ABSTRACT

Intellectual Humility as it Pertains to Self-Knowledge

Nicholas S. Grounds

Virtue epistemologists affirm that both faculties and intellectual character traits play primary roles in epistemology. However, virtue epistemology has little to say about self-knowledge and the intellectual virtues. Intellectual humility is now widely considered to be an epistemic trait, and over the past decade many different accounts of it have been offered. This fresh epistemic perspective on humility provides an excellent framework by which to examine the relationship between humility and self-knowledge, because intellectually humble dispositions help bypass obstacles to self-knowledge (e.g. The Limitations-owning account and the Low-concern account). There are two notable obstacles to substantial self-knowledge: fantastical self-conception and blameworthy self-ignorance. Given these problems, substantial self-knowledge requires critical and honest self-reflection, and therefore intellectual humility is necessary for substantial self-knowledge because it plays an integral role in forms of critical self-reflection.

KEY WORDS: Epistemology, Faculty, Intellectual Humility, Intellectual Virtues, Justification, JTB, Knowledge, Mind, Reliabilism, Responsibilism, Self-concept, Self-ignorance, Self-Knowledge, Social Epistemology, Virtue Epistemology, Virtue Ethics, Warrant.

INTELLECTUAL HUMILITY AS IT PERTAINS TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE

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Introduction

The virtue of humility has historically been defined as a kind of other centeredness, which means that the humble person values others above oneself.[1] This common account of humility reveals its Christian origins, especially when considering that the Greeks were not particularly fond of humility. It is widely accepted that Aristotle viewed humility as equivalent with the vice of pusillanimity, whereby the pusillanimous person does not have adequate self-knowledge given that one deprives oneself of the honors that one is due.[2] Challenging Aristotle on this, Thomas Aquinas insisted that the virtue of humility rightfully restrains the appetite from aiming at magnanimous things that one does not deserve.[3] In this sense, humility is akin to the virtue of magnanimity, just as its primary function is in the business of appetite management. Aquinas viewed humility as a moral virtue that requires self-knowledge, but even though the humble person needs to have self-knowledge in order to manage the appetite, he insisted that humility is not an epistemic virtue.[4] The simple question is: Was Aquinas right to suggest this?

Over the past decade there has a been a surge of research and literature devoted to the epistemic dimensions of the virtue of humility. To be sure, intellectual humility is now widely considered to be an intellectual virtue by many ethicists and epistemologists. While intellectual humility has gained plenty of attention for its benefits for general epistemic concerns, one of the questions that is yet to be tackled with the vivacity it deserves is the relationship between intellectual humility and self-knowledge. What is more, the relationship between self-

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[1]A good work on this specific account of moral humility is Lisa Fullam's *The Virtue of Humility: a Thomistic Apologetic*. See bibliography.
[2]Aristotle, & Irwin, T. (n.d.). *Nicomachean ethics / Aristotle; translated by Terence Irwin*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub., c1985. Book IV, Chapter 3 §3 and §8
[3]Aquinas, Thomas. *The Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Second and revised edition, 1920. http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3161.htm (accessed April 15, 2019) II.II, q. 161, a. 1, obj.3 & ad 3
[4]*Ibid*, *ST* II.II, q. 161, a.2, ad. 1

knowledge and the intellectual virtues in general needs more attention. Given that Aristotle and Aquinas shared the common understanding that humility is concerned with one's self-conception, now that humility is considered an epistemic virtue it only seems fitting that its most basic application would be for self-knowledge.

Beyond Aristotle and Aquinas, philosophers by the likes of Augustine, Immanuel Kant, and Søren Kierkegaard have all emphasized the connection between humility and self-knowledge. Augustine more or less tuned the Greek proverb *gnothi seauton* (know thyself) to fit his theological schema, just as he insisted that to know God is the means by which one comes to know thyself. Augustine operated under the tacit understanding that humility and self-knowledge are intimately connected. In the *City of God* Augustine affiliates each of the two cities with the virtue/vice spectrum of humility and pride.[5] Humility is an attitude of subservience that is rooted in a love for God and his commandments to value others above oneself (other-centeredness); this humble love is manifested through the four cardinal virtues of temperance, prudence, bravery, and justice.[6] Contrary to this, Augustine viewed pride as being rooted in a deep love of self, and this love finds expression in the manifold of self-indulgent vices.

Keeping with the Greek spirit, Immanuel Kant suggested that the first and greatest duty of the self is to know *thyself*, because to descend into the human heart—as unbecoming as it may be—is the only means by which one can obtain true wisdom.[7] Kant suggested that infallible self-knowledge is not possible because of the many psychological and epistemological hurtles

[5]Augustine. *The City of God*. New York: Image Books, 2014. Book XIV, Chapter 13; or see page 296.
[6]Augustine. Chapter 15 in *The Writings Against the Manichaeans and Against the Donatists*. https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf104.iv.iv.xvii.html (accessed April 14, 2020)
[7]*Ibid*.

that obstruct it.[8] But even in the face of the various challenges to self-knowledge, Kant viewed self-knowledge as necessary for the virtuous life.[9] Jeanine Grenberg notes that Kant made a key distinction between substantial self-knowledge and derivative self-knowledge. *Substantial self-knowledge* is knowledge of the universalities of human nature; it is knowledge that all humans are capable of good, while also corrupt and imperfect.[10] *Derivative self-knowledge* for Kant is self-knowledge that is particular to individual agents, such as one's *own* motivations or character.[11]

In order to obtain derivative self-knowledge, Kant advocates for a kind of evidentialism or behaviorism, where the agent reflects on one's own self-concept, and then examines one's behavior in order to see if one's actions are consistent with one's self-conception.[12] But because derivative self-knowledge is limited by human imperfection and corruption, failure to obtain self-knowledge is inevitable at times. Kant suggested that substantial *knowledge* of human nature is a requisite quality of humble attitudes; this allows the humble person to press on towards derivative self-knowledge with a confidence to fulfill one's obligation to know thyself, even though this fundamental duty is incredibly challenging to uphold.[13] What is more, because substantial self-knowledge reveals the universal human condition of corruption and dependence,

[8]Grenberg, Jeanine. *Kant and the Ethics of Humility*. Cambridge University Press, 2005. Page 223.
[9]*Ibid*, page 224
[10]*Ibid*
[11]*Ibid*, page 226. Kant did not view substantial knowledge as a direct knowledge of human substance or essence. This would be inconsistent with his metaphysics. Grenberg argues that Kant's account of virtue has more to do with the internalizing of certain values and principles, and this is what dispositions are connected with. Because Kant affirms that humans are corrupt, essential human nature is not excellent, and therefore requires the internalization of moral principles. The duty to know thyself derivatively is done with a humble attitude *only* when one recognizes that one is by nature prone to wicked self-conception. See Grenberg, Chapter 2: "Constraints on any possible Kantian account of virtue."
[12]*Ibid*
[13]*Ibid*, page 228

