Protagoras is in a

So Protagoras needs σωφροσύνη to include αἰδώς. And as we know this is one of the key messages of the μῦθος of the Speech: αἰδώς and justice stop humans from wronging each other. So αἰδώς-σωφροσύνη is the virtue that allows the agents to deliberate well in such a way that will prevent them from wronging each other. One natural way to understand this is to say that this is the virtue that allows one to *deliberate well about the common good,* i.e. what is beneficial for the whole body of citizens. This seems exactly the virtue the Athenian Assembly needs, since it is through the Assembly that the everyday business of Athens is deliberated and settled. The virtue to deliberate well about the common good is moral because the field or area that this virtue concerns is the typical subject-matter of “morality”, i.e. the common good. But it is also intellectual because its characteristic activity is *deliberation*. With this in mind, it seems Protagoras has good reason to agree to Socrates’ claim, that acting foolishly implies and is implied by acting not sensibly (2f). Acting foolishly implies acting not sensibly because deliberating badly about the common good is a way to give wrong judgments about what the common good consists in, and hence a way to lead to wrong or inappropriate actions; and acting not sensibly implies acting foolishly because failing to appreciate what’s beneficial for the whole of citizens is itself an intellectual flaw.[59]

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dilemma: on the one hand, since he has already expressed his rejection of UV (329e), he is committed to say there can be some people who are unjust but temperate; but on the other hand, given Socrates’ questions here at 333c-d, Protagoras is trapped into the embarrassing situation that he must admit *he* is the one teaching people to be temperate but unjust. Further, Protagoras already claimed that justice is a part of virtue as a whole (329d). But assuming that acting with σωφροσύνη or εὐβουλία is also good in the sense that it benefits the agent himself, the possibility of “temperate - hence good/beneficial - but unjust actions” will contradict Protagoras’ own statement that justice is a part of virtue as a whole (Stokes 1986, 309). See also McKirahan 1984.

[59] At an interlude session, the participants examine how best to continue the discussion (335d-338e). Ausland argues that their suggestions correspond to the five main virtues discussed in the dialogue. Callias speaks of justice (336b4-6); Alcibiades is in effect accusing Protagoras of cowardice (336b8-d1); Critias’ idea of neutrality amounts to temperance (moderation); Prodicus’ demand for mutual respect and judgment amounts to wisdom (337a-c), and Hippias idea of “citizens by nature” indicates some sort of piety (337d1). If this is true, then all these virtues are intellectual in the *further* sense that they must also be reflected in philosophical discussion (presumably about ethical matters).

So αἰδώς-σωφροσύνη refers to the virtue of deliberating well about the common good. Together with premise (1), this implies that failing to appreciate what's beneficial for the whole of citizens is itself unwise or ignorant.

Now, recall that the introduction of "wisdom" in this argument may be reminiscent of Pericles, the statesman Socrates mentioned as an example of the virtuous/wise person (320a). Given the whole dialectical context, it might be informative to consider what Protagoras' replies might imply about the statesman. The agent acting not sensibly is foolish and unwise, and given that wisdom and folly are opposites (premise (1)), perhaps both Socrates and Protagoras would agree that the wise agent will have the opposite set of excellence, i.e. will also be sensible. So it might seem that Protagoras, in agreeing with premise (1) and (2) so far, gives the right (non-offensive) judgment about Pericles.

But, as we know, Protagoras rejects UV after the Speech, and says one can be just but unwise (329e5). Protagoras does not mention if one can be wise but without σωφροσύνη, but given his rejection of UV, it is entirely unsurprising if he should think so. If so, it's logically possible, according to Protagoras, that Pericles may not have σωφροσύνη even though he is wise. But as a foreigner, he cannot afford to say this about Pericles (cf. 316d-317c). At any rate, this is not a very attractive position. For can anyone be both wise and fail to deliberate well about the common good? What does his wisdom consist in, then? So, to be both non-offensive and consistent with his rejection of UV, Protagoras needs to say that although UV is false, some extremely virtuous individual *does* possess several virtues. So Protagoras needs not only the claim that Pericles has wisdom and αἰδώς-σωφροσύνη, but also that he has these virtues in an outstanding way - after all, wisdom as intellectual distinction is a highly demanding virtue.

But here is the problem. In Protagoras' framework, as expressed in the Great Speech, everyone or nearly everyone in the city has αἰδώς-σωφροσύνη, but only

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See Ausland 2017, 65-66. McCabe 2016 develops a similar interpretation of the *Republic*.

in a technical or diluted sense: “you must regard the most unjust person ever reared in a human society under law as a paragon of justice…” (327d). In his technical sense, even *criminals* (with few exceptions, see 325b about how the unteachable should be exiled) have conscience/good-sense. But in the ordinary/non-technical sense, Protagoras cannot afford to say Pericles is on the same level with criminals – that Pericles is wise with σωφροσύνη only in the sense that criminals also have αἰδώς-σωφροσύνη. Protagoras, then, needs a *more robust* notion of “conscience” or σωφροσύνη.

I suggest, then, Socrates ’argument is in effect saying: this robust notion can only be secured if wisdom is identical with αἰδώς-σωφροσύνη. That is, it is not that every or most citizens, including criminals, know how to deliberate well about the common good, as if “deliberating well” can be interpreted in such a diluted way that even the criminal way of life is also one possible way to appreciate what’s beneficial for everyone in the city. Socrates is suggesting that what is lacking is intellectual distinction - most people are ignorant about what common good consists in. So I think this is what’s going on with premise (3), “to each thing that can have an opposite, there is only one opposite”. Socrates is saying it is not the case that there can be many ways to be wise and conscientious/sensible. Rather, we should be much more *rigorous* in thinking of these virtues. Folly has only one opposite, meaning only one virtue can be corrective of such vice, and that is the virtue denoted by the terms “wisdom”, “αἰδώς” and “σωφροσύνη”. This should be contrasted with how, in the Great Speech, everyone has “justice and σωφροσύνη and piety” (325a), as if there are many (diluted) ways to correct the vice of being ignorant about the common good, such that even criminals have some share of these ways.

Wisdom is knowing the common good; σωφροσύνη is expressed in deliberating well about it; and αιδώς is expressed in how one regulates one’s actions given such wisdom and deliberation, e.g. how one refrains from actions that might be harmful to everyone. The three names refer to the different aspects of the same virtue. So *Distinctness of Virtues* is false with respect to wisdom, σωφροσύνη and αἰδώς.

Let me end this section by connecting Socrates' first two arguments. In "the argument from self-predication", there is no independent criterion to determine whether two virtues are similar enough or even identical. Perhaps this is why Socrates settles for a disjunctive conclusion, "justice is either the same as piety, or very similar" (331b5-7). But in "the argument from opposite", we have a principle for when to count two apparently different virtues as identical: they are one just in case they have the same opposite. Consequently, Socrates does not have to conclude his argument with a disjunctive claim. This looks like a progress.

2.3 The argument from expert knowledge

In this section, I discuss Socrates' first argument that courage and wisdom are the same thing (349d-351b). I argue that the argument (as it is presented in the passage) is only intended to neutralise Protagoras' counterexample against the similarity of courage and the other virtues. I suggest that we should understand Socrates' argument as saying: the psychological profile of the courageous man is the same as the psychological profile of the technical experts. This invalidates Protagoras' assumption that courage is different from the other virtues (in this case, wisdom). Given this understanding of the whole argument, I proceed to discuss two textual details. First, I discuss the exegetical controversies surrounding 350b6-7: "what do you say about the courageous? Isn't it that they are the daring?" (section 2.3.2). Second, I discuss how Socrates' choice of examples - all technical expertise - are all designed to trap Protagoras (section 2.3.3). In section 2.3.4, I explore how Socrates can push the dialectic one step further given Protagoras' response. I end by briefly comparing this argument and the argument for IoV presented at *Meno* 88c-d.

2.3.1 Reconstructing the argument

Let's first try to reconstruct the argument in a more rigorous form:

1. The courageous person acts daringly (349e1-3).
2. The person who acts daringly is not courageous if such actions are not supported by knowledge/wisdom (350a1-c3).
3. (Being knowledgeable or not makes the difference as to whether one's actions are virtuous).
4. Acting daringly expresses genuine courage only if such action is also wise.
5. Insofar as the courageous person's daring actions are concerned,[60] courage is wisdom (σοφία).

First, we should note the dialectical context in which premise (1) is stated. Just before Socrates starts the "argument from expert knowledge", Protagoras remarks that "four of them [wisdom, temperance, justice, piety] resemble one another fairly closely, but courage is altogether different from all the rest", since "you will find many men who are totally unjust and irreligious and wanton and ignorant, but most outstandingly courageous" (340d3-7). The fact that there can be such people is a counter-example to the thesis that courage is like the other four virtues. Premise (1) is presumably a way to spell out Protagoras' idea that courage is special in this way.[61] The notion of "daring" (θάρρος) helps to illustrate the thought: that the exercise of courage requires some sort of non-rational urge, and this is what makes the virtue of courage so different.

So Protagoras is asserting a fairly specific thesis: courage is not similar to the other four virtues, especially wisdom. Given this dialectical context, I suggest, the conclusion of the "argument from expert knowledge" should be understood in a similarly specific way. In particular, I suggest that the point of the argument is *not* to argue that "courage is identical with wisdom *tout court*" (despite this being how Socrates explicitly states his conclusion at 350c5); rather, the argument is only meant to *neutralise* Protagoras' counter-example against the similarity of courage and wisdom.[62]

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[60] This qualification is not explicit in the text. I will explain as I proceed.

[61] Cf. *Laws* 630a-b:" there are very many mercenaries who stand firm and are ready to die in battle; with very few exceptions, the vast majority are bold and unjust yahoos, about as stupid as they come".

The whole structure of premise (2) can be further spelled out as follows:

2a. Virtue (in this case, courage) is something fine.
2b. The daring but ignorant agent is mad, which is shameful.
2c. Hence, in acting daringly, the ignorant agent is not virtuous/courageous (from 2a, 2b).

Premise (2a) is granted by both Socrates and Protagoras. We should note how it helps Socrates to calibrate the target of his argument. For Socrates goes on to add that "is it [virtue] as something fine that you offer to teach it?" (349e5). This is reminiscent of how, right before Socrates and Protagoras return to the topic of IoV, Socrates praises (perhaps ironically) Protagoras as the self-proclaimed "teacher of culture and excellence" (348e3). The hidden claim is presumably that, since Protagoras also teaches courage, he must also think of it as something fine. Otherwise, Protagoras would be teaching something shameful, which is of course no good for business.[63]

Let us turn to premise (2b). Socrates first establishes the importance of knowledge in acting daringly. The examples of well-diving, fighting on horse-back, and skirmishing are mentioned, all involve agents acting daringly. These people can act in these ways because, presumably, they know what they are doing; and they know what they are doing because they have the relevant knowledge, e.g. the knowledge of well-diving, horse-riding, etc. Hence, these agents act daringly "because of their knowledge" (350a4). But conversely, people can act equally daringly without the knowledge in question, and that is the problem: without the requisite knowledge, those who act equally daringly are apparently quite mad (350a-b6). Hence (2c): since virtuous actions cannot be mad and shameful, such ignorant but daring acts are not genuine cases of courage.

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[62] Stokes 1986, 342.
[63] Kerferd 1981, 132, 138.

It is important that this claim - the ignorant-but-daring agent is mad - is elicited from Protagoras. For let's look at the whole dialectic from premise (1) to premise (2c). Premise (1) is Socrates' attempt to capture Protagoras' original idea that courage is different from the other virtues. The hallmark of courageous actions is that these actions are daring. Protagoras gives his explicit consent to this premise. And Protagoras has some personal stakes in premise (2a). But these two premises combined invite Protagoras to rethink: if some actions, while exhibiting the hallmark of courageous actions in being daring, turn out to be shameful, hence not virtuous, then being daring *per se* cannot be the distinctive feature of courageous actions.

Now, for Socrates' argument to go through, Socrates at least has to think that *being knowledgeable makes the difference.* This brings us to premise (3): "being knowledgeable or not makes the difference as to whether one's actions are virtuous". Although this premise is not explicitly articulated in the text, it works well with how Socrates sharply contrasts the daring-but-ignorant agent and the daring-and-wise agent. Both agents are acting daringly, and it seems the only variable is being knowledgeable or not. Further, it is hard to see how 350a1-c3 can have *any* connection with the conclusion of the argument ("people who are wisest are also most daring, and being most daring are most courageous") without premise (3). The conclusion juxtaposes being wise and being daring, and the relation between the two, as discussed at 350a, is that (as summarised by Protagoras) "those who have knowledge are more daring than those who lack it, and once they have acquired it they are more daring than they themselves were before" (350a6-b2). Being knowledgeable is directly proportional to being daring. But the conclusion can infer from this to a claim about being courageous only because premise (3) connects being knowledgeable and being virtuous.

I suggest, then, Socrates' strategy is to articulate the minimal requirement for any daring actions to be fine, and it turns out wisdom or knowledge is such requirement.[64] When Socrates has Protagoras say daring-but-ignorant actions are shameful, Socrates is in effect proving that any apparently courageous action (i.e. daring action) has to be acted from wisdom or knowledge if it is to be truly courageous. This is what I am trying to say in formulating premise (4): "acting daringly expresses genuine courage only if such action is also wise". In other words, Socrates attempts to delineate the exact boundary of courageous action: in ruling out those cases of daring actions that failed to meet the minimal requirement - the daring-but-ignorant ones - one can in effect see at which point any attempt to behave courageously will only count as shameful madness, no matter how daring one appears to be.[65]

In this way, Socrates also turns the table on Protagoras. For recall that premise (1), "the courageous man acts daringly", is understood by Protagoras to be a counter-example of IoV. Courage is different from the other virtues because it involves some kind of non-rational urge. But now Socrates manages to prove at least the relevance of wisdom. Daring actions are courageous only if they are also wise. In this way, Socrates neutralises Protagoras' counter-example - as I said, the argument aims only at this specific goal.

But then how should we understand Socrates official conclusion, "wisdom would be courage" (350c3)? In the reconstruction above, I reformulated it as: "insofar as the courageous man's daring actions are concerned, courage is wisdom". The first half is meant to capture the idea that, according to my interpretation, Socrates is only targeting Protagoras' specific counter-example. But even with such a caveat, is courage *identical* with wisdom? Surely, one might ask, the previous reasoning proved at most that wisdom is *involved* in (but not identical to) courageous/daring actions?

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[64] It is interesting to see what the argument would look like if one distinguishes between knowledge and belief (e.g. *Meno* 97b). Perhaps beliefs about the right ways to perform the daring actions suffice to rule out shameful and mad daring actions. This would undermine Socrates' reasoning: courageous actions need to be grounded in some form of cognition, but all the same this does not mean one needs to be wise/knowledgeable in order to be courageous.

[65] Weiss 1985, 15-16.

This impression is, I think, invited by Socrates' examples of knowledge. Knowledge of well-diving, fighting on horse-back, and skirmishing are all technical expertise. As such, it is natural to think of them in terms of some determinate subject-matter, as opposed to some powers to act in certain ways. But if that is the case, it is natural to understand Socrates' argument as saying that daring actions done from some non-rational urge count as truly courageous only if such an urge is somehow *informed* or *regulated* by the relevant technical understanding. For instance, if one has the knowledge of well-diving, then one can assess the particular risks involved in particular acts of well-diving based on one's expert knowledge; consequently, one won't dive into the well blindly. If "knowledge" is understood in this way, then indeed it is more straightforward to think of the two virtues (knowledge and courage) as distinct but intertwined, for it is hard to think of some technical subject-matter as being identical with some non-rational urge (or some psychological state that is essentially associated with such an urge).

But in the context of "the argument from expert knowledge", it is more likely that Socrates thinks of "knowledge" in terms of some power to act in certain ways. For before Socrates begins the argument, when he is recalling the earlier discussion of IoV, he asks if Protagoras still thinks that the parts of virtues are like the parts of the face, "each having its own separate power" (349c) (i.e. *Distinctness of Virtues*). It is in this connection that Protagoras thinks courage is different from the other four virtues. As a result, when premise (1) asserts that courage is special because the courageous man acts daringly, both Protagoras and Socrates understand the premise as making a claim about the power that courage has. Accordingly, Socrates' argument, as a response to this claim, should also be understood as making a claim about the power of courage and the power of knowledge.

So what does it mean to say, "insofar as the courageous man's daring actions are concerned, the power of courage is identical with the power of wisdom"? It would be something like: in acting daringly, the courageous man's psychological profile is the same as the psychological profile of the experts.[66] For instance, they both have the same understanding of what is at stake should they perform the daring and courageous action (say, how seriously can one be injured); they also have the same attitude towards such actions, and they both know what they are doing. This claim directly contradicts Protagoras' claim that courage is special because, unlike such virtue as wisdom, it prompts daring actions. It is this claim, then, I suggest, that Socrates is trying to prove in neutralising Protagoras' counter-example. This gives us positive reason to think that *Distinctness of Virtues* is false with respect to courage and wisdom.

Protagoras' reply can then be understood as looking for a more complete account of courage. While Socrates tries to argue that the courageous man's psychological profile is the same as that of the technical expert, Protagoras replies that daring and courage emerge under different conditions: "for daring results both from skill (τέχνης) and from animal boldness and madness, like power, but courage from a good natural condition and nurture of the soul" (351b1-3). Consequently, even though courage typically expresses itself in daring actions, and even though one can grant that wisdom is one of the factors that gives rise to daring actions, still one cannot argue that courage and wisdom are the same simply on these grounds. For being one of the factors that gives rise to the manifestation of a virtue does not make such factor identical with the virtue in question. Courage is more the result of "good natural condition" and "good nurture". The best account of courage must include more factors than Socrates allows.

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[66] Hence I agree with Weiss that wisdom is courage in the sense that both refer to the source of courageous action. See Weiss 1985, 13-14.

2.3.2 Some exegetical controversies (350b6-7)

Now it is time to settle a few exegetical controversies. The main problem concerns 350b6-7: "what do you say about the courageous (τοὺς ἀνδρείους)? Isn't it that they are the daring (τοὺς θαρραλέους)?". The sentence form involving the definite article that Socrates uses here - "say that the Xs are the Ys" - is most naturally understood as asserting that all and only Xs are Ys.[67] If so, Socrates would be saying all and only the courageous ("C") are the daring ("D"), which can be formulated as the biconditional: "(Cx <-> Dx)".[68] However, while (Cx->Dx), the courageous are daring, is captured by premise (1), it is not clear how Socrates comes up with the reverse conditional, (Dx->Cx), the daring are courageous. Indeed, this is Protagoras' complaint after Socrates finishes the argument:

> you asked me if the courageous are daring, and I agreed that they are; but you didn't ask me if, in addition, the daring are courageous - for if you had asked me that, I should have said that not all are (350c6-9).

So it seems Socrates fallaciously derives (Cx<->Dx) from (Cx->Dx). But without the biconditional, Socrates can only prove that the class of courageous agents is *included* in the class of daring agents; he cannot prove that the two classes are *coextensive*. If so, some claims can be true of the daring agents without being also true of the courageous agents. Consequently, what is said about the daring - that the more knowledgeable is also the more daring - cannot be directly applied to the courageous. The wisest may be the most daring, but this does not automatically mean the wisest is also the most courageous. In other words, Socrates' inference in the conclusion, "people who are wisest are also most daring, and being most daring are most courageous" (350c4), fails to go through.

Taylor tries to escape this problem by reinterpreting 350b6-7 as saying only "the courageous are daring" (or (Cx->Dx)),[69] hence freeing Socrates from the fallacious inference. He then rephrases Socrates' conclusion (which is ambiguous anyway). It is not that there is first an inference from "being the wisest" to "being the most daring", then another inference from "being the most daring" to "being the most courageous", and finally the conclusion "being wisest" implies "being the most courageous". One does not need the middle premise "'being the most daring' implies 'being the most courageous'" (i.e. (Dx->Cx), derived from 350b6-7 discussed above). Rather, the inference is that "being the wisest" *and* "being the most daring" *jointly* imply "being the most courageous". In this way, one can secure the connection between wisdom and courage without interpreting 350b6-7 as involving a fallacious inference.[70]

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[67] O'Brien 1962, 413.

[68] Taylor 1991, 156; Denyer 2008, 175. See also Weiss 1985, 13, 16-17.

[69] Taylor notes how Plato sometimes uses the sentence form "say that all Xs are Ys" to mean simply "all Xs are Ys" *or* "all Ys are Xs", but not "all and only Xs are Ys". He cites

Stokes, on the other hand, thinks that Socrates does mean to say "the daring are courageous" (Dx->Cx) at 350b6-7, but only to manipulate an ambiguity in Protagoras' wordings. For, as Stokes helpfully points out, there is a strong contrast between "the courageous" and "the many" in Protagoras initial claim: the courageous are "ready for what most men fear" (349e3). There is then a sharp contrast between the courageous and the non-courageous non-daring many. If so, although Protagoras has not explicitly claimed that all daring people are also courageous (i.e. (Dx->Cx)), he can be taken to mean the logical equivalent, namely, all non-brave people are non-confident.[71] Socrates then manipulates this ambiguity and tries to push Protagoras to admit its logical implication.[72] In other words, when Socrates says "the courageous…isn't it that they are the daring?" at 350b6-7, he is trying to make Protagoras' claim more precise and as such makes

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Gorgias 491e (where Callicles says "It's the silly whom you call the self-controlled") and *Laches* 195e (where Laches says "He [Nicias] is calling the courageous the seers") as evidence. See Taylor 1991, 159.

[70] Put more formally, Taylor thinks the inference is "(Dx&Wx->Cx)" (where "D" = daring, "W" = wisdom, "C" = courage), not "((Wx->Dx) & (Dx->Cx))->(Wx->Cx)". But Taylor also thinks Socrates arrives at "(Dx&Wx->Cx)" through *another* fallacious reasoning. For at 350b Socrates asks "have you ever…seen people who are ignorant of all these things, but daring in each of them?", which is not a courageous thing to do. Taylor formulates this as "(Dx&~Wx) ->~Cx", and thinks that "(Dx&Wx->Cx)" is fallaciously derived from this. Taylor 1991, 158-160.

[71] Stokes 1986, 331.

[72] Stokes 1986, 338.

it works in his own favour. This is of course not the first time Protagoras falls victim to his own lack of precision.

Now let's see how we should understand 350b6-7 given my interpretation. Recall that I interpreted Socrates as trying to demarcate the exact boundary of courageous actions. I suggest, then, when Socrates says "what do you say about the courageous? Isn't it that they are the daring?", he is in the middle of that task. The point of b6-7 is to reconfirm Protagoras' commitment to premise (1). As Protagoras understands premise (1) as saying, "the courageous man acts daringly", i.e. this is how courage is different from the other virtues, at 350b6-7 Socrates tries to confirm, "didn't you say the courageous are the daring?", meaning "aren't the courageous (but not the wise, the just, etc.) essentially the same as the daring (hence the previous discussion of acting daringly is relevant)?". In this way, Socrates secures the target of his argument: whatever is said about daring - that it is directly proportional to knowledge - can now be applied to courage.[73] This is the most straightforward way to bridge the previous discussion of knowledge and daring on the one hand, and knowledge and courage on the other.

The original problem is that it seems 350b6-7 is stronger than premise (1): while premise (1) only asserts "the courageous acts daringly" (Cx->Dx), 350b6-7 asserts the biconditional, "the courageous and the daring are the same", (Cx<->Dx) (that is, despite some possible exceptions from the *Gorgias* and the *Laches*). The charge is that Socrates is guilty of making this fallacious inference (deriving the biconditional from the conditional). But this is not true. For one thing, if the above analysis is correct, Socrates does not derive the biconditional from anywhere. For he simply is not making any logical inference at that point; rather, he is just securing Protagoras' commitment. For another, for all we know, there is no telling whether Protagoras just meant the conditional (Cx->Dx) in asserting premise (1). What he needs is the idea that courage is different from the other virtues because the courageous is daring. But he can make this claim using either the conditional proposition or the biconditional one, as long as the same claim is not true of the other four virtues. When at 350b6-7 Socrates appears to identify the courageous with the daring, Protagoras concurred, not because he does or does not notice the difference, but because he does not think it matters.[74]

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[73] Smyth notes that the Greek article used with a noun as a predicate (as in τοὺς θαρραλέους) can refer to a definite object that is previously mentioned or hinted at. Smyth 1920, 292.

My interpretation is different from Taylor's in that I don't see Socrates as making any logical inference at 350b6-7, and also in that I am happy to adopt the natural or literal reading of that sentence (i.e. as asserting a biconditional proposition). My interpretation is closer to Stokes' as we both interpret 350b6-7 in light of premise (1). But while Stokes thinks that Protagoras is ambiguous between asserting the conditional and asserting the biconditional proposition, I think that Protagoras simply does not think it matters.

2.3.3 The argument and the Great Speech

Now, Socrates' choice of examples in this argument all concern technical expertise (well-diving, etc.). In a way, this helps to make Socrates' conclusion more intelligible: it makes sense to say that, at least when some technical expertise is needed, the courageous person acts with the same psychological profile as that of the technical expert. But one may point out that the choice of examples is also the obvious limitation of Socrates' argument. For instance, technical expertise can only tell us if the actions are safe, it cannot tell us if the actions are *worthwhile*. Socrates is about to argue that knowledge is "the mightiest of human things" (352d4), and that the power of knowledge must always override e.g. sexual appetites (353c7). But this possibility is not discussed in the context of the "argument from expert knowledge": there can be wanton experts. So it seems Socrates manages to come up with a plausible argument only at the expense of depriving its immediate ethical relevance.

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[74] Of course, in Protagoras' reply after the argument, he does try to clarify his position by separating "the courageous are the daring" and "the daring are the courageous". But according to this interpretation I am proposing, he simply does not anticipate Socrates' damaging conclusion at 350b6-7.

Further, if we go back to as early as 319b-d, note that it is Socrates, not Protagoras, who draws a sharp contrast between technical expertise and the political art. Socrates argues that the political art or “virtue” is not teachable because, unlike such technical expertise as ship-building, it does not seem possible to distinguish between the experts and the non-experts of the political art. Rather, everyone is allowed to give his opinion (319d1-5). But in the “argument from expert knowledge”, Socrates is relying on the examples of technical expertise as expressions of one’s wisdom. So the virtue of wisdom is very much unlike technical expertise at 319b-d, but in “the argument from expert knowledge”, technical expertise *itself* is treated as an expression of wisdom. Regardless of whether or not Socrates’ argument succeeds, then, he seems to have contradicted himself.

The rest of this section will be devoted to discussing whether Socrates’ choice of examples is problematic. First, one may say that Socrates deliberately chooses such examples. For the technical expertises are the paradigm examples of “art” (τέχνη). So, in order to point out how Socrates contradicts himself, and how technical expertise is not identical with wisdom in an ethical context, one needs to explain how wisdom is or is not - or how wisdom is similar to or different from - “art”, as it is standardly understood. But as Stokes argues, Protagoras may not be in a position to do so.[75] For Protagoras grants that wisdom is a part of virtue (330a), and virtues as Protagoras understands it are interchangeable with the “political art” (319a). So Protagoras needs to explain the difference between technical expertise and wisdom - if indeed they are different at all - in connection with the political art. But this leads to the questions that challenge most directly Protagoras’ own practice as a sophist: in what sense is the political art an “art”? Is it teachable (as the technical expertises are clearly teachable)? If not, why must one pay Protagoras to learn it?

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[75] Stokes 1986, 345.

Stokes does not go beyond stating that Protagoras fails to adequately distinguish his “political art” and “art” in general. On the face of it, this seems unfair to Protagoras. For Protagoras does mention several differences between the political art and the technical expertise. In the *muthos* part of the Great Speech, the two arts are given to humans in *different stages*: the technical expertises are given to humans by Prometheus (after he stole from Hephaestus and Athena) (321d-322a), whereas the political art is given to humans by Zeus (322b-c). The context suggests that the two arts have different functions and purposes: the former for survival, the latter for flourishing. As such, the two arts must also be distributed differently: the political art must be shared by all, whereas the technical expertise can be possessed by only some of the citizens (322d-323a). Immediately after the *muthos*, Protagoras further explains how the political art is widely assumed to be indispensable, such that one must at least pretend to share the virtue of justice. By contrast, if one pretends to be an expert without actually being so, everyone will “laugh at him or get angry at him” (323b). So Protagoras does realise the differences between technical expertise and the political art: they differ in terms of socio-political significance. Given such conceptual resources, Protagoras may object that, in “the argument from expert knowledge”, Socrates simply picks the wrong kind of examples: the technical expertises are never the relevant instantiation of ethical/political wisdom.

But this is still too fast. When Socrates first brings up the question of the teachability of virtues at 319b-320b, there is a sharp contrast between the teachable technical subjects and the unteachable political art. Closely associated with such contrast is the claim that only in the teachable technical arts can there be a distinction between the experts and the non-experts. In the case of virtue, by contrast, the pupils can only “wander about on their own like sacred cattle looking for pasture, hoping to pick up virtue by chance” (320a3). But Protagoras wants to argue for the teachability of the political art without conflating the distinction between the experts and the non-experts (since he regards himself as an expert, 328a6-b4). His strategy, I suggest, is to go beyond a dichotomy implicit in Socrates ’questions: the dichotomy between the “teachable” arts on the one hand and skills that can only be acquired “by chance” on the other. That is, the political art cannot be acquired by *formal* teachings, yes, but it does not follow that it can only be picked up by chance, for it can be inculcated through *informal practices*:[76] citizens acquire the political virtues in a way similar to how they acquire their mother tongue (328a). Protagoras can then claim himself to be an expert just as there can be expert and non-expert speakers of any native language. But then Protagoras manages to prove the teachability of virtue or the political art only by making the notion of “teaching” less rigorous: both formal and informal inculcation are now examples of teaching.Consequently, the sharp contrast between the teachable technical arts and the unteachable political art in Socrates’ original questions is lost: the political art is not distinguished from the technical arts by being unteachable. For both are teachable, it is just that the political art involves more informal practices.[77]

Socrates’ initial questions at 319b-320b strongly suggest that the technical arts and the political art differ in *kind.* For the two arts involve different *epistemic conditions*: the technical arts are governed by various epistemic norms that separate experts and non-experts; but in the case of the political art, no such epistemic norm exists (or at least no such norm exists to the same effect). But for Protagoras, both arts can be placed along the same spectrum, with differing degrees of socio-political significance. But then, going back to the “argument from expert knowledge”, if the technical arts and the political art differ only in degrees of socio-political significance, then it is harder for Protagoras to pinpoint the exact conditions under which some exercise of some art does or does not have sufficient significance. For it is *always* possible for even the most technical arts to make an ethical difference. And Socrates’ examples was not even about the rarest kinds of technical arts - well-diving, cavalry, skirmishers, these are all parts of the daily Greek life.[78]

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[76] Kerferd 1981, 134-136.

[77] One should also note that the means of teaching are different: punishment is part of the teaching of the political art, but not part of the teaching of the technical expertise.

[78] Denyer 2008, 175.

So Socrates' choice of examples should not be regarded as a defect in his argument. Rather, the examples are designed to trap Protagoras, since it is Protagoras who blurs the differences between technical expertise and the political art, and therefore, wisdom.

2.3.4 The importance of wisdom

The choice of examples in "the argument from expert knowledge" is directly targeted against Protagoras. But perhaps the argument as a whole is also pointing at a more general rationale - even if it is not explicitly formulated in this general way. For there is an apparent similarity between *Protagoras* 350a-c and *Meno* 88b. I shall argue that this similarity may suggest a way for Socrates to push the dialectic one step further given Protagoras' response to "the argument from expert knowledge". Let us look at the passage first:

> Courage, for example, when it is not wisdom (φρόνησις) but like a kind of recklessness (θάρρος): when a man is reckless without understanding (νοῦ), he is harmed; when with understanding, he is benefited (ὠφελεῖται) (*Meno* 88b; trans. Grube).

In *Protagoras* 350a-c, wisdom/knowledge guarantees that the daring actions are fine (καλόν); in *Meno* 88b, wisdom/understanding makes sure that the daring agent is benefited. Regardless of how we should understand the interrelation between the fine and the beneficial, there seems to be an underlying similarity: without wisdom, some reckless actions might appear to be courageous, but it is only when one is also wise that one is acting as one should.

Recall, in response to "the argument from expert knowledge", Protagoras says "good natural condition" and "good nurture of the soul" are both important if one is to be courageous (351b1-3). This makes sense because "the argument from expert knowledge" focuses rather narrowly on how technical expertise: it makes sense to say technical expertise cannot be everything that accounts for what it is to be courageous - good nature and other forms of nurture also matters. But wisdom can be understood in a much broader way: as whatever it is that guarantees the right use of things and the right expression of one's character.[79] If wisdom is understood in this way, then there is no reason why Socrates cannot say: whatever Protagoras may have in mind about "good nature" and "good nurture of the soul", if they are to lead to true courage at all, they must be part and parcel of wisdom. That is, good nature must be the nature that develops into wisdom, and good nurture of the soul must be the nurture that gives rise to wisdom. If so, then Socrates' more general point still stands: courage is identical with wisdom not only in the sense that the psychological profile of the courageous person is the same as the psychological profile of the knowledgeable expert, but also in the sense that the very same conditions that give rise to courage also give rise to wisdom (understood in the broad way). Protagoras' reply to the argument is valid but shallow.

This then allows us to deepen our understanding of this argument. I suggest, courage and wisdom are the same thing in the further sense that "courage" and "wisdom" refer to *one single capacity through the exercise of which we recalibrate our commitment to fineness especially in dangerous situations*. This confirms how *Distinctness of Virtues* is false when it comes to wisdom and courage. The very same conditions that give rise to wisdom also give rise to courage because it is the capacity to commit ourselves to fineness in dangerous situations that is at stake here: we need the intellectual power that is normally associated with "wisdom" to figure out *what* it is to be fine, but we also need the strength that is normally associated with "courage" to fully *show* our commitment to fineness in our deeds.

2.3.5 The argument for the Identity of Virtues at Meno 88c-d

Now, given this broader understanding of wisdom (as whatever guarantees the right use of things and the right expression of one's character), one might wonder how the *Meno* is related to *Protagoras* 350a-c. For not so long after *Meno* 88b (cited above), Socrates proposes another argument for IoV:

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[79] See also *Euthydemus* 281d.

> If then virtue is something in the soul and it must be beneficial, it must be knowledge, since all the qualities of the soul are in themselves neither beneficial nor harmful, but accompanied by wisdom or folly they become harmful or beneficial. This argument shows that virtue, being beneficial, must be a kind of wisdom (*Meno* 88c-d).[80]

Put more formally, the argument goes like this:

1. The only thing that always benefits us is wisdom (other things sometimes benefit and sometimes harm).
2. Virtue must always be beneficial.
3. Therefore, virtue is wisdom.

"The argument from expert knowledge" in the *Protagoras* (especially premises (2a) to (2c)) seems to be a counterpart of *Meno* 88c-d. The resemblance asks for clarification. Is the argument for IoV articulated at *Meno* 88c-d merely a different version of “the argument from expert knowledge”? Or is it entirely different? Or is either of them more fundamental? Some commentators think that *Meno* 88c-d represents Socrates’ main argument for IoV.[81] But we should also observe the difference in context: it is not surprising that Meno himself as a military man should appreciate more the practical value of virtues, hence Socrates presents the argument in the *Meno* in terms of how virtue must benefit. This is not the same as saying that the virtues must aim at the fine, as fineness is closer to (what we might call) a moral ideal, which may or may not be the same as being beneficial - at least, some independent argument is needed to prove that the fine also benefits.[82] Protagoras himself is certainly sympathetic to the thought that virtue must benefit: in the Great Speech, it is as if the virtues (political art) must be beneficial, since without them human beings as a species would not thrive (322b-c). But it is the fine that “the argument from expert knowledge” is based on (premise (2a)). So *Meno* 88c-d and “the argument from expert knowledge” seem to focus on different kinds of value.

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[80] The *Meno* is also part of another controversy. For although there is an argument for IoV at *Meno* 88c-d, Socrates also seems to think that there are many different virtues at 73e-74b. He also refers to each of the virtues as "part of virtue" (μόριον ἀρετῆς) at 78d-79a, and argues that Meno's proposed definition of virtue is inadequate because one cannot define virtue as such in terms of a part of virtue. To some commentators, *Meno* 73e-74b and 78d-79a are the major textual evidence that Socrates cannot be committed to IoV (see, e.g. Vlastos 1981). But it is also possible to argue that Socrates does not really mean to commit himself to the claim that there are "parts of virtue" in the *Meno.* Rudebusch 2011, for example, argues that 73e and 78d are merely false leads that Socrates uses to test Meno. As Rudebusch sees it, there is a certain pattern in Socrates' way of interrogating others. Socrates would first present false lead to his interrogators, all aiming to show that the interrogators do not really know the topic in question. If the interrogators admit their own ignorance, then Socrates would start to present positive theory. But if the interrogators fail to see their own ignorance (and blame Socrates for muddling things instead), then Socrates would start the same cycle again (by presenting another false lead). The point is that commentators should not expect any positive theory if the passages in question are situated before the interrogators admit their own ignorance - and that *Meno* 73e-74b and 78d-79a are situated in this way. See also Rudebusch 2017.

Further, it is not even clear if *Meno* 88c-d should be seen as aiming to prove that all virtues are the same state of soul (the state of wisdom). At the heart of the argument is the claim that the virtues are invariably beneficial, but at the same time they depend on wisdom to confer any benefits. One might even argue that such dependency is *ontological*. External goods such as wealth and health also depend on wisdom to be beneficial, for one needs wisdom to judge how to properly pursue and/or use these external goods. But the virtues are dependent on wisdom in a deeper sense: one can *be* wealthy or healthy before one acquires wisdom, but one cannot even *be* virtuous (be just, be courageous, etc.) if one does not also have wisdom. Without wisdom, all the other virtues (as something that is invariably beneficial) simply cannot even be *present*. But - as Ferejohn argues - this at most proves the claim that, for any person, if virtue X (say, courage) is present, then wisdom is also present in that person. As such, this is compatible with several different ways of articulating the ontological relation between the virtues and wisdom: a) wisdom is the general kind with the other virtues as the sub-kinds, or b) wisdom is the whole with the other virtues as its parts, or c) wisdom and the other virtues are ontologically one and the same thing.[83] The virtues can be seen as ontologically dependent on wisdom in all (a), (b), and (c). The virtue of, say, courage, cannot be present (and be present as something that invariably benefits) if wisdom is absent, regardless of whether courage is a sub-kind of wisdom, or a part of wisdom, or is ontologically identical with wisdom. But then this means *Meno* 88c-d is non-committal as to whether the virtues are the same state of soul - assuming, of course, that being the same state of soul implies being ontologically identical.

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[81] See, e.g. Irwin 1977, 87-88; Rudebusch 2011, 167-168.

[82] In the next chapter, we will see how Socrates argues that the exercise of virtue (more specifically, courage) is pleasant, good (beneficial), and fine (see section 3.2).

2.4 Varieties of Identity of Virtues?

Let me end this chapter by comparing these three arguments.

I want to suggest that each pair of virtues presented at each argument forms an identity in a way that is different from how another pair (of another argument) forms another identity. Consequently, we can find *three* forms of the Identity Virtues, corresponding to the three arguments. If this is true, then at least in the *Protagoras*, we can speak of *varieties of identity of virtues.* Against the standard interpretation, Socrates does not just present one version of the thesis that the virtues are identical. This is a claim that, as far as I know, no one has made before.[84]

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[83] Ferejohn 1984b, 117-120. Ferejohn formulates the claim as “for any life L, if courage is present in L, then wisdom is present in L”. The terminology of “life” is indebted to *Charmides* 173-4, which Ferejohn thinks is helpful in interpreting the *Meno*. For my purposes, I simplified the claim into “for any person (instead of for any life)…”.

[84] Sachs once suggests a geometrical model that explains how the five virtues presented in the *Protagoras* are interrelated. The structure that holds these virtues together is “something like a regular pentagon sharing its vertices with a five-pointed star” (Sachs 2011, 16). For instance, if one starts from the vertex that represents justice, then a line of the star connects justice to piety, and a different line connects justice to temperance, and a yet different line connects justice to wisdom, and finally another line connects justice to courage. This comes close to acknowledge that each pair of virtues can relate to each other in a way different from how a different pair relate to each other.

Let us look at the first two arguments first. The logic of self-predication suggests that justice and piety form a near identity (identical or very similar) by sharing their essential properties (being just and being pious). The two virtues form a near identity because of what they essentially are. A just person and a pious person are alike, according to the logic of self-predication, because there is some natural affinity between the just character and the pious character. By contrast, according to “the argument from opposites”, wisdom and σωφροσύνη are identical because they have the same opposite, and I argued that this should be understood as saying they occupy the same pole of the same spectrum: along the spectrum of deliberating well or badly with respect to the common good, wisdom/αἰδώς/σωφροσύνη occupies the excellent pole. We might say, then, wisdom and σωφροσύνη are identical because they *share the same task*: the task of deliberating well about the common good.

To appreciate the difference, imagine if the identity of wisdom and σωφροσύνη were argued for through self-predication. One can of course reasonably say that wisdom is both wise and sensible, and σωφροσύνη is both wise and sensible (if they are identical of course they share their essential properties). One can reasonably say a wise person and a sensible person share some natural affinity. But this is to obscure the substantial task wisdom-σωφροσύνη is meant to achieve (deliberating well about the common good), and that it is precisely in achieving this task that the two apparently different virtues can be seen as identical. For instance, it would obscure Socrates’ point that we should think of wisdom-σωφροσύνη in a more rigorous way; it is precisely because we need the kind of intellectual excellence that wisdom promises that we should think of wisdom and σωφροσύνη as identical. We can appreciate this point only if we think of the identity of wisdom and σωφροσύνη not through the logic of self-predication, but through how they share the same task.

But while Sachs admits that the geometrical model is just a speculation, my interpretation is the result of a careful discussion of each of the argument.

Similarly, imagine if the similarity/identity of justice and piety were argued for through the logic of opposite. For instance, one might try to suggest that justice and piety achieve the same task in the sense that they equally contribute to human flourishing. But this is to obscure how the two virtues are similar or identical precisely when they are expressing their own natures. For instance, it would obscure the point that piety can simply be seen (or so I argued) as the divine character of justice. The two arguments suggest different ways in which some apparently different virtues can be seen as forming an identity.

“The argument from expert knowledge” seems to indicate a yet different form of unity. Recall, I argued that courage and wisdom are identical because (to quote myself) “‘courage’ and ‘wisdom’ refer to *one single capacity through the exercise of which we recalibrate our commitment to fineness especially in dangerous situations*” (section 2.3.4). I suggest, then, courage and wisdom are the same because *they commit the agent to the same ideal.*

Again, think of how Socrates’ previous arguments can be understood differently if different forms of identity are presented. Consider first “the argument from self-predication”. I do not think Socrates would object to the idea that both justice and piety must also be fine. But “the fine” is an ideal that transcends any particular virtue. Consequently, if the similarity/identity of justice and piety is argued for through fineness, that would obscure the point that justice and piety form a near identity precisely because of their specific natures. Next, consider “the argument from opposites”. As I have interpreted it, wisdom and σωφροσύνη are identical because they share the same task: the task of deliberating well about the common good. This argument should welcome the notion of fineness, since fineness articulates more determinately what is so desirable about being able to deliberate well about the common good. But, again, this obscures the point of the original argument: of course both wisdom and σωφροσύνη are committed to the fine, but they are identical because they have the same opposite, i.e. in sharing the same task, they are opposed to the same vice (deliberating badly about the common good).

Conversely, imagine if the identity of courage and wisdom were argued for through the logic of self-predication. In fact, this seems to be a non-starter: the virtue of courage constitutes an obvious counter-example to IoV because courageous actions seem to involve some non-rational impulses (349e), and in this way courage is precisely *not* similar to other virtues (including wisdom). Courage appears unique because its psychological profile is *different* from the other virtues; it does not share a natural affinity with the other virtues. But then one needs the capacity to recalibrate our commitment to fineness in dangerous situations, and such capacity, if (my interpretation of) Socrates is correct, is the capacity that we recognise through the name of "wisdom" and "courage". If we think of the identity of courage and wisdom not through similarity, but through how they commit the agent to the same ideal in dangerous situations, then it makes more sense to say the two apparently different virtues are in fact identical. In this way, we can disarm an important objection to IoV insofar as the virtue of courage is concerned.

To complete the comparison: imagine if the identity of courage and wisdom were argued for through the logic of opposites. We can grant the (obvious) point that courage and wisdom share the same task, in the sense that both aim at fineness. But this is to obscure the claim that, to repeat, courage and wisdom *commit* the agent to the same ideal. Merely saying that both virtues aim at the fine fails to articulate *how* the virtue of courage-wisdom involves serious commitment: it is no small achievement to be able to show one's proper commitment to fineness even in dangerous situations.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined in detail three of Socrates' arguments: "the argument from self-predication" (330c-331e), "the argument from opposites" (332a-333c), and "the argument from expert knowledge" (349e-351a). Through careful reading of these arguments, their contexts, and how they are related to the Great Speech, I proposed that each argument indicates a distinct form of the identity of virtues. Up to this point, it seems Socrates can be seen as arguing for *Limited-IoV*: “For some set of virtues there is one underling power, and for another set of virtues there is another underlying power, but there is no one single power that underlies all the virtues”.

So wisdom and temperance form an identity, and wisdom and courage form another identity. But this invites a question: is “wisdom” in the former set the same as “wisdom” in the latter set? Socrates does not indicate at all that he is switching to a different notion. If we stop here, it can look as though I am attributing to Socrates some sort of confusion. Fortunately, I think Socrates’ final argument, “the argument from akrasia” (351b-360e5), helps to tie everything together. I shall suggest that this argument actually incorporates *all* three forms of identity we have seen so far. This is what makes that final argument so rich. Let us now turn to that argument. To do full justice to the text, I will examine Socrates’ reasoning first, and return to the question about the varieties of identity of virtues only at the end of the chapter (section 3.8).

Chapter 3: The Unity (Identity) of Virtues in the *Protagoras* (II)

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss Socrates' final argument for the identity of courage and wisdom, including the long passage on hedonism and akrasia (351b-360e). I will first briefly explain some points we learned from the previous arguments (section 3.1), then I will discuss Socrates' attitude towards hedonism in the *Protagoras*. I suggest that Socrates does not mean to embrace hedonism, but the monistic aspect of hedonism is useful for him to articulate his intellectualism (section 3.2). Then I will discuss the relation between knowledge and the passions (section 3.3). In section 3.4, I will explore the fundamental difference between knowledge and ignorance. I argue that ignorance is the sort of state that makes one perceive, calculate, choose, and act incorrectly. Section 3.5 argues that Socrates is committed to holism about the human soul, according to which no aspect of the psyche is isolated from the intellect. In section 3.6, I will explain what Socrates means when he says "cowards and the courageous go for the same things" (359e1). Section 3.7 reconstructs the argument for the identity of courage and wisdom based on what I found in the previous sections. Courage is wisdom because the whole soul of the courageous and the whole soul of the wise are oriented towards the same things. I end by further exploring the thesis that "virtue is one". I argue that this thesis has important pedagogical significance, and I explain how this final argument incorporates the different possible forms of identity of virtues that I articulated in the previous chapter.

3.1 Lessons from the previous arguments

The structure of the final argument of the identity of courage and wisdom is simple:

1. Cowardice is ignorance (359d-360c).

2. The opposite of cowardice is courage (360d1).
3. Courage is the opposite of cowardice-as-ignorance (From 1,2).
4. The opposite of ignorance is wisdom (360d3-4)
5. Wisdom and courage have the same opposite, namely, cowardice/ignorance (From 3,4).
6. So, wisdom and courage are identical.

Before I discuss the argument itself, let me say a few words on how my discussion of the previous arguments influences our understanding of this final argument. First, the similarity of the structure of this argument and the structure of "the argument from opposites" is unmistakable. Both rely on the logic of "opposites". Consequently, absent independent reasons to think otherwise, one should interpret the notion of "opposites" in this argument in a similar way, i.e. as two poles of a spectrum. I argued that wisdom/temperance and folly are two poles of the spectrum of deliberating about the common good. I also argued that wisdom/temperance is the opposite of folly in the sense that wisdom/temperance is corrective of the vice of folly. If we apply this understanding to this argument, the result would be something like: courage/wisdom and cowardice/ignorance are two poles of a spectrum - the spectrum of facing what is and is not to be feared, presumably - and the former is corrective of the latter.

Second, both "the argument from opposites" and "the argument from expert knowledge" seem to *individuate* the relevant virtues by their psychological roles, and this is part of the argument for the identity of the virtues in question. In "the argument from opposites", wisdom and temperance are identical because they both occupy the role of bringing about actions that are opposite to folly. In "the argument from expert knowledge", courage and wisdom are identical because they are just different ways to refer to the psychological profile that gives rise to knowledgeable and daring actions. We should expect to see something similar in this final argument. That is, cowardice and ignorance are identical because they are just different ways to refer to the state of soul that makes one act dishonourably in the face of fearful things. Similarly, courage and wisdom are different ways to refer to the state of soul that makes one acts honourably in similar situations.

Third, recall what I said about Socrates' choice of examples in "the argument from expert knowledge". I argued in the last section that, while one might be tempted to distinguish between technical expertises and ethical wisdom, Protagoras is not in a position to do so. For Protagoras distinguishes the two only in terms of their differing degrees of socio-political significance, and as such may not have the conceptual resources to articulate the *epistemic* differences between the two intellectual powers. Socrates' strategy seems to be to secure Protagoras' agreement to the relevance of knowledge first, however "knowledge" may be construed, and technical expertise is mentioned as an undeniable and paradigmatic instance. If so, we should expect Socrates to further expand on the notion of "knowledge" in the final argument. In particular, we should expect him to further articulate the relation between knowledge as an epistemic power and virtuous (courageous) action.

Finally, and relatedly, part of Protagoras' reply to "the argument from expert knowledge" is that it is "nature and good nurture of the soul" (φύσεως καὶ εὐτροφίας τῶν ψυχῶν; 351b1-2) that give rise to courageous actions. Socrates' strategy in the final argument seems to be to extend the conclusion of "the argument from expert knowledge" to cover both "nature" and "nurture". That is, while Protagoras objects that it is the non-epistemic conditions that explain courageous actions, Socrates wants to explain these non-epistemic conditions in terms of the exercise of such epistemic power as knowledge.[85] I will explain as I proceed.

3.2 The role of hedonism

Now let me first clarify my position with respect to a much-discussed problem: Socrates' attitude towards hedonism in this passage (353c-357e). This is not strictly speaking my main focus (i.e. IoV), but the text calls for clarification or elaboration. For one thing, Socrates does spend considerable time on it, and it seems that the passage on hedonism and akrasia somehow prepares for the argument for the identity of courage and wisdom. For another, Socrates also says courageous actions are pleasant when he is in the middle of the argument for the identity of courage and wisdom (360a) - so pleasure seems to play some role for IoV anyway. So how should we understand Socrates' attitude towards hedonism in the *Protagoras*?

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[85] Russell 2000, 318; Weiss 1985, 20.

There are a lot of different interpretations of Socrates' apparent hedonism. Irwin famously thinks that Socrates embraces hedonism in the *Protagoras*.[86] Nussbaum also argues that Socrates is committed to hedonism, but "for the science it promises, rather than for its own intrinsic plausibility".[87] Vlastos suggests that hedonism is Socrates 'view, but emphasises that it is not modern hedonism.[88] But given that Socrates explicitly argues against hedonism elsewhere (*Gorgias* 468c, 474d, 475b; *Phaedo* 68c-69c; *Republic,* 505c), or at least says something incompatible with hedonistic ideas (*Apology* 28b; *Crito* 48c), many commentators argue that Socrates is not sincerely advocating hedonism in the *Protagoras*.[89] Typically, these commentators then proceed to offer alternative explanations as to why Socrates appears to defend hedonism. One common move is to argue that the apparent hedonism is part of an *ad hominem* argument against Protagoras. I will discuss some of these alternative explanations as I proceed. On the other hand, some commentators argue that hedonism in the *Protagoras* is coherent with anti-hedonism in other dialogues.[90]

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[86] Irwin 1977, 103; Irwin 1995, 92-94.

[87] Nussbaum 2001, 110.

[88] Vlastos 1956, xl-xli; Guthrie 1956, 22-23. *Contra* Weiss 1989, 522, n.18.

[89] See, e.g. Dodds 1959, 21, n.3; Sullivan 1961; Kahn 1996, 236-242; Ferrari 1990; Russell 2000; Shaw 2015.

[90] Some distinguish between different forms of hedonism, such that defending one is compatible with arguing against another (Gosling and Taylor 1982; White 1985; Berman 1991). Some argue that while early Plato defends hedonism, he changes his view later (Irwin 1995; Rudebusch 1999; and Reshotko 2006).

Now, apart from the passage where Socrates appears to explicitly argue for hedonism (353c-355a), any account of the hedonism in the *Protagoras* must also accommodate two other texts. First, near the end of the discussion of the "art of measurement" (τὴν μετρητικὴν τέχνην), this is how Socrates explains the connection between hedonism and knowledge:

> since we have seen that the preservation of our life depends on a correct choice of pleasure and pain…doesn't it seem that the thing that saves our lives is some technique of measurement…and since it's measurement, then necessarily it's an art which embodies exact knowledge…now which art, and what knowledge, we shall inquire later. But this suffices to show *that* it is knowledge…(357a5-b6)

It seems that what matters ultimately is not whether pleasure is the only good, but that one must act from knowledge in order to make the correct choice. But second, it is not true that the discussion of pleasure plays no role other than helping to introduce the "art of measurement". For (as I have noted) the notion of pleasure appears in the final argument for IoV too. Socrates secures Protagoras' agreement that since courageous actions must be fine and good, they must also be pleasant (360a). One must find a way to characterise Socrates' attitude towards hedonism as accurately as possible: if he fully embraces it, then why does he speak as if what matters more is to be able to see that we need knowledge? But if the discussion of hedonism is purely instrumental, then why does he bring it up again when he argues for the identity of courage and wisdom?

My own view is closer to the last group of commentators I mentioned: I do not think Socrates means to embrace hedonism. But I also think hedonism in the *Protagoras* is not purely *ad hominem.* To anticipate, I will argue that Socrates appears to defend hedonism because a) it provides a straightforward way for Socrates to articulate his intellectualism about human motivation, thereby paving the way for the argument of the identity of courage and wisdom. And b) the hedonism helps to convince the many that IoV is an *attractive* thesis.

Let us first look at how the hedonism is understood in the overall context. The apparent hedonism surely plays some role in helping to establish the identity of courage and wisdom. For hedonism is part of the argument against the possibility of akrasia, and the akratic condition is one obvious counter-example to the thesis that courage and wisdom must be identical. For if akrasia is possible, then someone can *know* he should be courageous and yet fail to act accordingly. Knowledge (wisdom) is not sufficient for being courageous, then, and something *else* must be needed. But if something other than knowledge is needed for one to be courageous, then knowledge cannot be identical with courage. By the same token, even the coward can be said to "know" what is the noble (courageous) thing to do, and yet fail to act accordingly because he is overcome by fear (parallel to how the agent is said to be "overcome by pleasure" at 355a-e). The coward fears what he knows to be right.[91] If this is possible, then knowledge cannot even distinguish between virtues (courage) and vice (cowardice), and Socrates' intellectualist attempt to argue for IoV would be back to square one.

So Socrates has every reason to want to rule out akrasia. Or more precisely, he needs to argue for intellectualism about human motivation: judgment (or similar cognitive state) itself is sufficient for action. Correct judgment is sufficient for correct action. Knowing[92] that X ought to be done implies that one will X (provided that there is no external constraint); or, conversely, failing to do what ought to be done implies that one does not have knowledge, i.e. one is ignorant. Hence the famous Socratic dictum: no one willingly commits wrongdoings (358d). But then insofar as hedonism allows Socrates to make this argument, he has every reason to argue from the premise of hedonism. Very roughly, the idea is this. For akrasia (according to the many) just is "being overcome by pleasure" (352d-353a; 355a-e), and if hedonism is true and "pleasure" is identical with "good", then the akratic agent also makes his choice thinking that his choice is good. So the akratic agent is not "being overcome"; rather, he is also acting as he judges. But of course his judgment is mistaken; he commits wrongdoings out of ignorance, rather than knowingly (more below).

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[91] Kahn 1996, 239; Moss 2014a, 306.

[92] I assume for now that knowledge is just correct judgment. I will argue below that, for Socrates, knowledge is such a state that shapes one's true perceptions, calculations, choices, actions, and even emotions.

Further, recall that, as I interpreted it, after "the argument from expert knowledge", Socrates wants to extend the power of knowledge to cover the non-epistemic conditions Protagoras mentioned ("nature and good nurture of the soul"; 351b1-2). But something similar to a bad nurture of the soul may explain why someone would be "overcome by fear"; one may be akratic because one lacks the non-epistemic conditions Protagoras said also constitute courage. If so, the argument against the possibility of akrasia is almost indispensable if Socrates is to make progress after "the argument from expert knowledge". He needs an intellectualist account of human motivation to cover the apparently non-epistemic conditions of courage. And insofar as hedonism is instrumental to this intellectualist account, he also needs hedonism. Even though there seems to be a sudden change of topic after "the argument from expert knowledge",[93] and the interlude on hedonism and akrasia is so long that one might lost track of the overall argument for IoV, logically speaking Socrates' strategy is fairly straightforward: to equate courage with wisdom/knowledge, he needs to rule out the possibility that someone can be wise/knowledgeable and yet overcome by fear.

So it appears that Socrates' argument for the identity of courage and wisdom depends on the intellectualist account of human motivation, and the intellectualist account in turn depends on the argument for hedonism. This reliance on hedonism in Socrates' argumentative strategy is the main reason why Irwin thinks that Socrates means to embrace hedonism.[94] To argue for a conclusion one is committed to (IoV) from premises one does not sincerely believe (hedonism) is dishonest or manipulative. One should not think that Plato intends to represent Socrates in this way.[95]

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[93] Taylor 1991, 161.
[94] Irwin 1995, 84.

But is it true that Socrates' argument for the intellectualist account depends on hedonism as such? Let us take a closer look at the text. After having established that pleasure is good insofar as it is pleasant (353c-355a), Socrates proceeds to argue that one can then translate "being overcome by pleasure" - how the many characterises akrasia - into "being overcome by good". But as the imagined ill-mannered fellow says:

> what an absurd thing to say! That somebody should do bad things, though he knows they are bad, and doesn't have to do them, because he is overcome by good things….are the good things in your view worth the bad, or not? (355d1-5).

The ill-mannered fellow then proposes that "being overcome by good/pleasure" should be understood as "taking fewer good things at the cost of greater evils" (355e5), i.e. ignorance of what constitutes long-term overall pleasure. Within this context, then, the art of measurement is supposed to help the agent by maximising overall pleasures over a period of time (356d).

Given the structure of this argument, Zeyl famously argues that all that Socrates needs is some form of monism: "(a) that the goods of both the chosen and the rejected alternative are of the same kind, and (b) that it is by a good of that kind that the agent is said to be defeated."[96] As long as the chosen action and the rejected alternative can be measured along the same scale, Socrates' argument can still go through. If so, it is the monistic aspect of hedonism that attracts Socrates, rather than the claim that "pleasure is the good".

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[95] Taylor 1991, 209.

[96] Zeyl 1980, 260.

This monism of value also helps Socrates to make his case by ruling out possible conflicts between choices of actions. Arguably, this long passage (351b-360e) mentions three distinct kinds of values or valuable ends: the pleasurable, the good, and the fine. Pleasure is the obvious case. Goodness is understood in terms of advantages or what benefits someone (ὠφέλιμον).[97] Socrates' argument for hedonism - the claim that "pleasure is the good" - then, can be understood as something like "pleasure is the metric of goodness in terms of what brings overall benefits in the long term" (see 353c-354b). The fine or honourable (τὸ καλὸν) is also mentioned several times (358b4, 359e6, 360a), with an interesting role to play in the argument (more on this below). Now, if indulgence can be understood as being overcome by pleasure, as the many have characterised it, then one can also say that the akratic agent is choosing what is (immediately) pleasurable over what is good (beneficial) (352d). This is a conflict between the pleasant and the good.[98] Socrates' argument, then, can be seen as trying to rule out this conflict by arguing that, understood properly, the two are never in competition. For in pursuing pleasure, one naturally wants as much pleasure as possible, and this turns out to be the same as what eventually benefits the agent. But to know *this* - what would bring as much pleasure as possible - one would need to be knowledgeable. Hence being overcome by pleasure is just ignorance. Similarly, the coward, when overcome by fear, may be construed as experiencing a conflict between what is fine (going to the battlefield) and what is pleasant (escaping). But the truth is that the coward does not really know what is fine,[99] for the fine is also the more beneficial and the more pleasant (358b4, 360a), i.e. (properly understood) the cowardly action cannot compete with the courageous action even along the scale of what is pleasurable. But one needs to be wise to judge that courage is so much more valuable in this way. The upshot is that if one is wise, then one will always do the right thing, in such a way that one will also be able to see how all conflicts of values are merely apparent.[100] But it is monism, not hedonism as such, that helps Socrates to argue for this claim.

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[97] Kahn 1996, 237.

[98] Moss 2014a, 292-298.

[99] I will argue below that the coward (or at least some of them) is conflicted between "what one thinks one judges (as fine)" and "what one actually judged (as fine) as expressed in one's choices". He does not really know what is fine, but all the same he may still suffer from inner struggle.

Further, if we look at how Socrates arranges the different materials from 351b to 360e, it is also possible to argue that Socrates only intends to use hedonism as an expedient tool. For note that the final argument for the identity of courage and wisdom depends not directly on hedonism, but on the claim that courageous actions must be fine and good, and hence pleasant (360a). And yet the notion of the fine or the honourable does not come up at all during the argument for hedonism and the argument against akrasia (353c-357e). In fact, at a very early stage of this long passage, Protagoras tries to reject hedonism by suggesting that not all pleasant things are honourable, and only honourable things are good (351c-d). Honour seems to constitute a metric of goodness distinct from pleasure. But Socrates rejects this move. Why should Socrates reject the relevance of honour or the fine at the beginning, only to bring it back after having established his intellectualism?

One plausible explanation is that Socrates is aware of the gap between hedonism and the moral value (the value denoted by calling something "fine") of courage.[101] He wants to bracket the difficult question of the relation between the pleasant and the fine first, and focus instead on the power of knowledge. It is only after he has established his intellectualism that he acquired the conceptual tool he needed to argue for IoV, and it is only at this point that he can bring back the notion of the fine. Accordingly, Socrates may see 353c-357e (on hedonism and akrasia) and 358d-360e (on identity of courage and wisdom) as logically distinct:

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[100] Nussbaum famously argues that the hedonist calculus provides a metric where all goods are commensurable. This resolves any conflict in values because sacrificing any amount (of pleasures) of one thing can be compensated by an equivalent or even greater amount (of pleasures) of another thing (Nussbaum 1986, 109). Her view is criticised by Richardson, who notices that Socrates in fact lists three ways to compare pleasures, namely, larger and smaller, more or fewer, and greater or less. He argues that these can be three distinct standards of comparison, hence "pleasures" in the relevant passages need not be commensurable (Richardson 1990, 15-19). I am sympathetic to Richardson's position, but I intend to stay neutral on this issue.

[101] Kahn 1996, 238.

the former aims at establishing Socratic intellectualism (which requires only monism about values, not hedonism per se), while the latter argues for the identity of courage and wisdom based on such intellectualism.[102]

But if the two sets of passages are logically distinct, and if Socrates himself sees them as logically distinct, then whatever is said in the first set cannot be directly applied to the second set. Hedonism cannot be directly applied to the argument for IoV, nor does Socrates intend to do so. Arguably, then, Socrates intends to *limit* the argument for hedonism to the establishment of the intellectualist thesis *only,* and the final argument for IoV is indebted to the discussion of hedonism only in the sense that one of the premises of the argument (intellectualism) has itself hedonism as its premise. The upshot is that even if Socrates means to embrace IoV, and even if hedonism is part of the prologue preparing for the argument for IoV, it does not follow that Socrates must also embrace hedonism. For Socrates is merely using hedonism as a tool to get to his intellectualism.[103]

So Socrates does not mean to embrace hedonism, nor does the argument strictly speaking depend on hedonism (but only monism). But, as we saw, Socrates argues that since courageous actions are fine and good, they must also be pleasant (360a). Why does Socrates bother to argue that courageous actions must be pleasant?

This question is particularly challenging if we observe how temperance and courage are quite different. When Socrates argues that “being overcome by pleasure” is just ignorance, his reasoning captures best the problem of intemperance. Similarly, when Socrates argues that knowledge as correct measurement of pleasure and pain is the "salvation of our lives” (357b1), his reasoning works perfectly if we have the virtue of temperance in mind. Temperance is good for us precisely because it aims at long-term overall pleasure. The art of measurement is needed to figure out just which choice will lead to such overall pleasure. But the same is not obviously true in the case of courage. If courageous action is pleasant, arguably it is not pleasant in the same way as temperance (and good health) is (cf. NE 1117b1-16; 1119a21-28). In fact, if we have bodily pleasure in mind, then it is cowardly action - escaping from the battlefield - that is more pleasant.[104] Going to the battlefield may be honourable and good, but it is quite counter-intuitive to argue that it is also *pleasant*. Presumably, it follows from hedonism that, since courageous action is good, it must also be pleasant. For pleasure is the only good. Does this indicate that Socrates means to embrace hedonism after all? Or, conversely, if it is counter-intuitive to claim that courageous actions are pleasant, does this mean the argument for hedonism actually *prevents* Socrates from arguing for the identity of courage and wisdom?

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[102] Corresponding to this difference in vocabularies (353c-357e focus on pleasure with no mention of the fine, whereas the argument for the identity of courage and wisdom focuses on the fine) is the difference in Socrates’ (intended) *interlocutor*: the former passage is directly addressed to the many, the latter to Protagoras himself. See Kahn 1996, 234.

[103] Cf. Zeyl 1980, 260. Relatedly, also note that Socrates keeps asking if the many can come up with a non-hedonistic standard of evaluation (353e6, 354b7, 354d8, 355a). This can also be taken to mean that Socrates’ discussion of hedonism is purely dialectic.

It is possible to argue that it is logically superfluous to call courageous actions “pleasant”. Kahn, for instance, argues that the intellectualism previously established and the claim that courageous actions are fine and good suffice for the argument for the identity of courage and wisdom. In claiming that courageous actions must be pleasant, then, Socrates is merely trying to recall the argument for intellectualism, because it is the measurement of pleasure and pain that provides the original basis for an intellectualist model of choice.[105] But this seems arbitrary. Socrates has been discussing “pleasure” since 351b, right after “the argument from expert knowledge”; why should it be superfluous now, when Socrates is finally ready to argue for something he genuinely endorses?

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[104] Moss 2014a, 310.

[105] Kahn 1996, 236.

It seems more plausible to grant more significance to “pleasure”, while at the same time carefully avoid attributing hedonism to Socrates. Here is one idea. Perhaps since 353c the hedonism is meant to provide a protreptic (on Protagoras’ and other sophists’ behalf) to popular audiences:[106] the many are tempted to pursue pleasure *anyway*, and if one can show that one needs knowledge to do that successfully, then all the better for the sophists’ business, since knowledge (presumably) is one of the things that the sophists teach (357e). This is then brought up again in the argument for the identity of courage and wisdom, now emphasising how courage (not just knowledge) is pleasurable. This is hardly surprising: if one needs knowledge to live pleasantly, and if courage is identical with knowledge, then one also needs courage to live pleasantly.

And this fits how Socrates himself sets up the scene. Socrates begins the whole exchange by asking what it is to live well (351b). It is the question of living a good life that has been driving the whole dialectic. Courageous action is what wisdom - the virtue that saves our lives - would recommend. If so, calling courageous action pleasant may just be another way of saying courage is part of a good life - that is, a life recognisably good even in the eyes of the many.[107]

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[106] Hemmenway 1996; Kamtekar 2018, 50; Russell 2000, 328-333; Zeyl 1980, 254, 257. But then see *Meno* 91c, where Socrates says the sophists “cause the ruin and corruption of their followers.”

[107] Russell 2000, 333. The intended audience here may as well include the guests in Callias’ house: presumably members of the upper class of Athenian society. The claim that courage can be part of a good life can be reassuring to these audiences who have just heard Socrates say - not so long ago, when he was commenting on Simonides’ poem - that “it is impossible to be a good man, good all the time, that is, but it is possible to become good and for the same man to become bad. And the best, who are good for longest, are those whom the gods love” (345c). Regardless of Socrates’ true intention when he is commenting on this poem, the claim that “to be a good man is so demanding that it is beyond human power” surely has left an impression among the audiences. So when they now learn that having the virtue of courage is part of living well, and that the picture of a good life is one that they can recognise (since they pursue pleasure anyway), they must be more encouraged to pursue a life of virtue.

So Socrates' argument does not need hedonism, nor does he mean to embrace hedonism. The apparent hedonism in the passage is just to make his intellectualism and the thesis of IoV more attractive to the audiences.[108]

3.3 Knowledge and the passions

I now proceed to explain Socrates' notion of knowledge in this context. This is crucial for my purposes: since my aim is to understand Socrates' thesis "virtue is knowledge", then at least we should be clearer on his conception of "knowledge". Let us start by examining how Socrates introduces the term "knowledge" (ἐπιστήμη) at the beginning of the argument:

> The opinion of the majority about knowledge is that it is not anything strong, which controls and rules; they don't look at it that way at all, but that often a man who possesses knowledge is ruled not by it but by something else, in one case passion, in another pleasure, in another pain, sometimes lust, very often fear; they just look at knowledge as a slave who gets dragged about by all the rest. Now are you of a similar opinion about knowledge, or do you think that it is something fine and such as to rule man, and that if someone knows what is good and bad, he would never be conquered by anything so as to do other than what knowledge bids him? In fact, that intelligence is a sufficient safeguard for man?…[Protagoras:] wisdom and knowledge is the mightiest of human things. (352b-d)

On the face of it, Socrates seems to have implicitly accepted several things: 1) there are many different kinds of motivation. Knowledge is juxtaposed with passion, pleasure, pain, lust and fear, all species of motivation. 2) It is possible for the different motivations to come into conflict. In fact, the many construed "being overcome by pleasure" as a conflict between being motivated by knowledge and being motivated by pleasure (352d). Within this context, Socrates' claim that "knowledge…is such as to rule (ἄρχειν) man" can be understood as saying: 3) knowledge always *overrides* other motivations.

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[108] But why should Socrates bother to convince the many? Long 2013, 42-43 suggests that Socrates seeks out opposing views because if he can succeed in persuading opponents, then he can (further) confirm the truth of his own view.

Let us consider these claims in reverse order. It is possible to read Socrates as saying that knowledge "rules" only by overpowering other kinds of motivation. As such, one is virtuous when one's state of knowledge is strong enough to combat against the motivations that are in conflict with what knowledge dictates. Socrates' conception of the virtuous person, then, comes closer to what Aristotle calls the continent person.[109] However, this passage should not be seen as Socrates' last word on the authority of knowledge. It is more likely that he is only setting the stage for the argument, and is therefore framing the question from the perspective of the many. It is the many who assume that different motivations compete against each other like different forces in the soul.[110]

I want to suggest that Socrates does not in fact see knowledge as being in competition with other kinds of motivations. To begin, note that in his discussion of akrasia (355a-e), Socrates means to talk about a state that is *sensitive to calculation*.[111] It is hard to see how Socrates' argument could work without assuming that the pursuit of pleasure as such (regardless of whether successful) is a calculation-sensitive state. For in analysing akrasia as "taking fewer good things at the cost of greater evils" (355e5), Socrates has to assume that the akratic agent is already in the business of (so to speak) measuring pleasure and pain in the first place. Only then can Socrates use the apparently quantitative language ("larger and smaller", "more and…fewer" at 355e3) to analyse the akratic agent's reasoning (more on this line later). Further, Socrates must also have assumed that this calculation-sensitive state aims at maximising the pleasures one calculates. For otherwise he cannot claim that akrasia is just ignorance: if one is not supposed to maximise the pleasure, then not maximising such pleasure is not itself a failure.[112] The akratic agent can then reply that there is nothing wrong about "taking fewer good things at the cost of greater evils" (355e5). In short, Socrates claims that the pursuit of pleasure itself is in effect the pursuit of what is beneficial, and as such *requires* knowledge. In some sense, even the akratic agent also cares about the good/beneficial: to try to maximise long-term overall pleasure is equivalent to trying to guarantee the most beneficial choice of action.[113]

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[109] Devereux 1995, 405-407.

[110] For extra-textual evidence that this view has some popular currency in Plato's time, see Kamtekar 2018, 44-45.

[111] Moss 2014a, 312.

So Socrates does not just have an intellectualist account of human motivation (that judgment itself motivates), he also has an intellectualist account of one's desire for pleasure: the pursuit of pleasure itself is a judgment (in the sense that it is sensitive to calculation) and is aiming at maximisation. While the many understand akrasia as "being overcome by pleasure" - as if there are multiple faculties of mind, judgment and desire - Socrates replaces this conception with his own intellectualist account of desire. There is no real conflict between judgment and desire,[114] because desire itself is already an exercise of judgment, and akrasia occurs when one makes false judgments.[115]

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[112] Socrates recognises pleasure "internal" to an activity, pleasure the activity brings as a consequence, and the total sum of these two pleasures. Accepting a medical treatment may not be pleasant internally, but given the pleasure it brings, the total sum of pleasure should be greater than not taking the treatment (353c-354e). When we say that the akratic agent "knows" that it is better not to give in to the temptation but did give in anyway, no one is assuming that what he "knows" is that resisting the temptation is more *internally* pleasant. It is simply not. There is no need to argue that the akratic agent is ignorant about *this*, for there is nothing here to know. Resisting the temptation is more pleasant only in terms of overall pleasure. So the akratic agent's ignorance lies in failing to achieve overall pleasure, i.e. failing to maximise pleasure. See Evans 2010, 9-11.

[113] Moss interestingly suggests that, in arguing for hedonism, Socrates is not (as is commonly understood) trying to reduce the good to the pleasant; rather, he is trying to reduce the pleasant to the good, i.e. the beneficial. More specifically, Socrates is not trying to argue that the good/beneficial is nothing other than what the many already recognises as pleasant, but rather, that the pleasant is nothing other than what is ordinarily understood (i.e. understood by the many, the sophists, and Socrates) as good/beneficial. If this is true, then there is no need to reconcile Socrates' attitude towards hedonism in the *Protagoras* with what Socrates says against hedonism in other dialogues (most notably, in *Gorgias* 468c, 474d, 475b). For Socrates is arguing that all people desire the good in all these places (e.g. *Meno* 77b-78b). See Moss 2014a, 313-317.

Similarly, while here (352c) Socrates contrasts knowledge and fear, later he says the courageous person also experiences fear, but, unlike the coward, the fear (and confidence) of the courageous person is honourable (360b). Socrates does not recommend getting rid of fear, and the virtuous person will respond appropriately to fearful things. He does not discuss other passions in detail, but the thought generalises. Knowledge is the "sufficient safeguard for man" not by overriding or fighting the different passions, but by giving the right responses in the face of these passions.

Perhaps there is a stronger claim. Presumably the courageous and the cowardly do not find the same particular things equally fearful:[116] the courageous fears more being dishonourable, whereas the cowardly fears more getting hurt or killed. We may as well imagine that the courageous does not fear (as much) for his own safety, whereas the cowardly may not find the idea of being dishonourable too appalling. The courageous and the cowardly do not just differ in terms of whether they respond appropriately to fearful things, where "fearful things" is considered in general terms. They also differ as the *objects* of their fear differ. We might say, then, having the *right fear* itself is *part of* having knowledge or being wise, in the sense that one's wisdom is *expressed in* what one appropriately finds fearful. Similarly, one's ignorance is *expressed in* what one inappropriately finds fearful.

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[114] This is not to say that the akratic agent does not experience inner conflict at all, just that it is not a conflict between judgment and desire. Only the wise can avoid inner conflicts. I will argue below that we can understand the experience of inner struggle as between "what one thinks one judges" and "what one in fact judged as expressed in one's choices".

[115] This is not the only reading. One may think that Socrates is committed to psychological hedonism, according to which everyone by human nature is looking for pleasure, and knowledge or the art of measurement is powerful only to the extent that it channels or guides such background disposition in the right direction (see, e.g. Weiss 1989, 519). If so, then there is a different division of labour: rather than saying that there is one calculation-sensitive state that explains both what one judges and what one is motivated to do, one can instead say that the hedonist inclination in human nature explains (in the abstract) what everyone is inclined to do, i.e. to pursue pleasure, and measurement explains what one in fact does based on what one thinks would maximise pleasure. The akratic agent is also sensitive to the quantity of pleasure and pain he can get (though completely misguided), then, not in the sense that he is also acting from a calculation-sensitive state, but only in the sense that this is what human nature is like. But for one thing, it is not clear that Socrates or the many is committed to psychological hedonism. For another, this reading presupposes too much similarity between the knowledgeable and the ignorant. I will argue below that the knowledgeable and the ignorant differ not just in their calculation, but also in their perceptions, choices, feelings, and actions.

[116] At 359e2 Socrates says "both the cowardly and the courageous go toward the same things". More on this later.

This fits Socrates' strategy of trying to explain the non-epistemic factors (that give rise to virtues) in terms of the exercise of knowledge. For recall that in the previous argument, courage as a virtue is special because it involves some non-rational urge. This is the ground for Protagoras' claim that courage is altogether different from the other virtues. But if what is initially thought of as distracting non-epistemic factors (e.g. how immediate pains/fears distract one from doing what one judges) are simply defective exercise of the intellect, then, conversely, one can explain the non-epistemic factors themselves in terms of the proper exercise of the intellect. This by itself does not imply that knowledge is identical with courage, but it is one big step towards that direction. The non-rational urge typical of courageous behaviour is no longer a ground for claiming that courage is different from the other virtues. If Protagoras can grant that the other four virtues - justice, piety, temperance and wisdom - are identical, he must also include courage on this list. In this way, we can also preserve the continuity between this argument and the previous one. Recall, in "the argument from expert knowledge", Socrates argues that the psychological profile of the expert is the same as the psychological profile of the courageous agent. The state of knowledge that both judges and shapes how one feels can be a way to further specify such a profile.