Kant viewed humble attitudes as the means by which beneficence or other centeredness is realized.[14]

Following in Kant's footsteps, Kierkegaard insisted that the process of internalizing ethical duties is the vehicle by which humans realize a more authentic self; a synthetic self that emerges when there is equilibrium between the aesthetic and the ethical modes of being; an equilibrium between the particular and universal capacities of humanness. But this process of coming to know oneself necessitates a *choice*, the choice of choosing the real self, the limited self, and not the manifold of idealistic selves that merely exist in abstract fantasy. Becoming an authentic individual requires both responsibility and self-knowledge, whereby Kierkegaard places emphasis on the act of *choosing the real self* as a kind of ethics for self-inquiry. While substantial self-knowledge begins in equilibrium between the aesthetic self and the ethical self, Kierkegaard suggests that there is a deeper tension within one's soul that depends on God. Ironically, and with a bit of humor, he suggests that to know oneself is to know that one is not capable of anything at all, because one is ultimately dependent on God for everything. When viewed through the lens of Kant's understanding of humility, Kierkegaard seems to imply that humility is needed to admit one's limitations, but a deeper application of humility reveals that one's soul is ultimately dependent on God.[15]

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[14]See Grenberg Chapter 9: "The humble pursuit of respect for persons." Because the humble person will understand one's own dependency on others, Grenberg argues that humility is the lens by which one realizes one's own dependency on others, and recognizes that everyone is in the same boat. Humility involves recognizing the value and needs of others, and therefore one has an obligation to value others needs because one needs others to value one's own needs. In short, humility's principle is healthy codependence, which leads to beneficence.

[15]Kierkegaard, Soren; Howard V. Hong and Edna H Hong. *Kierkegaards Writings, V, Volume 5: Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses: Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*. Princeton University Press., n.d. *Four Upbuilding Discourses*, "To Need God is a Human Being's Highest Perfection."

–Robert C. Roberts notes that Kierkegaard seems to be making a connection between humility and self-knowledge. See article in bibliography by Roberts titled "Is Kierkegaard a "Virtue Ethicist?""

Given this rich history between humility and self-knowledge, the main problem is that virtue epistemology has little to say about the role that the intellectual virtues play in self-knowledge accounts. Because virtue epistemology is still emerging onto the scene, it is fair to suggest that self-knowledge accounts are still catching up with the epistemological trends of the moment. This project will ultimately examine the relationship between intellectual humility and self-knowledge.

The Thesis and its Main Elements

The thesis statement that will be defended in this work can be put as follows: ***Intellectual humility is necessary for self-knowledge of one's character because this kind of self-knowledge requires critical self-reflection***. There are two common challenges to self-knowledge that require critical self-reflection. The first challenge is one that is introduced by Søren Kierkegaard in the *Sickness Unto Death* and *Either/Or*. This challenge will be referred to as the problem of fantastical self-conception. The second challenge is a kind of blameworthy self-ignorance; a form of self-ignorance that Quassim Cassam connects with intellectual arrogance, vanity, and hubris. While self-conception and self-ignorance are not inherently bad in and of themselves, they pose serious limitations to self-knowledge, and therefore the humble and responsible agent will recognize these challenges, and will critically self-reflect. This is precisely why intellectual humility is necessary for the virtuous life, because honest critical self-reflection demands intellectual humility.

In order to defend the thesis, three key elements will be introduced: The history, the philosophical framework, and the argument. Chapter 1 will serve as an historical framework for virtue epistemology in the twenty-first century. To be sure, virtue epistemology is thriving at the

moment, but this was not the case nearly fifty years ago. There is a much larger historical piece of the puzzle that accounts for why virtue epistemology is now being taken seriously as an epistemological methodology. In other words, to understand why intellectual virtues play a central role in virtue epistemology, there is a larger story that deserves to be told. Alongside the Aristotelian revival of virtue ethics ushered in by Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, Linda Zagzebski's seminal work *Virtues of the Mind* got the ball rolling on the virtue epistemology front towards the tail end of the twentieth century. However, the epistemological paradigm shift away from Logical Positivism and JTB Theory had much to do with an article produced by Edmund Gettier titled *Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?* ; the core idea of this article is commonly referred to as the Gettier problem. Chapter 1 will examine this historical problem, and demonstrate why the Gettier problem led to paradigm shifts in epistemology.

Chapter 2 will be more philosophical and analytic in nature. The ultimate aim of this chapter is to define intellectual character virtues and faculty virtues, as well as to broadly introduce virtue epistemology as a methodology. The main reason for this is because the thesis tacitly operates within the epistemological paradigm of virtue epistemology. In order to accomplish this, the first part of Chapter 2 will offer a thorough engagement with Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* as a philosophical framework for the intellectual virtues. Aristotle's account of the virtues of the mind is somewhat on par with what is commonly meant by faculty virtues, but the concept of an intellectual character virtue is somewhat foreign to his philosophy. Nevertheless, virtue epistemologists frequently draw structural parallels between *intellectual* character virtues and Aristotle's virtues of character. Therefore, Aristotle's account of the character virtues will be thoroughly examined.

Chapter 3 will serve as the final element of the essay, and this is where the thesis will be argued and defended. The first part of this chapter will offer two leading accounts of intellectual humility: The *Low-concern* account and the *Limitations-owning* account. Alongside this, the ideas of virtue epistemologist John Greco will be examined to emphasize the social dimensions of intellectual humility. Following this, Quassim Cassam's account of substantial self-knowledge will be introduced, which is a bit different from Kant's use of the term.[16] Finally, the thesis will be argued, and the chapter will conclude with a few closing clarifications.

The overall role of intellectual humility in the final section draws on insights from both the *Low-concern* and the *Limitations*-owning accounts, as well as social epistemology. It is not obvious why one account should be the *right* or the *only* account; nor does one need to be a reductionist on such matters. As it happens, there is not even a general consensus in the field as a whole as to what intellectual humility really is. Nevertheless, accounts of intellectual humility paint the humble person as someone that would desire self-knowledge, as someone who values epistemic goods enough to *accept* the true reality about oneself over and above prideful self-conceptions and self-ignorance. The main reason for this is because self-knowledge as an epistemic good has practical value for character development. That is, to know oneself is the beginning of the virtuous life, because self-knowledge makes character management volitionally possible.