What about the second claim, that it is possible for the different motivations to come into conflict? If Socrates' ideal agent is like the continent person, then even the ideal agent suffers from inner struggle. But this is a minority view. At any rate, as Socrates describes it, the art of measurement can "give us peace of mind (ἡσυχίαν) by showing us the truth and letting us get a firm grasp of it" (356d7). This suggests that for the virtuous agent at least, the different motivations do not in fact come into conflict; he does not "change [his] mind about the same things and vacillate back and forth in [his] actions and choices of large and small things" (d5).

But is it *possible* for the different motivations to come into conflict, at least in the case of the less-than-virtuous agents? One might think Socrates has to assume this anyway, given the dialectical context. For in refuting the many, Socrates tries to show that their account of akrasia is absurd. After that, Socrates proceeds to give his own account of *the same phenomenon*, that "being overcome by pleasure" is simply ignorance (more on this below). But akrasia as the many conceives of it involves some sort of inner conflict: the conflict between the agent's purported knowledge and pleasure. So in giving his own account, Socrates has to at least acknowledge that the akratic agent experiences inner struggle, otherwise he risks changing the subject entirely. Consequently, however his account of akrasia should be understood, it cannot bypass the fact that the agent is pulled by different motivations.[117]

Below, I will argue that Socrates' account perhaps entails a different understanding of the inner conflict involved. Instead of saying how the different motivations come into conflict, we should perhaps say that it is a conflict between "what one thinks one judges" and "what one actually judged as expressed in one's choices". It is a conflict between something that the agent does not embrace but has nonetheless internalised (e.g. others' expectation) and what the agent wholeheartedly endorses in his actions. But for now, the important point is that it seems Socrates does acknowledge the existence of inner struggle, at least in the case of the less-than-virtuous agent.

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[117] Devereux 1995, 389; Penner 1990, 69-70. Kamtekar also emphasises that Socrates is disagreeing with the many on their *account of* the experience of akrasia, not the (existence of) the experience itself (Kamtekar 2018, 41).

What about the first claim, that there are indeed many different kinds of motivation? In a straightforward sense, if it is possible for the agent to experience inner conflicts, then of course there exist different things that the agent is motivated to do. There are different motivations in this sense. But there are different ways to understand this phenomenon. As we saw, arguably it is the many who theorise this in terms of the different forces that compete against each other in the soul. But if, as I have explained, one's wisdom or ignorance can be expressed in one's passions, then perhaps there is a more plausible way to think of the variety of motivations. There are different motivations insofar as the different passions have different phenomenological characteristics.[118] The courageous feels the trembling effects of fear, say, when he realises that he would be putting his city in danger and disgrace himself if he escapes, whereas the cowardly feels this way when he realises that he has to go to the battlefield. I see no reason why Socrates should deny the phenomenological differences of the different passions. What Socrates' argument strictly needs is the idea that the passions are not "blind", i.e. that they are not completely isolated from the influence of the intellect. For if the pursuit of pleasure is not calculation-sensitive, or if the akratic agent does not in fact care about getting as much pleasures as possible, then Socrates' argument would not succeed.[119] But rejecting "blind" passions is itself compatible with granting the heterogeneity of the states of the soul.[120] At any rate, Socrates does not need to completely reduce the passions to judgments. The ideal Socratic agent does feel pleasures and fear (to say the least); his wisdom consists in having the right kind of these passions. This agent is not, as one might think, a pure intellect; rather, he is someone whose passions are all expressions of his wisdom. In other words, Socratic intellectualism is not the idea that all motivations or passions are reduced to a narrow notion of "judgment"; rather, it is the idea that judgment itself is enlarged to cover all the passions.

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[118] Cf. Segvic 2009, 76.
[119] Russell 2000, 325.
[120] Segvic 2009, 75-79.

On a related issue: it is debatable whether Socrates in the early dialogues recognises the existence of non-rational desires, i.e. desires that do not aim at the good. Devereux argues that the language of “conquer” (κρατεῖν) at 357c1-4 suggests that Socrates is committed to the existence of non-rational desires. Knowledge rules by conquering such resistant desires (or at least whenever they are resistant).[121] This is part of Devereux’s argument that Socrates’ ideal agent is (what Aristotle would call) the continent agent. Similarly, Brickhouse and Smith argue that Socrates must recognise non-rational desires in the *Protagoras* because the (misleading) *appearance* of the goodness of things should be understood as a *product* of our non-rational desires.[122] By contrast, some commentators argue that (according to Socrates) the agent first judges the relative amounts of pleasures and pains based on the appearance, and then form the desires based on such judgments.[123] The allegedly non-rational desires are formed based on rational judgments.

For my purposes of reconstructing Socrates’ argument for IoV, I think I can stay neutral on this issue. If Socrates does not recognise non-rational desires, then virtue is knowledge in the sense that the different passions characteristic of the different virtues are all expressions of the same state of soul, i.e. the state of knowledge (more on the reconstruction of Socrates’ argument below). If Socrates recognises non-rational desires, then the virtuous agent is virtuous insofar as he succeeds in conquering the non-rational desires. The thesis that virtue is knowledge then extends to how the non-rational desires must also be governed by knowledge. Either way, the thesis that virtue is knowledge still makes sense; the plausibility of this thesis can be understood independently.

At any rate, the question about whether Socrates recognises non-rational desires in the *Protagoras* seems more like a second-order question. Even those who think that Socrates does not recognise non-rational desires can still grant that there are first-order differences between the different passions: for instance, that there are phenomenological differences. We can give a reasonably intellectualised account of these passions (by saying that they are expressions of wisdom or knowledge) without conflating their first-order characteristics. As long as this is clear, then nothing I have said above commits me to any position in this debate.

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[121] Devereux 1995, 389. The other passages he cites include: *Laches* 191d–e, *Gorgias* 507b, *Gorgias* 493a–b.
[122] Brickhouse and Smith 2010, 73; Devereux 1995, 394-395.
[123] See, e.g. Kamtekar 2018, 57, 67, n.38; Moss 2014a, 306.

3.4 Knowledge and ignorance

In this section, I discuss further Socrates' conception of knowledge (in this part of the *Protagoras*) by contrasting it with ignorance. We have seen one difference already: wisdom is expressed in feeling correctly, and ignorance is expressed in feeling incorrectly. But there is much more.

Socrates first starts by refuting the many's account of akrasia. After that, he introduces the notion of ignorance as an alternative account of this phenomenon. So let me start by briefly reviewing how the many's account is absurd. Kamtekar argues that however we try to understand the alleged absurdity of the many's account, we should explain how it is absurd *even in the eyes of the many*. For only in this way can Socrates' analysis be a *refutation* of the many. With this in mind, Kamtekar argues, we can rule out a couple of scholarly accounts of the alleged absurdity.

The akratic agent S chooses Y over X even though X brings more overall pleasure. The many say this is a case of being overcome by the (immediate) pleasure Y brings. Some commentators argue that this is absurd because it shows how S' choice violates psychological hedonism - the view that we always choose what we believe would bring the greatest pleasure (in this case, option X). If we always choose what we believe would bring the greatest pleasure, how is it that the akratic agent intentionally chooses Y, the option with less pleasure?[124] But it is not clear if the many accept psychological hedonism. And if they do not, then what Socrates has shown is not that the many's account is absurd, only that it disagrees with how he thinks of the phenomenon.[125] Some other commentators think that the absurdity is not psychological, but logical: it is self-contradictory to say both a) one believes that choosing Y is worse than the alternative, and b) one performs the action anyway because one believes choosing Y is more pleasant (hence better) than choosing X.[126] But while the akratic agent may be said to be absurd in being self-contradictory in this way, why should this automatically mean that the *many* is also absurd? Is not the contradiction part of the phenomenon?[127] Or one can say that the absurdity lies in the fact that the akratic agent is said to "know" (by stipulation), but is then exposed by Socrates' analysis to be ignorant.[128] But the verdict that the akratic agent is ignorant is the *result* of Socrates' own account and as such can only come *after* Socrates has refuted the many. The alleged absurdity should be understood in a way independent of Socrates' account.[129] Weiss argues that the absurdity lies in the fact that goodness cannot "cause someone to choose bad/pain".[130] But this is an instance of the "like causes like" principle, which is not even mentioned in this passage, and hence cannot be used to show how the account is absurd in the eyes of the many.[131] Woolf argues that Socrates deliberately leaves the precise nature of the absurdity in question unexplained.[132] Kamtekar does not discuss this account, but we can easily apply the same criticism. If Socrates left the absurdity unexplained, then he cannot be said to have successfully refuted the many. And if he has not refuted the many, it is doubtful how he can reasonably replace their account with his.

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[124] Klosko 1980; Santas 1979, 207.
[125] Kamtekar 2018, 43; Russell 2000, 323.
[126] Taylor 1991, 185-186; Wolfsdorf 2006.
[127] Kamtekar 2018, 42.
[128] Gallop 1964, 121.
[129] Kamtekar 2018, 42.
[130] Weiss 1990, 23.
[131] Kamtekar 2018, 41.
[132] Woolf 2002.

According to Kamtekar, the many's account is absurd even by their own standard because a) they are committed to the idea that different motivations are like different competing forces in the soul, and b) it is indeed absurd, according to this conception of motivations, to say that the option with *lesser* magnitude of pleasure still somehow has *greater* strength on the akratic agent. How can a lesser force be more powerful? Something other than the absolute magnitude of pleasure must be in play here. And it is the *appearances,* as opposed to the absolute amount, of the magnitude of pleasure that explains the case. The option with lesser pleasure has greater strength on the agent because it is more immediate. This in turn explains what the akratic agent is supposed to be ignorant about: how temporal proximity can affect the appearance of magnitude of the relevant pleasures and pains, even though not the absolute magnitude itself (356b).[133] The akratic agent fails to see how he can be tempted by *immediate* pleasure, even though he may judge correctly the absolute magnitude of the relevant pleasures and pains. This captures nicely how "the art of measurement" can be our salvation: if the appearances of magnitude of pleasures and pains explain akratic choices in the first place, then what we need is an art that allows us to see through the appearances.[134] Appearances are said to have power (τοῦ φαινομένου δύναμις), but the art of measurement renders the appearances "powerless" (ἄκυρον) (356d-e). Just as clear perception allows us to navigate a certain space, a clear perception of value "show(s) us the truth and let(s) us get a firm grasp of it" (356e1).[135]

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[133] Kamtekar 2018, 46-47.

[134] Gosling and Taylor argue that "to be chosen" (ληπτέα) at 356b4 and "to be done" (πρακτέον) at 356b8 are ambiguous between psychological necessity and normative necessity. Is Socrates claiming that, as a matter of human psychology, we necessarily pursue greater pleasures? Or is it that we should pursue greater pleasure? See Gosling and Taylor 1982, 57-58. But it seems clear that Socrates has normative necessity in mind here. For the power of appearances is introduced to complete Socrates' account: akrasia is just ignorance, and the power of appearances tells in more details how exactly it happens. The akratic agent makes ignorant choice because he is led astray by the appearances. Since "ignorance" is a normative notion here, what completes the story to tell how ignorance occurs should also be understood as normative. In fact, it seems that Socrates is trying to give a more precise diagnosis here: if we can pin down how ignorance occurs, then we can have a more determinate conception of what the cure should look like (the art of measurement).

Kamtekar does not say this, but to put it slightly differently: being mistaken about the overall pleasures and pains is not just a mistake in *calculating* the relative magnitude of the pleasures and pains. Rather, it is also a mistake in *perceiving* (insofar as it is appropriate to say "perceive" when it comes to appearances) the exact amount of pleasure or pain something has or can provide in the first place. The agent misperceives the exact amount of pleasures the temptation can give and overestimates its overall value because of its temporal proximity. This is the point of the perceptual analogy: just as things can look bigger than they actually are when they are nearby, certain experiences can feel more pleasurable than they actually are when they are immediately realisable (356d).[136] Later in the dialogue, Socrates says being ignorant implies having "false beliefs" (ψευδῆ δόξαν) and "being mistaken about matters of importance" (358c5). This is unsurprising: incorrect perception naturally leads to false beliefs.

Given the possibility of misperceiving (not just miscalculating) pleasures and pains, I suggest this is how the knowledgeable and the ignorant differ. To act from knowledge is to act from the right sort of state such that one both perceives and acts correctly.[137] The agent with knowledge does not struggle with being overcome by pleasure. For he can see correctly how the immediate pleasures really are just not attractive given that they will lead to greater pain. By contrast, to act from ignorance is to act from the kind of state such that one both perceives and acts incorrectly. It is because one is subjected to temptation that one misperceives the true value of immediate pleasures.

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[135] Thus I agree with Segvic's general contention that "Socratic volition is likewise a receptivity of the soul to certain evaluative properties of the object of volition, the properties Socrates designates by the term 'good'…Socratic volition latches on to a certain evaluative aspect of reality" (Segvic 2009, 55). But she is relying more on *Gorgias* 466a-468e.

[136] Moss objects that, since in the case of optical illusions, reasoning can only influence one's judgment but not one's vision, so analogously (if we follow the perceptual analogy), the art of measurement can only correct one's judgment but not one's desire for pleasure (Moss 2006, 510). Liu has similar suggestions (Liu 2022, 318). But this seems to be taking the perceptual analogy too literally. In the case of pleasures and pains, the agent is not perceiving some mind-independent object; rather, his perception concerns the magnitude of pleasures and pains - in layman terms, how *attractive* some experience can be. If the agent is in the right condition, there is no reason why he cannot both judge and perceive correctly.

[137] Recall that I said, after "the argument from expert knowledge", Socrates needs to clarify the relation between knowledge as an epistemic power and being virtuous. Presumably this is his answer.

There is more to be said about the difference between knowledge and ignorance. As we have seen, being overcome by pleasure is "taking (λαμβάνειν) fewer good things at the cost of greater evils" (355e3-5). I mentioned how this presupposes that the akratic agent is acting from a calculation-sensitive state. But the analysis can go further. As scholars have pointed out,[138] "taking" here implies intentional action on the agent's part. That is, the agent acted in the way he did (opting for fewer goods at the cost of greater evils) *intentionally*. "Taking" implies such intention, because this line is supposed to further *explain* the condition of being overcome, and it cannot do so if it is just repeating the meaning of the previous line (i.e. that good things worth the bad or bad worth the good only by having different quantities of pleasures and pains). If this is correct, then, akrasia is not being paralysed by the temptation; rather, the truth is, the agent *chooses* the tempting object.[139] This indicates another difference between acting from knowledge and acting from ignorance: only the former makes the correct *choice*.

So the ignorant feels incorrectly (see the previous section), misperceives (which gives rise to false beliefs), miscalculates, chooses wrongly, and acts wrongly. The perceptual analogy suggests that misperceiving what's valuable is analogous to being subjected to illusion. But the ignorant actively chooses to be in such a state.

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[138] Santas 1966, 279-280; Klosko 1980, 315; Taylor 1991, 187.

[139] Evans tries to entertain how the opponents of Socratic Intellectualism can think of "being overcome" differently: one can act based on appearances without believing them to be true (in a way reminiscent of make-believe) (20). In this way, one can reject Socrates' account of akrasia (Evans 2010, 20). Regardless of how one thinks of the distinction between "belief" and "appearances" (make-believe), something in the conceptual neighbourhood seems right: in claiming that the akratic agent is choosing the worse option intentionally, Socrates seems to assume too much *rational agency* on the part of the agent (cf. Kamtekar 2018, 58).

I suggest, then, the psychological state of the ignorant is similar to a *delusional* state.[140] Someone in a delusional state fails to distinguish between “what merely appears to be the case” and “what really is the case”.[141] This is analogous to how the ignorant is mistaken about the good/pleasurable but fails to acknowledge his mistakes (cf. *Apology* 21b-22e).

3.5 Holism about the human soul

The wise agent feels, perceives, calculates, chooses, and acts correctly, while the ignorant agent feels, perceives, calculates, chooses, and acts incorrectly. A stronger thesis slowly emerges. In the end, it is actually a *holistic* theory of the soul: no aspects of the soul should be thought of as isolated from the intellect. I suggest, Socrates' insight is that we should not think of the soul as *compartmentalised:* the intellect permeates through what one perceives, calculates, chooses, acts, and feels. One may then say that the virtuous person and the vicious person differ as their whole soul differs. The indulgent agent and the self-controlled agent, for instance, differ as their *whole orientation* differs.[142] The indulgent agent is too much attracted to immediate (bodily) pleasure; that is the kind of thing his soul is oriented towards. Similarly, what the cowardly is oriented towards (escaping) is different from what the courageous is oriented towards (fighting). Despite perhaps some inner struggle, the coward does not really judge that going to the battlefield is honourable, for in escaping from the battlefield his soul is already oriented towards what is shameful and thereby has implicitly granted that this is the right thing to do. So the debate between Socrates and the many concerning the nature of akrasia extends to the debate concerning the nature of the human soul.

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[140] Moss 2014a, 315; Liu 2022, 327-329.

[141] Hence I agree with Liu's analysis that the ignorant person's judgments and actions are “dominated” by appearances (2022, 322-325, 328-329), and I also agree that the ignorant person is ruled by passions, which should themselves be ruled (by reason) according to Plato. But I do not think all this requires any talk of “psychic order” (Liu 2022, 321-322). It makes sense to talk about “psychic order” only if the soul is a composite, but I am not sure if the *Protagoras* is committed to this conception of the soul.

[142] Segvic 2009, 79-80.

Socrates' holistic theory of the soul, it seems, entails a different understanding of the experience of inner struggle. It is not that, as the many assumed, different forces are competing against each other. Nor is it the case that, as Devereux and the like argued, there is a conflict between rational and non-rational desires. Rather, I suggest, the inner struggle that the akratic agent experiences (according to Socrates) is a struggle between "what one thinks one judges" and "what one actually judged as expressed in one's choices".[143] The cowardly may have some notion of why he should go to the battlefield, despite the fact that this is not what he sincerely endorsed. He may know, for instance, what is expected of him by his fellow citizens, or what is legally required of him in a given situation. And yet since doing what the courageous would do is not what his soul is oriented towards, what he genuinely and wholeheartedly judges should be the case moved him to escape anyway. In other words, according to this account, ignorant choices typically involve some degree of *self-deception.* Being ignorant about goods and evils is connected with being ignorant about oneself (what one's soul is actually oriented towards).[144] We need not downplay the quasi-authority "what one thinks one judges" may have on the agent: self-deception can run deep, and one can internalise others' expectations (or any other narratives that one tells oneself) to such a degree that one seriously feels being pulled in completely different directions when such internalised expectations contradict with what one's whole soul is actually oriented towards.

This complicates things. At 356c-357a, when Socrates talks about the art of measurement, one might think the struggle is between grasping the absolute magnitude of pleasures and pains on the one hand and the power of appearances on the other (presumably this is how Devereaux interprets the passage when he argues that the conflict is between rational desire and non-rational desires). But when Socrates describes us as "vacillating back and forth" between large and small things, he is saying that we vacillate between the varieties of appearances themselves, not between the truth the art of measurement promises on the one hand, and the power of appearances on the other. The truth is what gives us peace of mind.[145] So the struggle must occur somewhere else. When the coward apparently judges that he should go to the battlefield, perhaps based on what he aware is expected of him, his judgment may or may not conform with the right action. But he is not grasping what is to be done from the right sort of state, because his other aspects of the soul are not equally oriented towards the same thing. For the less-than-virtuous agent, being aware of this discrepancy between the truth and what his soul is actually oriented towards is perhaps the first step of the journey to become more virtuous. This is not new: Socratic interrogation is supposed to make us aware of our own ignorance. But we now learn that such ignorance does not just affect our judgment, but also our perceptions, choices, actions, and feelings.[146]

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[143] Cf. Taylor 2008, 284.
[144] Cf. Moss 2014a, 316.

The wise person does not suffer from such inner struggle. But there is no reason why Socrates should think that the less-than-virtuous agent also does not experience inner conflicts. Nor do we need to assume that Socrates rules out such experience on purely conceptual grounds: as we saw, in order to engage with the many, his account at least has to recognise that such experience of inner struggle is part of the phenomenon that requires explanation. What might give us the impression that Socrates does mean to rule out such experience on purely conceptual grounds is the fact that, I think, Socrates develops his analysis using knowledge (the best condition of the soul) as the paradigm. He takes the best condition of the human soul as the logical starting-point to inquire about the nature of the human soul. Consequently, one might think that inner conflicts are impossible because the human soul by nature cannot be torn apart.

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[145] Cf. *Phaedo* 69b-c, where wisdom purifies us by detaching us from all the worldly and bodily concerns. See Sedley 2014, 70-71.

[146] We have to be careful here. According to this analysis, the ignorant agent suffers from self-deception, so self-knowledge about one's own ignorance is impossible at least *in the moment*. But then is it possible *ex ante facto*? But since *knowledge* should shape one's whole soul, if one really *knows*, then it is impossible to both *know* in advance and be ignorant/akratic in the moment of action. So whatever effect Socratic interrogation might have in exposing this kind of ignorance, it can only take place *ex post facto*. Diachronically, there can be stages where the agent is somehow aware of his weakness but has not managed to fully deal with it. This does not refute Socrates' claim, which is centred on knowledge, not just any vague awareness of one's own state. (Cf. *Philebus* 48e-49a on people who are ignorant about whether they are superior in virtue).

It is not entirely clear if Socrates approaches the matter this way because he is genuinely committed to such a holistic theory of the soul, or if it is because if we inquire about the nature of the human soul using knowledge as the paradigm, then it is easier to argue for the “virtue is knowledge” thesis. For if the holistic theory of the soul is true, that the intellect really permeates every aspect of our soul, then it is easier to argue that all virtues are just expressions of the same thing: the intellect in its best condition (knowledge being the virtue that puts the intellect in its best condition).

This echoes a point I made earlier about monism in the argument. I said that according to the many, the coward may experience a conflict between the fine (fighting) and the pleasant (escaping). Socrates’ response is that what is fine is also good and hence pleasant (360a). The fine, the good and the pleasant are not in conflict if one is wise enough to appreciate the truth of monism. Now we are finally in a position to grasp the full import of this commitment to monism. The monism about value corresponds to the holism about the human soul:[147] one’s judgments, perceptions, calculations, choices, emotions and actions have to be all in place in order for one to be counted as virtuous. And given the correlation between knowledge of goods and evils and self-knowledge, one should also say that the virtuous/wise agent is *transparent* in the sense that what he knows of himself is identical with what ought to be the case, i.e. the truth (the famous Delphic maxim “Know Thyself” is mentioned at 343b1). Conversely, if one of these aspects is not functioning as it should, then there might also be something wrong in the other aspects: the indulgent agent, in perceiving immediate pleasures incorrectly, also chooses, acts, and feels incorrectly - he is *tempted* by immediate but smaller pleasures. He may also suffer from self-deception in the sense that he is not aware of the discrepancy between the truth and what his soul is actually oriented towards.

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[147] Monism here is an axiological claim, while Socrates’ intellectualism is about the human psyche. One might want a clearer understanding of their relation. Moss helps to articulate the hidden link. Moss argues that, according to Plato, the question of what things are valuable is understood as what ends one should adopt (Moss 2014a, 294-5), and furthermore, “distinct ends are correlated with distinct species of motivation” (302). For instance, if pleasure is the only thing valuable, that also implies that the only species of human motivation is (one’s desire for) pleasure. So monism about value/ends implies monism about motivation.

3.6 How the courageous and the cowardly are alike

So the courageous and the cowardly are oriented towards different things. But this seems to contradict the following passage:

> everyone, coward and courageous alike, goes for what he is confident about, and in this way, at any rate, cowards and courageous go for the same things. (359d5-e1)

Here, Socrates says the courageous and the cowardly "go for the same thing". So do they go for the same thing, or different things?

Let us take a closer look at the passage. Socrates starts that argument by asking "what are courageous men ready for? The same things as cowards?" (359c2). Protagoras says "no". Then Socrates proceeds to see *in what sense* the courageous and the cowardly are going for *different* things. They first examine the common belief that "cowards go for things which they are confident about, and courageous men for fearful things" (c5). This is rejected on the ground that "no one goes for things that he regards as fearful" (c5). And this is supposed to follow from the previous discussion on akrasia. It is in the context of rejecting the common belief that Socrates says "cowards and courageous go for the same things" (359e1-2). But, as Protagoras points out, courageous men are willing to go to war, but cowards are not. Socrates agreed.

As I understand it, Socrates prefers to characterise the coward as doing what is disgraceful and bad, whereas the courageous does what is honourable, good, and pleasant. The line "coward and courageous alike, goes for what he is confident about" seems to be just one of the steps he goes through to arrive at the preferred characterisation. In particular, it seems that Socrates is just rejecting how common belief portrays the differences between the courageous and the cowardly. So, the courageous and the cowardly differ not in terms of what they are ready to go for, but in terms of whether their actions and emotions are honourable, good, and (truly) pleasant.

If my interpretation is correct, Socrates has proved that one's intellect, perception, choice, emotion and action have to cohere with each other. If one is virtuous, then one's confidence and fear somehow track what deserves to inspire confidence and fear, and one will act in pursuit of those things that warrant one's confidence.[148] By contrast, if one is vicious, then one's confidence and fear misperceives what is confidence-inspiring and fearful, and one's actions will be centred around things that are falsely confidence-inspiring and falsely fearful. Presumably this is why Socrates thinks ignorance is the *cause* of the dishonourable behaviour of the cowards (360b5-c5). Given this framework, then, I suggest that when Socrates says "coward and courageous alike, goes for what he is confident about", he is making a rather technical and conceptual point that perceiving something as confidence-inspiring is causally linked to pursuit. That is, one goes for things that one sees as confidence-inspiring, whether such perception is correct or not. This is perhaps just a very long-winded way of saying: the courageous sees going to the battlefield as something that should inspire his confidence, so that is what he chooses to do, just as the coward sees escaping from the battlefield as something that inspires *his* confidence, so that is what he chooses to do instead.

As I interpret it, Socrates makes this point about how the coward and the courageous are alike *because then he can go on to demonstrate the importance*

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[148] Segvic 2009, 77.

of knowledge. That is, precisely because both the coward and the courageous are going for what each is confident about, but one is right and one is wrong, therefore it is important to have wisdom and track what is truly confidence-inspiring and truly fearful. In particular, precisely because seeing something as confidence-inspiring is causally linked to action, one needs knowledge to have the correct perceptions of what deserves one's confidence.

3.7 The argument reconstructed

It might help to summarise the result of our discussion by seeing how it gives us a more precise understanding of the several premises of the argument.

1) The coward is ignorant in that he is oriented towards shameful things.
2) Courage is the opposite of cowardice, i.e. the courageous is oriented towards honourable things.
3) Courage is the opposite of cowardice-as-ignorance (From 1,2).
4) The opposite of ignorance is wisdom.
5) Wisdom and courage occupy the same role of bringing about the opposite of cowardice/ignorance (From 3,4).
6) So, wisdom is courage: the wise and the courageous are oriented towards the same things.

Premise (1) should not surprise us by now. The coward is the person whose soul is oriented towards shameful things. As such, he perceives, calculates, chooses, and acts incorrectly. Socrates takes premise (2) for granted. And since courage is the opposite of such cowardice/ignorance (premise 3), courage is the character that is oriented towards honourable things. As such, the courageous person perceives, calculates, chooses, and acts correctly.

Socrates takes premise (4) for granted. But premise (5) deserves some attention. Recall that, in the previous arguments, Socrates individuates the virtues in terms of the relevant psychological roles. In "the argument from opposites”, wisdom and temperance are identical because they both occupy the role of bringing about actions that are opposite to folly. A similar inference can be found here: because both wisdom and courage occupy the role of bringing about the opposite of cowardice/ignorance, wisdom and courage must be identical. What the discussion of hedonism and akrasia adds to the argument is to provide a much thicker conception of the human psyche: instead of saying only what brings about certain actions, now Socrates can say what the whole soul of a person is oriented towards, i.e. how he perceives, calculates, chooses and acts. In light of this conception, the conclusion “wisdom is courage” should then be understood as “the wise and the courageous are oriented towards the same things”.

3.8 How the virtues are one

We are finally in a position to understand Socrates’ statement “all things are knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), justice, temperance, even courage, from which it would follow that excellence most certainly could be taught.” (361b). If no aspect of the soul is isolated from the intellect, and if the different virtues are just expressions of one’s wisdom in different things, then the virtues are one in the sense that one’s wise judgments should permeate through the whole soul. One’s perceptions, calculations, choices, actions and emotions are all expressions of one’s wisdom. In the end, Socrates’ ideal agent is someone with an all-rounded character, with knowledge or wisdom as the guiding principle (cf. 339b).

But how is having one’s whole soul cohering with one’s wisdom equivalent to identifying all the virtues as one? Unlike Socrates in the *Republic,* Socrates in the *Protagoras* does not individuate the virtues in terms of their correspondence to the different parts of the soul (442d4-444c). So the virtues are not one in the sense that they jointly guarantee the psychic order (433a-c). In the very compressed discussion in the *Protagoras* (351b-360e), the cases Socrates considers all involve difficult choices one needs to make that also engage different aspects of one’s soul. The indulgent agent needs not only to judge correctly, but also to perceive correctly. The coward's fear is tracking the wrong objects, and is therefore dishonourable. Insofar as it is intuitive to say that these different aspects of the soul should also conform to one's wise judgments, it is also intuitive to say that knowledge "rules" in these cases only if one's whole soul is oriented towards what one wisely judges right. And insofar as these different aspects of the soul somehow correspond to the different areas that are typically said to be taken care of by the different virtues, it is also intuitive to say that if one's whole soul coheres with one's wisdom, then the apparently different virtues must also be one. In this way, *Full-IoV* is vindicated.

I suggest, then, all the virtues are knowledge in the sense that the apparently different virtues are just different ways to refer to how wisdom/knowledge is expressed in the different aspects of the soul. We have been expecting this answer at least since "the argument from opposites". Recall, I said at the end of my discussion of that argument: wisdom is knowing the common good; σωφροσύνη is expressed in deliberating well about it; and αἰδώς is expressed in how one regulates one's actions given such wisdom and deliberation. All these may be part of the subtext when Socrates introduces the seemingly technical notion of the art of measurement. Indeed, when Socrates appears to argue for hedonism, his examples of things that are partly painful but pleasurable on balance include not just diets and medical treatments, but also "preservation of cities" (353c-354b). The art of measurement might just be the art one needs in deliberating well about the common good. And now, given the final argument, we can add one more aspect: courage is expressed in how knowledge rules the agent in the face of what ought to be feared.

This should be contrasted with a common reading found in the literature. It has been standard to assume that Socrates distinguishes the virtues in terms of their different areas of concern (e.g. courage is the knowledge of what ought and ought not to be feared), and knowledge subsumes all the other virtues by including them under a generic “knowledge of all goods and evils”.[149] But this interpretation does not fit what we can find based on a close reading of the *Protagoras*. For one thing, it seems to be an over-interpretation. What Socrates wants to prove, by proving that all the virtues are knowledge, is that the virtues are teachable (361b). But then all he needs is the claim that virtue is knowledge, not a whole theory of how such knowledge can be subdivided into different areas.[150] For another, it does not fit how “knowledge” is understood in the relevant passages of the *Protagoras* (351b-360e). Socrates does not say anything about a generic all-encompassing knowledge of all goods and evils. True, the art of measurement is supposed to apply across different scenarios, but Socrates’ point is rather that exercising such art of measurement will allow one to perceive, calculate and choose correctly, not that this art subsumes all areas.

I want to emphasize the pedagogical significance of the “virtue is knowledge” thesis. Kamtekar suggests that if the virtues are not all just knowledge, but distinct both in themselves and in their power (i.e. if *Distinctness of Virtues* is true), then it is hard to see how mere teaching can make people good, *period*. For then it is always possible that one fails to acquire some virtues because of factors that teaching cannot influence, e.g. one’s innate tendencies.[151] I want to suggest that there is something even deeper. From the perspective of the student of virtue, the thesis that “virtue is one” is an important model because it reminds us that one cannot prejudge what can and cannot be an *opportunity* for exercising virtue. In a practical situation, for any issue, there is always a difference between dealing with this issue virtuously and viciously. But if *Distinctness of Virtues* is true, then the student of virtue can always myopically aim at getting only some of the virtues and neglect others. The result will not be just that the student turns out to behave virtuously only in some areas, but that an entire realm of issues will go neglected. As being virtuous is related to perceiving things correctly, if one lacks the virtue in question one can turn out to be completely oblivious of what is problematic and what is not. So the student of virtue must take “virtue is one” as a model, in the sense that he must always be vigilant as to what can go right and what can go wrong.[152] This is especially important given the holistic theory of the soul. For if the intellect is supposed to permeate through the whole soul, then any failure in the case of perception is also a failure in the case of judgment: if one fails to be as observant as one should be, one is simply not wise.[153]

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[149] See, e.g. Hartman 1984; Ferejohn 1984a; Brickhouse and Smith 1997, 2000, 2010; McPherran 2000.

[150] Glasscock 2020, 63.

[151] Kamtekar 2018, 37-38.

Let me end by revisiting the idea that there are varieties of identity of virtues. Recall, in the last chapter I said that, according to the “argument from self-predication”, justice and piety are very similar or identical because of what they essentially are. According to the “argument from opposites”, wisdom and temperance are identical because they share the same task, the task of deliberating well about the common good. Finally, according to “the argument from expert knowledge”, courage and wisdom are identical because they commit the agent to the same ideal, the ideal of achieving fineness even in dangerous situation.

Now, I suggest, this last argument for the identity of courage and wisdom incorporates all of the different forms of identity we have seen. And it is helpful to analyse this last argument through such a lens. Let me explain them one by one. First, regarding the identity formed through the essential character of the virtues, we can now distinguish between two *levels* of similarities. If virtue is knowledge, then all virtues are identical at the most fundamental level: any expressions of any virtue mobilise the whole soul (what one judges, perceives, calculates, chooses, feels, and acts). But at the surface level, we can call the virtues by different names as the wise intellect is making judgments about different issues.[154] When facing what is to be feared, it is “courage” that is concerned; when facing deliberation about the common good, it is “wisdom” and

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[152] See also note 258; cf. Annas 2011, ch.6.

[153] Cf. *Laws* 964a-966b on how the guardian must grasp the nature of virtue as a single entity in order to rule the polis well.

[154] Note that this is not the same as saying we individuate the different virtues in terms of how they deal with these different issues.

"temperance" that are concerned. The disjunctive conclusion of "the argument from self-predication", that justice and piety are either very similar or identical, can now be applied to the different levels. Any two virtues are identical at the fundamental level, but they are only similar at the surface level.

Second, regarding the identity formed through sharing the same task, we can now say that all the virtues share the same task of allowing us to "abide in the truth" (μένουσαν ἐπὶ τῷ ἀληθεῖ; 356e1) (the truth that the art of measurement promises). All apparently different virtues relate, in a variety of ways, to the fine, the good, and the pleasant - which in the end are the same thing. Third, regarding the identity formed through committing the agent to the same ideal of fineness, we can say that, given how monism about value corresponds to holism about the human soul, the wise agent wholeheartedly orients himself to the ideal. As long as all the apparently different virtues are just expressions of one's wisdom, all the virtues commit the agent to the same ideal. This is especially true in the case of the courageous agent as he is conceived in this last argument. His whole soul is oriented towards what his wisdom judges is right (as fine, good, and pleasant), even though it involves taking him to the battlefield, perhaps even sacrificing himself. In this way, he also exemplifies maximum transparency: what he knows of himself is the same as what ought to be the case, that is, the truth.

Conclusion

This chapter examined in detail Socrates' attitude towards hedonism in the *Protagoras*, his account of akrasia as ignorance, and his last argument for the identity of courage and wisdom. I argued that what Socrates needs is not hedonism *per se*, but monism about values, which has the implication of preventing any real conflict between the fine, the good, and the pleasant. But Socrates bothered to engage with apparent hedonism because in this way IoV can be more attractive to the audience. I also argued that, according to Socrates, knowledge "rules" not by overriding other passions, but by shaping what one perceives, deliberates, chooses, acts, and feels. In the case of the virtuous agent, what he knows of himself is the same as what ought to be the case or the truth. By contrast, the less-than-virtuous agent suffers from self-deception. All these then lead to the argument for the identity of courage and wisdom: the whole soul of the courageous and the whole soul of the wise are oriented towards the same things. This in turn implies *Full-IoV*: the same state of soul (knowledge) underlies the expression of all virtues. I also emphasised the pedagogical significance of *Full-IoV*: one must be vigilant as to what can go right and what can go wrong. This long passage (351b-360e5) also shows how Socrates' *Full-IoV* is especially sophisticated: it incorporates the three forms of identity of virtues I identified in the previous chapter.

Socrates' theory is elegant in the sense that everything in the end comes back to the same thing: knowledge. But one might reasonably say his discussion is too brief to do justice to so many important and difficult philosophical issues. Be that as it may, it gives us an opportunity to reflect systematically on the relation between a set of closely related topics: the nature of the human soul, practical reasoning, the relation between values and motivations, the authority of knowledge, akrasia, the nature of virtue, self-knowledge and truth. These topics will come up again when we turn to Aristotle, and Socrates' theory will act as a useful contrast as I explore the nuances of Aristotle's account.

Part II Aristotle

Chapter 4: Wisdom and the Unity of Virtues

Introduction

This and the following chapter discuss two main *kinds* of argument Aristotle can be seen to have in defending UV. This chapter discusses the argument that appeals to the function of wisdom. The next chapter discusses the argument that appeals to the unity of the soul. Both can be found in the secondary literature, though commentators do not often supply the supporting textual evidence. And very few, if any, pay sufficient attention to how Aristotle tries to distance himself from Socrates' position. My interpretation intends to fill in these gaps. In this chapter, after some preliminary remarks (section 4.1), I will explore two possible reconstructions of the argument that appeals to the nature of wisdom. The first I call "the argument from 'acting well'" (section 4.2). The idea is that wisdom implies all the ethical virtues because to act well all things considered one needs all the virtues. But this argument fails to give a non-question-begging explanation as to why one must hit the mean in both one's actions and feelings in all areas in order to be counted as having any virtue at all. The second argument I call "the argument from holistic evaluative knowledge" (section 4.3). According to this argument, wisdom implies all the ethical because the holistic knowledge about the good life implies all the ethical virtues. One version of this argument says such knowledge also constitutes political expertise, another version is free of this assumption. I conclude by noting some general lessons that we can learn from the discussion.

4.1 Preliminaries

Let us start by recalling the distinction between:

> *The Identity of the Virtues* (IoV): the names of the virtues are all names of the same thing.
>
> *The Unity of the Virtues* (UV): if one possesses one of the virtues, one necessarily possesses all the others.

It is commonly understood that Aristotle is arguing for UV. According to Aristotle, the ethical virtues are not identical; rather, there are many different ethical virtues, but they are mutually entailing. We will see the implications of this as we proceed. For now, let us first take a look at the passage where Aristotle presents his argument for UV:

> [T1] [A] As wisdom is related to cleverness - not the same, but similar - so in this way natural virtue (ἡ φυσικὴ ἀρετὴ) is related to the proper one (τὴν κυρίαν). For it seems to all that each of the character states is already there in some way by nature (φύσει): for we have justice, temperance, courage and other character from birth.
>
> [B] (1) But all the same we seek proper goodness to be something different, and we come to possess such qualities in some other way. (2) For even children and animals possess the natural dispositions. (3) But without *nous* they are evidently harmful. At any rate, this much we can see is likely (ἔοικεν), that just as a strong/heavy (ἰσχυρῷ) body without sight moving around results in falling heavily because it has no sight, so it is in this case [i.e. in the case of the natural virtue] too. (4) But if *nous* is acquired, then one excels (διαφέρει) in practice: and the disposition, which previously merely resembles proper virtue, will now be proper virtue (ἡ δ’ ἕξις ὁμοία οὖσα τότ’ ἔσται κυρίως ἀρετή).
>
> [C] So just as in the case of the belief-bearing part there are two types, cleverness and wisdom (φρόνησις), so also in the case of the character-bearing part there are two, natural virtue and proper virtue, and of these, proper virtue does not come into being without wisdom (1144b1-15; my translation)
>
> […]
>
> [T2] [A] So Socrates thought that all virtues are [instances of] reason (λόγους) (for all are (instances of) knowledge (ἐπιστήμας)), but we think that they involve reason (μετὰ λόγου).

> [B] It is clear, then, from what has been said that it is not possible to be properly good without wisdom, nor to be wise without ethical virtue.
>
> [C] [1] But this conclusion also offers a means of resolving the argument one can employ, in a dialectical context, to show that the virtues can be possessed independently of one another - i.e. that the same person is not best adapted by nature (εὐφυέστατος) to all of them, so that at a given moment he will have acquired one, but not another; for this is possible in relation to the natural virtues (φυσικὰς ἀρετὰς), but [2] in relation to those [virtues] that one must have to be called good without qualification, it is not possible, since if wisdom, which is one, is present, they will all be present along with it. (1144b28-1145a1; my translation)

Aristotle’s chain of reasoning in [T2] seems to be as follows:

1) The (proper) ethical virtues and wisdom are inseparable (if one is to be good in the primary sense).
2) If one is wise, one will have all the (proper) ethical virtues.
3) Therefore, it is not possible to possess the (proper) ethical virtues independently of one another.
4) Rather, it is the opposite: if one possesses one of the proper ethical virtues, one necessarily possesses all the others (implied).

Now, there is a lot to be said about [T1], and we will encounter different interpretations of it soon. But one point is clear: without *nous*, natural virtues are harmful. As such, they cannot be what is properly good. By contrast, proper virtue comes with wisdom, which makes it properly good (ἀγαθὸν κυρίως) - that is, good without qualification (ἁπλῶς ἀγαθός).

With [T1] and [T2] in place, let me now make a few preliminary remarks.

First, note that premise (1) above should not be confused with the debate about whether the ethical virtues, as Aristotle understands them, are partly intellectual.

Given the claim at the end of [T1] that “full virtue does not come into being without wisdom” (1144b15), and the claim at the beginning of [T2] that virtues “involve reason” (μετὰ λόγου) (1144b28), one might think that the proper virtues must essentially involve a virtue of the rational part of the soul, i.e. wisdom. It is because the proper virtues are themselves partly intellectual that they can avoid being harmful.[155] But it is also possible to argue otherwise. As Moss points out, in [T1][C], right after remaking the importance of *nous*, Aristotle goes on to say that full virtue belongs to the character-bearing part of the soul. The point, according to Moss, is not that the proper virtues are themselves partly intellectual; rather, the point is simply that proper virtues cannot exist in those who do not also possess wisdom.[156]

For my purpose of reconstructing Aristotle’s argument for UV, it is not necessary to take a side in this debate. If the ethical virtues are partly intellectual, then premise (1) can be seen as another way to spell out how this is so. But even if the ethical virtues are completely non-rational, premise (1) can still be granted on independent grounds: if one is to be good without qualification, the non-rational ethical virtues need to be accompanied by a *distinct* rational state, namely wisdom. In any case, it is the combination of the ethical virtues and wisdom that Aristotle needs here. One may regard such combination as jointly constituting a unified dispositional state (since the ethical virtues are partly intellectual), or one may think that the combination is a combination of two distinct dispositions; it need not concern us.

Second, recall, in chapter 1, I distinguished between:

> UV-A: if one possesses one of the ethical virtues, one necessarily possesses all the others, because all are united through an elite virtue (viz.

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[155] See Lorenz 2009, 198-202, 206-211. He argues that when Aristotle uses the phrase “μετὰ λόγου”, the point is usually that the state in question belongs to the rational part of the soul (NE 1140a6-8, 1140b20-22, 1140b33, and EE 1220a4-12). See also Irwin 1975 and Nielsen 2023.

[156] Moss 2012, 167-169.

> wisdom), just as different branches of knowledge are all united under one single system of knowledge.
>
> UV-B: if one possesses one of the ethical virtues, one necessarily possesses all the others, because all are united through an elite virtue (viz. wisdom), in the sense that all the virtues must be associated with this elite virtue, but the various virtues can be differentiated by their non-rational aspects.

It seems clear that "wisdom" in text [T2][C] is an elite virtue in this sense. For it is the presence of wisdom that simultaneously implies all the virtues: "wisdom, which is one, is present, they will all be present along with it" (1145a1). Further, it also seems clear that Aristotle cannot be committed to UV-A. Aristotle's ethical virtues are differentiated, if anything, by (at least) their non-rational aspects (e.g. 1103a1-10). UV-B looks closer to what Aristotle has in mind.

Third, one common doubt about UV says: how can the virtues be mutually entailing, when the demand of one virtue can surely be in conflict with the demand of another?

Whether there are in fact genuine moral dilemmas is a big topic in itself, and I cannot fully address this problem here.[157] But a few comments on its relation to UV are in order. First, we may distinguish between the conflicts of virtues, as states, and the conflicts of the *exercise* of virtues.[158] One can argue that all possible conflicts in the exercise of virtues arise from some external factors, e.g. limited resources, conflicting social roles, luck, etc. The mere possibility of conflict in the exercise of virtues does not challenge UV, for strictly speaking it is not the virtuous states themselves that are in conflict.[159]

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[157] For a reconstruction of Aristotle's view on moral dilemma (focusing on NE III.1), see Gottlieb 2009, ch.6.

[158] In more Aristotelian terms, one can distinguish between conflicts of virtues that arise at the level of second actuality (the exercise of a capacity) and those that arise at the level of first actuality (having but not exercising a capacity). See *DA* 412a9-28, 417a21-417b2.

Second, there are grounds for thinking that, according to both Socrates and Aristotle, there are no genuine conflicts in the exercise of virtues. Recall, in "the argument from akrasia" (351b-360e), Socrates is committed to some form of monism about value. If one is fully virtuous, then one should be able to see how the fine, the good, and the pleasant do not really come into conflict. If all the apparently different virtues are just knowledge/wisdom, and if wisdom allows one to grasp monism about value, then there is no room for conflicts between the different exercises of wisdom. No matter how one chooses, if one is choosing wisely, then one must have already responded adequately to what is objectively valuable. There is nothing left to be dealt with. Similarly, according to Aristotle, the virtuous person is a sort of "standard (κανὼν) and measure (μέτρον)" because he sees what is true (τἀληθὲς) in each case, presumably with regard to the fine, the pleasant and the good (1113a30-1113b2; see also 1104b30-35). Less-than-virtuous agents may pursue some naturally good things excessively, but the fully virtuous agent should be able to see that there are no genuine conflicts between the exercise of virtues.[160] I will have a bit more to say about the conflicts of (the exercise of) virtues as I proceed.

But there is a more straightforward objection to Aristotle's UV: does Aristotle not also recognise the possibility that some agents can have some virtues but not others (which, of course, reminds us of *Protagoras* 329e)? If so, does he not simply contradict himself in both recognising this possibility and asserting UV?[161] For example, he says “the magnificent person is generous, but generosity does not imply magnificence” (1122*a*28-29). But a closer reading suggests that he can simply mean “the magnificent person *qua* magnificent is generous, but generosity *qua* generosity is not magnificence”. That is, he is making a remark, not on whether someone does or does not have both virtues, but on the qualities of these virtues themselves.[162] This does not challenge UV, which allows the virtues to have different qualities. Of course, one might still think the large-scale virtues present special difficulties for UV because they concern goods that are relatively hard to get access to. As such, they require extra training.[163] It is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully discuss the large-scale virtues themselves. But I will say a few more things below about how the different arguments for UV can accommodate them.

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[159] Irwin 1988, 68. Cf. Russell on how UV is supposed to be a claim about the "natural makeup" of the virtues themselves, as opposed to a claim about when we can reasonably attribute a virtue to an agent (Russell 2009, 363-373). See also note 258.

[160] In NE VII.4 Aristotle says there are pleasures that are naturally fine, good and choice-worthy, such as wealth, profit, victory, honour, and (taking care of) children and parents. It is praiseworthy to take these things seriously, but all the same it is possible to pursue them to an excessive degree that goes against reason (1148a25-35). Presumably these are not cases of conflicts between the exercise of virtues. For even though one may need some good character to appreciate the value of these naturally fine things, virtue is, by definition, an intermediate state, not an excessive one (1106b20-1107a10). So one is not exercising virtues when one pursues these goods excessively.

4.2 The argument from ‘acting well’

4.2.1 The guidance of wisdom

One of the most common ways to argue for UV is to appeal to how wisdom equips us to “act well” or to do the best action.[164] Let us call this, then, “the argument from ‘acting well’”. It goes like this:[165]

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[161] Irwin 1988.

[162] Pakaluk 2002, 203. Similarly, one might think Aristotle asserts that one can have (what is usually called) proper pride (the nameless small-scale counterpart of magnanimity) without having magnanimity. For he says “the person who is worthy of small things and thinks himself worthy of them is moderate, but not magnanimous” (1123b5-6). However, arguably, “moderate” here does not refer to proper pride, but just self-constraint in general. Aristotle’s point, then, is simply that magnanimity does not just consist in correct self-assessment, but correct self-assessment in the field of great honour.

[163] Irwin 1988, 62-64.

[164] As reported in Russell 2009, 358. I should say that “acting well” here is not meant to be a translation of εὐπραξία, which is sometimes equated with happiness (e.g. 1095a18, as εὖ πράττειν). “Acting well” in this argument refers to doing the best one can in a particular situation, all things considered. In lack of a better term, I use this expression because it captures well a very intuitive way to argue for UV.

[165] See, e.g. Irwin 1988, 66-69; Irwin 1998, 52-54. But they do not provide a close reading of the passage ([T1] and [T2]) in reconstructing the argument this way. A.W.

1A. The ethical virtues and wisdom are inseparable, in the sense that one's exercise of the ethical virtues needs to be guided by wisdom (especially in hitting the mean).

2A. To be wise is to succeed in acting well, which in itself amounts to the possession of all the ethical virtues.

Hence, UV: to have one of the ethical virtues one necessarily has all the ethical virtues.

Let us start by looking at the first premise. It gives us a straightforward interpretation of the distinction between natural virtue and proper virtue. Natural virtues, as text [T1][B] describes it, are "harmful" (βλαβεραί) because they lack *nous* (1144b10). One way to interpret this is to say that the natural virtues are flawed because they lead to disastrous actions.[166] This is suggested by Aristotle's own metaphor about how the heavy body moving without sight suffers a heavy fall (1144b11-12). If one takes the "moving body" as a metaphor for actions, and "sight" as a metaphor for any kind of (intellectual) guidance on one's actions, then the point is that if one performs the relevant actions without any (intellectual) guidance, then one would cause some damage. Take, for example, bravery caused by spirit, which Aristotle describes as the "most natural sort" of bravery (1117a5). He acts from temper and Aristotle illustrates this by saying that it is natural for human beings to "take pleasure in retaliating" (1117a6). If retaliation becomes his sole or major motivation, then it is not surprising that he will go too far in his actions and cause trouble, e.g. he may hurt someone disproportionately or otherwise inappropriately. So natural virtues are harmful because the actions they lead to can cause actual harm.

But causing actual physical harm must not be the whole story. For one thing, while the person with natural courage may cause such damage, it is harder to

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Müller 2004 does better, see below. In any case, I shall offer a close reading on their behalf.

[166] See, e.g. Irwin 2019, 293; Gottlieb 2009, 109-110.

imagine how the person with natural temperance, just by being temperate, may cause any physical harm. For another, Aristotle elsewhere uses the term “harmful” (βλαβερός) to refer to the contrary of what is beneficial (συμφέρω).[167] This suggests, then, natural virtues are harmful because they put the agent at a disadvantage.

Further, note that although Aristotle uses the general term “praiseworthy” to highlight the good uses of cleverness, cleverness used badly is said to exhibit a *specific* vice: unscrupulousness (πανουργία).[168] The *EE* describes the unscrupulous man as someone who greedily “makes profit from any source” (1221a36–37). As such, unscrupulousness as a vice is a kind of *excess* with respect to profit-making; cleverness misused is a *deviation from the mean*. But natural virtue relates to proper virtue in a way similar to how cleverness relates to wisdom (1144b3). But then we can reasonably expect that the problems that we can find in the case of misused cleverness can also be found in the case of unguided natural virtue.[169] One might then say natural virtue is flawed *because it fails to hit the mean*. After all, natural virtue is a good character state without wisdom, and to determine the mean is precisely what wisdom does:

> Virtue, then, is a disposition issuing in decisions, depending on the mean of the kind relative to us, this being determined by rational prescription and in the way in which the wise person would determine it. (1107a1-4)

The crux of premise (1A), then, is that proper ethical virtue cannot be separated from wisdom because succeeding in hitting the mean (μέσον…κατορθοῦται) in actions and feelings is praised (1106b26-7), and this requires the guidance of wisdom.[170] Without wisdom, the natural virtues are harmful, not just in the sense of causing physical harm or bringing disadvantages, but in the broader sense of deviating from the mean.[171]

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[167] See, e.g. 1104b30-32, where the harmful (βλαβεροῦ) is one of the three objects of avoidance. See also 1126b28-35 and NE V.5.

[168] As observed by Reeve 2013, 250.

[169] This also confirms how natural virtues put the agent at a disadvantage: just as cleverness without the ethical virtues leads one to blindly pursue what is beneficial, natural virtue without the guidance of wisdom has the opposite problem, namely, failing to attend to what is beneficial.

4.2.2 Acting well and the virtues

I now proceed to premise (2A), "to be wise is to succeed in acting well, which in itself amounts to the possession of all the ethical virtues." The claim is that one needs wisdom to know how to act well, all-things-considered, and that involves knowing when and how to give the various responses characteristic of the various virtues. But different responses are required for different scenarios. So one needs all the virtues, all under the guidance of wisdom, to know how to act well *tout court*.[172]

We can use the Doctrine of the Mean to illustrate the point. As is well-known, there are many different "aspects" or "parameters" that one needs to get "right" if one is to successfully hit the mean: for instance, to hit the mean that concerns giving wealth, one has to give to the right people, the right amount, at the right time, and so on (1120a25-6). But since "there are many ways of going astray…whereas there is only one way of getting it right" (1106b30-33), one needs all the virtues if one is to succeed in the difficult task of hitting the mean in different scenarios (more on this below). The core idea that is encapsulated in the Doctrine of the Mean, after all, is that the virtuous person responds in a way that is just-right. Any defects from any sources would defeat the purpose of this Doctrine. This explains why UV must be true of the proper ethical virtues. For only natural virtues can tolerate such defects: one can possess one virtue without another, and hence be good in some qualified ways but not without qualification, only in the case of the natural virtues. If one is to be good without qualification, one must be virtuous in every way,[173] but that requires having all the virtues.[174]

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[170] Irwin calls this the "demand of success". He also cites 1106b26-27 (Irwin 1988, 65).
[171] A.W. Müller 2004, 41.
[172] A.W. Müller 2004, 26, 36-39; Pakaluk 2005, 227-228.

Since all the ethical virtues aim at the same thing (hitting the mean), and that requires the guidance of wisdom, one may say that no virtues will be in conflict with each other if one is truly wise:

> Nor is virtue contrary to virtue. For it is by nature subject to reason, however it prescribes, so that wherever reason leads virtue inclines. For reason is what chooses the better. For neither do the other virtues arise without wisdom nor is wisdom complete without the other virtues, but they co-operate in some way with each other under the guidance of wisdom (MM 1200a5-11).

Now, between text [T1] and [T2], Aristotle is trying to calibrate his position vis-a-vis Socrates':

> [T3] [A] That is why some say all the virtues are wisdom, and Socrates inquires correctly in a way and wrongly in another way. For in thinking that all virtues are wisdom he is wrong, but in thinking they are not without wisdom, he has spoken finely.
> [B] A sign of this: now everyone, whenever they define virtue, having named the disposition and what it is concerned, they add that it is in

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[173] This is perhaps a good chance to mention how this argument can explain away the large-scale virtues. Gardiner argues that the large-scale virtues are *non-basic,* in the sense that they are not required for being unqualifiedly good (Gardiner 2001, 265, 279-281). For they govern relative goods (being relatively wealthy for magnificence, having relatively higher capacities for magnanimity), and one can be happy without these goods (1179a5-6; 1179a13-15).

[174] As Aristotle recognises, while making errors voluntarily demonstrates one's competence in the case of craft, doing so in the case of virtue (and wisdom) simply shows that one is *not* virtuous (1140b21-25). This seems to point to a deeper fact about virtue: one must exercise the virtues with a view to what is unqualifiedly good. Indeed, this is the fundamental rationale of UV: to exercise any virtue properly is to be committed to unqualified goodness, but one needs all the virtues to *be* unqualifiedly good. Cf. A.W. Müller 2004, 44-45, 51.

> accordance with right reason (τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον), and the right one is the one in accordance with wisdom. Everyone seem to somehow divine, then, that virtue is this sort of disposition, the one in accordance with wisdom.
> [C] But a small change is necessary. For virtue is a disposition not only (μόνον) in accordance with right reason (κατὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον), but it is that which involves right reason (μετὰ τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου): and right reason about these things is wisdom. So Socrates thought that all virtues are reason (for all are knowledge), but we think that they involve reason (1144b18-30).

It is worth noting how this argument interprets [T3]. Virtues cannot be without wisdom because only the wise can determine the mean. But Socrates is wrong to think that the ethical virtues just are wisdom because Aristotle is committed to UV-B, that the ethical virtues can be differentiated at least through their non-rational aspects. Further, if one is to fully spell out the argument, "reason" here must include not just the faculty of practical reason, but also one's all-things-considered judgments. After all, acting well requires being able to make such judgments. This is unsurprising given that Aristotle is in dialogue with Socrates. For when Socrates argues that virtue is knowledge, he has in mind also the question of how to live well (351b). Naturally, the judgments that one makes in thinking about this question are all-things-considered judgments.

But we also need to be more careful in thinking about the relation between wisdom and the ethical virtues. As [T3][C] says, virtue is a disposition that is not just "in accordance with" right reason, but it "involves" right reason. It is standard to interpret this as saying that being virtuous does not just consist in having one's actions conform to whatever reason prescribes; rather, one has to make *one's own* judgments. The virtuous person is autonomous.[175] This surely fits with the current reconstruction: one needs to make one's own all-things-considered judgments if one is to be properly virtuous. But given the relevance of the Doctrine of the Mean, we can also say something more specific: virtue is a disposition that

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[175] See, e.g. Broadie and Rowe 2002, 383; Irwin 2019, 293; Lorenz 2009, 209.

"involves" right reason because virtue does not just aim at hitting the mean - rather, it is itself an intermediate state. Moreover, virtue is an intermediate state *because* it aims and hits the mean (in actions and feelings), not *vice versa*: "virtue is a kind of mean, since it aims at what is intermediate" (1106b27-28).[176] So, virtue involves reason in the sense that it is one's own disposition-that-aims-at-the-mean, where the mean is determined by right reason (wisdom).[177]

4.2.3 Critical reflections

So UV is true of the proper virtues because to be able to act well all-things-considered amounts to possessing all the proper virtues. But more needs to be said on how "acting well" implies UV at the level of the individual virtues. More specifically, we should ask: how do the ethical virtues contribute to "acting well"? This is of course a big topic, but a brief discussion should show how "the argument from 'acting well'" is inadequate. I will argue that this argument is plausible only for some sets of virtues; for other sets of virtues, it can seem question-begging if we insist on UV based on this argument.

There are at least two ways to think about the contributions of the ethical virtues. First, one may say the virtues contribute by preventing possible distortions coming from irrelevant and corrupting factors. This is one possible interpretation of how "temperance…preserves wisdom" (1140b10-12). One's understanding of what is choice-worthy can be corrupted by pleasure and pain (b15-20), but the virtue of temperance safeguards oneself from such influence.[178]

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[176] Brown 2014.

[177] Nielsen argues that 1107a1–3 suggests a series of "definitional dependencies": virtue as a state that decides is definitionally dependent on what it is to be an intermediate state, which in turn is definitionally dependent on the rational mean that the *phronimos* represents, since it is *phronesis* that determines the (ethical) mean. Since the dependencies are definitional, the ethical virtues must be intrinsically rational (Nielsen 2023, 26). As I explained in section 4.1, I think the debate that concerns UV can stay neutral on this issue. When I suggest (according to this argument) the ethical virtue can be understood as "one's own disposition-that-aims-at-the-mean", I merely mean the ethical disposition "involves" reason in the sense that it should be characterised in terms of the mean-determining function of (practical) reason. This is compatible with claiming that such function arises from a state that is distinct in existence from the ethical dispositions.

This conception of ethical virtues does not seem to be adequate. For the continent person does not deviate from reason despite his imperfect affective state, and therefore has a good ethical disposition (1151a26-28). Aristotle even distinguishes between the continent person and the stubborn person, and the former is supposed to listen to what reason prescribes (whereas the latter "[is] led on by pleasures") (1151b5-10).[179]

In light of this, one may think that the ethical virtues should have more robust contributions. More specifically, one may think that the virtues *shape* one's process of deliberation, such that one will pay attention to different things, see different things as good, and even deliberate differently if one has certain virtues.[180] To use the virtue of temperance as an example again, one may say that if one is temperate, then one will see the right things as good, to the right degree, and in the right way (1119a11-15). For pleasant things that do not deviate from the fine and are no obstacle to physical fitness, the temperate person will not like them more than they are worth (a16-20). Consequently, one may argue that the temperate person and the continent person deliberate differently. The temperate person will not even consider the prospect of choosing some unhealthy or base pleasure, for he is not even tempted in the first place. By contrast, the continent person can see himself enjoying some base pleasures, or pursuing pleasures more than he should, but he managed to keep those appetites from influencing his final decisions and actions (1151b35-1152a5).[181]

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[178] Irwin 2019, 281. I will come back to this passage in section 6.4.

[179] Aristotle emphasises how the continent overcomes obstacles: "resisting is a matter of withstanding, whereas continence is a matter of overcoming, and withstanding is different from overcoming, as not being defeated is different from winning - which is why continence is also a more desirable thing than resistance" (1150a35-37).

[180] McDowell 1996, 2002, 23-49.

[181] Irwin 1988, 88; McDowell 2002, 46-47.

This more robust conception should be able to distinguish virtue from continence. And it is also true that, according to Aristotle, to deliberate properly as some virtue demands will require another virtue. For instance, the virtue of generosity concerns *both* the giving *and* the taking of wealth (1120b26-35). The generous person will “take from the sources one should and the amount one should” (1120b31; 1120b1), and he will avoid taking wrongly. Taking wealth correctly seems to require *justice* (1120a22).[182] And surely one needs wisdom to determine the exact ways to take wealth justly. So to deliberate how to give and take wealth generously, one also needs the virtue of justice and wisdom. So the robust conception of virtue seems to justify at least the unity of *some* virtues.[183]

However, other sets of virtues may be more problematic. For example, the temperate person feels the right pleasures and pains with respect to objects of touch and taste (NE III.10). According to UV, this person is also wise, and this wisdom will imply that he is also, say, courageous. The courageous person is a person who has the right fears and confidence (for the right end, in the right way, etc., 1115b18-20). But given all that is said about Aristotle’s argument for UV, why should we expect that the person who feels the right pleasures and pains (with respect to objects of touch and taste) will also feel the right fear and confidence?[184]

Of course, the argument for UV is not claiming that feeling the right pleasures and pains (with respect to objects of touch and taste) *by itself* implies feeling the right fears and confidence. Rather, the claim is that the person who does not have the right emotions in both cases cannot be called wise, and so cannot have either of the virtues (temperance or courage). But this sounds *ad hoc*. Why should flaws in one aspect of the psyche (the aspect that concerns pleasures and pains in objects of touch and taste) imply flaws in another aspect of the psyche (the aspect that concerns fears and confidence)?

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[182] Gottlieb 2009, 107.

[183] For more possible examples, see A.W. Müller 2004, 37-38.

[184] In the *Statesman*, Plato even suggests that temperance and courage are in tension with each other (306a-308b). See Kamtekar 2021.

Let us think of the “quasi-courage” that Aristotle discusses - some less ideal state that resembles courage. For example, Aristotle mentions that there are those who stand firm against dangers not because they desire what is fine, but only because they are “under constraint from their commanders…[their actions are done] not through shame but through fear” (1116a30-33). Let us grant that the temperate person, in being wise, will also fare better than the one who is quasi-courageous in this sense. But what grounds do we have to insist that this temperate person will also be genuinely courageous - to aim at the fine, to have the right fears and confidence, etc.?[185]

One can of course insist that the Doctrine of the Mean is supposed to apply to both actions and feelings for all the virtues. One may insist that one is wise only if one acts correctly and has the right feelings in the different areas. In the context of temperance and courage, this means that one is wise only if one feels the right pleasures and pains (with respect to objects of touch and taste) and also feels the right fears and confidence, for this is just what hitting the mean demands.

But this will not do. For one thing, it is not clear if this is just restating the position of UV or if it really gives an independent argument. For the opponent of UV can still ask: why must hitting the mean (in both actions and feelings) in the area of pleasures and pains (with respect to objects of touch and taste) imply and be implied by hitting the mean (in both actions and feelings) in the area of fear and confidence? What can we say apart from insisting that to act and feel correctly all-things-considered is just what the Doctrine of the Mean requires? For another, it seems a similar question can be asked about the nature of wisdom: what is it

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[185] Aristotle even recognises that intemperance is more voluntary than cowardice (1119a21-25). And it is “easier to acquire the habit of resisting pleasures, since there are many such things in one’s life, and the occasions for habituation are without danger, whereas with fearsome things it is the reverse…” (a25-28). It is easier to follow the pattern of temperate behaviour than to develop a pattern of courageous behaviour. More needs to be said on why the truly temperate person also has to be genuinely courageous. See also Sedley 2014, 86.

about wisdom that enables us act well *tout court* (which amounts to the possession of all the ethical virtues)?[186]

I want to suggest there is a general problem here. That the unity of justice, generosity and wisdom sounds plausible may have to do more with the three virtues themselves than with the argument. One can of course insist that, according to the argument, if having one virtue does not imply having another virtue, then one cannot be called wise, and hence cannot have either of the virtues in question. But then one has to say more about what it is to *be* wise, if one does not want to just build everything into the notion of "wisdom", and thereby risk begging the question against the opponent of UV. Otherwise, this argument can justify at most the unity of virtues and some quasi-virtues.[187]

Note that Socrates does not face this problem. For Socrates' arguments amount to rejecting *Distinctness of Virtues,* the idea that each virtue is distinct from another both in itself and in its power. As we saw in text [T2][A], the virtues are all (instances of) knowledge (1144b28). Socrates' IoV claims that the different names of the various virtues all refer to the same state of soul, i.e. knowledge. These names need not be synonymous. But, importantly, the different names of the various virtues do *not* amount to different *virtuous states.* Just so, it is not possible for the agent to be virtuous in one area (say, be courageous) but not virtuous in another area (say, be temperate). For all the apparently different virtues express knowledge. Either one is virtuous (wise) or one is not; it is not possible to have a mixture of virtue and some other less-than-ideal states.[188]

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[186] Chappell 2006, 138. Or one may have the opposite problem: what is it that wisdom can contribute that is not already covered by the ethical virtues themselves? See also section 6.2 below.

[187] Curzer 2012, 312-315; Kraut 1988, 83; Telfer 1989, 39-40. Outside the context of classical philosophy, several scholars have similar complaints about UV, see e.g. Hursthouse 2006; Lemos 1994; Toner 2014; Watson 1984, 59–60; Wolf 2007, 162.

[188] Socrates would not face the same problem even if he recognises the existence of the non-rational soul. For even if the soul has non-rational aspects, knowledge should be powerful enough to override any recalcitrant passions (see the end of section 3.3). Any deviation of these non-rational aspects implies the failure of knowledge, hence failure of character.

More specifically, since according to Socrates (in the *Protagoras*) all choices are weighed on the same scale (given the apparent hedonism, or more precisely, monism about value), being intemperate implies being in an (ignorant) state that misperceives and miscalculates (exaggerating) the value of immediate pleasures, and this might just imply (at least in some situations) misperceiving and miscalculating (exaggerating) the value of cowardly actions - one finds such actions more worthy of one's confidence than they really are. But since Aristotle explicitly limits the scope of temperance to objects of touch and taste (in eating, drinking and having sex), a similar reply does not seem available.

There seems to be a general lesson to be learned here. If UV is true, then one has to explain not just how the deliberative process of the virtues can be intertwined, but also how the non-rational aspects of the virtues can be intertwined.

This lesson also gives us a chance to reflect on how central we take UV to be in Aristotle's ethics. On the one hand, note that in NE II-V Aristotle is quite concerned with getting the names or the descriptions of the individual characters right. This echoes Socrates' attempts to find the real definitions of the individual virtues (especially in the *Laches*, *Charmides*, and *Euthyphro*). For instance, in the discussion of generosity, Aristotle says those who take wrongly on a large scale (e.g. tyrants sacking cities) are called "wicked, impious, unjust, but not ungenerous" (1122a5-7). It matters whether we articulate the virtues or vices correctly. He even has to coin some new words to pin down the otherwise nameless characters (e.g. μικροπρέπεια or shabbiness at 1107b20).[189] But on the other hand, note the level of generality that characterises Aristotle's argument for UV. Instead of explaining *how* the virtues must be mutually entailing through wisdom, he in effect just asserts that the presence of wisdom must entail the presence of all the virtues (1145a1). If we are to take Aristotle's commitment to UV as a central part of his ethics, we should also note the nuances of Aristotle's overall account: on the one hand, we need to be able to articulate how the individual virtues are distinct, but on the other, we also need to explain how such distinct virtues are mutually entailing. But since Aristotle differentiates the ethical virtues by (at least) their non-rational aspects, he also needs to explain how these non-rational aspects are part of UV.

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[189] Broadie and Rowe 2002, 307.

It seems we need a more elaborate theory of wisdom. Premise (2A) - “to be wise is to be able to act well, which in itself amounts to the possession of all the ethical virtues” - is not sufficient to establish UV. More specifically, we should ask: how is wisdom, an intellectual excellence, supposed to imply the presence of all the other ethical virtues (which are at least partly non-rational)?

4.3 The argument from holistic evaluative knowledge

4.3.1 The argument

In the previous section, I discussed one possible way to reconstruct one type of Aristotle’s argument for UV (the type that appeals to the nature of wisdom). In this section, I should discuss another way to reconstruct the same type of argument. This formulation is also quite widespread,[190] though, again, not all scholars present this formulation in conjunction with a close reading of the text. The argument goes likes this:

1B. The ethical virtues and wisdom are inseparable, since one needs to be able to evaluate the relevant goods and evils in order to have any virtue (which requires wisdom).

2B. To be wise is to have holistic evaluative knowledge, which amounts to the possession of all the ethical virtues.[191]

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[190] Cooper 1998, 265-266; Sorabji 1980; Gardiner 2001, 286-8; Russell 2009, ch.11; Russell 2014. This is the argument that is usually assumed when philosophers discuss UV. See, e.g. McDowell 2002, 50-73; Hursthouse 1999; Badhwar 1996; Wolf 2007.

[191] “Holistic evaluative knowledge” should remind us of the debate about the “Grand End” theory of wisdom. I will discuss this in section 4.3.3 below.

> 3B. Hence, to have one of the ethical virtues one necessarily has all the ethical virtues.

Let us start from premise 1B. The idea is this. Every ethical virtue is meant to address some goods and evils (NE II.7). For example, as we have seen, temperance (and intemperance) is about pleasures and pains (with respect to objects of touch and taste) (1118a25-1118b9). Courage is about objects of fear and confidence. Generosity and magnificence concern how to handle wealth. Magnanimity and its smaller-scale counterpart are about honour. Each ethical virtue is the intermediate state with respect to its own area. The general idea that each virtue deals with different goods and evils can of course be traced back to Plato: for instance, courage is understood as the knowledge of what is and is not to be feared (*Laches* 195a; *Protagoras* 360c-d), piety as the knowledge that deals with human-gods relations (*Euthyphro* 12a-e).

But to appreciate fully and properly the true worth of each of the goods, one has to appreciate them in a system or even in a hierarchy of goods. Consequently, to fully know what each virtue is addressing, one has to have holistic knowledge about these goods. The following passages may help illustrate this function of wisdom:

> It is thought characteristic of a wise person to be able to deliberate well about the things that are good and advantageous to himself, not in specific contexts, e.g. what sorts of things conduce to health, or to physical strength, but what sorts of things conduce to the good life in general. (1140a25-29)

To be wise is to be able to deliberate well when there are no explicit guidelines about what to do (1140a29-31). Presumably, then, one is wise if one can deliberate well about life in general when there are no explicit guidelines.

> It is for this reason that we think Pericles and people of that sort wise - because they are capable of forming a clear view of what is good for themselves and what is good for human beings in general; we think that this description applies to those who are good at managing property and politics. (1140b8-10)

In the case of production (ποίησις), the end is “something distinct from the productive process”, but in the case of action (πρᾶξις), “doing well itself serves as end” (1140b6-7). There is not an end distinct from whatever one does here and now that one is supposed to realise through one’s actions; rather, doing best here and now is the end. As I understand it, Aristotle’s point is that wisdom is supposed to tell you what is good to do *simpliciter*, as opposed to what is good to do relative to a specific end (the end of a particular productive process). He then (1140b9) explains the scope of such thinking, namely, it is both for the agent and for human beings in general.

This allows us to proceed to premise (2B). According to “the argument from holistic evaluative knowledge”, when Aristotle talks about the “good life in general” (1140a29), he does not just mean to contrast the unconditional end of wisdom and the conditional ends of craft. Rather, he also means to hint at how the scope of wisdom includes the exercise of every individual ethical virtue. The notion of a “good life” helps illustrate the substantial standard wisdom relies on in evaluating the goods and evils that the various ethical virtues respectively address. In this sense, such holistic knowledge is the counterpart in Aristotle of Socrates’ notion of the “art of measurement” in the *Protagoras*. Just as the art of measurement weighs every pleasure and pain from a global point of view (that is, one does not just consider pleasures and pains of a particular choice here and now, but the total sum of pleasures and pains of one’s choices and their consequences), Aristotle’s *phronimos* weighs every relevant consideration to make an all-things-considered judgment.[192]

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[192] Both “the argument from ‘acting well’” (see the previous section) and “the argument from holistic evaluative knowledge” recognise that the agent with proper virtue and

This gives us another way to spell out the distinction between natural virtue and proper virtue. Natural virtue is “harmful” in the sense that its concerns are partial or myopic. Consider the person with natural justice. At EE 1234a30-32, righteous indignation is mentioned as the natural counterpart of (genuine) justice. To have righteous indignation is to be “pained at failures or successes that are underserved, and rejoicing at those that are deserved” (1233b25; trans. Inwood and Woolf). But it is not a genuine virtue because it is a mere affection and does not involve decision (1234a25), since virtue is a state that decides (ἕξις προαιρετική) (*NE* 1106b36–1107a1; *EE* 1227b5–11). But since decision is the result of deliberation (*NE* 1112a13–17; *EE* 1226b1-5), this means that the expression of natural justice (mere righteous indignation) does not involve deliberation. Without deliberation, one cannot see whether a particular course of action is better than its alternative, or whether some actions should be chosen for the sake of some end.[193] For instance, a person may go on to try to fanatically execute some kind of punishment on those he thinks do not deserve successes, thinking that this serves to balance the scale. This person mistakenly thinks this course of action is better than, say, helping those who do not deserve their failure. He also misjudges that this choice of action should be chosen for the sake of justice. In other words, while his concerns about undeserved failures and successes are on the right track, his actions are too myopic. By contrast, proper virtue is informed by the holistic evaluative knowledge that wisdom provides. In

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wisdom is able to make all-things-considered judgments. But only the latter argument gives a further explanation as to how this is so: because wisdom equips such an agent with holistic evaluative knowledge about the good life.

[193] Aristotle remarks that the term προαίρεσις itself is a compound of “προ” and “αἵρεσις”, which literally means “before” and “choice” (*NE* 1112a17, *EE* 1226b7). Some translators take the “before” temporally (e.g. Irwin 2019), but most take it preferentially (e.g. Wood 1992, Inwood and Wolf 2013). Nielsen argues that προαίρεσις is understood *teleologically* in the MSS of *EE*, that a choice is essentially “this for the sake of that” (Nielsen 2022, 85, 92-94). This presents a clear alternative to the preferential and the temporal reading modern scholarship on the NE assumed (87). But she also thinks that NE may include all three readings (96-97). I intend to acknowledge these nuances in my formulation. Natural justice does not involve decision, hence does not involve deliberation. As a result, one cannot see whether a course of action is better than its alternative (preferential reading), or whether some actions should be chosen for some end (teleological reading). Natural virtue can be flawed in either or all of these ways.

this way, the agent can deliberate globally, i.e. with a view to the good life in general.

The current argument, then, boils down to the claim that for one to possess one virtue, one needs to be able to deliberate well about the relevant goods and evils, but to do that one has to evaluate the goods and evils with a view to the good (flourishing) life as a whole. But only the wise can deliberate well about the good life as a whole. So one needs the holistic knowledge about the good life that wisdom provides in order to possess one virtue. But since the same reasoning applies to every virtue, so the following is true: either one does not have wisdom and fails to deliberate well about the relevant goods and evils (i.e. fails 1B, in which case one does not have any virtue), or one has wisdom, which is expressed in every virtue, so one has all the virtues.

In the next three sections, I will elaborate on these premises. Let me start with premise (1B).

4.3.2 Continence (and quasi-courage) again

Recall, in the previous argument ("the argument from 'acting well'"), the continent agent (and the quasi-courageous agent) presents a problem. For one can imagine an agent who is temperate but not courageous, since it is plausible that one can have the right feelings for pleasures and pains with respect to the objects of touch and taste but fail to have the right fear and confidence. Conversely, one can imagine a courageous person who is merely continent in the area that concerns temperance. It seems *ad hoc* just to claim that if one fails to be virtuous in one of these areas then one cannot be wise, and so cannot be virtuous in another area, either. We need a deeper explanation as to why one needs to hit the mean in both one's actions and feelings in *all* areas in order to be counted as having *any* virtue at all. The "argument from acting well" did not provide that deeper explanation.

"The argument from holistic evaluative knowledge" intends to provide such an explanation. For failing to have the right feelings in any area means one does not have the holistic evaluative knowledge about the good life, and that flaw corrupts all other virtues one may appear to have. One can argue on general grounds that flaws in the non-rational aspect of the soul imply some flaws in the rational aspect of the soul, which in turn implies that one cannot be virtuous *tout court*. For example, one can argue that the continent person does not fully enjoy the fineness of the right action, and so is not in the best condition possible.[194] But more needs to be said about how the virtues are mutually entailing: how is it that having only some quasi-virtue in one area (but being good enough to not have any vice in that area) corrupts one's character in another area? It seems, if "the argument from holistic evaluative knowledge" is going to work - that is, if one is to argue for UV through the knowledge of the wise person - then one has to further assume that:

> 1B*. The ethical virtues and wisdom are inseparable, in the sense that one's different emotions, decisions and actions (that are characteristic of the different virtues) in the different areas of life must all express one's correct conception of the good life, otherwise one does not have any virtue.