Keeping with the Kantian spirit, the humble person in general knows that one is human, and *to be human necessarily entails that one is imperfect, corrupt, and dependent on others for all sorts of things*. Given that self-knowledge is an epistemic good, the intellectually humble person will own one's cognitive limitations for self-knowledge, and will be disposed to critically

[16]Cassam's use of the term is reflected in thesis statement above.

self-reflect. When necessary, the humble person will accept a less than ideal reality about one's own character because it is the truth, and will use this self-knowledge as a springboard to become a more virtuous person. Beyond this, the humble person will value others because one realizes that codependency is a necessary feature of humanity, and this no doubt has many epistemic implications.

1. Epistemology in the Twentieth Century Firmament

Throughout the course of western history philosophers have been interested in the knowledge concept. While a vast number of philosophers agree that knowledge is at least true belief, many have argued that knowledge is more than this. In the contemporary era specifically, many have analyzed knowledge in a way that views justification as a central component of the knowledge concept. That is, one has knowledge if and only if one possesses a true belief, and one has sufficient justification for that belief. Epistemologists in the second half of the twentieth century demonstrated problems with this approach to knowledge, which ultimately led to a surge in virtue epistemology. Understanding this history is crucial for understanding the normative scene of epistemology in the twenty-first century.

This particular section will offer an historical analysis of the twentieth century debate over JTB Theory (i.e. justified, true belief). In order to accomplish this, section 1.1 will explore themes from Plato's [Socratic] dialogue *Theaetetus* in order to lay the foundations for epistemology in the contemporary era. Following this, section 1.2 will introduce JTB knowledge theory, as well as Logical Positivism's connections to David Hume's philosophy. Section 1.3 will introduce the famous Gettier problem in contemporary epistemology, and section 1.4 will examine the No-defeater and No-false-lemma responses to the Gettier problem. Section 1.5 will turn to examine Alvin Plantinga's reliabilist response to Gettier, and section 1.6 will examine Linda Zagzebski's criticism of justification and warrant. Finally, section 1.7 will close by pinpointing deeper methodological concerns with epistemological Intuitionism.

1.1 Plato's Theaetetus

In Plato's epistemological masterpiece *Theaetetus*, there is a threefold Socratic dialogue taking place between Socrates, an astronomer named Theodorus, and his pupil, a young boy called Theaetetus. The bulk of the first part of the dialogue is between Socrates and Theaetetus, in which Socrates seeks to dialectically elicit the truth in Theaetetus concerning the nature of knowledge *itself*—not merely knowledge *about* something—by posing difficult questions to the young boy. It is through this dialectical process that Socrates's intellectual "midwifery" is displayed, as the concept of knowledge is slowly born within Theaetetus. In totality, there are three different definitions of knowledge put forth in *Theaetetus*, in which the logical development of the dialogue, in its fullness, takes the form of a disjunctive syllogism. That is, definition one is proposed, but given that it is problematic, a second definition is offered. When definition two is shown to be problematic, it is abandoned for definition three, etc. While the ultimate focus will be on the third definition, it will be important to briefly cover the first two bases before then.

The first definition Theaetetus entertains is that: "knowledge is simply perception."[17] While Socrates accepts this definition for the sake of argument, further deliberation between the crew unveils crucial problems with this theory. First, Socrates raises the problem of dreams and misperceptions, that is, if knowledge is merely perception, then it is not clear how one is capable of distinguishing reality from dreams.[18] To draw out this tension further, Socrates notes that half of one's life is spent asleep, and therefore one should have no reason to epistemically prefer the objects of one's conscious experience over the objects of one's dreams.[19]

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[17]Plato, Bernard Arthur Owen Williams, M. J. Levett, and Myles Burnyeat. *Theaetetus*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992. 151d
[18]*Ibid*, 157e-158a
[19]*Ibid*, 158c-d

Another immediate problem for knowledge defined as perception is memory recollection. Socrates raises the point that if someone is perceiving something, does not knowledge as perception imply that one's knowledge flees the very moment the object ceases to be perceived?[20] On a similar note, if one recalls to mind an image or event from one's memory bank, do not most people consider this to be a kind of knowledge?[21] What is more, how can knowledge ever be advanced if one cannot reflect on the previous objects of perceptual experience stored in one's memories? Given these problems and others that are raised in the dialogue, the first definition of knowledge is abandoned by both Socrates and Theaetetus, and the group works towards a new, more robust definition of knowledge.

The next definition of knowledge offered by Socrates involves the epistemic function of *judgement*. Socrates and Theaetetus distinguish between experience and judgement. In short, experience is defined as the sum of one's perceptions, which involves the powers of the senses to impress upon the soul.[22] Judgment, on the other hand, is a more basic faculty or function of the soul that is intimately involved with one's ability to reason through experiences; judgement is motivated by an appetite for *being*, that is, it is purely concerned with grasping the truth of things.[23] With that being said, Theaetetus entertains a second epistemic definition: *knowledge as true judgement*.[24] The nature of human judgement will prove to be incredibly significant for any

[20]*Ibid*, 164 (all)
[21]This problem clearly influenced Lockean forms of representational realism. That is, one has an internal sense or eye that perceives sense-datum's that are generated by one's sensible faculties. To be sure, John Locke affirmed that internal sense-datum solves this problem raised by Socrates, as memory recollection brings to mind real images that serve as faithful representations of real objects, and are perceived internally.
[22]As a brief aside, he does mention that experience has no direct share in knowledge. That is, Socrates seems to be implying that while experiences provide content for judgment and knowledge, experience is not knowledge itself, as already established.
[23]*Ibid*
[24]*Ibid*, location 186b-187 (all)

inquiry of knowledge, and as for Plato, this is particularly important for the final definition of knowledge offered at the end of *Theaetetus*.

To summarize, Socrates postulates that judgement has one of two possible natures: *either judgment is infallible or fallible*. Firstly, when one judges truly one judges what *is*; when one judges falsely, it would seem that one judges what *is not*, and by extension, according to Socrates, one does not even judge at all.[25] In essence, Socrates notes that humans only seem to be capable of judging what is true, as judgment is concerned with grasping the essential nature of something, and it would be absurd, perhaps even contradictory, to suggest that one is capable of passing judgement on something one does not know or perceive.[26] That is, the notion of 'false judgment' seems to imply a contradiction of terms.