Given (1B*), one can then say: although the quasi-courageous person is able to perform some apparently courageous actions (standing firm against danger), *he* is not a virtuous person at all, for his actions do not express the correct conception of the good life. Since his conception of the good life is corrupted by his defects in the area that concerns courage (fear and confidence), whatever it is that his temperate actions may express, it is not the *correct* conception of the good life. Hence his apparently temperate actions do not express the virtue of temperance, either.

(1B*) gives us another way to interpret the distinction between a disposition that is "in accordance with the correct reason" and the disposition that "involves the correct reason" (1144b25-27, text [T3][C]). Recall, according to the "argument from 'acting well'", this is interpreted as a distinction between behavioural conformity with whatever reason prescribes (in accordance with reason) and virtue being one's own disposition-that-aims-at-the-mean, where the mean is determined by right reason (involves reason) (see section 4.2.2). But according to (1B*), virtues "involve" the correct reason in the sense that they also *express* the correct reason (wisdom).[195]

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[194] Coope 2012, 153-157.

As demanding as (1B*) may seem, it is not completely implausible. In NE I.5, Aristotle says "on the good and happiness: to judge from their lives, most people, i.e. the most vulgar, seem - not unreasonably - to suppose it to be pleasure; that is just why they favour the life of consumption." (1095b14-19). Aristotle does not elaborate on this, but it is possible to conceive of the following possibility: one can both regard pleasure as the highest good and perform all the virtuous actions. This person would be doing all the virtuous actions for the sake of pleasure and consumption. For instance, he may perform temperate actions regularly just so he can get delayed gratification.[196] But it seems right to say that this person is not really virtuous: as Aristotle remarks, this person seems to be "vulgar" and "slavish" (b20).[197] At any rate, he does not choose the virtuous actions for their own sakes (1105a33). The starting-point or the "that-for-the-sake-of-which" of his decisions is corrupted. But if a corrupted conception of happiness deprives one of virtue, then one can say the quasi-courageous person cannot be temperate, either. For the quasi-courage corrupts his conception of happiness.

I suspect one conceptual obstacle for accepting (1B*) is the tendency to characterise UV in the following way. We start by imagining that we are already virtuous in one area (say, being temperate), then proceeds to see how having that particular virtue implies having another completely distinct virtue (say, courage). Or, conversely, we imagine how lacking a virtue in one area (quasi-courage in our example) implies lacking another virtue in a different area - we then struggle to explain how we (or anyone) can suddenly “lose” a virtue simply because we are not excellent in a completely different field. But this way of thinking UV is misleading. We should not start by imagining that we already have some virtues. Rather, deep down, we may be more like the vulgar person. We may perform some virtuous actions and appear civilised and so on, but our starting-point is corrupted. We do not necessarily know our deepest motivation. After all, as Aristotle recognises, our character is shaped through our upbringing, and that happens way before we develop our ability to reflect on ourselves critically. So when we behave less-than-ideally in a different situation - say, we exhibit only quasi-courage but not genuine courage in the battlefield - then we *discover* that our lives as we know it is not really governed by the correct conception of the good life. We then *realise* that, despite appearances, we have not had the virtues we thought we have. Premise (1B*) should be understood along similar lines.

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[195] Recall that in section 4.1 I suggest that the debate that concerns UV is orthogonal to the debate that concerns whether the ethical virtues are partly intellectual. The "express" relation suggested by (1B*) pushes us towards the idea that the ethical virtues are, in fact, partly intellectual. But all the same this does not entirely settle that debate. For it is possible for ethical virtue to express a rational state that is *distinct* from itself.
[196] Cf. *Republic* 358e-359a.
[197] Cf. "But the man who thinks he ought to have the excellences for the sake of external goods does deeds that are noble only *per accidens*" (*EE* 1249al5-16).

4.3.3 Wisdom and political expertise

Let us move on to premise (2B), “to be wise is to have holistic evaluative knowledge, which amounts to the possession of all the ethical virtues.” There is a complication when it comes to the *phronimos*’ knowledge. In NE VI.8, Aristotle remarks that: “political expertise (πολιτικὴ) and wisdom (φρόνησις) are the same disposition, but their being is not the same” (1141b25). Depending on how close we take political expertise and wisdom to be, we may have two different readings of premise (2B). I shall try to articulate these two readings in this section, and explain how they lead to UV differently in the next section.

Now, according to what is known as the "Grand End" conception of wisdom,[198] the *phronimos* is equipped with an articulate, comprehensive, substantial and true vision of the highest human good. This vision serves as a "blueprint" that explains and justifies the *phronimos'* choices and actions: all he deliberates about and chooses concerns realising this Grand End. Conceived in this way, wisdom is not unlike such crafts as medicine: for both posit a final end that remains fixed across all situations (health for medicine, happiness for wisdom), and all that one deliberates about is how to apply this ultimate end to varying circumstances.[199]

Arguably, the Grand End theory of wisdom takes very seriously the claim that political expertise and wisdom are the same disposition.[200] For one thing, as Aristotle says in the *Politics*, the statesman is a wise person, at least in the best constitution (1277a14-23). But to be an excellent statesman one needs political expertise. So in the best constitution at least, the wise ruler is also the political expert.[201] "Political expertise and wisdom are the same disposition", then, because the virtue (wisdom) that makes the excellent ruler an excellent individual is also the disposition (political expertise) that makes him a good ruler. But political expertise and wisdom differ in being because what it is to have wisdom is different from what it is to have political expertise: to have wisdom is to be able to exercise one's reason well, whereas to have political expertise is to be able to rule well.

For another, deliberating about how to realise the Grand End sounds like the kind of deliberation the excellent statesman most likely needs in promoting the happiness of the whole community.[202] More specifically, to fully realise the Grand End, the excellent ruler should need at least legislative science, if not also executive and administrative expertise (1141b24-28): he needs to legislate and implement laws that make the citizens virtuous (1102a10, 1180b20–29).

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[198] The term is due to Broadie 1991, 198-202. See also Cooper 1975, 76-88; Bostock 2000, 82-99.

[199] Broadie 1991, 198.

[200] Broadie herself articulates the Grand End theory just to attack it (as a theory of wisdom). But she also recognises that the Grand End fits well with political expertise. Consequently, one way to interpret her analysis is to read it as in effect asking: do we need political expertise in order to be wise? At any rate, I think this can also help us to articulate a rather strong form of UV. See also the next two notes.

[201] Inglis defends the Grand End theory of wisdom by appealing to *Pol.* III.4 (Inglis 2014, 272-276). I focus more on how the Grand End can lead to UV than on whether the Grand End theory itself is defensible.

Now, political expertise takes as its starting-point a correct conception of the highest human good (1094a18–25). However, although everyone agrees that happiness is the highest human good, people disagree about what happiness consists in (1095a15-20). Arguably, then, one needs *philosophical ethics* to have a *correct* conception of happiness. One needs to understand the nature of happiness as the first principle in ethics (1102a2-5). Insofar as politics can be called a "science" (ἐπιστήμη, 1094a26, 1094b15), one *may* even argue that it includes foundational principle about the human good and human nature that holds of necessity of all humankind.[203] At any rate, Aristotle seems to think that the excellent statesman at least needs to be *philosophically informed*,[204] insofar as such philosophical understanding serves the practical purpose of ruling a state well: "the politician must study the soul, but he must study it for his specific purpose" (1102a24; also 1098a30-33). Indeed, Aristotle often remarks that his philosophical discussion in the *Nicomachean Ethics* matters for legislators (e.g.1103b5, 1105a12, 1109a34-35).

So wisdom, political expertise (legislative, administrative and executive) and philosophical ethics converge. We can then reformulate premise (2B) as:

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[202] Broadie 1991, 204.

[203] Nielsen 2015, 39. This is also related to a different but closely related debate: whether *NE* itself can be understood as proposing ethical first principles from which ethical truths can be demonstrated - that is, whether *NE* is a scientific treatise, broadly speaking. For disagreement, see Lorenz and Morison 2019, 453-454; Henry 2015, 189. I am more interested in seeing whether different understanding of wisdom leads to different ways to argue for UV.

[204] Of course, inquiry into first principles and political deliberation are different tasks with different epistemic status, and so we need not suppose that the excellent statesman or the wise person, *as* the excellent statesman, is also a good moral philosopher; Nielsen 2015, 34, 41. If the statesman is not also a philosopher, then he perhaps learns the nature of the Grand End from a philosopher such as Aristotle himself. All the same, philosophical inquiry makes a practical difference.

> 2B-1. To be wise is to have and correctly apply the holistic evaluative knowledge that the philosopher-statesman has or that is philosophically informed (most importantly, knowledge of the nature and the application of the Grand End), which amounts to the possession of all the ethical virtues.

I will explain how 2B-1 entails UV in the next section. For now, let me proceed to articulate another formulation of (2B).

Opposed to the "Grand End" conception is what Sarah Broadie dubbed "ground-level" wisdom. According to this conception, practical deliberation begins by one's being attracted to some ordinary and specific end, such as "gaining a college degree, making a fortune, establishing useful contacts, moving to a place with good opportunities".[205] One deliberates about "how" to achieve these specific ends, not just through simple causal reasoning, but by thinking through if pursuing this goal in this particular situation would be acceptable given *all else* that one cares about. Deliberation starts with a provisional wish for some specific end O, and the agent asks: "would it be good to pursue O in situation S, given that this would require me to do T or U, at the costs of J or K, with consequences V or W, bear in mind about commitment X or Y, etc.?"[206] The provisional wish and the intelligent grasp of the particulars, both factual and with respect to their evaluative significance, constitute the core of practical deliberation. Throughout this process, one's intelligence and one's character cooperate simultaneously: one needs practical intelligence (*nous*) to analyse the situation, but it is one's character that selects and rejects the relevant options.[207] Practical intelligence is especially demonstrated when one needs to navigate unfamiliar situations; practical intelligence reads the initially confusing situation in such a way that converts it into something one's character can naturally respond to.[208] One then makes a rational choice after deliberation. In situation S, one may give up O, or one may pursue O, if the initial wish for O is proved to be practicable, and rationally and morally acceptable here and now all things considered.

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[205] Broadie 1991, 234. See also Lorenz and Morison 2019, 443-447.

[206] The formulation of the question is quoted (with some expansion) from Broadie and Rowe 2002, 50. See also Broadie 1991, 238-241, 247, 250.

[207] Broadie 1991, 246. As we have seen, the ethical virtues allow one to pay attention to the relevant salient features of the situation (section 4.2.3).

One shows one's (ground-level) wisdom, then, when one manages to deliberate well in this way, and succeeds in achieving most if not all of these worthwhile but diverse goals, each at its appropriate time and place. Importantly, one may not have anything as grandiose and expansive as the Grand End in mind.[209] If this is true, then political expertise and wisdom can be understood separately.[210] Further, to have ground-level wisdom, one does not even need to engage in the philosophical inquiry that the *Nicomachean Ethics* itself exemplifies. Relatedly, one can also argue that while the *phronimos* needs to have some understanding of happiness, he does not need to grasp it as something to be proven in a demonstrative science.[211] In a word, philosophical ethics or philosophical inquiry is not a prerequisite of ground-level wisdom.[212]

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[208] Broadie 1991, 250-252. By contrast, Reeve argues that *nous* grasps the nature of *eudaimonia,* understood as first principle of ethics, and this separates natural virtue and proper virtue (Reeve 1992, 30, 86; see also Reeve 2013, 169-171; Morison 2019, 239-242). Moss argues that the role played by *nous* in the theoretical realm is played by habituation in the practical realm (Moss 2012, 206-219). Cf. Nussbaum 1992.

[209] Broadie 1991's argument(s) against the Grand End view is complex and I can only provide an outline here. As she sees it, the Grand End conception of wisdom is false for the following reasons. First, it goes against the common sense idea that there can be non-philosophical but wise agents (201). Second, relatedly, since proper virtue requires wisdom, if the Grand End view is true, then one needs philosophical ethics to be properly virtuous, which is too demanding (201). Third, the Grand End conception renders practical reasoning unnecessarily mysterious or unrealistic (198, 201). Fourth, and relatedly, the Grand End view mistakenly thinks that what is substantially best is the same across all situations (since there is only one end for all deliberation, namely happiness). (241). Fifth, the Grand End view fails to make sense of Aristotle's claim that "virtue makes the end correct" (1144a10; 1144a30-35; 1145a5-7). For Aristotle's account of the ethical virtues does not imply that these virtues generate anything as grandiose as the Grand End (243). Finally, the Grand End conception of wisdom suffers from circularity since, according to Aristotle, the exercise of wisdom itself is part of human happiness. The Grand End conception of wisdom would in effect be saying: the phronimos' knowledge consists in exercising his own wisdom (200). For criticisms, see Kraut 1993.

[210] They are "the same disposition" only in the sense that they are developed by the same training (although expressed very differently). See Broadie 1991, 204; Broadie and Rowe 2002, 373. See also Moss 2012, 183-184.

Broadie does not say this, but given this conception of "ground-level" wisdom, we can reformulate premise (2B) as:

> 2B-2. To have ground-level wisdom is to have holistic evaluative knowledge, which amounts to the possession of all the ethical virtues. For one is wise when one can reliably and consistently make good rational choices with respect to all the specific and diverse ends (that one has) across different situations, and this amounts to possessing all the ethical virtues.[213]

As I understand it, while ground-level wisdom does not entail the Grand End, it does assume some sort of consistency in one's overall evaluative outlook. After all, if one's character is good enough to conduct good deliberation (in selecting and rejecting proposals about how to act here and now given one's wishes), then one's likes and dislikes must have the sort of coherence and stability characteristic of the relevant virtues. There must be a set of things that someone with a certain virtue approves of, and a different set of things that this person disapproves of. One can be said to be wise when one has achieved maximum consistency in what one knows about the good life - through induction based on one's concrete living experiences - and this consistency is then reflected back into one's overall character (in being better able to make good choices).

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[211] Lorenz and Morison 2019.

[212] Broadie 1991, 200.

[213] Wisdom need not be the only intellectual state that contributes to good rational choices. One may also need "comprehension" (σύνεσις, εὐσυνεσία), the ability to judge the wisdom of *others*' decisions, and "sympathy" (γνώμη), the ability the make discretionary or equitable judgments (VI.10-11; see also NE V.10). I leave these out for the sake of simplicity.

Now that I have articulated two readings of premise (2B), let us see how they lead to UV in different ways.[214]

4.3.4 How wisdom implies all the ethical virtues

Political expertise/wisdom (premise 2B-1)

The central idea of 2B-1 is that the philosopher-statesman (or the philosophically-informed statesman) needs all the ethical virtues to grasp and apply the Grand End (a true, comprehensive, articulate conception of human happiness) correctly (cf. *Republic* 484c–d, 501a–c, 520c). Inferior or otherwise defective character fails to grasp and/or apply the Grand End correctly.

But one does not just realise the highest human good in the city at one stroke. Rather, the political expert tries to apply the Grand End in the city through legislative (and administrative and executive) science (*NE* VI.8, X.9). More precisely, the wise political expert tries to realise the correct conception of human happiness through a hierarchy of different levels of ends. Each level of subordinate activities realises the ends of the dominant activities of the next level, and it is the ends of the dominant activities that determine the way and the extent to which the subordinate activities are to be pursued (1094a15-16).[215] But ultimately it is political expertise that sets the normative standard for all pursuits. This makes it the "most architectonic/controlling" (μάλιστα ἀρχιτεκτονικῆς) expertise (1094a27-1094b7). Take, for instance, horsemanship. It helps to realise the end of generalship (e.g. by training horses for the battlefield), and generalship determines the way and the extent to which horsemanship is to be pursued, i.e. it is to be pursued in such a way and to such an extent that it contributes most to the goal of generalship (victory). And political expertise determines the way and the extent to which one should value military victory (over other goods). To say that the philosopher-statesman attempts to apply the Grand End, then, is to say that the Grand End determines the ways in which these layers of activities should be arranged, and the extent to which each should be realised.

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[214] This categorisation perhaps leaves out those who are both philosophically informed but are not in a position to rule: say, a moral philosopher who is also an activist. At any rate, Aristotle seems to be speaking to potential legislators most of the time. Insofar as UV is concerned, perhaps (2B-2) can best accommodate this possibility.

[215] Kraut 1989, 200-203.

Importantly, since the Grand End can only be realised within the context of the hierarchy of ends, we should think of the authority and influence of wisdom/political expertise as permeating through all the different levels of pursuits. As such, there is a lot of room for the various ethical virtues to contribute, just as there are many ways for one to fail to be morally virtuous, and hence fail to grasp and/or apply the Grand End correctly.

To continue with the earlier example, note that although the philosopher-statesman does not necessarily know how to train horses, he should know enough about the art of warfare to know what a good army is, and as such should know what it is to fight courageously with the right equipment. And so he needs to know what it is to be courageous. All the same, in evaluating the value of military victory in comparison to other goods, he is in effect grasping the true value of courage. For he needs to know what courage and the art of warfare are *for*. But war is chosen for the sake of peace where leisure is possible (*Pol.* 1333a35, 1334a4-5; *NE* 1177b4-12). If the leisure is used well (*Pol.* 1334a36-40), peace affords a better form of life, since happiness is found in leisure (1177b5). Courageous activities (including any military activities) will become excessive if one lost sight of this fact. Failing to acknowledge how war is conducted for peace and a better form of life will lead to overvaluing the importance of courage and the related military culture. The mistake is twofold: in failing to see what courage is *for*, one fails to grasp the Grand End correctly, and in overemphasising military culture, one fails to correctly apply the Grand End - that is, one fails to see the way and the extent to which courageous activities should be conducted.

Further, since peacetime makes possible relaxation and forms of amusement, it also sets the stage for the exercise of the social virtues (e.g. wittiness). As such, then, wisdom/political expertise explains how courage and the social virtues, as disconnected as they might seem in terms of their respective characteristic concerns,[216] can be mutually entailing: when we grasp the true value of courage through how it matters in relation to the Grand End (courage is chosen for happiness, which is found in peacetime), we can see how the value of courageous activities lies in the fact that it makes possible a better form of life - a life where the social virtues are active and called for. (Moreover, leisure affords the best kind of happiness since it affords the best use of reason, that is, contemplation (*NE* X.7). As such, then, one might even argue that genuine courage is choice-worthy because it defends a commitment to the best way of life where the best/divine element in human beings can express itself.)[217]

Further, we can also see how temperance is needed. For “if one’s appetites are strong and vigorous, they knock out one’s capacity for rational calculation as well” (1119b10), in which case one cannot even exercise one’s practical intellect. So temperance is at least a prerequisite for one to actually exercise wisdom/political expertise. Further, one might also need temperance to properly execute any appropriate legislations (legislations that seek to realise the Grand End): e.g. one shows temperance when one rejects bribery. Different virtues are also needed to see how some middle-level pursuits facilitate the realisation of the Grand End: for instance, one needs the virtue for handling wealth (generosity or magnificence), and perhaps also justice, to know how to appropriately arrange any business related to profit-making so that the Grand End can be realised.

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[216] MacIntyre 1984, 155.

[217] Richardson Lear 2004, 159-162. Since Aristotle thinks happiness consists in virtuous rational activities (NE I.7), and since wisdom relates to theoretical excellence (σοφία) in a manner comparable to how a steward procures leisure and order for his master (*MM* 1198b), one might think that ultimately it is σοφία, not (practical) wisdom, that explains how UV is true. But then it is hard to see how premise (1) can be reformulated. For it is hard to see how the ethical virtues, even the proper ones, *require* σοφία. At any rate, this does not seem to be what Aristotle has in mind in NE VI.13. But perhaps it is possible to have a hybrid approach? That is, perhaps premise (1) states how ethical virtues require wisdom, and premise (2) states how wisdom defers to the authority of σοφία. If so, premise (2) can be formulated as something like: “to be wise is to be able to appreciate the value of excellent theoretical activities, which amounts to the possession of all the ethical virtues” (Cf. *Republic* 500b7-d7). In this way, we are not arguing for UV through seeing how the *exercise* of proper virtues requires every other virtue, but through seeing how being able to appreciate the *source of value* for every virtue entails possessing all virtues. I am willing to leave this possibility open, but am not sure what to say to it.

Premise (2B-1) is true, then, because to correctly grasp and apply the Grand End, one needs all the ethical virtues to determine the correct way and the correct extent to which all other things should be pursued. The ethical virtues are needed for legislations, policies, decrees at every level, every subordinate pursuit.

Together with premise (1B*), the idea would be the following. The philosopher-statesman is in such a condition that all his emotions, decisions and actions in different areas of life express his correct conception of the nature and the application of the Grand End. It is because he is in such condition that he also possesses all the ethical virtues. One may note how Socratic this argument becomes.[218] Recall, in Chapter 3 I argued that, according to Socrates, the wise person has the right emotions in the sense that his right emotions are part of his wisdom (section 3.3). And virtue is knowledge in the sense that all of one's perceptions, deliberations, emotions, choices and actions express the state of knowledge (section 3.8). Given (1B*) and (2B-1), we can still distinguish the various ethical virtues through their non-rational aspects. But all the same the ideal agent as these premises conceive of him is still quite Socratic in the sense that all his character expresses a robust cognitive state, i.e. his conception of the Grand End.

Ground-level wisdom (premise 2B-2)

The central idea of premise (2B-2) is this: one has the kind of consistency distinctive of the wise person's ethical outlook (to be able to make good rational choices with respect to everything that one cares about across different situations) when one also has all the ethical virtues. But we can distinguish between at least two types of case.

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[218] Broadie also notes that the Grand End conception of wisdom implies a Socratic conception of the moral virtues (Broadie 1991, 201).

If one has a good upbringing and has acquired a sufficient set of good habits, then one must have some sort of (let me call it) “proto-virtues”, in which case one’s overall character must be determinate and reliable enough. As one becomes more mature, one will start to reflect on and learn from one’s evaluative experiences. At some point, one’s attempt to make better rational choices will be accompanied by the growth of one’s practical-intellectual power. If the situations one faces are simple enough, or if they occur within the usual fabric that one is familiar with, the intuitive responses one has internalised given one’s (good) upbringing should suffice for one to deal with the situations adequately. It is possible to live one’s entire life in this way. The development of one’s practical-intellectual power, then, will be more like an intellectual confirmation of what one has acquired in one’s upbringing. The sort of “good life” that one can recognise is very much shaped by the tradition one lives in. The consistency that one developed in one’s overall evaluative outlook, then, reflects the general coherency that encapsulates one’s determinate and reliable character. Premise (2B-2) is true in this case, then, because one’s life is simple enough to leave the constancy of one’s system of values unchallenged, such that articulating the coherency of one’s overall evaluative outlook suffices to make good rational choices.

But if one’s life is more complicated, then it is harder to make choices that are good all things considered. As such choices need to take care of not just what is most pressing, but also (as the analysis above suggests) the relevant costs, the expected consequences, one’s standing commitments, etc., there is plenty of room for the ethical virtues to make a difference. One may need more than one virtue to fully address the relevant costs, and then one may need other virtues to deal with the expected consequences, and yet other virtues to hold on to one’s commitments, and so on. But one needs a more global point of view to see how everything fits together. After all, the wise person is able to deliberate well not in specific contexts, but about “what sorts of things conduce to the good life in general” (1140a25-29). One proto-virtue may pull one in a certain direction, and another proto-virtue pulls one in another, and one needs wisdom to figure out what reason dictates here and now. This may involve balancing or somehow integrating the concerns that two proto-virtues respectively address, or it may involve realising that one of the proto-virtues is actually irrelevant. As one applies this more global sort of deliberation more often, one starts to have a more complete and coherent worldview. One does not need to evaluate everything on a single scale, and one may not even need to assume that every consideration is commensurable, but one at least has to have some thoughts about what a good life is like, given all that one cares about, and what one wants and does not want in such a life. Premise (2B-2) is true in this case, then, because developing such a complete worldview itself amounts to properly going through what different proto-virtues require, and appreciating how everything eventually comes back to what reason dictates. The responses characteristic of the proto-virtues become proper virtues when one figures out what reason demands of one all-things-considered, and in this way one succeeds in making good rational choices. Wisdom entails the presence of ethical virtues, then, because it is through acquiring wisdom that one's proto-virtuous responses become proper virtues. And wisdom entails the possession of *all* the ethical virtues, because the kind of consistency that one develops in developing such a complete worldview cuts across the different areas that the different virtues respectively concern.

Together with (1B*), the idea is this. The virtuous agent with ground-level wisdom is in such a condition that all his decisions, emotions, and actions express the consistency of his overall ethical outlook. This is arguably less Socratic than the version of the argument suggested by (1B*) and (2B-1). For (2B-2) does not demand the virtuous agent to have a true, articulate and comprehensive conception of the highest human good. All it demands is that one has a consistent view of a good life that is also reflected in one's good rational choices.

4.3.5 Critical reflections

In this section I will discuss some possible objections against "the argument from holistic evaluative knowledge".

I have already noted how the argument based on the Grand End conception of wisdom (i.e. (1B*) and (2B-1)) is quite Socratic (see the previous section). This may not be a problem if we consider the argument only in the abstract. But if pay attention to the context of NE VI.13, where Aristotle presents his argument for UV, then we should be more careful. For after Aristotle distinguishes between "in accordance with reason" and "involving reason" in text [T3][C] (1144b25-27), he contrasts his view again with Socrates' position: "so Socrates thought that all virtues are reason (for all are (instances of) knowledge (ἐπιστήμας)), but we think that they involve reason (μετὰ λόγου)" (1144b28-29, as quoted in [T2][A]). This suggests that whatever "μετὰ λόγου" means, it should be understood as Aristotle's deliberate attempt to distance himself from Socrates' view. But if the argument based on the Grand End theory suggests a rather Socratic account of Aristotelian ethics, then we risk losing sight of this detail in the dialectical context of VI.13.

Further, the reference to the philosopher-statesman in (2B-1) may strike us as way too demanding. Why must one possess the knowledge that the philosopher-statesman has (or be philosophically informed) in order to have *any* virtue at all?[219] One can revise the conclusion of (1B*) and (2B-1) to (partly) side-step this problem. One might say these two premises do not lead to UV *per se*, but a specific form of it:

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[219] Perhaps this is something Aristotle inherits from Plato. In the *Republic*, arguably, one is virtuous only if one has all temperance, courage, wisdom and (therefore) justice (433a-c). But only the ruler has wisdom, which allows him to oversee what is beneficial for the city as a whole and even how his city should be related to other cities (412d; 419a-421c; 428b-429a). One may even need to grasp the Form of the Good in order to fully know how the virtues are beneficial, which is something only philosophers can do (505a.ff, 532a-536b). So it turns out only the philosopher-king has genuine virtue. But some argue that, according to the *Republic*, individual soldiers can have genuine courage without also possessing wisdom themselves. See Sedley 2014, 84-89; Devereux 2006, 336-337.

> *Elitist-UV.* For the philosopher-statesman (or the philosophically-informed statesman), if he possesses one of the virtues, he necessarily possesses all the others.[220]

In this way, *Elitist-UV* concerns only the virtues of the philosopher-statesman; it does not make any claim about non-philosophers. Consequently, one is free to say that the non-philosophers need not acquire the architectonic knowledge that the philosopher-statesman has.[221] But then it is also unclear if UV is true of them.[222]

Another possible advantage of *Elitist-UV* is that it can accommodate the large-scale virtues with relative ease. For arguably the philosopher-statesman is in a position to possess and exercise magnificence and magnanimity. By contrast, the same is not obviously true for the version of the argument based on ground-level wisdom (i.e. (1B*) and (2B-2)). But since magnificence concerns the same kinds of goods as generosity (wealth), and magnanimity concerns the same kinds of goods as proper pride (honour), one can perhaps reasonably refine UV into saying, not that it literally covers every virtue, but rather:

> *UV-Refined*. If one possesses one of the virtues, one necessarily possesses every virtue of every field, and if a field is related to more than

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[220] Premise (1B*) also needs to be revised accordingly. Instead of making a general claim about virtue and wisdom, it needs to be revised into a claim that applies specifically to the virtues of the philosopher-statesman. I leave this out for the sake of simplicity.

[221] There is another ambiguity concerning the scope of (2B-1). There can be more than one ruler (cf. *Pol.* 1287b30-35; *Republic* 445d). But then it is unclear if UV applies to one ideal individual or to a group of virtuous agents who collectively possess the required holistic evaluative knowledge. If it is the latter, it is unclear how the ethical virtues of this group should be "distributed".

[222] Cf. *Pol.* III.11, where Aristotle argues that there is a good form of majority rule: "for being many, each of them can have some part of virtue and practical wisdom, and when they come together, the multitude is just like a single human being, with many feet, hands, and senses, and so too for their character traits and wisdom" (1281b1-5). Gottlieb interestingly suggests that "perhaps the best argument for the coalescing of a cohesive and correct decision on the part of the majority rests on the thesis of the unity of the virtues itself…for the more people are involved, the more various their partial vicious tendencies will be, and the more likely it will be that only their virtuous judgments will coalesce" (Gottlieb 2009, 206-207).

> one virtue, then one necessarily possesses *at least one of* the virtues of that field (that is, magnificence or at least generosity in the field of wealth, and magnanimity or at least proper pride in the field of honour).[223]

But perhaps a more problematic aspect of this interpretation is how intellectualist (2B-1) is. Recall, in section 4.3.4, I suggest that the philosopher-statesman should know what a good army is, if he is to know the way and the extent to which military activities should be pursued. As such, he needs to know what fighting courageously on the battlefield is like. As the argument goes, he therefore needs to have the virtue of courage. But is the inference from “knowing what it is like to fight courageously” to “actually possessing the virtue of courage” valid? Surely, one might say, it is possible to gain the knowledge about battlefield experience from, say, others’ testimonies?

One can reply that one has to possess genuine courage if one is to have authentic and correct grasp of what courage is *for*. For instance, one can argue that only the genuinely courageous can realise that despite all the death and wounds that fighting on the battlefield necessarily brings, fighting courageously is still pleasant to the extent it attains the noble end (1117b8-16). Wisdom/political expertise then locates this understanding one earned on the ground within the hierarchy of ends. If so, (2B-1) need not assume an overly intellectualised conception of the ethical virtues, for it is the ethical virtues themselves (with all their rational and non-rational aspects) that provide the understanding in the first place. What wisdom does is to integrate such understanding into a more comprehensive framework. Wisdom implies all the ethical virtues, then, not because we need to assume an intellectualised conception of the ethical virtues, but because one does not have an adequate grasp of the Grand End if one does not have all the virtues.[224]

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[223] Drefcinski 2006, 209.

[224] McDowell 2009, 47-48. Similar reasoning applies to (2B-2), for according to this account, one develops one’s wisdom based on making inductions from one’s ethical experiences.

But there is a general question that bears on “the argument from holistic knowledge” as such, regardless of how we flesh out the details. What makes the proponents of this argument think that the human psyche is constituted in such a way that it can be shaped into having all the ethical virtues? Recall, in text [T2][C], Aristotle says that in the case of natural virtues, it is possible that “the same person is not best adapted by nature to all of them, so that at a given moment he will have acquired one, but not another” (1144b35-37). And this is impossible in the case of the proper virtues. Wisdom is supposed to give us the explanation. Either one fails to grasp and apply the Grand End correctly (2B-1), or one fails to develop a consistent ethical outlook (that reflects back into one’s overall character) (2B-2). But this does not answer the question. For one can still ask: is it realistic to think that any human agent can possess this robust and all-encompassing virtue called “wisdom”? What explains how the human psyche can be “adapted by nature” - to use Aristotle’s own language - to have all the ethical virtues?

Note that in the *Protagoras,* when Socrates argues that all virtues are identical with knowledge, he says since virtue is knowledge, it must be teachable (361b). This may not be a satisfactory answer, but at least it is one possible answer to our question: according to Socrates, the human psyche is such that virtue/knowledge can be acquired through teaching. Aristotle, of course, says that the ethical virtues are acquired through habituation, and the intellectual virtues are acquired through teaching (1103a15-20). But he does not explain this in connection with UV. So Aristotle needs to explain how UV can be true at the level of the human psyche without at the same committing himself to Socratic intellectualism. In the next chapter, I will discuss another type of argument for UV that can help with just this problem. According to this type of argument, UV is true because it is only in this way that the soul can be in (maximum) unity. We do not have to worry that the human psyche is not so constituted to have all the ethical virtues, for to have all the ethical virtues just is to have the human psyche to be in its best condition.

Conclusion

This chapter discusses two possible reconstructions of the argument for UV that appeals to the nature of wisdom. The first is based on the idea that wisdom equips one to act well all things considered. The second is based on the holistic evaluative knowledge that the *phronimos* has. Both are inadequate. But a few major lessons can be drawn from the discussion. First, in defending Aristotle's version of UV, one needs to explain not just how the deliberative aspects of the virtues are intertwined, but also how the non-rational aspects of the virtues are intertwined. Second, one needs to explain how Aristotle distances himself from Socrates' position in defending his version of UV. Third, one needs to explain not just UV, but also the more fundamental assumption about the human soul: how is it that the human psyche can possess all the ethical virtues?

Chapter 5: Unity of the Soul and the Unity of Virtues

Introduction

The previous chapter explores the kind of argument for UV that appeals to the nature of wisdom. This chapter discusses the kind of argument that appeals to the unity of the soul. Section 5.1 starts by motivating this approach. Section 5.2 discusses what I call “the argument from ‘the fully integrated soul’”. According to this argument, the fully integrated soul implies UV because such a soul is all-round excellent. But this risks trivialising Aristotle’s rejection of Socratic Intellectualism. Section 5.3 examines the relation between UV and general justice. I argue that in defending UV we should also be able to explain how the ideal agent has the virtue of general justice, and that the argument of this chapter fails to do so. I conclude by extracting a few lessons that we can learn from the discussion.

5.1 Some motivations

This chapter explores the thought that UV is true because the agent with proper virtues has a well-ordered psyche. But before I go into the details, let me try to motivate this approach.

First, recall that in text [T1][C], Aristotle says:

> [T1][C] So just as in the case of the belief-bearing part (τοῦ δοξαστικοῦ) there are two types, cleverness and wisdom, so also in the case of the character-bearing part (τοῦ ἠθικοῦ) there are two, natural virtue and proper virtue, and of these, proper virtue does not come into being without wisdom (1144b13-15)

But cleverness can be unscrupulous (1144a28), and natural virtues are harmful (1144b10). So the best condition of the belief-bearing part is being wise, and the best condition of the character-bearing part is to have proper virtue. But proper virtue is inseparable from wisdom. This suggests that the best condition of the character-bearing part of the soul, if it is to be in this condition, needs to cooperate with the best condition of the belief-bearing part of the soul. The soul of the agent with proper virtue is such that these two parts cooperate well with each other - this seems to indicate psychic order. The inseparability of proper ethical virtue and wisdom reflects how the orderly soul is structured. But to have wisdom is to have all the proper ethical virtues (1145a1). So the immediate context of VI.13 suggests the following claim: UV is true because the soul of the genuinely virtuous agent is structured in such an orderly way that wisdom implies all the proper ethical virtues.

Second, it is, unsurprisingly, characteristic of the virtuous agent to have a well-ordered soul. After all, this is what distinguishes the virtuous person from the continent and the incontinent person (1102b25-30). It is also common for Aristotle to characterise the individual virtues in terms of how the relevant passions agree with what (correct) reason prescribes (e.g. 1117a5-7; 1119b15; 1152a1-4), or in terms of how the virtuous person does whatever (correct) reason prescribes (e.g. 1126a1; cf. 1148a30-35). Further, the virtuous person finds enjoyment or pain in the right things (1104b13); wrong pleasure or pain corrupt the starting-point of actions (1140b15-20). One might say, in the case of the virtuous agent, the exercise of reason is fluent in the sense that it meets no obstacles and is unchallenged. This is characteristic of an orderly soul. Now, if the notion of "proper virtue" in NE VI.13 is a continuation of whatever is said about the ethical virtues in NE II-V,[225] then similar claims about a well-ordered soul should apply to the person with proper virtues. Consequently, this thought seems worth considering: when Aristotle says wisdom implies the presence of all the proper ethical virtues, he means to say wisdom implies all the virtues because the agent with the proper ethical virtues, *qua* such an agent, has a well-ordered soul. At least, the passions (that are pertinent to the different virtues respectively) of the agent with proper virtues have to be such that they *do not distort* the judgments of reason.[226]

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[225] Nielsen 2023, 27.

Third, Irwin once points out that since virtue demands success (in hitting the mean), and since to succeed in acting well one needs a considerable amount of empirical knowledge (e.g. to succeeds in acting courageously in war, one needs to have the relevant military knowledge), then, if UV is true, then it seems one needs to have "an encyclopaedic range of empirical knowledge" in order to be virtuous, which is absurd.[227] I tend to think the problem is exaggerated.[228] However, this also points to a deeper issue. Recall the distinction between having a virtue and exercising that very virtue. In some situations, external conditions may hinder the exercise of a certain virtue, but all the same that does not mean we do not have that virtue at all (section 4.1). Perhaps Irwin has this worry because he is mainly thinking of virtues in terms of how they should be exercised. But what if we can think of the virtues from the other side of the story? Instead of focusing on what the virtues have to *achieve*, perhaps we should ask: what is it about the *agent* that if he is to have any virtue at all, he must possess every one of them? That a genuinely virtuous agent should have a well-ordered soul seems to be one plausible answer.

Finally, Aristotle is surely not unfamiliar with the idea that psychic unity somehow grounds UV. In the *Republic*, one has the virtue of justice only if one "binds together all of these [i.e. reason, spirit, appetites] and, from having been many, becomes entirely one, temperate and harmonious" (443c8-e). In the *Gorgias*, it is said that the good soul is the self-controlled (σώφρων) soul, and that the bad soul is "the foolish and undisciplined" (ἀκόλαστος) one. Socrates even proceeds to articulate some version of IoV based on the idea that the self-controlled soul will do whatever is appropriate in different circumstances (*Gorgias* 507a-c). It is at least worth considering whether Aristotle also means to follow a similar line of argument when he argues for UV.

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[226] This is the motivation behind Halper's account (Halper 1999, 119-122, 132-133). See also note 229 and 242.

[227] Irwin 1988, 75-76.

[228] For one thing, UV presupposes some account of moral education. One has to have some exposure to the relevant field of experience first, before one can be said to have any virtue. One at least has to try to acquire the virtues by performing the relevant kinds of actions (NE II.2). Presumably, one also acquires the empirical knowledge that one needs in this process. For another, one does not have to have all the technical expertise to be wise; sometimes one needs only to know which technical expert to defer to when such technical knowledge is needed.

5.2 The argument from 'the fully integrated soul'

In this section, I will explore the idea that UV is true because the person whose soul is fully integrated has all the proper ethical virtues. As Gottlieb (2009) gives us the most elaborate version of this strategy, I will begin by focusing on her interpretation.[229] But I will also try to push her ideas beyond what she has already said.

5.2.1 Choosing to act virtuously

As Gottlieb understands it, Aristotle's argument goes like this:[230]

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[229] Halper 1999 also gives a similar account. He suggests that we can distinguish between virtue as it is expressed in paradigmatic behaviour (what he calls "proper virtue") and virtue as agreement of passions and (correct) reason (what he calls "psychic virtue"), such that UV is true in the sense that the exercise of any proper virtue requires the possession of all the psychic virtues. (119). I find his account problematic. For one thing, I do not think the distinction between "proper virtue" and "psychic virtue" is helpful. He cites 1115b17-20 as evidence (121-122), but that passage seems to suggest, not that there is a distinct "psychic virtue", but that one has to get it right not just in one's actions, but also in one's emotions. After all, Aristotle is very explicit that to be virtuous one has to hit the mean in both actions and emotions (1106b15-30). For another, one of Halper's concerns seems to be that courage should be part of UV, but at the same time we should be able to find expressions of courage outside of military contexts. This may suit the taste of the modern reader better. And it is true that Plato's Socrates also has similar thoughts (see esp. *Laches*). But all the same it is also not uncommon for Plato and Aristotle to think that courage is essentially expressed in war (e.g. *Protagoras* 326b; *Republic* 404a-e, 539e; *Pol.* VIII.4. See also Marrou 1964, 63-75)). The insight of Halper's account is that we can think of the *interrelations* of virtues more easily if UV does not require the full expressions of every virtue, but only the psychic counterparts. But all the same I think there is nothing that Halper's account can explain that Gottlieb's cannot.

[230] Reconstructed from Gottlieb 2009, 106.

> 1E. The proper ethical virtues and wisdom are inseparable, in the sense that one can have any proper ethical virtues only if one's non-rational soul is fully integrated with the (proper functioning) practical intellect.
> 2E. The full integration of one's soul amounts to the possession of all the proper ethical virtues.
> Hence, UV: to have one of the proper ethical virtues one necessarily has all the proper ethical virtues.

Premise (1E) is the result of Gottlieb's particular interpretation of the κατὰ λόγον/ μετὰ λόγου distinction in text [T3][C]. According to Gottlieb, when Aristotle says virtues are disposition that "involve the correct reason" (μετὰ τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου), he means to say that the virtuous agent *chooses* to act virtuously. By contrast, if the agent's action is such that it just happens to coincide with what wisdom prescribes, but the agent himself does not choose nor even recognise that the action is the correct one, then this is a case of "in accordance with correct reason" (κατὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον).[231] This interpretation is suggested by the following passage from MM:

> …the men of the present day say better; for they say that excellence is doing what is good in accordance with right reason. Even they, indeed, are not right. For one might do what is just without any choice at all or knowledge of the good, but from an irrational impulse, and yet do this rightly and in accordance with right reason (I mean he may have acted in the way that right reason would command); but all the same, this sort of conduct does not merit praise (1198a16-21).[232]

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[231] Gottlieb 2009, 101.

[232] In NE VI.4, Aristotle describes craft as a state "with true reason" (μετὰ λόγου ἀληθοῦς; 1140a20-21), echoing how virtue is described as "with the correct reason" (μετὰ τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου) in NE VI.13. Gottlieb argues that virtue and craft are different in that learning a craft does not require acquiring the correct motives. That is, mastering the skills of, say, house-building does not require the agent to know when it is *good* to build a house, e.g. whether it is a good decision to build a house at a particular time, all-things-considered. But to exercise ethical virtues, one needs to perform the virtuous action knowing that it is the right thing to do (1140b6-10). In other words, one has to correctly *choose* the action in question, and one has to choose the

But if virtue involves correct reason in the sense that the virtuous agent chooses to act virtuously, then one has proper ethical virtue only if one's choices are good. Choices are made correct by both ethical virtue and wisdom (1139a20-1139b5; 1144a7-10; 1144a20-35; 1145a1-6). But ethical virtue and wisdom are the excellent conditions of the non-rational soul and the practical intellect respectively. It follows that to be virtuous in the proper sense both parts of the soul have to be in their excellent conditions. Since the function of the rational soul is to command and that of the non-rational soul is to listen to reason's command (NE I.13), so to have both parts of the soul to function properly just is to have the two fully integrated. Hence, premise (1E): to have any proper ethical virtue one's non-rational soul has to be fully integrated with the proper functioning practical intellect.

5.2.2 The fully integrated soul

So, proper ethical virtue is the virtue of the person whose soul is fully integrated. This seems right: one has proper ethical virtue only if one can be called good without qualification (1144b31-32), and the person who has a fully integrated soul should be good in precisely this way. This then allows us to give an interpretation of the distinction between natural virtue and proper virtue. Aristotle says even children and animals have natural virtues, but they cannot have proper virtue (1144b9, in text [T1][B]). Children cannot have proper virtues because their practical intellect is not adequately developed (*Pol.* 1260a13). And although Aristotle does say that animals can have *phronesis* and related intellectual capacities (*NE* 1141a28; *HA* 588a25-b3, 618a25–30; *GA* 750a13–15), these practical-intellectual capacities are species-dependent (1141a30-35). Animals

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action for its own sake. This echoes how Aristotle conceives of the difference between craft and virtue in NE II.4: to exercise craft properly, it suffices that the *products* of the craft have the right qualities, but to act virtuously (as the virtuous agent would act), one has to choose the actions themselves (1105a26-35). So the ethical virtues are μετὰ λόγου in the way that the agent is described as acting virtuously in NE II.4. It is an extra merit of this interpretation that it can preserve the continuity between NE II.4 and NE VI.13. See Gottlieb 2009, 99-102.

cannot have *human's* practical intellect.[233] Hence they cannot have proper ethical virtue, which, presumably, refers to human virtue.[234]

Premise (1E) is most evident in the case of temperance. For Aristotle explicitly says that in the case of the temperate agent, reason and appetite are in harmony, and both reason and appetite aim at the fine (1119b16). One has the virtue of temperance when one's soul is fully integrated in this way. Gottlieb does not say this,[235] but arguably the same point applies to the virtue of courage. For let us look at courage caused by spirit in NE III.8 again:

> …the "courage" that comes about through temper (τὸν θυμὸν) does seem to be the most natural form, and to *be* courage once the factors of decision and the end for the sake of which have been added. Human beings too, then, are distressed when angry, and take pleasure in retaliating; but people who fight from these motives are effective in fighting, not courageous, since they do not fight because of the fine, or as the correct reason directs, but because of affection (1117a5-8).

If one has only this sort of courage, then one fights through temper. This is similar to courage because "courageous people too are strong-tempered; for temper especially strains to go out and meet dangers" (1116b25-26). But this person is not courageous in the proper sense because he is mistaken about the for-the-sake-of-which he fights: it should not be for expressing anger, nor for retaliation, but for the fine.[236] One may say, then, temper or the spirited part (τὸν θυμὸν) of this person's soul is not fully integrated with the correct reason. Otherwise, both his reason and his temper would aim at the fine. Just as one can have proper temperance only if one's appetites are fully integrated with the correct reason, one can have proper courage only if one's temper is fully integrated with the correct reason.

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[233] *HA* 588a18–29 makes it clear that animals have intellectual capacities only by analogy. See also Lennox 1999, 16-18; Leunissen 2012, 513-514. See also Smith 1996, 68.

[234] Gottlieb suggests that the person with natural virtue can act in accordance with reason. She is mostly thinking of the continent person and/or the person who acts from the relevant temperament (Gottlieb 2009, 108-109). But this entirely ignores the natural virtue of animals and children: while we may be tempted to describe their actions in a way that echoes whatever wisdom may prescribe in similar situations, animals and children cannot be acting "in accordance with reason" in the relevant sense. For the notion of acting "in accordance with reason" is introduced to illustrate why Socrates is in a way correct to say that the virtues are (instances of) wisdom. And Aristotle explains this not so long after saying that natural virtues lack *nous* - whatever acting "in accordance with reason" means, it is something natural virtue cannot achieve, and animals and children are mentioned to sharpen this contrast.

[235] She very briefly alludes to a contrast between "bravery and mock states that resemble bravery" later (Gottlieb 2009, 170).

So it seems premise (1E) is vindicated: one has the ethical virtues only if one's (relevant aspects of the) non-rational soul is fully integrated with the proper functioning practical intellect.

5.2.3 Uniting the virtues

Let us proceed to (2E), "The full integration of one's soul amounts to the possession of all the proper ethical virtues." Is it true? Gottlieb herself cited a line from NE IX.4,[237] where Aristotle is talking about friendship towards oneself: "the excellent person is in harmony with himself and strives for the same things with the whole of his soul" (1166a13). Now, if the virtuous person is in this excellent condition in all aspects of his practical life (his desires, choices, emotions, etc.), and if any exercise of any virtue must involve at least some of these aspects, then arguably he has all the ethical virtues. For according to (1E), one has an ethical virtue just in case one's soul is fully integrated in the way explained above. What (2E) claims is only that the same excellent condition of the soul underlies all the ethical virtues.

If this account is right, then one should expect that *any* imperfections in the practical intellect will imply some other imperfections in the non-rational part of the soul, and vice versa. And Gottlieb does give an example to illustrate this point.[238] Suppose one has the vice of boastfulness. This person will think too highly of himself, and so will be more prone to think that others are belittling him even when they are not, and as a result will be more likely to have the vice of irascibility (1125b30). So an intellectual flaw about one's worth (thinking too highly of oneself) implies a flaw in one's emotional life (being prone to anger). We can think of similar examples in relation to anger. Someone who is deficient about anger - who has the vice of "spiritless" - is, as Aristotle remarks, "not the sort to defend himself", and "putting up with being a target of abuse, and not intervening when those close to one are treated that way, is slavish" (1126a5-9; cf. *Rhetoric* II.2). This person is likely to be cowardly, since he does not feel the right fear and right confidence. He is then likely to judge the wrong things as inspiring confidence. So a flaw in one's emotions - feeling less than one should in relation to anger - implies a flaw in one's judgements, and will likely lead to wrong actions.[239]

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[236] See also Smith 1996, 71-73.
[237] Gottlieb 2009, 104.

The point is that it is the excellent condition of one's soul that is doing the work of uniting the virtues. One major advantage of this move is that we can now easily explain why the continent (and the incontinent) does not fulfil UV. Recall, the problem is that one may appear to be virtuous in one area but is merely continent in another area (section 4.2.3). "The argument from 'acting well'" faces this problem because there is no non-question-begging way to insist that one must hit the mean in both actions and emotions in all areas. "The argument from holistic evaluative knowledge" tries to solve this by hypothesising that if one is virtuous, then every aspect of one's practical life has to express one's correct conception of the good life (i.e. premise (1B*)). If one is merely continent in some area, then in that area some aspects of one's character fail to express wisdom. Regardless of whether (1B*) can be justified, this is a long way to meet the challenge.

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[238] Gottlieb 2009, 107.

[239] Wittiness and friendliness may not involve (full-fledged) emotional responses in the same way that the virtues of courage and temperance do, but they can still be understood as perfections of one's character in the sense that they involve learned dispositions that are fully incorporated with one's judgments. See Fortenbaugh 2002, 87-91.

According to “the argument from ‘the fully integrated soul’”, we can now say that if one is merely continent in some area, then one’s soul is simply not in the excellent condition (not fully integrated), and hence is not virtuous in Aristotle’s sense.

Similarly, one can explain how one cannot be fully virtuous in one area but have only quasi-virtue in another area. We have already discussed the example of quasi-courage: courageous actions done from temper are not genuine courage. If one performs courageous actions just for retaliation, then one’s temper is not fully integrated with reason. But then that means one’s soul is not in its excellent condition, in which case one’s virtuous actions in other areas are also not expressions of genuine virtue.

This account also has an extra theoretical advantage. Note that even the continent, the incontinent, and the vicious exercise both the rational and the non-rational part of their soul.[240] This is just how Aristotle thinks of rational agency, as opposed to mere voluntary action. (Both children and animals can act voluntarily, but they cannot exercise rational agency, for they cannot act on decision, see 1111b5-20). But the continent, the incontinent, and the vicious fail to exercise the different parts of their soul *well*. To exercise the parts of the soul well, one needs to have the relevant virtues. But according to this argument, that means one’s soul has to be fully integrated, and that implies having all the ethical virtues. So the same set of conditions explain how the ethical virtues are united and how the continent, the incontinent, and the vicious fail to be virtuous: they fail to have their soul fully integrated.[241] Since one needs to explain how these agents are not fully virtuous *anyway* - regardless of what one thinks about UV - this argument for UV manages to explain how UV is true using resources that are already part of Aristotle’s standard theory. One does not need to hypothesise anything as robust as (1B*). In this way, “the argument from ‘the fully integrated soul’” is fairly elegant.[242]

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[240] As Bonasio nicely puts it, “the parts of the soul are de facto—not only ideally—related” (Bonasio 2020, 38).

[241] The continent person might appear to do the right action. But without the correct motivation, his actions do not have the same status as those of the virtuous person. See Gottlieb 2009, 170-171.

5.2.4 “Excellent condition of the soul”

Gottlieb’s account invites us to think of the ethical virtues in more robust terms. To have the ethical virtues does not just involve choosing, acting, and feeling correctly, but also involves having a properly integrated soul. What should we think of the idea that it is the same excellent condition of the soul that underlies all the various ethical virtues (i.e. premise (2E))? Do we have independent ground to accept this idea? Of course, as we have seen in section 5.1, Aristotle has every reason to welcome the notion of a well-ordered psyche. However, “the argument from ‘the fully integrated soul’” gives much more weight to the idea of the orderly soul than is usually recognised. And yet despite the passages where Aristotle tries to distinguish the virtuous from the continent and incontinent (e.g. 1102b15-11034), he is not entirely explicit about how the various ethical virtues are all underlined by the same state of the soul. In fact, in NE II-V, he is more concerned about *differentiating* the ethical virtues. So more needs to be said about how the different ethical virtues can be seen as expressing the same underlying condition.

Deslauriers (2002) is relevant in this context. She argues that we should understand the interrelation between the ethical virtues in the following way: collectively speaking, all the ethical virtues are numerically the same disposition (ἕξις), but each has a different being (εἶναι).[243] The ethical virtues are numerically the same disposition - characterised as “(ethical) virtue without qualification” - but

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[242] Grounding UV in psychic order also helps explain how the ethical virtues can be attributed to the contemplative life (1178b5-9; 1179a5-19). The philosopher, insofar as he spends his life in study, does not face as much ethical challenges as the politician. But he does have the ethical virtues insofar as he has a well-ordered soul. See also Halper 1999, 133-135.

[243] That is, we should think of the interrelation between the ethical virtues on the model of political expertise (πολιτικὴ) and wisdom (φρόνησις): they are the same disposition, but different in being (1141b24). See Deslauriers 2002, 117-125. We have seen how the identity of political expertise and wisdom can be part of the argument for UV (see section 4.3.3 and 4.3.4). But it is the logical structure suggested by this example that interests us here.

what it is to be, say, courageous, is not the same as *what* it is to be, say, just. Further, we can better understand how the ethical virtues are mutually entailing by paying more attention to what Aristotle says about the logic of sameness. More specifically, she argues that the ethical virtues form a numerical unity in the way that two or more properties of a substance form a unity: they are predicated of the same substance.[244]

Of course, as Deslauriers acknowledges, a disposition (ἕξις) is not a substance in Aristotle's ontology, but she says: "a [disposition]…can be logically equivalent to a substance, in the sense that it can be qualified by properties, and can be what underlies those properties".[245] Now, a peculiar property of a substance is such that it belongs necessarily to the substance alone (although it does not specify its essence) and is predicated convertibly of it (*Top.* 102a17-19). For instance, possessing knowledge of grammar is a peculiar property of humans, in the sense that it belongs necessarily to humans alone, and that everything that is a human also possesses the knowledge of grammar, and everything that possesses the knowledge of grammar is also a human. But since peculiar properties of a substance belong necessarily to the substance alone, these properties (of the same substance) are mutually entailing. Similarly for the ethical virtues: since the ethical virtues are (logically speaking) properties of the same disposition - "virtue without qualification" - they must be mutually entailing.[246] As Deslauriers understands it, the different ethical virtues are individuated by how the underlying disposition is exercised in different contexts concerning different objects - more specifically, by how the desire for the good is manifested and realised in different circumstances.[247]

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[244] Two other possible kinds of numerically unity are ruled out: a) numerically one because definitionally one. This implies that the two items are also one in being. But this doesn't fit how the interrelations between the ethical virtues should be understood. For Deslauriers is trying to argue that the ethical virtues are "one disposition, but different in being". And b) numerically one in the way two accidents (as opposed to properties) are predicated of the same substance. This is ruled out because accidents of a substance are not mutually entailing (Deslauriers 2002, 122).

[245] Deslauriers 2002, 121.

[246] Deslauriers 2002, 122-124.

[247] Deslauriers 2002, 114-5, 121, 124.

So - to return to our original context - perhaps the same excellent condition of the soul underlies all the ethical virtues in Deslauriers' technical sense that the various virtues are properties of the same underlying (substance-like) disposition. But in what sense are the ethical virtues the same disposition? After all, each ethical virtue is a disposition already (NE II.5). In fact, it seems that the various ethical virtues are different from one another *as different dispositions*, for each is an intermediate disposition between two extremes, and different virtues are contrasted with different extremes (surprisingly, Deslauriers does not mention the Doctrine of the Mean at all when she tries to reconstruct how Aristotle individuates the virtues). Deslauriers says she finds evidence for her view in the passage on general justice:[248]

> what we have said makes clear how virtue and justice of this sort differ from each other: while it is the same disposition, what it is to be the first is not the same as what it is to be the second; rather, insofar as the state relates to another person, it is justice, while insofar as it is this sort of disposition without such a qualification, it is virtue (1130a10-14).

But general justice and "virtue without qualification" can be seen as the same disposition only in the sense that general justice is complete virtue, i.e. it is not any individual virtue. So even if general justice and "virtue without qualification" can be numerically the same disposition, it does not follow that all the individual virtues must also be numerically the same disposition as "virtue without qualification".[249]

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[248] Deslauriers 2002, 122-4.

[249] Of course, it is still possible that if one's soul is fully integrated, then one also has general justice. And it may well be the case that "general justice" helps illustrate what it is to have a well-ordered psyche. So even though the notion of general justice does not prove that all ethical virtues are numerically the same disposition, it can still help us understand how premise (2E) is true - how the excellent condition of the soul underlies all the ethical virtues. More on this below.

However, regardless of whether Deslauriers gets the logical details right, I think she is onto something. There is a sense in which we can refer to one's character as a whole, and the individual ethical virtues (or vices, for that matter) are just "aspects" of one's character understood as a whole. This can be true no matter what we think about UV. For regardless of whether we attribute any virtue to an agent, we can still talk about his or her character in *some* way. And there is a sense in which we want to talk about someone's character only when we have an understanding of the *person* as a whole. When (2E) claims that full integration of one's soul amounts to the possession of all the ethical virtues, then, the claim is that full integration of the soul amounts to *all-round* excellence. To put it slightly differently, when one has all the ethical virtues, one's character is excellent *as a whole*.

Aristotle can be seen as hinting at such a holistic conception of character when he compares virtue with health in NE II.2:

> It is the nature of such things [the inexact things that concern medicine] to be destroyed by defect and excess, as we see in the case of strength and of health…both excessive and defective exercise destroys the strength, and similarly drink or food which is above or below a certain amount destroys the health, while that which is proportionate both produces and increases and preserves it. So too is it, then, in the case of temperance and courage and the other virtues. (1104a10-25)

According to this characterisation, acts or treatments that promote health - well-functioning of the body - are intermediate, and acts that fail to maintain the function of the body (lack of nutrition etc.) are deficient, while acts that give more than the body can take (absorb, digest) are excessive. Surely we have to consider the body as a whole in determining the things that really preserve and promote health. After all, it is the whole body, and not just some parts of it, that is destroyed by excess and deficiency.[250]

The analogy with health is, of course, reminiscent of *Republic* IV.[251] At 443d, after explaining how justice (in the case of the individual) is the harmony of the different parts of the soul, Socrates says that just action is that which "preserves this inner harmony and helps achieve it" and unjust action that which "destroys this harmony, and ignorance the belief that oversees it" (443e4-444a1). This is analogous to how health is the harmony of the different elements of the body (444d).

In general, the analogy with health suggests the following understanding of what a character is. Just as the body can be seen as some sort of (biological) constitution that underlies and undergoes the process of growth and decay, one's character can also be seen as a constitution that underlies and undergoes development (when it is becoming virtuous) and destruction (when it is becoming vicious). In both NE II.2 and *Republic* IV, whatever preserves and promotes the constitution is virtuous, and whatever undermines it is vicious. So perhaps this is the idea that Deslauriers is trying to articulate, and that premise (2E) in this argument is supposed to capture: one's character should be understood as a whole that underlies and undergoes development and destruction, and whose excellence depends on the condition of its parts.

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[250] Cf. "We have spoken previously about each particular virtue and since we have separately distinguished their capacities we should also make articulations about the virtue which is composed of them, which we already referred to as "nobility" (καλοκἀγαθίαν). It is obvious that whoever is going to genuinely earns this appellation must have the particular virtues. Nor can it be otherwise in other domain; for no one is healthy in the body as a whole, but not in any part of it; rather, it is necessary that all parts or most parts and the most important ones should be in the same condition as the whole (EE 1248b8-15; trans. Inwood and Woolf)".

[251] It is quite common in ancient times to compare healthiness with virtue and sickness with vice. The author of *Airs, Waters, Places* thought that bad character is similar to disease (ch.5). The author of *Regimen* thought that goodness/badness of the soul is caused by the same factors that cause healthiness/sickness of the body (I. 35), and it also emphasises the importance of having balanced states. See Hutchinson 1988, 18-20.

Here we come to one final nuance of "the argument from 'the fully integrated soul'". The agent with proper virtue is the one whose soul is fully integrated. This allows us to appreciate a deeper sense in which being virtuous requires acting from a "firm and unchanging disposition" (1105a33). This does not just consist in being able to perform a certain action type reliably. Rather, the thought is that the constitution of the excellent soul determines in advance not just what one will do given the situation, but also what one would do in a counterfactual situation (but one which within reasonable degree of differences). A genuinely courageous person is prepared to act courageously not just *when* courage is called for; more importantly, he is prepared to act in the way courage (or other virtues) requires *should* the situation present different challenges, even though these challenges are not present in the actual situation. Perhaps this is why unexpected emergencies reveal more our character (1117a20). The person who only has natural virtue(s) may happen to act similarly in the counterfactual situation, but that would be just a result of (good) *luck*.[252] The constitution of one's excellent character should be robust enough to determine one's responses in both actual and counterfactual situations.[253] It is this robust quality of the excellent soul that "the argument from 'the fully integrated soul'" wants to capture.

Now we have a clearer idea about what it means to think of the ethical virtues in more robust terms: the ethical virtues are not just excellent responses (decisions, actions, emotions, etc.) vis-à-vis different areas of life, they are also expressions of how one's character as a whole is in a robust and excellent condition.[254]

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[252] Cf. Gottlieb 2009, 110; Broadie and Rowe 2002, 19.

[253] A similar point applies to the healthy body: if one's body is strong/healthy enough, then it should be able to endure not just actual illness, but also possible diseases in counterfactual situations, as long as those counterfactual situations are within reasonable degree of differences. That the body can endure possible challenges is a way to capture the strength of the body.

[254] The priority of person over action (according to this argument) pushes Aristotle's ethics towards what is known as "agent-centred", as opposed to "act-centred", theory (Annas 1981, 157-160). Taylor argues that this is implicit in 1105b5-9, "actions are called just and temperate when they are the sort of actions that the just and temperate person

5.2.5 Critical reflections

Recall, at the end of the previous chapter, I said that our reconstruction of Aristotle's UV should be able to explain: 1) how the non-rational aspects of the virtues are intertwined, 2) how Aristotle distances himself from Socrates 'position, and 3) how the human psyche can possess all the proper ethical virtues.

Arguably, "the argument from 'the fully integrated soul'" fulfilled (1). The non-rational aspects of the virtues are intertwined because all of the non-rational aspects of the soul have to be in agreement with (the same) correct reason. The non-rational aspects are intertwined insofar as (the proper functioning of) all of them are part of what it is to have a fully integrated soul. The argument also fulfilled (3). For if to have all the proper ethical virtues just is to have a fully integrated soul, then it is possible for the human psyche to possess all the proper ethical virtues insofar as it is possible for the human soul to be in such an excellent condition. Of course, one can still ask if it is possible to have a well-ordered psyche. But that is a different question. What about (2)? How should we understand Aristotle's rejection of Socratic Intellectualism given "the argument from 'the fully integrated soul'"?

I suggest that "the argument from 'the fully integrated soul'" fails to fulfil (2). Let us look at each of the premises again. Premise (1E) says "the ethical virtues and wisdom are inseparable, in the sense that one can have any ethical virtues only if one's non-rational soul is fully integrated with the (proper functioning) practical intellect". I explained this by referring to NE I.13: the rational part of the soul is to rule and the non-rational part is to obey. But surely Socrates can also agree that reason is such as to rule. After all, in the *Protagoras*, he explicitly says that "knowledge…is something fine and such as to rule man" (352c). Socrates can

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would perform…". See Taylor 2006, xvi-xvii, 94-96). This is also related to the debate about whether Aristotle is a "virtue ethicist" in the modern sense, i.e. whether the concept of good character is explanatorily prior to the concept of right conduct (see, e.g. Watson 1997). Brown 2014 argues against this based on the fact that the Doctrine of the Mean identifies the right responses prior to the good agent. See also Aufderheide 2017.

grant premise (1E) or at least something similar to it: that one's emotions obey (or even express) one's wisdom.

What about premise (2E)? Again, there is no reason why Socrates should not accept it. More specifically, there is no reason why Socrates should not accept the health analogy, i.e. the idea that one's character should be understood as a whole, and that for UV to be true one has to be all-round excellent. After all, according to Socrates (or the Socrates in the *Protagoras* at least), knowledge shapes one's perceptions, deliberations, choices, actions, and emotions (see section 3.4 and 3.5). So it seems Socrates can happily grant premise (2E) too, or, again, something similar to it: that the finest state of one's soul should be expressed in all aspects of one's life.

But if Socrates can grant both premises (or claims that are sufficiently similar to them) of the argument, then what exactly, according to this reconstruction, is Aristotle arguing against? Recall that Gottlieb interprets "μετὰ λόγου" (involves reason) in [T3][C] in terms of how the virtuous agent *chooses* to act virtuously. As we saw, good choices are the joint product of ethical virtue and wisdom (1139a20-1139b5; 1144a7-10; 1144a20-35; 1145a1-6). This presupposes a distinction between the rational and the non-rational part of the soul. One might then think *this* is precisely where Aristotle and Socrates come apart: for, arguably,[255] Socrates fails to draw a (deep) distinction between the rational part and the non-rational part of the soul. So Aristotle rejects Socratic Intellectualism by rejecting its underlying moral psychology: it is not true that, insofar as the ethical virtues are concerned, only the rational soul matters; rather, one must appreciate the significance of the non-rational part. This following passage seems to support this reading:

> …Socrates, who spoke better and more fully about them, but even he did so incorrectly, in making virtues sciences/knowledge (ἐπιστήμας) - this cannot be the case for them; for the sciences have, for each of them, a

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[255] But see the end of section 3.3.

> rational account, which comes to be in the rational (διανοητικῷ) part of the soul; thus according to him all the virtues come about in the rational part of the soul; thus making virtues sciences leads to denying the non-rational (ἄλογον) part of the soul, and making them thus denies both passion and character (πάθος καὶ ἦθος). For this reason he was incorrect to deal with the virtues in this way (*MM* 1182a15-24).

Of course, the rational part is still important, for one needs wisdom to determine the ethical mean (1107a1-4). Be that as it may, in denying the relevance/existence of the non-rational part of the soul, Socrates fails to do justice to the nature of ethical character (as Aristotle conceives of it).

This may be true. However, as the argument is presented right now (through (1E) and (2E)), the notion of choice does not play much role in it, and the idea of the full integration of the soul is not understood in a way that presents a serious challenge to Socrates' position. It is the fact that the soul must be fully integrated, not the constitutive components that *form* such integration (what the integration must be an integration *of*), that is supporting the whole argument. Even if the full integration of the soul is relevant (for defending UV), more needs to be said about *how* such integration should be understood. In other words, while the notion of choice and the related distinction between the two parts of the soul reveal how Socrates and Aristotle have different background assumptions about moral psychology, the argument itself does not push the idea far enough and hence risks trivialising Aristotle's rejection of Socratic Intellectualism. We need a reconstruction of Aristotle's position, then, that explains what Socrates missed in failing to acknowledge the full significance of "choice" and the related distinction between the two parts of the soul. I will come back to this point in the next chapter.

5.3 General justice?

There is one final issue raised by "the argument from 'the fully integrated soul'". This argument appeals to the idea that the genuinely virtuous agent has a well-ordered psyche. But to have a well-ordered psyche is to have the different elements in one's soul fulfil their proper tasks: e.g. for reason to command and for the passions to obey such commands. In the *Republic*, Plato says producing justice in the soul is like producing health in the body in that both consist in putting the constitutive elements in their "natural relations of mastering and being mastered" (444d). Aristotle seems to be echoing this when he says that the person with general justice has a lawful character (1129b13-15). The person with an orderly soul has a lawful character. This then leads to a question: is "the argument from 'the fully integrated soul'" also an argument for the claim that the genuinely virtuous agent must have the virtue of general justice?

Of course, we should not confuse UV and general justice: UV makes a claim about the interrelation between the ethical virtues (that they are mutually entailing), and general justice describes how all the ethical virtues considered in their entirety should look like. As general justice is not any particular virtue, it is not *one of* the virtues that wisdom implies when Aristotle says wisdom implies the presence of all the ethical virtues (1145a1).

But one can still ask: suppose UV is true of agent x, does this imply that x also has the virtue of general justice? It seems so. UV and general justice seem to be at least extensionally equivalent, for general justice is virtue as a whole (1129b20-30; 1130a10-11). One may even argue that cultivating virtue as a whole implies cultivating general justice.[256] Relatedly, one may say general justice gives a more determinate characterisation of the genuinely virtuous agent, a characterisation that UV is also trying to deliver or at least should welcome. A full account of the ideal agent should be able to show how this agent fulfils both UV and general justice. At any rate, the exercise of the ethical virtues cannot go *against* general justice (cf. *Meno* 78c-79b).[257]

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[256] Broadie and Rowe 2002, 337.

[257] This is evident when Aristotle discusses the different cases of akrasia. Aristotle explicitly calls the person who is akratic about appetite unjust (1149b19), though he later qualifies it as "not unjust but will do injustice" (1151a10). Either way, akrasia about appetite derails the exercise of justice. In general, acts of injustice can be caused by

But general justice is not just virtue as a whole; rather, it is complete virtue “in relation to another person” (1129b25). General justice is essentially other-regarding. It is “the complete exercise of complete virtue…many people are able to display their virtue in relation to what belongs to them, but incapable of doing so when it comes to dealing with another person” (1129b31-35). To exercise general justice, one has to care not just for one’s friends and family, but also people outside one’s familiar social circle (1130a1-6). But the argument in this chapter fails to capture this aspect of general justice. If, according to “the argument from ‘the fully integrated soul’”, to have a fully integrated soul is to have *all-round excellence*, it is no surprise that one should also be excellent in the way general justice requires. But all the same this does not really *articulate* how general justice is an other-regarding virtue.

Of course, one can doubt if defending UV *requires* articulating the other-regarding character of the ideal agent. It is possible to say “no”, for logically speaking claiming that the virtues are mutually entailing is not the same as claiming that one must exercise all the virtues in the way that general justice requires. Defending UV and giving a full account of the ideal agent would then be two separate tasks. But this might also result in depriving UV of whatever moral significance it might have originally. There seems to be something unsatisfactory if we can explain how UV is true without also explaining how the ideal agent exercises the ethical virtues in the complete way. UV then turns out to be just a conceptual claim about the nature of the ethical virtues (and their relation with wisdom) - this is, no doubt, still philosophically important, but it can no longer be the moral model that we initially thought it is supposed to be. Recall, near the end of Chapter 3, I suggested that, in Socrates’ case, the idea that “virtue is one” is pedagogically important because it reminds the students of virtue that they must always be vigilant as to what can go right and what can go wrong, i.e. it reminds them that they should not compartmentalise. It would be strange if UV loses this

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“temper and other affections that are inevitable or natural for human beings” (1135b19). This seems to violate general justice understood as lawful character (1129b1).

pedagogical aspect when it comes to Aristotle.[258] So if one tries to unpack the fundamental rationale for defending UV, one is tempted to say that any explanation of how UV is true should also be an explanation of how the ideal agent has the virtue of general justice.[259]

In illustrating the other-regarding nature of general justice, Aristotle cites with approval Bias' quote, "ruling will reveal the man". Presumably the idea is that it is in holding office that one has to be more attentive to the fellow-members of one's community (1130a1-6). The reference to holding office should remind us of the first version of "the argument from holistic evaluative knowledge" - the version that relies on premise (2B-1): "To be wise is to have and correctly apply the holistic evaluative knowledge that the philosopher-statesman has or that is philosophically informed (most importantly, knowledge of the nature and the application of the Grand End), which amounts to the possession of all the ethical virtues." For if one has and applies such robust knowledge, then there should be no doubt that one exercises the ethical virtues in the way general justice requires. But then this argument has its own problems. More specifically, as we have seen, it does not explain how the human psyche can possess such robust wisdom (or how it can possess all the ethical virtues). But what if we can combine the best of both arguments? One needs the notion of a well-ordered psyche to explain how possessing all the virtues is possible for a human agent, and one needs *some* notion of evaluative/political knowledge to explain how the ideal agent has general justice (or at least is in a position to exercise general justice). I will suggest a way to combine these two notions in the next chapter.

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[258] Russell argues that UV should be understood not as a claim about any particular individual (UV as "an attributive thesis"), but as a claim about the nature or the "natural makeup" of virtue as such (UV as "a model thesis"). Common-sense suggests that the actual exercise and development of one's character are piecemeal and fragmentary. But this does not challenge UV - argues Russell - because what UV claims is that the virtues themselves (as opposed to how they are exercised) should not be piecemeal and fragmentary (Russell 2009, 362-373). I agree that UV is mainly a claim about the nature of virtues themselves. But I also think that Russell pushes the opposition between the "nature of virtue" and "how any particular individual may exercise virtue" too far. He suggests that UV is *not* a destination that we strive towards, but only a *regulative ideal* that we use to critically reflect on our own character and see how we can improve (Russell 2009, ch.4; 2014, 215-216; 2018, 439-443). But I do not see why we should rule out the idea that it is *possible* for some individual to fulfil UV. As I see it, UV has pedagogical significance precisely because it is both a regulative model and something we strive towards to. I will suggest below that it is guaranteed in human nature that we can fulfil UV. But I also admit that there is still a lot to be said about how a good moral education can prepare us to do that. See also Ackrill 1981, 137.

[259] The same is arguably not true for magnanimity, another virtue that Aristotle also describes as complete virtue (ἀρετῆς παντελοῦς) (1124a9). For magnanimity is an "adornment of virtues", as it makes the virtues greater (1124a1-3). Magnanimity seems to be something *extra*, something over and above the excellent character that the agent already has. If so, one can keep the pedagogical significance of UV without including magnanimity. Burger even suggests that general justice and magnanimity can be in tension with each other: while general justice demands respecting everyone as equals, the magnanimous person demands recognition of his own superiority (Burger 2008, 84).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined one particular strategy to defend UV: UV is true because the genuinely virtuous agent has a well-ordered psyche. What I call “the argument from ‘the fully integrated soul’” adopts this strategy. But this argument risks trivialising Aristotle’s rejection of Socratic Intellectualism. In particular, it fails to explain what Socrates missed in failing to fully acknowledge the significance of “choice” and the significance of the related distinction between the two parts of the soul. It also fails to explain how the ideal agent has the virtue of general justice.

From the discussion of Chapter 4 and 5, then, we can extract four desiderata. A good account of Aristotle’s UV should explain: 1) how the non-rational aspects of the virtues are intertwined; 2) what Socrates missed but Aristotle successfully recognised about the significance of “choice” and the significance of the related distinction between the two parts of the soul; 3) how the human psyche can possess all the proper ethical virtues; and 4) how the ideal agent has general justice. In the next chapter, I will articulate an argument from “practical truth” that, in my view, can fulfil these desiderata.

Chapter 6: Practical Truth and the Unity of Virtues

Introduction

This chapter aims to show that Aristotle argues for UV through the notion of "practical truth". The connection between practical truth and UV is, as far as I know, not acknowledged.[260] But if I am right, then we cannot fully understand Aristotle's view on UV without practical truth. I shall argue that what I call "the argument from practical truth" is uniquely successful in reconstructing Aristotle's defence of UV.

6.1 The argument

Since the notion of "practical truth" requires considerable explanation, this will be a complicated chapter. In order not to lose sight of UV, let me first articulate "the argument from practical truth":

> 1F. The proper ethical virtues and wisdom are inseparable in the sense that possessing proper ethical virtue amounts to attaining practical truth.
> 2F. Attaining practical truth amounts to possessing all the proper ethical virtues.
> Hence, UV: possessing any proper ethical virtue amounts to possessing all the proper ethical virtues.

To begin, note that the notion of practical truth should not be completely unrecognisable. For "truth" as such hints at cognitive achievement, and this captures one aspect of wisdom quite well: to be wise is to be *sagacious,*[261] in the sense that one has cognitive achievements about "what sorts of things conduce to the good life in general" (1140a25-29; 1140b8-10). We have seen similar claims when we discuss "the argument from holistic evaluative knowledge". I will briefly compare the two arguments once we have both before us.

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[260] Richardson Lear 2004, ch.5 and Charles 2018, 166-7 see a connection between NE VI.2 and VI.13, but neither of them extend the discussion to UV. I will discuss their views below.

[261] Pakaluk 2005, 225.

Here is the plan. Section 6.2 argues that the notion of practical truth is invited by the dialectical context of NE VI.12-13. Section 6.3 argues that only the agent with proper virtue, but not the one with natural virtue, attains practical truth. I will provide my original interpretation of VI.13. Section 6.4 explains how attaining "truth" in Aristotle's sense does not just involve getting the truth-value right, but also giving a true account. I suggest attaining practical truth involves giving an account of one's choice. Section 6.5 explores three different accounts of practical truth and their implications for UV. I argue for an account that includes two senses of "truth": truth as property of assertions and truth as reality presented as such. Section 6.6 and 6.7 explain how practical truth implies all the proper ethical virtues. I argue that the different virtues can be seen as different ways to attain practical truth, which are themselves different manifestations of our nature as practical rational beings. Section 6.8 explains how my account succeeds in fulfilling the desiderata of a good defence of Aristotle's UV.

6.2 The dialectical context of NE VI.12-13

Let me start by taking a closer look at NE VI.12-13. I shall suggest that the dialectical context of VI.12-13 itself invites the notion of practical truth.

Recall, in NE VI.12, Aristotle is discussing a puzzle related to wisdom: what is its usefulness? One might think that wisdom is useless because having wisdom does not make us more inclined to do virtuous actions, just as having medical knowledge does not make us more inclined to live a healthy life (1143b20-34). And there is a variation of the same puzzle: one may say even though wisdom may not be useful for making us more ready to perform virtuous actions, surely it is useful for making us become good? (1143b29)? If one really does possess medical knowledge, then one surely has the ability to make others healthy whenever the opportunity presents itself (despite not being as healthy as possible oneself). In reply, Aristotle says: but then those who are already good do not need wisdom, just as those who are already healthy do not need medicine (1143b30). Further, if medical knowledge is about making *others* healthy, then, from the point of view of the patient, one does not need to have medical knowledge oneself - one can rely on *others*' medical knowledge if one wants to be healthy. Similarly, one can also rely on *others*' wisdom if one wants to be virtuous oneself (1143b31-34).