Yet Socrates affirms that false judgements are possible for two reasons: applied knowledge from memory is not sure proof, nor are one's sense perceptions infallible. Socrates states:

> We may sum up thus: it seems that in the case of things we do not know and have never perceived, there is no possibility of error or of false judgement, if what we are saying is at all sound; it is in cases where we both know things and are perceiving them that judgement is erratic and varies between truth and falsity. When it brings together the proper stamps and imprints directly and in straight lines, it is true; when it does so obliquely and crosswise, it is false.[27]

In addition to this, Socrates notes that false judgements are just as possible *a priori* as they are *a posteriori*. That is, one can err in both mathematics and matters of perception. This leads Socrates to distinguish between what he calls *possessing* and *having* knowledge. Socrates suggests that *having* knowledge in mind is to call to the forefront of the mind something one knows, while *possessing* knowledge is to have knowledge stored away in the recesses of the

[25] *Ibid*, 188d
[26] The simple force of this argument is reminiscent of a common epistemic maxim: *speak only of what you know*.
[27] *Ibid*, 194a-b

mind. Given this distinction, arithmetical error is possible because one can fail to *have* in mind some knowledge that one already *possesses*.[28] In other words, someone may know something, but fail to call to the forefront of the mind that which one already knows, for whatever given reason. As an example, if an educated person were to make the arithmetical error 7+5=11, it is not necessarily that one does not know that the sum is 12, but rather one simply fails to call to mind the correct sum.[29] Therefore, one makes a false judgement.

To offer a brief summary up to this point, let us revisit the definition offered at the beginning of *Theaetetus*. At the very beginning, Socrates entertains that knowledge is perception, which is shown to be faulty; but just to be clear, this does not make perception any less epistemically valuable, it just simply entails that perception and knowledge are not the same thing. In this sense, perception still plays a role in knowledge for Socrates, namely, it provides at least some of the content that human reason engages with, as the soul is impressed by perceptual experiences. But if the reader recalls what was said above, it is the more basic faculty of judgement that is involved with the ontology and truth value of things, and it is for this reason that judgement is more intimately connected with knowledge. Thus, Socrates entertains the definition of knowledge as true judgment. It will now be prudent to identify why *knowledge as true judgement* is deemed faulty by Socrates, before moving to explore the third definition.

As it pertains to knowledge as true judgment, Socrates suggests something that most contemporary philosophers disagree with concerning the epistemic nature of *testimony*. That is, Socrates seems to imply that knowledge cannot be transmitted through testimony.[30] In short, Socrates gives an example of a courtroom in which a particular witness testifies to what the

[28]*Ibid* , location 199 (all)
[29]*Ibid*, 199a-b
[30]Most contemporary philosophers affirm that knowledge can be transmitted through trustworthy testimony.

witness alone experienced firsthand.[31] Nevertheless, despite the fact that the jury was not present to experience what was being testified to by the witness, they are still capable of making true judgements based on the witness's faithful testimony, even though this judgement is completely disconnected from the experience. In short, no one on the jury perceived firsthand the events being testified to, but in the end, they still made true judgements. For Socrates, this eliminates true judgement alone from being knowledge, because it is completely disconnected from experience. Thus, while the jurors made true judgments, they did not have knowledge.

At this point for Socrates, neither perception nor true judgement in and of themselves count as knowledge, because perceptive experience can prove faulty at times, and true judgement can occur apart from firsthand experience. Needless to say, it would seem that these particular epistemic functions are only parts of knowledge, and as a result, another component is desired. In light of this, Socrates and Theaetetus offer a third definition of knowledge: "*knowledge is true judgement with an account."*[32]

There are three different definitions of an *account* that Socrates proposes. The first proposal is that knowledge is accounted for when one expresses thoughts through verbal and non-verbal forms of speech. Socrates likens this kind of speech to seeing one's reflection in a mirror, in which one's words reflect one's internal thoughts.[33] Being dissatisfied with this first definition, the second definition of an *account* offered has more to do with one's being questioned, that is, if one is questioned about one's knowledge of something, then one must adequately be able to refer to its most basic elements.[34] In essence, one must have knowledge of

[31] *Ibid*, 201 (all)
[32] *Ibid*, 202 (all)
[33] *Ibid*, 206c-d
[34] *Ibid*, 206e-207

a thing's most basic parts to be able to give an adequate account of it. Again, Socrates is dissatisfied with this definition as well.

Given that Socrates is not content with the previous two definitions of epistemic accounts, he lastly suggests that account ought to be concerned with the differentness of particular instances of universals. For example, while one might have in mind the universal concept of what it means to be a human person, this is distinct from what it means to know a *particular* human person, that is, to know what uniquely distinguishes an individual person from another person (i.e. one knows what makes Theaetetus distinct from Theodorus, and the like). Socrates writes: "So, it seems, the answer to the question 'What is knowledge?' will be 'Correct judgement accompanied by *knowledge* of the differentness'—for this is what we are asked to understand by the 'addition of an account.'"[35]

The overall significance of this final definition comes from the conceptual structure of the Socratic knowledge concept itself. That is, it is not so much the explicit content of Socrates's definition of an account that is of particular interest here, but more precisely the generic templet of knowledge *as true judgement plus an account*. Contemporary epistemology in the twentieth century was predominately concerned with answering Socrates's fundamental question: What component needs to be added to true belief in order for it to be knowledge? The next section will examine a popular twentieth century attempt to answer Socrates's ancient proposition.

1.2 JTB Theory, Logical Positivism, and David Hume

The reason that key ideas from Plato's *Theaetetus* have been explored here is because there can be no doubt of its lasting impact on western epistemology. By and large, his third and

[35] *Ibid*, 210 (all)

final definition of knowledge is the chief aim of western epistemology: to develop an adequate theory of knowledge as true judgment + an account. This basic vision, coupled with nearly 2,300 years of development in the fields of philosophy of mind, psychology, and epistemology, has molded and shaped contemporary epistemology. However, the ancients still have a seat at the head of the table, just as mainline contemporary knowledge theories are still chasing the ancient Socratic vision. Many contemporary knowledge theories define knowledge in a tripart fashion, and this tripart nature of the concept is owed to Socrates's third and final definition offered above.

In the mid to latter portion of the twentieth century, the predominant epistemological theory was knowledge defined as a *justified, true belief.* Knowledge is a *belief* inasmuch as it is an attitude of sorts towards either a proposition or a set of propositions. Knowledge is a *true belief* inasmuch as one's attitude is securely based in good judgement, that is, one's ability to assign truth value to a given proposition that corresponds with reality. Lastly, knowledge is a *justified belief* inasmuch as one typically has a *reason* for why one believes what one does, and this justificatory element both defends and confirms its epistemic status. For practical purposes, this understanding of knowledge will be referred to as *JTB Theory*. To be sure, one has JTB knowledge (S knows that P) *if and only if* the following conditions are met:

I. S believes that P

II. P is true

III. S is justified in believing that P[36]

Again, while JTB theory reveals its Platonic roots, make no mistake that it has also been influenced by trends in modern philosophy, just as the above definition reveals JTB theories tacit

[36]Gettier, Edmund L. "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis*23, no. 6 (1963): 121-23. Accessed February 29, 2020. doi:10.2307/3326922.

affirmation of the modern *fact-value* divide between epistemology and ethics. The fact-value divide insists that epistemology is a factual discipline, in which epistemic judgments are in the business of describing *what is*. On the other hand, ethics is a normative discipline, in which moral judgements are in the business of describing what *ought to be*.[37] This division between matters of fact and value has origins in both Hume and Immanuel Kant.

For the time being, the inquiry at hand will examine he modern fact/value problem as it pertains to David Hume's epistemology, and then connect it to a radical twentieth century JTB Theory known as Logical Positivism. The reason for doing this is not motivated by an attempt to knock down straw men arguments that are no longer relevant to the philosophical community by-and-large, but to give a brief glimpse into the historical current that led to the groundbreaking work in epistemology during the second half of the twentieth century. This historical basis will serve as an effective springboard into a more robust criticism of JTB Theory made by an epistemologist named Edmund Gettier, which indirectly led to a neo-Aristotelian revival of virtue epistemology.

As a preface to David Hume's work, it will behoove the reader to call to mind the groundbreaking development that occurred in the philosophy of mind during the early modern era. Cartesian skepticism had sunk its teeth deep into the continent, and it would seem that most philosophers were interested in giving an account of epistemic certainty in the face of skepticism. The Rationalist movement led by the likes of Rene Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, and G.W Leibniz built deductive logical systems on innate ideas, which served as foundational and analytic axioms of thought upon which doxastic certainty was firmly fixed.[38] Descartes famously

[37]Audi, Robert. Dancy, Jonathan and Ernest Sosa. "Fact/Value." *A Companion to Epistemology*. Malden, Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell, 1999. Page 137.
[38]This was the beginning of an epistemological justification theory known as foundationalism.

proposed "*Cogito ergo Sum*;" Spinoza made an argument for the necessary idea of *substance*; and Leibniz proposed his atomic theory in his famous work *Monadology*, as a rival to Sir Isaac Newton.[39]

Alongside revolutionary work in epistemology, the early modern world was also shaken by debates over the precise nature and function of *judgement*. The reader might recall a key discussion from Plato's *Theaetetus* above, in which Socrates entertains whether or not it is possible to make false judgements. In specific, modern philosophers by the likes of Descartes, Spinoza, and Blaise Pascal expanded the Socratic discussion on judgement, which had become concerned with the role of the *human will* in the judgement process. Descartes believed in a freedom of judgement whereby one could withhold assent, and Blaise Pascal's Voluntarism more or less affirmed that judgment is entirely volitional; on the contrary, Spinoza's determinism was highly influential, and it permeated every aspect of his own worldview, including the two independent closed systems of physics and psychology.[40] Spinoza once wrote: "There is in the mind no absolute, i.e. no free, will, but the mind is determined to will this or that by a cause, which is again determined by another, and that again by another, and so on to infinity."[41]

Rationalism was countered by sixteenth and seventeenth century British Empiricism, which is properly where Hume is situated in the history of philosophy. Being inspired by John Locke, George Berkeley, and those listed above, David Hume set out on a radical philosophical project of his own. The general aim of Hume's famous project *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* was to offer a precise and clear investigation into the faculties of the human mind

[39]Descartes, R., & Cress, D. A. (1979). *Meditations on first philosophy in which the existence of God and the distinction of the soul from the body are demonstrated*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publ. Page 18.
[40]Nadler, Steven, "Baruch Spinoza", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/spinoza/>. Section 2.1. Substance for Spinoza refers to both God and nature, as a synthesis, in totality.
[41]Spinoza, Baruch. Edited and translated by G. H. R. Parkinson. *Spinoza: Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Page 158, proposition 48.

and by so doing, offer some sort of unity amongst the various sciences and philosophies that exist. His general criticism of human knowledge by and large is that various philosophical systems and sciences ascribe different forms of knowledge to the natural faculties of the mind, operating under the presumption that the mind is equipped with epistemic powers and abilities to grasp physical laws and universal truths. For Hume, this was a terrible mistake. He believed that until an intelligent philosophy of mind was offered, that is, a careful inquiry into the various mental faculties of the mind and, more precisely, their epistemic potency, one cannot begin to unify the different philosophies and sciences, as one cannot even offer an intelligent account of the respective mental faculties employed in their development.[42] To offer a pure philosophy of mind, this means that one must inquire with a willingness to forsake philosophical tradition and religious dogma, as subscription to such authorities taints and restricts intellectual freedom.

Hume begins the technical side of his project by offering his own articulation of Lockean terms, in which he categorizes the perceptions of the mind into two distinct categories: *ideas* and *impressions*.[43] To be sure, any idea, thought, belief, or account of knowledge, is classified within these two categories; that is, all the inner content of the human mind is reducible to either an impression or the synthesis of both an impression and a reflection, which together form an *idea*. To clarify his terms, Hume defines *impressions* as the kind of sensations people have when engaging the world around them. In this category he places sense perceptions, emotions, and the human will.[44] As it pertains to the category if ideas, Hume suggests that *ideas* are the products of self-reflection upon one's impressions. The result is that all ideas are dependent upon

[42]Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding.: a Letter from a Gentleman to His Friend in Edinburgh U.a.* Indianapolis u.a.: Hackett, 1993. Pages 6 and 9.
[43]*Ibid*, page 10
[44]*Ibid*

impressions, and all mental activity is a synthesis of sorts, in which the faculties of the mind engage with internal mental phenomena. Hume's summation is as follows:

> In short, all the materials of thinking are derived either from our outward or inward sentiment: The mixture and composition of these belongs alone to the mind and will. Or, to express myself in philosophical language, all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones.[45]

Hume offers a final maxim by which one can navigate the epistemic value of any abstract philosophical ideas that are not clear; this maxim is very important. He writes:

> When we entertain, therefore, any suspicion, that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or idea (as is but too frequent), we need but enquire, from what impression is that supposed idea derived? And if it be impossible to assign any, this will serve to confirm our suspicion.[46]

Hume's connection between impressions and meaning has far reaching implications beyond mere deliberation within the guild. Hume goes on to offer another categorical division between "*relations of ideas* and *matters of fact*."[47] On the one hand, the *relations of ideas* category has abstract mathematical disciplines as its object of inquiry; the propositional objects of these fields are discoverable by the application of reason in thought, and have no real connection with the world of experience. On the other hand, the *matters of fact* category has physical objects as its objects of inquiry. Matters of fact ultimately rest on the law of non-contradiction, and require experiential, demonstrable proof to validate their adherence to the law of non-contradiction.[48] In short, if one can link a philosophical idea to an impression, but cannot empirically verify whether or not such an idea is true, then it is beyond the power of the human

[45] *Ibid*, page 11
[46] *Ibid*
[47] *Ibid*, page 15
[48] *Ibid*, pages 15-16

understanding to make any intelligent judgements concerning the reality of said idea.[49] For practical reasons, this will be referred to as Hume's *Verification Principle*.