To push the analogy further, imagine a medical doctor trying to cure his own illness. He is not relying on *others*' medical knowledge in becoming healthy. But in an important sense there are two participants involved: he is applying medical knowledge to himself *as a patient* - the role of patient is distinct from the role of doctor. The medical doctor can also be healthy, of course, but the point is that having medical knowledge and being healthy are *separable*. The contribution of medical knowledge ends after one is healthy enough; being healthy as such does not require such knowledge. Similarly, according to this objection, the contribution of wisdom ends after one has become sufficiently virtuous - being virtuous as such does not require wisdom. Wisdom is not something one must *have* in order to *possess* the ethical virtues.

Aristotle then proceeds to show, in a way reminiscent of NE II.4, how being virtuous and being wise are in fact inseparable. For being virtuous is not just about performing virtuous actions. For one can perform virtuous actions "either unwillingly or because of ignorance or because of some other end" (1144a16) - these are not cases of being virtuous. To be virtuous, one needs to choose the virtuous actions for their own sakes (1144a20). And one needs wisdom to make such correct choices. To illustrate how wisdom is inseparable from the ethical virtues, Aristotle then contrasts wisdom and cleverness (δεινότης): if calculative reasoning is employed for the wrong ends, then one is not showing wisdom but only cleverness; wisdom as such cannot be misused (1144a25-30). In effect, Aristotle is saying that the objector doubts the usefulness of wisdom only because he conflates doing virtuous actions (but out of ignorance, etc.) and being genuinely virtuous - it is clear that being genuinely virtuous and being wise are inseparable.

Now, it would not help if Aristotle's strategy were merely to enlarge our conception of what it is to possess the ethical virtues. Rather, he has to prove that whatever wisdom can contribute, such contribution is not *already* taken care of by the ethical virtues. For if it is, then the objector still wins: wisdom is useless because there is nothing wisdom can contribute that the ethical virtues do not already have. One still does not need to possess wisdom if one is to possess the ethical virtues. But, within Aristotle's framework at least, what can be a better way to prove that wisdom has its own distinctive contribution, other than by showing that (practical) wisdom is an intellectual excellence, on a par with theoretical wisdom (σοφία)?[262]

So, in explaining how wisdom is useful, Aristotle needs to justify the status of wisdom as an intellectual excellence, i.e. an excellence of the *rational* part of the soul. Given the inseparability of the ethical virtues and wisdom, the upshot is that being genuinely virtuous involves a distinctively *intellectual* aspect. NE VI.13 then continues to clarify exactly how this is the case - as I understand it, the distinction between natural virtue and proper virtue is meant to address this question. I will give my interpretation of this distinction below. For now, simply note how this distinction between natural virtue and proper virtue is also part of Aristotle's response to the objector from VI.12: we can now see how wisdom is definitely not useless, for without the guidance of wisdom, the natural virtues are "harmful" (1144b10).

So Aristotle needs to show that wisdom is a genuine intellectual excellence that the virtuous agent must possess. Now, a virtue is a disposition the possession of which enables a thing to perform its proper function well (1098a15; 1106a16-24; 1139a18). It follows that, to justify the status of wisdom as a virtue of the practical intellect, one needs to show how the possession of wisdom allows the practical intellect to perform its proper function. Indeed, part of Aristotle's reply in VI.12 is that wisdom helps us to fulfil our function: "virtue makes the goal correct, and wisdom makes the means to it correct" (1144a10).

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[262] Broadie and Rowe 2002, 380; cf. Chappell 2006, 138.

But there is a deeper sense in which wisdom is an excellence of the practical intellect. For in VI.2 Aristotle claims that the proper function of any rational soul is to attain truth:

> It holds, then, of both intelligent parts that their function is truth (ἀλήθεια); so the excellences of both will be the dispositions in accordance with which each of them will attain truth (ἀληθεύσει)[263] to the highest degree (1139b12-14).

In light of this, we should say that to justify the status of wisdom as an intellectual excellence, one needs to show how wisdom is the disposition in accordance with which the practical intellect attains truth. The truth thereby attained by the wise practical intellect is then known as "practical truth". To show how wisdom is useful, then, one needs to explain how wisdom equips the practical intellect to attain practical truth.[264]

So "practical truth" is invited by the dialectic that begins from VI.12. Hence "the argument from practical truth". If I am right so far, then practical truth must at least involve this: it is what explains how the practical intellect is a rational faculty, and as such is the sort of cognitive achievement that the proper ethical virtues must attain. With this working conception of practical truth in mind, in the next section (6.3) I turn to explain premise (1F). Section 6.4 continues the discussion by explaining how attaining "truth" in Aristotle's sense involves grasping a true explanation.

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[263] I will briefly discuss the verb ἀληθεύσει near the end of section 6.5.2.

[264] Note that in NE VI.13 Aristotle mentions different terminologies for intellectual excellence(s). He first says that once one has "understanding" or "intelligence" (νοῦς), then one will have proper virtue. After the remark on Socrates, as we know, Aristotle draws the contrast between "according to correct reason" (κατὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον), and "involve correct reason" (μετὰ τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου). He then says that wisdom (φρόνησίς) is the correct reason in this area. It is not entirely clear if or how νοῦς, ὀρθὸς λόγος, and φρόνησίς are interchangeable. But the mere fact that Aristotle does not pause and explain these different terminologies suggests that he is more interested in showing how the intellectual excellence(s) equips the practical intellect to function properly, as opposed to distinguishing the different intellectual excellences.

6.3 Proper ethical virtue and practical truth

Premise (1F) says: "the proper ethical virtues and wisdom are inseparable in the sense that possessing proper ethical virtue amounts to attaining practical truth". Only proper virtue, but not natural virtue, attains practical truth. Given the working conception of practical truth, the idea is that the agent with proper ethical virtue is sagacious, i.e. his virtuous character has a distinctively intellectual aspect. How should we understand this claim?

In the last section, I suggested that the distinction between natural virtue and proper virtue is supposed to clarify how being genuinely virtuous involves a distinctively intellectual aspect. Let me explain by first trying to give a deeper explanation as to how this distinction continues the dialectic of VI.12. I suggest that the notion of "natural virtue" is Aristotle's attempt to re-describe how the objector from VI.12 would characterise the ethical virtues, given the conclusion reached at the end of VI.12 (that the ethical virtues and wisdom are inseparable). That is, "natural virtue" captures what the ethical virtues would look like if, as the objector from VI.12 understands it, wisdom is indeed useless. Aristotle characterises "natural virtue" as something one can have "immediately from birth" (1144b6), and presumably this can be granted by both Aristotle himself and the objector from VI.12. For Aristotle thinks that one cannot be wise as a young person, and certainly not as a child (1142a10-20), so to exercise the virtues that one has "immediately from birth" one does not need wisdom - and this is just what the objector from VI.12 claims. But since such re-description of what the ethical virtues would look like is done given the conclusion of VI.12, this move in effect accommodates the objector's position within Aristotle's own framework, with a clear understanding that it is indefensible. After all, natural virtues are "harmful" (1144b10). In this way, Aristotle manages to *disarm* the objector.

If this is right, then, insofar as the exact relation between wisdom and ethical virtue is concerned, natural virtue is at the lowest level in terms of how much it engages with wisdom. This should not be surprising since Aristotle explicitly says that natural virtues are "without understanding" (ἄνευ νοῦ).[265] But clarifying the dialectic that starts from VI.12 helps us to have a firmer grasp of this fact. At the next level is the (conception of) ethical virtue as it is understood at the end of VI.12: that it engages with wisdom in choice and deliberation. In this context, the contrast between wisdom and cleverness is right on point, since both wisdom and cleverness concern practical reasoning.

To push this line of thought even further, I want to suggest that what is important about the notion of proper ethical virtue must be that proper ethical virtue engages with wisdom to a sufficiently high degree. For Aristotle is in dialogue with Socrates' view - the view that virtue just is knowledge. Proper ethical virtue needs to "engage with" wisdom to a similarly significant degree if Aristotle is to have any meaningful conversation with Socrates.[266] Premise (1F) seems to be just what Aristotle needs. For attaining "practical truth" articulates the distinctive function of the (wise) practical intellect. If, according to (1F), possessing proper ethical virtue amounts to attaining practical truth, then proper ethical virtue must engage significantly with what the wise practical intellect grasps.

So this is how Aristotle proceeds from NE VI.12 to VI.13. He first demonstrates that being genuinely virtuous and being wise are inseparable. This settles the side of things that concerns wisdom. He then starts afresh by introducing the notion of “natural virtue”, in effect asking us to imagine what one’s character would look like if, as per the objector from VI.12, wisdom is not required for possessing ethical virtue. As this is clearly indefensible, Aristotle then pushes the conclusion of VI.12 one step further: wisdom and ethical virtue are not just inseparable in choice and deliberation; rather, the agent with proper ethical virtue has a practical intellect that is fulfilling its function as a part of the rational soul, i.e. it attains practical truth.

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[265] Arguably, the agent with natural virtue can perform means-ends reasoning. After all, even animals can perform means-ends reasoning (e.g. *HA* 612b18-32).

[266] I left the expression "engage with" intentionally vague for now. What I need is the idea that something distinctively intellectual (more precisely, practical-intellectual) must play a significant role in possessing and exercising proper virtue. I will further clarify the "engage with" relation near the end of this section.

It is tempting to assume that “natural virtue” refers to some good character that disposes one to proper virtue.[267] One may even argue that the notion of “natural virtue” explains how some of us may have a better start in acquiring the corresponding proper virtue.[268] Aristotle may not disagree with these claims, and perhaps his overall ethical theory should welcome them. But if my reading is right, then the notion of “natural virtue” is introduced only because the dialectic invites it. Insofar as NE VI.12-13 goes, Aristotle does not really need to commit himself to the claim that there is such a thing as “natural virtue”.[269] This also affects how we translate the passage. Recall my translation:

> [T1][B](4) But if *nous* is acquired, then one excels (διαφέρει) in practice: and the disposition, which was merely similar to proper virtue, will now be proper virtue (ἡ δ’ ἕξις ὁμοία οὖσα τότ’ ἔσται κυρίως ἀρετή) (1144b13-14).

Some commentators take ἕξις to refer to the disposition after one has acquired *nous,* and it is said to be similar (ὁμοία) to the one before *nous* is acquired. Reeve (2013), for instance, translates it as “and his state, though similar to the one he had, will then be full virtue”. Ross (1984), Bartlett and Collins (2012), Crisp (2014), and Irwin (2019) have similar translations. It is then not entirely clear if the disposition before *nous* and the one after *nous* have equal status. But ἡ δ’ ἕξις ὁμοία can also be understood as “the disposition that merely resembles (proper virtue)”, in which case it is clear that “natural virtues” are mere resemblance - natural virtue and proper virtue are not on an equal footing (Broadie and Rowe 2002 take it this way). Relatedly, it is common to translate διαφέρει as “make a difference” (Ross, Reeve, Crisp, Irwin, Broadie and Rowe, Bartlett and Collins). But it can also mean “to excel” (be better than others). This is what we should expect if proper virtue attains practical truth, since attaining such truth is a notable achievement.

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[267] See, e.g. Chappell 2006, 144; Gottlieb 2009, 109; Lennox 1999; Reeve 2013, 253-255; A.W. Müller 2004, 40, 45, 49.

[268] Leunissen 2012.

[269] Similar claims can be made about the wisdom/cleverness distinction. That is, Aristotle can introduce “cleverness” for mere illustrative purpose: to clarify that wisdom is dependent on the ethical virtues. Natali (2001, 51) vaguely hints at this reading. By contrast, J. Müller suggests that a) wisdom and cleverness are distinct, and b) the excellent agent needs both of them (J. Müller 2018, 164, n.30)

To further clarify premise (1F), let me compare it with the different interpretations of the natural/proper virtue distinction we have seen so far. According to “the argument from ‘acting well’”, proper virtue is inseparable from wisdom because it needs to be guided by wisdom to successfully hit the mean. This seems right insofar as hitting the mean is distinctive of the wise practical intellect. One may even suggest that hitting the mean just is attaining practical truth.[270] Further, “truth” hints at *success*, which captures what is so important about the guidance of wisdom if one is to act well. But “the argument from ‘acting well’” focuses more on what *results* from the proper exercise of the practical intellect. But if the above analysis is correct, it is the degree to which one’s character can be understood as engaging with wisdom that underlies the distinction between natural virtue and proper virtue.

According to “the argument from holistic evaluative knowledge”, natural virtue is harmful because its concerns are myopic, and this is because the agent does not deliberate. This seems right. Since practical truth concerns what conduces to the good life in general, if one attains practical truth, one’s concerns cannot be myopic. According to “the argument from ‘the fully integrated soul’”, natural virtue differs from proper virtue precisely because the agent with natural virtue does not have the capacity to deliberate. This echoes how, according to the analysis above, natural virtue is at the lowest level in terms of how much it engages with wisdom (i.e. it lacks *nous* completely). But more can be said about how proper ethical virtue engages with the (wise) *practical* intellect. Of course, deliberation is the exercise of the practical intellect. But premise (1F) attempts to say more: proper virtue attains practical truth, and practical truth (as opposed to theoretical truth) is distinctive of the practical intellect (as opposed to the theoretical intellect). I will come back to this point near the end of the next section.

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[270] Chappell: “practical wisdom can be an intellectual virtue—a form of grasping truth—because reasoning to find this mean is the grasping of *practical* truth” (Chappell 2006, 143). But the focus of that paper is not practical truth as such.

Contrasting natural virtue and proper virtue in terms of how much they engage with wisdom also helps to clarify the distinction between κατὰ λόγον (in accordance with reason) and μετὰ λόγου (involving reason). When Aristotle introduces κατὰ λόγον, the main point seems to be that the non-rational disposition must be guided by correct reason if one is to avoid acting in a harmful way. As I read it, this is not the main part of Aristotle's reasoning: κατὰ λόγον is introduced only as an indirect support that reason is indispensable (so it is clear that natural virtue is not genuine virtue). But μετὰ λόγου should be what Aristotle meant to endorse as part of what illustrates proper virtue. I suggest that Aristotle felt the need to change κατὰ λόγον into μετὰ λόγου because he wants to emphasise that proper virtue indeed engages with wisdom to a significant degree, i.e. correct reason (wisdom) does not just influence one's behaviour. I will argue below that, since according to Aristotle, to attain "truth" one must also give a true explanation, proper virtue engages with wisdom in the sense that one must explain and justify how one acts. The notion of μετὰ λόγου captures how tight the relation between proper virtue and wisdom must be.

The notion of "practical truth" is also helpful in a further way. When Aristotle proceeds to μετὰ λόγου, one more distinction is involved: that between knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) and wisdom.[271] For Aristotle needs to distance himself from Socrates' view. But knowledge according to Aristotle exercises the *theoretical* intellect (NE VI.1,3). So within Aristotle's framework, the difference between knowledge and wisdom is also the difference between the theoretical intellect and the practical intellect. Accordingly, I suggest, μετὰ τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου in VI.13 should be read as “with correct *practical* reason”.[272] This is just what we should expect: the agent with proper virtue attains practical truth, which means his *practical* intellect is in excellent condition.

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[271] As is also rightly observed by Burger 2008, 73, 128. As Burger interprets it, Aristotle here is responding to the view that only Socratic philosophy - philosophical

6.4 Truth as giving true account

So much, then, for exegetical grounds for accepting premise (1F). Now let us ask this: what would the ethical virtues look like given premise (1F)?

As commentators have pointed out, attaining “truth” in Aristotle’s sense does not just include getting some truth-value right; rather, it consists in getting the correct truth-value and the correct *explanation* as to how it is so.[273] It is helpful to consider the parallel between theoretical truth and practical truth. In NE VI.3, Aristotle characterises knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) as “a disposition that is active in demonstration” (ἕξις ἀποδεικτική; 1139b31). When one demonstrates how something follows from the starting-point, one is also *explaining* how the demonstrandum follows by necessity. Suppose the fact is P. One has knowledge about P not just when one gets the truth-value (of the assertion) about P right, but when one can also demonstrate how P is entailed and explained by the relevant starting-point by necessity (*APo*. 71b10-13). Later in NE VI.7, Aristotle

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conversation about virtues - counts as true human excellence. This seems to me to be an over-interpretation.

[272] In fact, this is perhaps one source of confusion that troubles commentators: in the case of κατὰ λόγον, it is the distinction between reason and non-rational dispositions that matters, but in the case of μετὰ λόγου, it is the distinction between the two kinds of reason (theoretical and practical) that is important. And yet Aristotle uses “reason” (λόγον/λόγου) in both cases, as if the only difference is between how reason is related to the non-rational disposition (κατὰ or μετὰ). But all the same the difference between wisdom and knowledge should not evade us, nor, in fact, any reader that has been listening to Aristotle on the differences between the various intellectual excellences throughout the whole NE VI.

[273] Broadie 2019, 253-254; Nielsen 2019, 222; Olfert 2017, 87.

sums up the theoretical excellences. *Nous* grasps the starting-points (1141a9), knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) demonstrates how the demonstrandum is entailed and explained by the starting-points by necessity, and when one grasps the whole explanatory account, one has theoretical wisdom (σοφία) (1141a17-19).

We can then add one more element to our working conception of practical truth. Grasping practical truth does not just consist in knowing what conduces to the good life in general; rather, given such evaluative knowledge, one can know *what* one should do and *why* one should do it.[274] Given premise (1F), this is what the agent with proper ethical virtue should be able to do.[275] Put schematically, such an agent grasps thoughts of the form:

> X should be chosen for the sake of Y (in the way that the virtuous agent chooses to do)[276]

One cites Y to explain one's choice to do action X. Arguably, citing Y has two functions: first, it gives us the *explanatory reason* for choosing X, as it reveals how X is understood in the eyes of the agent. But, second, it also reveals the *justificatory reason* for choosing X, as it shows how choosing X-in-the-light-of-Y is, as the agent understands it, categorically good. Insofar as citing Y gives the justificatory reason for one's choices, the process of deliberation and making choices express one's rational agency. The chosen action, then, can be seen as embodying one's judgment that *X-in-the-light-of-Y is categorically good in this situation*. As the choice reveals one's judgment, it makes sense to say "what makes us people of a certain quality is our decision to do, not our belief about (τῷ δοξάζειν), good things or bad ones" (1112a2).[277]

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[274] Morison 2019, 226-228. Cf. Moss 2014c, 222-226.

[275] In NE I.4, Aristotle remarks that "in order to listen appropriately to discussion about what is fine and just, i.e. about the objects of political expertise in general, one must have been well brought up. For the starting point is the "that", and if this were sufficiently clear to us - well, in that case there will be no need to know in addition why (τοῦ διότι). But such a person either has the relevant starting-points, or might easily grasp them" (1095b4–7). This is to illustrate that in an ethical inquiry, we start from "what is knowable in relation to us", and work towards "what is knowable without qualification" (b1-4). Some argue that Aristotle literally means if one has the "that" one does not also need the "why" (e.g. Moss 2012, 187). But perhaps the fundamental insight of this passage is the following: some ethical common-sense idea can be taken for granted if one has a good upbringing, and there is no point arguing against common sense just to win a debate (Kraut 2006, 79). Further, there can be situations where a good upbringing does not ensure the best decision, in which case we need to dig deeper (Broadie and Rowe 2002, 267). Finally, even if there is no doubt about what we should do, working towards "what is knowable without qualification" can deepen our understanding of the values that we grow up with, because we can now illuminate what are initially only appearances in terms of the foundational starting-point: "just as the path on a race course goes from the starting line to the far end, or back again" (1095a33–b2). See Kraut 2006, 88-90; Reeve 1992, 30.

[276] This is an instance where it is more helpful to think of choice in teleological terms ("this for the sake of that"), as opposed to preferential terms ("choose X over Y"). See note 193 above.

Now, ultimately speaking, "Y" must somehow concern happiness. This is so not in the sense that the agent must spend every waking moment thinking about how to pursue his happiness, but in the sense that properly speaking it is happiness that grounds the explanatory power of "Y" (X-in-the-light-of-Y as attempt to realise happiness), and it is by making reference to (one's conception of) happiness that one can justify one's choice of action (cf. 1097b1-5).[278]

In this connection, we can better understand how temperance preserves wisdom:

> [T4] That is why we give τὴν σωφροσύνην its name, as something that preserves wisdom (σῴζουσαν τὴν φρόνησιν). And it does preserve the sort of supposition (ὑπόληψιν) in question. What is pleasant and painful does not corrupt, or distort, every sort of supposition, e.g. that the internal angles of a triangle do or do not add up to two right angles, only supposition in the sphere of action. For the starting-points (αἱ ἀρχαὶ) of practical projects are constituted by what those projects are for; and once someone is corrupted through pleasure or pain, he fails to see the starting-point (ἀρχή), and to see that one should choose everything, and act, for

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[277] Broadie 1991, 183-4; Taylor 2006, 85-92.

[278] To connect the current discussion with Chapter 4, note that this does not have to be anything as grandiose as the Grand End. But if one is to attain practical *truth*, presumably one has to at least explain why one thinks one's choices are *worthwhile*.

> the sake of this, and because of this - for vice is corruptive of the starting-point (ἀρχῆς). The necessary conclusion is that wisdom is a state involving reason (ἕξιν μετὰ λόγου), true (ἀληθῆ), in the sphere of human goods, relating to action (1140b11-21).

If one is corrupted by pleasure and/or pain, one fails to see the starting-point for the sake of which one should choose and act. Aristotle seems to mean temperance (σωφροσύνη) in a broad sense here:[279] unlike what is said in NE III.10, temperance does not just concern the pleasure and pain in eating, drinking, and having sex; rather, it concerns pleasure and pain in general. The *Protagoras* helps illustrate how being corrupted through pleasure or pain can result in failing to see the (correct) starting-point: the intemperate person is overcome (corrupted) by temptation, and so he exaggerates the exact magnitude of immediate pleasure (356b). Consequently, his action expresses his (mistaken) judgment that choosing to pursue the immediate pleasure is more worthwhile (see section 3.6). The intemperate agent fails to see the (correct) starting-point in the sense that his action indicates that he chooses for the sake of a life with less overall pleasure.

Of course, in Socrates' case, temperance "preserves" wisdom in a relatively straightforward sense: temperance *is* wisdom insofar as wisdom is expressed in every aspect of the soul, and "temperance" is just one of the many names to refer to this excellent state. But even if Aristotle does not subscribe to Socrates' moral psychology, a more general point still applies: according to this analysis, being corrupted by pleasure or pain results in getting two things wrong *at once*: wrong in both actions and the starting-point of actions. The intemperate person pursues the immediate pleasure (wrong action), and as such chooses for the sake of a life with less overall pleasure (wrong for-the-sake-of-which).

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[279] Broadie and Rowe 2002, 368.

To return to Aristotle, some commentators think that temperance preserves wisdom by safeguarding one's conception of happiness from bad influence.[280] Some think that temperance (or more generally, one's virtuous character) supplies the content of the correct goal.[281] But if I am right so far, temperance preserves wisdom by securing one's grasp of the whole "X should be chosen for the sake of Y" structure, i.e. by securing one's grasp of *what* one should do and *why* one should do it. One needs to have a correct conception of happiness, yes, and the content of the correct goal too, of course, but one also needs to grasp the teleological connection between one's action and one's goal: how the that-for-the-sake-of-which explains and justifies one's choice of actions. By contrast, pleasure and pain do not distort one's geometrical knowledge because such knowledge does not reflect such a teleological structure: one does not "choose" whether the internal angles of a triangle add up to two right angles.[282] Rather, the nature of geometrical properties dictates the answer. Pleasure and pain do not distort because geometrical reasoning is not explained or justified by one's practical goals.

The last sentence of [T4] makes clear the connection with practical truth: "wisdom is a state involving reason (ἕξιν μετὰ λόγου), true (ἀληθῆ), in the sphere of human goods, relating to action" (1140b20-21). Given the parallel with theoretical truth, I suggest, wisdom "involves reason" in the sense that it is a state that gives an account of something. But wisdom "relates to action" because the account it gives has the teleological structure "X should be chosen for the sake of Y", that is, it is an account of what one should do and why one should do it. Wisdom is "true" insofar as the account it gives is true, i.e. is correct about what one should do (just like ἐπιστήμη must get the truth-value about some fact P correct) and correct about why one should do it (just like ἐπιστήμη demonstrates how P is explained and entailed by the relevant starting-point). The criterion wisdom uses to give such a true account is the evaluative knowledge about what conduces to the good life in general.[283]

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[280] Irwin 2019, 281.
[281] Moss 2012, 175.
[282] Of course, one can choose to perform a series of acts of calculation for the sake of getting the right answer, but that is a different matter.

According to premise (1F), the agent with proper ethical virtue attains practical truth. What we have seen in this section fits with the context of NE VI.12-13. It is not just that in both NE VI.5 and VI.13 Aristotle uses the phrase μετὰ λόγου (in connection with wisdom in VI.5, with virtue in VI.13). I suggested that proper ethical virtue "involves reason" in the sense that it engages with wisdom to a sufficiently high degree. That to attain truth one must give a true account further explains how this is so: giving an explanation of something is a highly intellectual activity. I also said that Aristotle distances himself from Socrates' view by contrasting ἐπιστήμη and wisdom. We now have a better understanding of how Aristotle understands the difference: the true account that wisdom gives is teleological in nature, but the demonstration that ἐπιστήμη gives is not.

Again, it is interesting to compare how the various arguments for UV we have seen so far interpret the κατὰ λόγον/ μετὰ λόγου distinction differently. According to "the argument from 'acting well'", virtue is a disposition that involves reason insofar as it is one's own disposition-that-aims-at-the-mean. According to "the argument from holistic evaluative knowledge", virtue is a disposition that involves reason in the sense that all aspects of one's practical life express one's correct conception of the good life. According to "the argument from 'the fully integrated soul'", virtue is a disposition that involves reason because the virtuous agent chooses to act virtuously. According to the current argument, virtue is a disposition that involves reason because the virtuous agent attains practical truth, and this implies that he can explain and justify his choice of action.

There is, I know, much controversy about the *scope* of the practical intellect: whether it is limited to "things that forward (τὰ πρὸς) the ends" or if it also deliberates about the ends themselves. The account I have presented so far is compatible with the different proposals that we can find on either side. For instance, according to one influential interpretation, the practical intellect deliberates the ends by making more determinate the general direction given by one's character.[284] But this can be accommodated within the "X should be chosen for the sake of Y" structure because "Y" can tolerate different levels of generality. Ultimately speaking, it is (one's conception of) happiness that explains and justifies one's choices. But all the same there is room to further specify what pursuing happiness here and now amounts to, and it may as well be the job of the practical intellect to fulfil this task.[285] However, on the other hand, some argue that the practical intellect does not deliberate about the ends because all the contents of the ends are provided by one's character, and all that the practical intellect does is to make explicit (and conceptualise) these ends so that one can grasp the ends *as ends*, i.e. as something to-be-achieved.[286] But, again, the "X should be chosen for the sake of Y" structure can accommodate this. For what is important is the teleological connection between X and Y, regardless of how Y is given. Maybe it is one's character that fixes the contents of one's ends, or maybe it is the practical intellect. Of course, the starting-point cannot be incorrect if one is to attain practical truth. But that is compatible with saying that it is character that determines the contents of the starting-points, in which case to attain practical truth one would also need virtuous character. Regardless, it is the practical intellect that gives a true account of one's choices.

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[283] Nielsen briefly suggests that "true" in NE VI should be understood as "perfections of our capacity for discovering and applying principles (ἀρχαί) in thought" (Nielsen 2019, 222). She does not elaborate, but perhaps these can be the principles that justify one's choices.

6.5 Practical truth in NE VI.2

We are finally in a position to look at NE VI.2, the one and only place in the entire *corpus* where Aristotle explicitly uses the phrase "practical truth" or "the truth that is practical" (ἡ ἀλήθεια πρακτική):

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[284] Broadie 1991, 239-250; Broadie & Rowe 2002, 49-50, 363; Broadie 2019, 254-256; Hardie 1980, 216, 226-227, 235; McDowell 2002, 25-26; Sherman 1989, 87-89; Wiggins 1975. Cf. Tuozzo 1991. This should remind us of the notion of "ground-level" wisdom we have seen in Chapter 4.

[285] See Morison 2019, 229-238 on *MA* 7.

[286] Moss 2012, 223-233; Moss 2014b.

> [T5] [A] In the soul, the things responsible for action and truth are three: perception, intelligence, and desire. But of these, perception is not an originator of any sort of action; and this is clear from the fact that brute animals have perception but do not share in action. [B] What affirmation and denial are in the case of thought, pursuit and avoidance are with desire; so that, since excellence of character is a disposition issuing in choices, and choice is a desire informed by deliberation, in consequence both what issues from reason must be true and the desire must be correct for the choice to be an excellent (σπουδαία) one, and reason must assert and desire pursue the same things. [C] This, then, is the thought and the truth that are practical (ἡ ἀλήθεια πρακτική); in the case of thought that is theoretical, and not practical nor productive, "well" and "badly" consist in the true and the false (this is, after all, the function of any faculty of thought), but that of a faculty of practical thought is truth in agreement with the correct desire. (1139a18-30).

As I understand it, by "responsible for" (or "things that control", τὰ κύρια), Aristotle means that the three items mentioned are states through the proper exercise of which one acts correctly and attains truth. By "action" (πρᾶξις) Aristotle seems to mean actions that are ethically assessable - perhaps more naturally called "conduct".[287] Presumably this is why animals are excluded. Perception is then excluded as the originator of "conduct" on the grounds that while animals also have the power of perception, they nonetheless cannot perform ethically assessable conduct. It is possible to ask if the same reasoning applies to desire: since animals also have desires, will not that exclude desire as an originator of ethically assessable conduct as well?[288] Arguably, Aristotle is making a normative claim: ethically good conduct and attaining practical truth do not depend on the proper functioning of the faculty of perception *per se*, but it does depend on the proper functioning of thought and desire.[289] Aristotle thus proceeds by restating his doctrine that the ethical virtues issue choices (1105a28-b4; 1106a3-4; 1106b36), which themselves require excellence of both thought and desire. Altogether, then, the claim is that good conduct and attaining truth depend on the proper functioning of thought and desire. As a result, the crucial difference between theoretical truth and practical truth is this: for the former, exercising the theoretical intellect well consists in attaining the truth *per se*, but for the latter, exercising the practical intellect well consists in “truth in agreement with correct desire” (1139a30).[290]

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[287] Broadie and Rowe 2002, 362; Charles 2018, 151, n.7.

[288] Charles 2018, 152, n.9.

Insofar as “practical truth” is concerned, commentators rightly focus on the role of “correct desire”. On the one hand, attaining“ truth” is the function of the rational soul, but practical truth differs from theoretical truth in that correct desire, along with thought, is responsible for attaining such truth.[291] Yet on the other hand, desire is not a part of the rational soul. This leads to two interrelated questions: first, what exactly is the “bearer” of truth in the case of practical truth? Is it just reason? Or some composite of reason and desire? Second, how can correct desire be responsible for attaining *any* truth? Let us say, “X should be done in situation S” is true. Why must attaining the truth of this particular thought be in agreement with correct desire?

I will discuss some of the major accounts of practical truth as I proceed: that practical truth is correctness of choice, that is a true assertion, etc. Given the difficulties faced by standard accounts, I ultimately endorse a view that includes two senses of “truth”: “assertoric” truth and truth as reality presented as such. I will also explain how UV should be understood on this account.

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[289] Broadie and Rowe 2002, 362.

[290] Following Broadie and Rowe 2002, I take “τὸ εὖ” (“the well”) at 1139a28 to be the subject of the genitive “τοῦ δὲ πρακτικοῦ καὶ διανοητικοῦ” (“of a faculty of practical thought”) at 1139a29-30.

[291] Broadie 2019, 258-259.

6.5.1 Practical truth as correctness of choices

In the previous section, I suggested that attaining practical truth implies giving a true account of one's choice in the form "X should be chosen for the sake of Y". The most straightforward way to complete this account, it seems, is to suggest that practical truth *just is* making good choices. If so, attaining practical truth consists in making, explaining, and justifying one's excellent choices. Sarah Broadie once developed an account to this effect. As she understood it, practical truth is the *correctness of choices,* i.e. *the whole composite* of true *logos* and correct desire is the bearer of practical truth.[292] Truth understood in this way is "not a semantic property of propositions, but a property which the mind has when it is in the best relation to the objects in the domain it is addressing".[293] In making excellent choices, the practical intellect stands in its best relation to the objects it is addressing (and in this sense attains practical truth), for it is in making excellent choices that one achieves the goal of doing well (εὐπραξία) (1139b3).[294] Correct desire is also (along with true reason) responsible for attaining truth, then, because it is responsible for making excellent choices. This allows us to explain fairly neatly the difference between the virtuous agent and the vicious one. Aristotle says that the vicious agent, despite being able to calculate rationally (e.g. in devising vicious plans), cannot be said to have deliberated well, for good deliberation reaches good things (1142b18-22). We can now add that the vicious person simply fails to attain practical *truth*. For correct desires are literally part of practical truth, and the vicious person lacks correct desires - after all, correct desires depend on the goodness of character (1139a35).[295]

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[292] Broadie 1991, 224; Broadie and Rowe 2002, 361.

[293] Broadie and Rowe 2002, 362. Broadie does not say this, but perhaps we can use the state of knowledge to illustrate the point. Since the explanandum follows from the starting-point by necessity, so in exercising knowledge one must achieve some sort of cognitive necessity that reflects the epistemic necessity the object of knowledge exhibits. In this way, one's mind (knowledge) is in its best relation to the object (object of knowledge) it is addressing.

[294] Relatively little - both in the text and in the secondary literature - has been said about how craft also attains truth. But perhaps a similar account can be applied to it. In NE VI.4, Aristotle characterises craft as "a disposition involving true reason concerned with production" (1140a10). We can say that this disposition attains truth in the sense that by acting accordance with it one's expertise can be in its best relation to the relevant objects, i.e. to those things "the origin of whose coming into being lies in the producer" (1140a14). That is, the craftsman can produce excellent products and can explain and justify (insofar as "true reason" involves giving true explanation) how he does it. Cf. Reeve 2013, 151-153 on incompetence (ἀτεχνία) in craft that involves false reason.

To illustrate, also note how practical truth rules out continence. In NE VII.9, Aristotle describes the continent person as someone who abides by "true reasoning (τῷ ἀληθεῖ λόγῳ) and the correct decision (τῇ ὀρθῇ προαιρέσει)" (1151a35-1151b5). As such, the continent person is different from the stubborn person (who is "not swayed by reason", 1151b10). But "true reason" and "correct choice" in VII.9 should not be confused with "truth in agreement with correct desire" (1139a30) in VI.2. The continent person simply does not have correct desire.[296] For the continent person has "base appetites", although he does nothing against reason (1151b35-1152a1). In other words, although the reason of the continent person is true and he can make a correct (ὀρθῇ) choice, he cannot make an excellent (σπουδαία) choice - choice that VI.2 says one needs to make if one is to attain practical truth.[297]

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[295] Broadie 1991, 250.

[296] There is a textual issue. As Olfert observes, when Aristotle mentions "desire" (ὄρεξις) in NE VI.2, it is not clear to what extent Aristotle means to include both rational and non-rational desires (Olfert 2017, 81, n.3). On the one hand, the focus on good choices suggests that he has in mind mainly rational desire. For choice is the result of a rational desire for the good (1111b26, 1113a15) and the corresponding deliberation about how to achieve this good (1112b15, 1112b26). But on the other hand, at 1139a30-35 he says (good) choice requires both thought and intelligence and a state of character (ἠθικός ἕξις). But character state involves the non-rational part of the soul (1103a1-10; 1105b22-29). Broadie and Rowe (2002, 364) suggest that Aristotle is perhaps using ἕξεως here to "cover any condition of the non-rational part of the soul". At any rate, if the central theme is *practical truth*, it should be clear that any imperfections in the non-rational soul are ruled out. See also Richardson Lear 2004, 100-102.

[297] Coope 2012 argues that wisdom is dependent on the ethical virtues because without the latter one cannot fully appreciate the fineness of the right actions. The continent person can also make the right choices and act on them, but he is not wise because his bad appetites prevent him from taking rational pleasure in doing the right things (153-7). This is how "having a bad appetite imply a flaw in the rational part of one's soul" (147). When Coope says the continent person also makes the right choice, she seems to have in mind mainly "correct" (ὀρθῇ) choices (though she does not cite VII.9). But if I am right, the continent person does not make excellent choice (προαίρεσις σπουδαία). If so, having bad appetites implies a flaw in the rational soul not because such appetites prevent one from taking rational pleasure in appreciating the fineness of the right actions, but because they prevent one from attaining practical truth.

Now, this account of practical truth allows us to interpret premise (2F) in the following way. Attaining practical truth amounts to possessing all the proper ethical virtues because lacking any ethical virtue implies that one cannot make, and/or explain, and/or fully justify excellent choices. Given the broader notion of temperance articulated in [T4], one may even give temperance so understood a special place in one's account of UV. That is, since temperance preserves wisdom by securing the teleological connection between one's actions and one's goal, one may further suggest that lacking any ethical virtue also implies, in one way or another, some degree of damage of such teleological structure. This should allow us to see, to say the least, how the truly courageous person should also be temperate (broadly construed). For if intemperance corrupts one's understanding of the starting-point, then one cannot be choosing to act courageously for the sake of the fine, which is what true courage should involve (1117b8-16). In other words, even if one can appear to act courageously, one fails to justify such action (for one fails to grasp the correct starting-point), and so in this sense fails to attain practical truth.

However, there are some problems with this account of practical truth. First, in [T5][B] Aristotle says "*logos* must be true and desire must be correct" (1139a25). The most straightforward reading of this line suggests that *logos* is the bearer of truth.[298] Relatedly, Pakaluk argues that the sentence "this, then, is the thought and the truth that is practical" (αὕτη μὲν οὖν ἡ διάνοια καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια πρακτική; 1139a26) should be read as: "this *sort of thinking*, then, is action-directed thinking, and *this sort of truth is action-directed* truth".[299] For the "this" (αὕτη) that begins the sentence delimits a species within a larger genus - in this case, the genus of “thinking”. And the repetition of the definite article “ἡ” suggests that the same reasoning applies to “truth” (ἀλήθεια). So Aristotle is delimiting the species of thinking that is practical thinking and the species of truth that is practical truth. So the truth that is practical is the truth of διάνοια. But since Aristotle has just said διάνοια issues in “affirmations and denials” (1139a20), it follows that practical truth is the truth of affirmations and denials. This contradicts the idea that it is the whole composite of true *logos* and correct desire that is the bearer of truth.[300]

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[298] Charles 2018 argues that, for Aristotle, desiderative *nous* and intellectual desire refer to the same unified state. Desiderative-thinking and intellectual-desire do not just necessarily co-occur, but they cannot be defined independently of each other, or may even share the same definition (149-151). This contradicts how reason and desire are two distinct components: "reason must be true and the desire must be correct" (1139a24). Further, I think Charles over-intellectualises desire when he interprets 1139a ("what affirmation and denial are in the case of thought, pursuit and avoidance are with desire") as "pursuit is the same as assertion" (152). At any rate, for my purposes, I do not think I need to commit myself to such a contentious view. See also Charles 2015.