Perhaps the most notorious criticism of realism that Hume offered in his *Enquiry* is his criticism of the metaphysical principle of cause and effect, which he deemed to be the underlying principle of all matters of fact.[50] Hume's *Verification Principle* for cause and effect led him to postulate that the principle of cause and effect is not something known *a priori*, but is something that can only arise from the experience of conjoined objects.[51] Hume goes on to suggest:

> No object ever discovers, by the qualities which appear to the senses, either the causes which produced it, or the effects which will arise from it; nor can our reason, unassisted by experience, ever draw any inference concerning real existence and matter of fact.[52]

As it pertains to the laws of physics, Hume finds no *a priori* reason to suggest that one's expectation of what will happen in the next moment, if one hits one billiards ball towards another, should have any priority over the manifold of other scenarios that could possibly unfold.[53] In essence, the early modern quest for certainty is suspect, as human knowledge seems to be both probable and fallible at best.

The later influence of Hume's *Verification Principle* for late nineteenth and early twentieth century philosophy culminated in the emergence of Logical Positivism, whose adherents held that all knowledge and meaningful statements must be factual in nature and ultimately reducible to demonstrable proof. It would seem that Hume's matters of fact category, now appropriated by the Vienna Circle, was no longer pitted against the abstract ideas of mathematics, but was pitted against anything that did not adhere to the Logical Positivist's

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[49]Hume offers the example of the propositional statement: the sun will rise tomorrow. While in theory the statement is of no consequence, one cannot assign any truth-value to this statement until one can experience for oneself the sun rising on the next day. See page 16.
[50]*Ibid*
[51]*Ibid*
[52]*Ibid*, page 17
[53]*Ibid*, page 18

reductionistic principle of verification. To be sure, a realist approach to various kinds of mathematics led to an extraordinary level of confidence in the efficaciousness of the scientific method to grasp necessary truth; thus, there was a newfound harmony between *a priori* and *a posteriori* forms of knowledge. Furthermore, following the rise of Nihilism and the First Great War, it would seem that the enlightenment project to ground morality in reason had failed, and alongside this, value judgments were tossed into the camp of *what ought to be*, and not *what is*, given they did not adhere to positivist principles.

In essence, Logical Positivism affirmed that science is the only form of knowledge, and that science is compatible with the necessary *a priori* truths of logic and mathematics. The implications of Logical Positivism for epistemology and linguistics is that any judgements or beliefs that lie beyond the scope of science are meaningless.[54] In short, all knowledge must be both factual and empirically *justifiable* in the Humean sense of the term, that is, through a demonstrable proof of sorts that ultimately rests on the law of non-contradiction. While it would be absurd to suggest that JTB Theory is only compatible with logical positivism or naturalistic reductionism, it is worth noting that Logical Positivism was largely abandoned in the mid twentieth century. This abandonment played a modern-day John the Baptist role of sorts concerning problems with JTB Theory in general. In short, the death of Logical Positivism came in a similar fashion to the death of metaphysical first principles at the hands of David Hume's criticism of realism, in which he argued that the principle of cause and effect cannot be *known* per say on empiricist grounds. Logical Positivism near collapsed under the weight of its own presuppositions; it near collapsed under the weight of its inability to justify itself *by* its own

[54]Stroud, Barry. Dancy, Jonathan and Ernest Sosa. "Logical Positivism." *A Companion to Epistemology*. Malden, Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell, 1999. Page 262.

epistemic principles, or as they say: 'the wagon was placed before the horse.' Furthermore, a short paper written by Edmund Gettier was the final straw that broke the camel's back.

1.3 The Gettier Problem and Epistemic Luck

In 1963 an epistemologist named Edmund Gettier produced a very short article revealing problems with JTB Theory accounts of knowledge, and this little philosophical rudder steered the whole western epistemological ship into entirely new waters. In his article, Gettier offered three different biconditional accounts of knowledge, the first of which was JTB Theory. S knows that P *if and only if*:

I. S believes that p

II. p is true

III. S is justified in believing that p[55]

The other two positions are very similar to the JTB model, one of which was put forth by prominent Logical Positivist AJ Ayer: S knows that p *if and only if*: *p is true, S is sure that p is true, S has the right to be sure that p is true.*[56] Another was put forth by an epistemologist named Roderick Chisolm, S knows that p *if and only if*: *S accepts that p*, *S has adequate evidence for p, p is true.*[57] In essence, Gettier saw both Ayer and Chisolm's models as being mere renditions of JTB Theory, and he felt that if he could defeat the basic JTB model, then he could defeat JTB Theory.

Gettier's article demonstrated problems with JTB theory as he provided examples in which all the conditions for JTB Theory were met, but problems still remained. That is, the crux

[55]Gettier, Edmund L. "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"
[56]*Ibid*
[57]*Ibid*

of the Gettier article centers around practical examples that meet all the conditions for JTB Theory and yet, even while all the conditions for JTB Theory are satisfied, S still does not know that p. Formally, Gettier imagines possible worlds in which S *believes* that p; p is *true*; and S is *justified* in believing that p; but S still doesn't *know* that p. While the agents in Gettier's examples meet all the conditions for JTB Theory, it would seem, intuitively, that their 'knowledge' is the result of mere lucky guesses and coincidence. The basic structure of a Gettier-case example starts with a sufficiently justified belief that meets the justification component, and then proceeds to add a double luck element to the scenario. That is, first there is an element of bad luck in the scenario which would normally lead subject S to have a false belief. However, lucky for the subject, there is a further development in which the bad luck is negated by a stroke of good luck. Therefore, in the end subject S has true belief p accidentally.[58]

To offer a Gettier-like example, imagine that you've just walked into your favorite coffee shop on a Saturday. Given that this is your favorite local coffee shop, you see two of your close friends Griffin and Emily sitting at a table in the corner waiting for their coffee. Before going to join them for the afternoon, you decide to order a beverage. While approaching the counter, you quickly glance over to the table to see what Emily—a coffee connoisseur—is drinking, because you usually employ her expertise to influence your own beverage choices. Additionally, you know from previous experience that Emily typically orders the house blend. At a glance, you notice that there is only one cup of coffee on the table in front of Emily. Quickly, by virtue of your sharp eyesight and previous experience, you note that she ordered a cup of the house coffee,

[58]Turri, John, Alfano, Mark and Greco, John, "Virtue Epistemology", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/epistemology-virtue/>. Section 5. Knowledge

and so you decide to order one yourself. In essence, you form the simple belief that *Emily ordered a cup of the house blend.*

Little to your knowledge, Griffin ordered the house coffee as well, and it just so happens that when you first saw Griffin and Emily sitting at the table, Griffin's cup had arrived first, and it was actually his cup in front of Emily who, being rather cheeky and impatient, reached over to sneak a sip of his coffee while waiting for her own, which at the time of your initial observation, had not yet arrived. Knowing that Emily is a coffee connoisseur himself, Griffin, of course, ordered a cup of the house coffee as well, which arrived at the table first. In short, at the time of your initial observation there was *only one* cup of coffee on the table, Griffin's cup; but it was stationed right in front of Emily, a cheeky thief.

As you move to order your own house brew, and as your friends temporarily leave your line of sight upon your approaching the counter, the plot thickens, and it just so happens that Emily's coffee arrives at the table, at which point Emily slides Griffin's stolen cup of coffee back to him, in order to make room for her own. This further development, of course, all happens without your knowing it. To the best of your understanding, the cup that you thought was Emily's was actually Griffin's, but by the time you arrive at the table to sit down, both Emily and Griffin have a cup of the house coffee. As you sit down at the table to enjoy your afternoon with your friends the question remains: Does your initial belief that *Emily ordered a cup of the house blend* count as knowledge?

At first glance, it would seem that all the conditions for JTB Theory are met. First and foremost, you *believe* that Emily ordered a cup of the house coffee. Secondly, this belief is a *true belief* inasmuch as Emily did in fact order a cup of the house blend. Finally, this belief is *justified* inasmuch as you clearly saw Emily drinking a cup of the house of blend, and you also

have prior experience of Emily's coffee drinking habits. To answer the question, it would seem *prima facie* that even though all of the JTB conditions have been met, it still does not seem right to say that you *know* that Emily ordered the house coffee, because your correct judgement is a result of coincidental luck. In essence, this is the crux of the Gettier problem, that possible worlds exist in which the conditions for JTB Theory are met but one still does not seem to have knowledge. As long as epistemic luck and coincidence remain a possibility, some other condition needs to be added to JTB Theory.

1.4 Responses to the Gettier Problem

The latter half of the 20th century saw numerous brilliant responses to the Gettier problem. To offer a preceding clarification, some chose to respond to Gettier by amending JTB Theory, while others opted for a paradigm shift in epistemology altogether.[59] One such JTB amender was epistemologist Michael Clark, who proposed his "No-False-Lemma" response to the Gettier problem. Formally, Michael Clark's position suggests that S knows that p *if and only if*:

I. p is true

II. S believes that p

III. S is justified in believing that p

IV. It is on true grounds that S believes that p[60]

In essence, Clark's condition IV suggests that in order for a rational agent to have knowledge, she must have true grounds upon which she makes inferences; true grounds here implies the

[59]This paradigm shift will be treated in Chapter 2.

[60]Nagel, Jennifer. *Epistemology: Analyzing Knowledge #2 (No-False-Lemma and No-Defeater Approaches).* YouTube video, running time 9:01, March 07, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAt9h6PCnEg ; Jennifer Nagel is a philosophy professor at the University of Toronto.

relevant *set of true beliefs or facts* needed for one to make an inference in any given scenario. That is, for one to have knowledge, there cannot be some false lemma or belief that one bases one's inference or judgement upon. In the case of Emily and Griffin, Clark might suggest that one would have JTB knowledge on true grounds if and only if one had all the correct beliefs and facts needed to make a true inference. To be sure, because there is a false belief in the coffee shop scenario, namely, that you believe Griffin's cup to be Emily's, Clark would suggest that it was not on true grounds that you inferred *that Emily ordered a cup of the house blend*. As a result, your belief does not count as knowledge because you did not meet all the conditions for knowledge.

Another response by amendment to the Gettier problem was offered by philosophers Keith Lehrer and Thomas Paxson. In similar fashion, they suggested that an additional condition needs to be added to JTB Theory, which for them was a *no-defeater* clause. To be sure, this condition only applies to a certain kind of knowledge commonly referred to as *non-basic knowledge*.[61] Non-basic knowledge is contrasted with *basic knowledge* which is more foundational in nature, and can be defined as a belief that is not held on other beliefs one holds (i.e. the belief that I am in pain). *Non-basic knowledge*, then, is what Gettier problems are concerned with: the kind of knowledge that is propositional in nature, and which requires a reasonable form of positivist justification. One has non-basic knowledge *if and only if* the following conditions are satisfied:

[61] *Ibid*

I. S believes that p

II. p is true

III. S is justified in believing that p

IV. There is no defeater for S's belief that p[62]

The no-defeater condition essentially suggests that there is no counter fact unbeknownst to S which defeats his belief that p.[63]

While similar to Clark's example, it is not nearly as strong of a condition.[64] Clark's fourth condition suggests that one must have true grounds for forming inferences, constituted by a set of true beliefs; whereas Lehrer and Paxson's position does not make such a strong claim, but suggests that there cannot be some knockdown fact lurking in the shadows, unbeknownst to the agent. In other words, Lehrer and Paxson suggest that one does not need to have a complete set of true beliefs or true grounds to have non-basic knowledge, one only needs to be sure that there is not some contradictory fact which defeats one's justified true belief that p.

In the case of Emily and Griffin, a no-defeater proponent might respond to this scenario by suggesting that while the initial belief *that Emily ordered a cup of the house blend* satisfies the first three conditions, the inquiry was not pushed far enough because clearly there exists some counter fact that defeats the initial belief, namely, the fact that one's judgment is based on a misunderstanding of whose cup was whose. While Clark's condition suggests that one needs to have true grounds in order to have knowledge concerning what Emily ordered—which would necessarily include insight into the fact that it was initially Griffin's cup of coffee in front of Emily at the time of your judgment—a no-defeater proponent would not see this as necessary.

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[62] *Ibid*
[63] *Ibid*
[64] *Ibid*

For all intents and purposes, one does not need to know whose cup is whose to have knowledge here, rather, to the best of one's awareness, one just needs to be sure that there does not exist some counterfactual evidence or defeater which knocks down one's original belief *that Emily did in fact order a cup of the house blend*. To accomplish this, the no-defeater proponent might find it prudent for one to simply ask Emily what she ordered, and in this sense, one could come to know that Emily ordered the house blend, while maybe even still possessing some false belief(s) in the process. That is, one might go on, for whatever reason, believing that Griffin's cup was Emily's on false grounds, but so long as one is certain that Emily ordered a cup of the house blend—and that there is *not* some defeater lurking in the background—then one's belief *that Emily ordered a cup of the house blend* counts as knowledge.

While there are certainly many other noteworthy responses to the Gettier problem, the general response by many epistemologists—as seen with the two positions just explored—was to add a fourth condition to JTB Theory in order to avoid Gettier problems of epistemic luck. While many took a fourth-condition approach in an attempt to salvage JTB Theory, others in the latter half of the twentieth century felt that another approach altogether was needed. One such philosopher was Alvin Plantinga, who replaced justification with his concept of epistemic *warrant*.