[299] Pakaluk 2010, 152; emphasis original.

Second, elsewhere Aristotle says:

> We divide beliefs into true and false, not into good and bad, whereas choices we divide more in the latter way [i.e. into good and bad more than true and false] (1111b33-4).

“Choices” are divided more into good and bad, rather than true and false; it is not helpful to characterise the correctness of choice in terms of (practical) truth. So let us see if there are other accounts of practical truth, and if they give us better chance to argue for UV.

6.5.2 Practical truth as true assertions

We just saw that the most straightforward reading of 1139a25-26 suggests that it is *logos,* not the whole composite of reason and desire, that is the bearer of practical truth. This should remind us of Aristotle’s general theory of truth as truth of assertions:

> To say that what is, is not, or that what is not, is, is false; whereas to say that what is, is, or that what is not, is not, is true (*Meta.* 1011b26–7)

Here, “truth” is understood as “correspondence”: if one asserts what is in fact the case, then one’s assertion is true. If one asserts what is in fact not the case, then one’s assertion is false.

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[300] Broadie herself noted this problem of her earlier account in Broadie 2019, 263.

Can practical truth be understood as truth of assertions? Some think that the notion of "practical truth" is an isolated anomaly in Aristotle's theory of truth as truth of assertions.[301] But some suggest otherwise. Olfert develops the most elaborate account of practical truth based on assertoric truth (and falsehood).[302] The assertion "X is good" is true in the same way "X is red" is true: they are true because they correspond to the relevant facts. "Good", "just", etc. can operate as predicates that are combined with the subject of which they are predicated (*Cat.* 10b19–25).[303] But practical truth is different from theoretical truth because, argues Olfert, practical truth is made true by the things that also make the desires correct, i.e. the highest human good as it is practicable for the agent here and now. Our desires, decisions, thoughts share one common standard.[304] Finally, practical truth ensures that true practical assertions are motivating because the human psyche is such that we are motivated by what we find good and practicable.[305]

It seems right that correct desires and true reason are both responsible for truth and good conduct because they share one common standard. This allows us to make sense of how the good person can be like "a carpenter's rule or measure", since in his case "the object of wish is the one that is truly so [i.e. truly good] (1113a25-35).[306] The good person "discriminates correctly in every set of circumstances, and in every set of circumstances what is true is apparent to him" (1113a30-31). In discerning correctly about the truth of what one ought to desire and how one ought to act, one succeeds in attaining practical truth and acts excellently.

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[301] Crivelli 2004, 40.

[302] Pakaluk also suggests that "the point of developing a science…is precisely reliably to generate in a domain only true claims" (Pakaluk 2010, 152).

[303] Olfert 2017, 90, 119. More specifically, assertions (and denials) are true or false in virtue of the similarity (or the lack of it) between the combination and separation of items in affirmations (and denials) (*Cat.* 16a10-18) on the one hand, and the combination and separation of items in the world, on the other (*Meta*. 1051a34-1051b17; *Cat.* 13b10). The affirmation "X is red" is true in virtue of the correspondence between the combination of "X" and "red" in affirmation and the combination of the entity X and the property red in the world. Similarly, "X is good" is true because it corresponds to the combination of the entity X and the property good. See Crivelli 2004, 1-41.

[304] Olfert 2017, 105-118. Reeve understands the relation between reason and desire slightly differently: the correct desire itself is caused by true reason, and reason and desire jointly produce the right action (Reeve 2012, 189-190).

[305] Olfert 2017, 122-128.

[306] Adler 1978.

This then gives us another way to interpret premise (2F). Attaining practical truth amounts to possessing all the proper ethical virtues because lacking any ethical virtues implies failing to observe this one single standard that governs all our decisions, desires, and thoughts, i.e. happiness as it is practicable in a given situation. To put it differently, one attains practical truth only when one's desires are also in tune with this standard. But since the excellent person attains practical truth in every situation, it follows that his desires are in tune with this standard in every situation. But to have one's thoughts, desires and choices conform to such a standard just is to be ethically virtuous. Since the excellent person can do so in every situation, it follows that he has all the ethical virtues to act excellently.

Understood in this way, premise (2F) is reminiscent of premise 2B: "To be wise is to have holistic evaluative knowledge, which amounts to the possession of all the ethical virtues". For both emphasise the importance of evaluative knowledge. (If practical truth also includes political expertise, then it also echoes premise (2B-1). But this is not built into the notion of practical truth.) But (2F) differs from (2B) in that the former focuses more on how the soul of the excellent person is in tune with the standard that happiness constitutes. In this way, (this interpretation of) premise (2F) relies more on the condition of the soul than on the content of holistic evaluative knowledge to argue for UV, although it is true that the condition of the soul of the excellent person is characterised in terms of *what* it attains (truth about what one ought to do and desire). As is sometimes noted, the verb ἀληθεύει at 1139b15 ("there are five states in which the soul ἀληθεύει…"), meaning "arrive at truth" or "be right about", can be attributed to both the knower and what the knower knows.[307]

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[307] Richardson Lear 2002, 99, n.16.

However, assertoric truth does not seem adequate in the context of NE VI. Consider for instance knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), which is one of the states that attains truth (alongside (practical) wisdom (φρόνησις), craft (τέχνη), theoretical wisdom (σοφία), and understanding (νοῦς), 1139b15-19). As we have seen in section 6.4, knowledge is a "demonstrative state" (ἕξις ἀποδεικτική): it concerns not just correct truth-value but also correct explanation. One can of course formulate the *content* of what is known through a series of suitably formulated assertions. But it seems that the state of knowledge cannot be fully analysed in terms of (a series of) true assertions. For to have knowledge one must see for oneself the connection between the explanans and the explanandum: all the understanding (of the starting-point, of what follows from it, and of the necessary connection) must spring from the same disposition. Knowledge attains truth not just in the sense that it is a disposition to grasp true assertions.

Unless we have reason to assume that wisdom is an exception among the states that attain truth, a similar verdict should apply: assertoric truth (and falsehood) seems inadequate to characterise how wisdom is a disposition that attains truth. Olfert does acknowledge that to attain truth in Aristotle's sense one also needs to give a true explanation,[308] but all the same her account does not really explain this aspect of practical truth.[309]

Given the two accounts of practical truth we have seen so far, it seems this is what we need: to appreciate that it is the *logos* (not the whole composite of reason and desire) that is the bearer of (assertoric) truth, whilst doing justice to the fact that wisdom (among other states) is a state that attains truth in a more robust sense - more robust than just being a state that grasps true assertions.[310]

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[308] Olfert 2017, 87.

[309] Nielsen 2019, 222. Similar criticism applies to Pakaluk 2010, 152.

[310] It seems similar criticism applies to Anscombe's pioneering account. Her account is centred on the idea that for an action to be a human action, it has to be done under a description (Anscombe 2005). For example, the event of S's feeding his cat is an action that S did only if S does it under the description that "I am doing this and that in feeding my cat". The action can fall under a series of nested descriptions: the action "S feeds a cat" can also be an action "S is enjoying his time with his cat", "S is taking a rest", etc. According to Anscombe, if I understand her correctly, practical truth is the true

6.5.3 The robust sense of “truth”

Broadie (2019) is helpful here. In effect, she settles the issue by first introducing a non-assertoric sense of truth. As she notices, Aristotle often uses the noun ἀλήθεια, as opposed to the adjective ἀληθές, in a more robust way. For instance, *Meta.* talks about “the investigation of the truth (ἀληθείας)” (993a27-993b8), *DA* talks about how “research into the soul contributes greatly to the whole body of truth (ἀλήθειαν ἅπασαν)” (402a5).[311] The expression “the truth” (as a noun) seems to indicate a sense of “truth” that is much richer than mere assertoric truth. It is closer to a whole domain of knowledge, or even just reality as such.[312] As Broadie puts it: “‘The truth ’in this richer sense indicates, simultaneously, (*a*) actual or possible cognitive achievement in relation to some reality, and (*b*) the reality itself insofar as it is or might be successfully presented to rational cognition.”[313]

Broadie then develops an account of practical truth that includes both senses of truth. She suggests that the true *logos* is the bearer of assertoric truth, but assertoric truth can be attributed to *logos* only if it is accompanied by the correct desire. When the correct desire is also present and one makes an excellent choice, the practical intellect[314] attains a kind of full cognitive achievement (the more robust sense of “truth”). The presence of correct desires elevates the true

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descriptions of our actions (πρᾶξις) that are *made true* by the actions themselves (Anscombe 1981, 77). The true description of “S feeds a cat” is made true by what S actually did, i.e. feeding his cat. Since the source of truth is the action itself, the truth is practical; but since an action is always an action done under a certain description, it is not just an event and hence can be the bearer of truth. But insofar as descriptions of actions use only assertoric truth, Anscombe’s account does not capture how attaining truth also implies giving an explanation.

[311] See also *Meta.*, 984b9–10, 988a19–20, 993b17–20; *Phy.* 188b29–30, 191a24–5, 251a6–7; *EE* 1215b1–2.

[312] *Meta.* 993b31 even says “for each thing, the degree to which it has being (τοῦ εἶναι) is also the degree to which it has truth (ἀληθείας)”. No matter how we understand the metaphysics involved, it is clear that ἀλήθεια here cannot be a property of assertions.

[313] Broadie 2019, 259.

[314] This interpretation assumes that when Aristotle says “This, then, is the thought and the truth that is practical” at 1139a26, the “this” (αὕτη) refers back to the “true logos” (λόγον ἀληθῆ) mentioned at 1139a24.

logos “from being a mere assertoric truth to being an instance of ἀλήθεια”.[315] Broadie does not say so, but presumably this is an achievement that concerns not just any domain of reality, but the reality of living well.

It seems right that we need both senses of truth. On the one hand, it seems intuitive that the wise practical intellect makes particular true judgments that can be understood in terms of assertoric truth. On the other, the robust sense of truth captures how “wisdom” is an accolade that indicates intellectual achievements.

Now, correct rational desires aim at what is truly good (1113b25-30), and non-rational desires are correct if they are fully governed by true reason (e.g. 1102b29, 1119b15, 1152a2).[316] So when Broadie’s account suggests it is the correct desires that elevate the true *logos,* it also implies that it is when one aims at what is truly good and is fully governed by true reason (in one’s choices and actions) that one deserves the accolade ἀλήθεια. That is, although properly speaking it is the true *logos* that is the bearer of truth (both assertoric truth and truth as reality), we attribute “practical truth” to someone only when his various parts of the soul (thoughts, rational and non-rational desires) are all in their proper condition. In this way, although excellent choices themselves are not equivalent to practical truth (*contra* the account given in section 6.5.1), one can still say these choices *express* one’s attainment of practical truth.[317]

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[315] Broadie 2019, 264. Broadie herself does not say this, but this proposal also fits how ἀληθές (the adjective) and ἀληθεία (the noun) are used in [T5]: “true” as adjective is applied to the logos component, hence we can speak of “true” assertions; whereas “the truth” as a noun refers to cognitive achievements (as in “the truth (ἀλήθεια) that is practical” at 1139a26 and “truth (ἀλήθεια) in agreement with the correct desire” at 1139a30). The noun “ἀλήθεια” is also used at 1139b12, when Aristotle says “It holds, then, of both intelligent parts that their function is truth (ἀλήθεια)”.

[316] I am aware that there is a question about whether rational desires and non-rational desires concern different objects, and, relatedly, whether “apparent good” should be understood in a technical sense as the object of a distinct capacity, *phantasia* (see Moss 2012, ch.3). But regardless of how one understands *phantasia,* in the case of the virtuous agent, what appears good is in fact good (1113a25-35).

[317] Consequently, this account can accommodate what is said about the continent person near the end of section 6.5.1: the continent does not attain practical truth because he can only make “the correct (ὀρθῇ) choice”, but not “the excellent (σπουδαία) choice”.

The “X should be chosen for the sake of Y” structure encapsulates one’s excellent choices, i.e. how one chooses the best action for the sake of the correct starting-point with the full support of one’s non-rational desires. As such, “the truth" that is expressed in one’s excellent choice can also be what explains and justifies one’s choice. In this way, wisdom is not just a disposition that grasps true assertions: it is an excellent condition that one achieves when one’s excellent choices and actions express what one understood about “the truth” of living well.

Since it is the presence of correct desires that elevates the true *logos* to a case of “truth”, and since correct desires are expressed in one’s choices and actions, there is a sense in which one *earns* practical truth: it is in excelling in one’s conduct that one simultaneously deserves the accolade ἀλήθεια.[318] This accolade may come as a surprise to Aristotle’s audience. For being well brought-up as they are (1095a2-10), they may already know that virtuous activities are ways of doing well; but now they are told that this is also a matter of *intellectual* excellence - in being ethically excellent, they are also attaining “*the truth*”.[319] In this specific sense, perhaps, Richardson Lear is right that the whole virtuous agent “corresponds” to the truth-maker of practical truth, not in the standard sense that true assertions correspond to the relevant facts, but in the sense that “in realising the human good in his actions, [the virtuous agent] corresponds to the object of knowledge in the appropriate way”.[320]

With this account of practical truth on the table, let me explain how I think we should understand premise (2F), “attaining practical truth amounts to possessing all the proper ethical virtues”.

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[318] Pakaluk is right that the fundamental rationale behind the idea of “practical truth” is actually quite simple: that in the practical realm, we need to attain truth in practice (Pakaluk 2005, 220-221). But he does not entertain the robust sense of truth, and I think only this sense of truth does justice to how being wise in one’s practice is an *intellectual achievement*.

[319] Richardson Lear 2004, 121.

[320] Richardson Lear 2004, 106.

6.6 Aristotle vs. Socrates

Attaining practical truth in one’s life implies making excellent choices with the right starting-point and the full support of one’s non-rational desires. This echoes “the argument from ‘the fully integrated soul’”: the excellent (healthiest) condition of the soul implies all-round excellence (section 5.3.4). The theory of practical truth gives the fully integrated soul a more determinate characterisation: it is a soul that attains “the truth” about what it is to live well. Further, there should be no doubt about the *scope* of practical truth: after all, we would not want to say that someone succeeds in attaining and practising “the truth” about living well in one’s life if one does not excel in most, if not all, areas of one's life.

I suggest, then, as a first approximation, the following interpretation of (2F): the different ethical virtues can be seen as different ways to commit to attaining (practising) practical truth in one’s life. This is not entirely surprising: since the ethical virtues are dispositions that issue choices (1139a21), and since excellent choices as such express practical truth, it is reasonable to say that the ethical virtues (by issuing good choices) express one’s overall commitment to practical truth (in different ways that are characteristic of the different virtues).

The emphasis on practical truth and the practical intellect seems sufficient to show how Aristotle rejects Socratic Intellectualism. For, as is often noted, Socrates fails to distinguish between the theoretical intellect and the practical intellect.[321] Relatedly, Socrates does not recognise a kind of truth that is practical and is distinguished from its theoretical counterpart. Aristotle, then, rejects Socrates’ position by suggesting a different kind of intellectualism - “practical intellectualism” (intellectualism based on the practical intellect), perhaps.

But there is a problem. For note that Socrates’ position is characterised in *Aristotle’s* terms: Socrates would not say that he is arguing for IoV based on what Aristotle called theoretical truth. For Aristotle’s theoretical truth concerns beings whose first principle cannot be otherwise (1139a8). But Socrates' knowledge concerns what we evaluate as good or bad: it concerns human affairs (*Protagoras,* 357b). Aristotle distinguishes the theoretical intellect and the practical intellect because he wants to have a framework that includes both the theoretical sciences (metaphysics, theology, astrology, physics, even biology)[322] and the practical sciences (politics, ethics, rhetoric). But Socrates is not even considering theoretical inquiry. In fact, early in the *Protagoras*, Protagoras says, unlike other sophists, he is not offering any theoretical training (arithmetic, astronomy, geometry);[323] rather, he is teaching his students about proper management (318e-319a). All the subsequent discussion, including Socrates' argument for IoV, is centred on what Protagoras professes to teach; theoretical sciences are not part of the picture. Socrates may have interests in theoretical studies (cf. *Phaedo* 96a-b), but this is not part of his argument for IoV.

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[321] See, e.g. Moore 2019, 204; Taylor 1991, 172.

6.7 Human nature as practical rational beings

So we must go even deeper. Here is my suggestion. Just as theoretical truth appeals to our nature as theoretical rational beings in that it captures how the supreme element in us enables us to attain the truth about the supreme objects of knowledge (1141b5-10; 1177a20-21), practical truth encapsulates our nature as practical rational beings in that it captures how the excellent practical intellect enables us to attain the truth about human goodness.[324] Accordingly, this is how I think we should think of premise (2F): the different proper ethical virtues can be seen as different ways to attain practical truth, which are themselves different manifestations of our nature as practical rational beings, and such nature cannot be compartmentalised or otherwise broken apart. This captures how proper virtue manages to do precisely what natural virtues cannot: as we saw in [T2][C], in the case of natural virtues, it is possible that “the same person is not best adapted by nature (εὐφυέστατος) to all of them” (1144b35-36). But if proper virtue is grounded in our nature as practical rational beings, then this possibility is ruled out.[325]

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[322] The status of the natural (sublunary) sciences as theoretical science is controversial. See, e.g. Reeve 2013, 100, 136-138.

[323] Music and literature are also mentioned, but these two are included as part of the virtue education in the Great Speech (325d-326d).

[324] Bonasio 2020 argues that, in the *EE*, Aristotle's ideal agent does not just have the ethical virtues and wisdom, but also all the *theoretical* virtues. My account is relatively friendly to this interpretation. For arguably the wise practical intellect will also prescribe that σοφία is a superior form of truth (1145a6-10; 1141a20-22; X.8).

To illustrate, consider again the virtue of temperance. This virtue is special from the point of view of practical truth because in an important sense it is the virtue that confirms our nature as (practical) rational being. Aristotle first remarks that temperance and intemperance concern objects that relate to our animal nature - mostly objects of the sense of touch (1118a25). Even in consuming food, while animals enjoy it insofar as it supervenes on their nutritive and generative capacities (1118a20-25; see also *DA* II.4), the intemperate person gratifies the most bestial aspect of eating: the tactile sensation (1118a31-1118b1).[326] By contrast, the temperate person does not just enjoy the right sort of things, but he enjoys the right sorts of things in a human rather than bestial way (cf. 1154a15-20).[327] As such, temperance confirms (or promotes the expression of) our rational nature not simply because it gives us some “psychic leisure” so that reason can function without distraction (cf. 1154b1-6),[328] nor just because temperance promotes health and health is a prerequisite of (other) virtuous activities;[329] rather, temperance confirms our (practical) rational nature because it affirms the authority of practical rationality as it is expressed in our choice of a human (as opposed to animal) way of life.[330] The virtue of temperance asserts, with a clear understanding of our animality, that we conceive of ourselves as more than an animal.[331]

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[325] Cf. Richardson Lear argues that while the agent with natural virtues also, in a sense, aims at faring well, this agent chooses virtuous activities for some external ends (protection of family and friends, etc.). By contrast, the agent with proper virtues values virtuous activities for their own sakes, i.e. as an expression of his excellent practical rationality (Richardson Lear 2004, 117-119). See also White 1992, 162-163.

[326] A temperate person can enjoy discriminating flavours in wine and food (cf. *Meta*. 980a22—24), but the glutton does not even care about the flavours (1118a30).

[327] Richardson Lear 2004, 166-168.

[328] Tuozzo 1995, 146-148.

[329] Kraut 1989, 237.

[330] Fortenbaugh emphasises how the desires of the right bodily pleasures (on the right occasion, etc.) of the temperate person should be understood as *rational* appetites,

In confirming the authority of practical rationality, the temperate agent attains practical truth in his life. His choice of a temperate way of life instantiates "the truth". The fact that this is his choice is vital, as excellent choice is the activity of the practical intellect, and as such expresses his attainment of practical truth. Perhaps this is why Aristotle later emphasises that the intemperate person, unlike the incontinent person, acts on choices. It is worse to pursue pleasures without the presence of intense appetites than doing so because one is compelled by such appetites (1148a17-21, 1150a26-31).[332] When we emphasise that the vice of intemperance also issues choices, the intemperate person is sort of a mirror image of the temperate person: in choosing a way of life that reveals his humanity, the choices of the temperate person express practical truth, but in choosing a way of life that reveals animality, the choices of the intemperate person express practical *falsehood* (a wrong conception of what it is to live well as a rational human being).

A similar account can be applied to the virtue of courage. The courageous person fears the right things, in the right way, etc. (1115b18-20). Now, someone is called fully brave if he is fearless (ἀδεής) about "a fine death, or about sudden situations that threaten death" (1115a33): he does not fear dying in war if doing so is noble (1117b10-15), as he does not desire to avoid such death.[333] Aristotle

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since they "are acquired and involve judgment as their efficient cause" (Fortenbaugh 2002, 83-87).

[331] Broadie and Rowe 2002, 27.

[332] As I understand it, these remarks in NE VII about the intemperate agent complement the description of the glutton in NE III.10 as someone who enjoys excessively the sensation of touch. The glutton acts on choices in the sense that he actively lives a life that reveals more his animality (as opposed to humanity), and taking pleasure in the bestial aspect of even the most ordinary activity is part of such a life. If he has intense appetites, he would live in an even more bestial way, since he is already on this path.

[333] In NE III.6, Aristotle begins by reporting that some people think (see *Protagoras* 358d) fear is the expectation of harm. The courageous person (or any sane person) has every reason to expect imminent harm on the battlefield, and so has every reason to fear in this thin sense (1117b7-8). So when Aristotle says the fully brave is fearless, he seems

took pains to explain how is it that "the end that accords with courage would seem to be pleasant", although "obscured by the circumstances" (1117b1). Death and wounds on the battlefield are unavoidable and painful, but courageous activity is pleasant insofar as it "touches" (ἐφάπτεται) the fine end (1117b16). The choice of word ἐφάπτεται here is interesting: given the robust notion of "truth" as reality, could it be that courageous activity "touches" - in the sense of "having direct contact with" - the truth/reality of a noble life?

This may help to illuminate some aspects of Aristotle's reasoning. According to Aristotle, the more the courageous person is willing to embrace a fine death, the more he is virtuous, and so the more his life is valuable. By the same token, it also means that in embracing death the courageous person is letting go of a good with great value (his own life). Courageous activity points to the supreme value of the noble end precisely *at the limit* of one's own life (1117b10-15). The robust notion of truth bears this out: the truth about τὸ καλόν refers to value that transcends any individual life. In excelling in one's conduct, one attains such truth in one's life, and that is what makes one's life of great value. So the truth of the supreme value of the noble end is expressed precisely in one's excellent choice to sacrifice one's life for the sake of such end.[334]

By contrast, the person who acts from *thumos* fails to attain practical truth. He may have some correct desires, as the courageous person also expresses his spirit. But fighting from *thumos* means his spirit does not agree with his reason - or even, he does not exercise his reason at all (1116b30-1117a5). People with citizen courage are better, since they care about the fine (1116a29). Their

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to be working with a different sense of "fear". The definition of fear in *Rhet*. II.5 helps to fill the gap: fear is the expectation of imminent harm *and* the desire to avoid it. So the courageous person does not fear noble death in the sense that he does not desire to avoid it. See Pears 1980, 174-175.

[334] Note that both Socrates and Aristotle bother to argue that courageous activities are pleasant (*Protagoras* 360a) (see section 3.2). In Socrates' case, the art of measurement allows us to grasp the exact value of one's actions, which (supposedly) should let us know that courageous actions are more valuable than cowardly ones. This gives us peace of mind (356d7). In Aristotle's case, courageous activities are pleasant insofar as they are fine.

conception of what it is to live well approximates practical truth. But their focus is relatively shallow: they care about winning honour, not the intrinsic value of the noble end (1116a20-22). As such, they do not attain practical truth in the sense that they are not expressing their nature as practical rational beings.

It is time to tie the whole argument together. Recall, premise (1F) says "possessing proper ethical virtue amounts to attaining practical truth". I argued that the agent with proper ethical virtue does not just judge correctly about what to do, but also gives a true account to explain and justify why he should do it (section 6.4). Given the interpretation of (2F) I have just given, we can now add that proper ethical virtues are committed to attaining practical truth in practice, and the same attainment, itself a manifestation of our nature as practical rational beings, is expressed in all the proper ethical virtues. The agent with natural virtues does not excel in practice, but the agent with proper virtues does, and when he thus excels, he earns the accolade ἀλήθεια.

In the final analysis, Aristotle's ideal agent - the agent who attains practical truth - is in an excellent condition because he is living the best life he can as a practical rational being (which is not to say, of course, this is also the best life for him as a theoretical rational being). His thoughts, choices, conducts, and desires are all in tune with what is genuinely good; attaining practical truth expresses his unchanging character vis-a-vis the human good. By contrast, although Socrates also speaks of human nature (that it is not "in human nature (ἀνθρώπου φύσει) to be prepared to go for what you think to be bad in preference to what is good" (358d)), his virtue (wisdom/knowledge) is not directly an expression of human nature. Despite all the contentious claims about how knowledge is something fine (352d) and can save our lives (357b1), Socrates has a relatively simple (and hence also quite elegant) picture of the ideal agent. Socrates' ideal person, at least as presented in the *Protagoras*, is someone whose mental and practical life are all governed and shaped by wisdom. All his thoughts, desires, emotions, and actions express his wisdom. One might prefer Socrates' position just because it is more elegant, but one might also be impressed by how Aristotle based his view on (what we might call) philosophical anthropology.

6.8 Desiderata fulfilled?

At the end of Chapter 5, I summarised four desiderata for an account of Aristotle's defence of UV. To repeat, such an account should explain: 1) how the non-rational aspects of the virtues are intertwined; 2) what Socrates missed but Aristotle successfully recognised about the significance of "choice" and the significance of the related distinction between the two parts of the soul; 3) how the human psyche can possess all the proper ethical virtues; and 4) how the ideal agent has general justice. I want to suggest that "the argument from practical truth" fulfils all four desiderata.

This argument can fulfil (1) because in making excellent choices with the full support of the non-rational desires one is simultaneously expressing practical truth, and it is the same truth that one's choices express when different non-rational desires are involved. In the case of temperance, to have one's appetites agree with reason is to confirm the authority of practical rationality as it is expressed in one's choice of a human way of life. The truth that one attains is the truth that encapsulates one's nature as a practical rational being. The same truth is manifested in one's courageous activity: the activity that allows one to "touch" the noble end. The authority of practical rationality is equally expressed in one's choice to sacrifice oneself for the sake of the fine. If one appears to live a temperate life but cannot withstand what is painful, then one's character is simply soft (1150a15).[335] Conversely, if one appears to fight courageously but lives no better than slaves in peacetime because one lacks temperance (*Pol.* 1334a30-1334b5), then one's apparent courage does not attain practical truth, i.e. one does not attain the truth that encapsulates one's nature as a practical rational being.[336]

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[335] Bravery is praised because it is "harder to withstand what is painful than to hold back from what is pleasant" (1117a35), and "the one overcome by pains is soft" (1150a15).

The connection between character and truth reminds us of Socrates. Near the end of section 3.8, I said that, in the way I interpreted Socrates, all the apparently different virtues share the same task of allowing us to "abide in the truth" (μένουσαν ἐπὶ τῷ ἀληθεῖ; 356e1). The "truth" in Socrates' case is what the art of measurement promises: the exact value (the pleasure, the good, and the fine) of each choice. If one is wise/virtuous, then one's character is transparent, in the sense that what one knows of oneself (in relation to one's perceptions, deliberations, choices, emotions, actions) is the same as the truth about what ought to be the case (section 3.5). Aristotle pushes this idea to the level of human nature: if one is virtuous without qualification, then one attains practical truth, the truth that encapsulates one's nature as a practical rational being.

Let us now turn to desideratum (2). At *MM* 1182a15-24, recall, it is said that Socrates is wrong because he denies the non-rational part of the soul and "thus denies both passion and character". I argued that "the argument from 'the fully integrated soul'" risks trivialising Aristotle's rejection of Socratic Intellectualism because it fails to articulate the significance of "choice" and the significance of the related distinction between the rational and the non-rational parts of the soul (section 5.3). This should not be a problem for the "the argument from practical truth". Choice is all-important because excellent choices express practical truth. Virtue is not simply instances of knowledge, but virtue involves reason in the sense that one has to give a true account that explains and justifies one's excellence choice. And one has to have correct desires, including non-rational ones, if one is to make excellence choices and the practical intellect is to attain the robust sense of practical truth (section 6.5.3). In effect, this turns the table on Socrates: for Socrates, if one is to be virtuous, one's emotions must express or at least be governed by one's intellect (section 3.3); but now we realise that, according to Aristotle, the practical intellect cannot even perform its function well (attaining practical truth) if correct desires are not present. This is almost Socrates' position inverted: the proper functioning of the practical intellect is hostage to the proper functioning of the non-rational part of the soul.

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[336] *Rhet*. discusses how different virtues somehow correspond to different age groups. For instance, the young are said be courageous and magnanimous. But they are also inexperienced (II.12). By contrast, the old are said to be small-minded, cowardly, stingy, but appears to have more self-control (II.13). Those in the prime of life are said to combine courage and prudence (II.14). These sound more like natural virtue. At any rate, it should be clear that these are not manifestations of our nature as practical rational beings.

How about desideratum (3)? Recall that "the argument from 'the fully integrated soul'" suggests that the human psyche can possess all the proper ethical virtues because to possess all the proper virtues just is to have a fully integrated soul, and it is possible for the human soul to be in such an excellent condition. "The argument from practical truth" has an even more straightforward but deeper answer. The human psyche can possess all the proper ethical virtues because this is guaranteed by human nature: proper ethical virtues attain practical truth, and such truth is the truth that humans as practical rational beings are meant to attain.

Finally, desideratum (4). Given "the argument from practical truth", how should we explain that the ideal agent also has general justice? I suggested that if the agent with proper virtue has some sort of political knowledge then it should be clear that he can be in a position to exercise general justice, i.e. to take care of the fellow-members of his community (section 5.4). Admittedly, as I noted, such political knowledge is not built into the notion of practical truth. But all the same I think it is well within the *spirit* of "the argument from practical truth" to include the other-regarding aspect of proper ethical virtues. For practical truth is the truth about what it is to live well as human beings, and human beings flourish in a community (e.g. NE 1097b6-10, 1142a9, 1169b16, 1170b12, 1172a1-6, *Pol*. 1253a25-35, 1280b33). This also echoes how practical truth encapsulates human nature, for "a human being is by nature a political animal" (*Pol*. 1253a4). So practical truth can also be seen as the truth about what it is for human beings to live well as political animals.

If this is right, then the idea would be that all the proper ethical virtues express the same attainment of the same practical-political truth. Is this plausible? One option would be to combine the Grand End theory of wisdom and the theory of practical truth: the robust truth that one attains if one has correct desires would be the truth about the blueprint of human goods that the Grand End theory articulates. As the Grand End is the product of philosophical ethics, this would also mean that all the proper ethical virtues express the same commitment to philosophical truth (about human goods).[337] I find this too intellectualised. Another option would be to emphasise that the exercise of the proper ethical virtues has a public or social dimension, such that one does not count as having any proper virtue if one fails to attain practical truth in both the private domain and the public domain. For instance, even the virtue of temperance, which one might think concerns only one's relation to one's appetites (an impression no doubt suggested by NE III.10), can lead to disastrous results if it is not observed diligently in the public domain. For instance, one may commit an act of adultery, which is an act of injustice (1134a24). The authority of practical rationality, then, must be observed in both the private and the public domain, and practical truth applies to both. Attaining practical truth in the public domain requires general justice. A lot more can be said about how UV can be applied to the public domain, but I hope at least I have shown that "the argument from practical truth" can explain how the ideal agent also has general justice.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I proposed a new interpretation of Aristotle's argument for UV. After suggesting that the notion of "practical truth" is invited by the dialectic of NE VI.12-13, I explained how proper ethical virtue attains practical truth. I then argued against a) taking practical truth as correctness of choices, and b) taking practical truth as just making true assertions. I endorsed the account of practical truth that says true *logos* is the bearer of assertoric truth, but when correct desires are also present, then the practical intellect also attains robust practical truth (the truth of what it is to live well as a human being). UV is true because the different proper ethical virtues are just different ways to attain the same practical truth, which are also manifestations of our nature as practical rational beings. According to this picture, Aristotle’s ideal agent lives the best life he can as a practical rational being; as such, all his thoughts, desires and emotions are in tune with what is genuinely good. “The argument from practical truth”, I suggest, fulfils all four desiderata of a good defence of Aristotle’s UV.

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[337] Cf. Reeve 2013, 261-262.

Final Conclusion

According to Socrates, IoV is true in the sense that the best condition of the intellect (knowledge) shapes every aspect of our practical lives. All the apparently different virtues express the state of knowledge. Socrates' ideal agent is maximally transparent: what he knows of himself is the same as what ought to be the case. This elegant model has important pedagogical significance: it reminds us that we should always be vigilant as to what can go right and what can go wrong. Since all possible expressions of virtue (or, for that matter, vice) can be tied down to the same thing, any ambivalence or blind-spot implies that one is not virtuous in the strict sense. This explains how one's commitment to goodness has to be robust.

According to Aristotle, UV is true in the sense that the different ethical virtues should be understood as different ways to attain the same practical truth, which are themselves manifestations of our nature as practical rational beings. Aristotle's ideal agent is also transparent, perhaps in an even deeper sense: the excellent condition of his soul reveals the truth about what it is to live well as practical rational beings. Aristotle's theory is arguably more complicated, since he wants to preserve a) the distinction between intellectual virtue and ethical virtue, and b) the distinctness of each ethical virtue. Still, everything is tied together. Practical truth explains how intellectual excellence and moral excellence(s) cooperate: it is in having a virtuous character that the practical intellect can fulfil its function in attaining practical truth. And the ethical virtues, understood as states that issue choices, express one's commitment to practical truth. The practical intellect fulfils its truth-attaining function as one exercises the ethical virtues in making excellent choices. The ethical virtues are still understood in holistic terms, as long as the notion of "practical truth" is interpreted in a sufficiently robust way. The pedagogical significance of Aristotle's model is arguably deeper, but less straightforward: it is not just that one has to be vigilant, but also that one has to appreciate how being morally good is also being intellectually excellent, i.e. that going right and going wrong is a matter of being excellent and being bad *as a practical rational being*. This explains how the exercise of the ethical virtues should be understood in rigorous terms.

Both Socrates' and Aristotle's virtuous agent are against hypocrisy in the sense that their words, their deeds, and their self-knowledge all harmonise. This is part of being transparent: if all of one's soul reveals what ought to be the case, then it is not possible for one to think of oneself as being more virtuous than one in fact is (insofar as there is still any room to speak of being *more* virtuous in this case). Further, all of one's words - what one says about one's own actions and character, what one says about others' character, what one projects as an ideal - spring from one's virtuous character. In Socrates' case, since the wise intellect permeates through the whole soul, thoughts will naturally harmonise with deeds as they are all parts of the same substance. As Laches once said, perhaps even of the character of Socrates' himself, that there is something genuinely musical (μουσικὸς), something that produces that most beautiful harmony (ἁρμονίαν καλλίστην), when someone renders "his own life harmonious (ἡρμοσμένος) by fitting his deeds to his words" (*Laches*, 188d). Similarly, according to Aristotle, the practical intellect attains truth about what ought to be the case, and it is the same truth that is expressed in one's excellent choices when correct desires are also present. So whatever one judges or says should be the case, the same truth is expressed in one's choice of action.

Aristotle's account is most different from Socrates', I think, when it comes to the notion of choice. Practical truth is expressed in excellent choices, and one chooses as one deliberates about how to achieve certain good as one sees is achievable through one's own agency (1111b26; 1113a10-13). So practical truth is expressed in one's efforts to realise genuine goodness through one's own agency. In this sense, it is appropriate to speak of how one earns the accolade of "(practical) truth". Unlike theoretical truth, practical truth cannot just consist in true or false, grasped in the abstract (1139a26-30); rather, practical truth has to be expressed - confirmed, perhaps even vindicated - in one's excellent deeds (cf.

1179a19-23). This should be contrasted with Socrates' analysis, according to which it is purely the business of the intellect to grasp truth. Of course, since knowledge is all-powerful (352d), one might say that if one does not act as wisdom prescribes one fails to do full justice to the truth the wise intellect grasps. But all the same there is not a clear sense in which the task of the intellect has to be answered by one's choice of action. In Aristotle, UV is true because the ethical virtues are united via the practical-truth-confirming attempts to realise genuine goodness through one's own agency. In Socrates, IoV is true because all the apparently different virtues express the same truth-grasping wisdom.

I hope I have demonstrated how IoV and UV are deeply connected with other central topics in Socrates' and Aristotle's ethics. To say the least, IoV and UV are intertwined with Socrates' and Aristotle's moral psychology, their views on the nature of virtue (intellectual and ethical), their views on agency, and so on. In a sense, then, it is beside the point to object that UV and/or IoV are "too demanding". For as Socrates (or Plato's Socrates) and Aristotle understand it, it is in the nature of virtue(s) to be holistic and robust in this way. While one can say this is simply not how modern philosophers would understand "virtue", one has to argue against the whole philosophical package, not just the aspects related to demandingness, if one is to reject Socrates' and/or Aristotle's account.

Let me end by suggesting some possible topics for future research, in light of this thesis.

First, it is worth asking in what sense we can speak of the identity/unity of *vices.* In Socrates' case, it seems we can speak of identity of vice: just as virtue is knowledge, vice is just ignorance. But Aristotle says in relation to the vice of irascibility that different vices cancel each other: "the bad destroys even itself" (1126a13). Aristotle makes this remark about vices in relation to the same mean; the same is not obviously true of vices in relation to different means. Still, this invites the thought: there cannot be unity of vices - it is not true that if one has any vices, one has to have all of them - because vice is, after all, the power to destroy, and virtue the power to protect or benefit. But what explains the asymmetry between the unity of virtues and the unity of vices? Is it because there is something in human nature that predisposes us towards goodness, such that the ethical virtues are mutually entailing because such mutual entailment facilitates the predisposition towards goodness, and the same predisposition prevents the mutual entailment of vices?

Second, more needs to be said about moral luck. If virtue is indeed holistic and robust (as both UV and IoV would claim), then one can reasonably say that if one fails to be virtuous in the strict sense, then the apparently virtuous actions that one performs are merely the result of luck. On the other hand, if one is genuinely virtuous, then one's virtuous actions are not subjected to luck in this way. But surely there are limits as to how far one can push in this direction: there are situations that simply "overstrain human nature" (NE 1110a25), such that we cannot reasonably demand *anyone*, including the genuinely virtuous agent, to act excellently. So how much luck UV or IoV can reasonably accommodate can be seen as a *further test* as to whether the idea of UV or IoV is plausible.

Finally, more needs to be said about moral education. As long as an ideal moral education should prepare the student to be virtuous in the strict sense, UV and IoV presuppose some account of moral education. One does not become virtuous in the strict sense out of thin air. Socrates is explicit that if virtue is knowledge, then it can be taught (361b). But what kind of teaching can have the extraordinary effect of shaping one's whole soul? And how does this kind of teaching relate to traditional musical and physical training (cf. *Protagoras* 324e-326e; *Republic* II-III)? And - to turn to Aristotle - what kind of moral education can prepare us to attain practical truth, the truth that encapsulates our nature as practical rational beings?

I hope I have shown the depth of IoV and UV in Plato and Aristotle. But one deep question leads to another, and so this is where I will stop.

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