1.5 Alvin Plantinga and Warrant

Alvin Plantinga largely expounded on the theory of epistemological Reliabilism. Generic Reliabilism is an epistemological method that loosely affirms: "S's belief that p at t is justified iff it is the outcome of a process of belief acquisition or retention that is reliable, or leads to a

sufficiently high preponderance of true beliefs over false beliefs."[65] While many reliabilists opted to drop justification from the knowledge concept altogether, others viewed Reliabilism as an external means of justification. That is, the justifying property of one's knowledge is external to the consciousness of the person (i.e. evidence, a reliable faculty or method, etc.). To offer a brief example of this kind of model, suppose that a middle school student uses a hypothetical-deductive method to form a belief, such as the scientific method. Let us also suppose that this student does not understand why the scientific method is valuable, but that she only uses the scientific method because she was instructed to do so by her science teacher. To be clear, a reliabilist might suggest that the student does not need to consciously understand why such a method is useful or valuable in the first place. In order to be justified, the student only needs to use this reliable method and form some true belief and voilà, she has justification, given that the justifying properties of her belief are in the facts and evidence that the scientific method employs.

To emphasize Reliabilism and externalist theories of justification further, it is helpful to draw a parallel with moral philosophy. Linda Zagzebski, in her seminal work *Virtues of the Mind*, parallels reliabilism with consequentialist ethics. To be sure, consequentialism can be modeled as follows: action *A* is morally good if it yields some good state of affairs *S*.[66] On a consequentialist ethical model, action *A* is not justified by the action itself, nor the character of the agent; rather, action *A* is justified if it plays an instrumental role in obtaining some good state of affairs *S*. Simply put, if the consequences are good, then action *A* is retrospectively justified

[65]Sosa, Ernest. *Knowledge in Perspective: Selected Essays in Epistemology*. Cambridge u.a.: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1991. Page 131.

[66]Zagzebski, L. T. (2002). *Virtues of the mind: An inquiry into the nature of virtue and the ethical foundations of knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. See page 25.

by *S*. One might say that the ends justify the means. The same holds for a true belief obtained on a reliabilist, externalist model of knowledge. That is, an agent's belief is not justified by some internal cognitive awareness or account, but rather, if the agent employs a reliable method for obtaining some true belief B, then true belief B is retrospectively justified by the reliable method of inquiry. In essence, if one is consistently forming true beliefs *via* one's eyesight, then eyesight clearly proves to be a reliable method of obtaining true beliefs; therefore, one's true beliefs are justified by the reliable method of obtainment, one's eyesight, because the consequences of looking yields true beliefs. Once more, the ends justify the means; that is, the obtainment of true beliefs validates the means employed.

Alvin Plantinga largely accepted the basic tenants of Reliabilism. However, he further suggested that knowledge has more to do with both the proper functioning of one's epistemic faculties, and one's having warrant for one's beliefs. With his approach, Plantinga largely sought to shift the paradigm away from a basic JTB approach by substituting justification with the concept of warrant. As it pertains to the knowledge concept, Plantinga realizes that his attempt to shift the epistemic paradigm requires a thorough development of warrant. He writes:

> To return to warrant then: to a first approximation, we may say that a belief B has warrant for S if and only if the relevant segments (the segments involved in the production of B) are functioning properly in a cognitive environment sufficiently similar to that for which S's faculties are designed; and the modules of the design plan governing the production of B are (1) aimed at truth, and (2) such that there is a high objective probability that a belief formed in accordance with those modules (in that sort of cognitive environment) is true; and the more firmly S believes B the more warrant B has for S.[67]

Just to be sure, Plantinga still affirms that knowledge is true belief plus something else, but again, Plantinga does not add a fourth condition to JTB Theory, rather he revises the knowledge concept by substituting justification with epistemic warrant. While Plantinga thinks that the

[67]Plantinga, Alvin. Warrant and Proper Function. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

above definition is more of a "hint" or definitional approximation of warrant, his rough account helps the reader identify salient features of his epistemology. For all intents and purposes, it will be helpful to briefly identify those key features, beginning with proper function.

There are three conditions of warrant that Plantinga identifies: *proper function*, *design plan*, and *reliability*. ***Proper function*** quite simply entails that one's "noetic equipment" involved in both belief formation and belief sustainment are working correctly.[68] In essence, he suggests that one's intellectual abilities and sense faculties need to be functioning in the way they are intended to function. This, of course, appears to be self-evident and unproblematic. For example, in a court of law it is standard for witnesses to be called to the stand to testify on behalf of their firsthand experiences. If, however, a witness's intellectual ability to recollect past events from one's memory bank is damaged for some reason, the credibility and value of the witness's testimony is compromised, and may even be disposed of altogether. Thus, Plantinga's definition of warrant suggests that one's relevant epistemic faculties and noetic abilities *at least* need to be working properly for one to have warrant. In the case of the witness, given that her memory recollection is not working properly for whatever reason, she does not have warrant for her beliefs about past events. By extension, her testimony is not valid, and does not hold up in a court of law.

The second feature of warrant Plantinga identifies is the ***design plan***. This condition is added to warrant because proper function alone is not enough to ensure that one's beliefs are warranted. Plantinga suggests that warrant requires one's belief forming mechanisms to be both aimed at truth and functioning properly within a cognitive environment that they were designed to function within.[69] Plantinga insists that one's cognitive faculties serve many different

[68] *Ibid*, page 6
[69] *Ibid*, page 16

functions, and therefore there needs to be a condition for truth and compatibility between a cognitive agent and one's environment for warrant to obtain. To demonstrate this, Plantinga appeals to many different cases in which one's belief formation is motivated for something other than truth. Feuerbachian and Freudian accounts of wishful thinking, desperate survival situations, happiness, and even desire for friendship, are all scenarios that involve beliefs; but according to Plantinga, these beliefs are aimed at something other than knowledge.[70]

To offer a possible example of an ulterior motivation for belief formation, suppose that a man has just been diagnosed with a terminal sickness that has a 5% survival rate across the board. Even in this unfortunate scenario, despite the low probability of survival, he might still have an unwavering optimism that he is going to overcome his sickness. That is, the patient forms the belief *that he will survive*.[71] In this given scenario, it would seem inappropriate to suggest that one's optimistic belief is warranted per say, because the belief in question is motivated for survival, not knowledge. Thus, while one's noetic equipment is functioning properly, i.e. one forms optimistic beliefs and maintains positive attitudes in the interest of survival, something else is needed to confer warrant, and by extension, to have knowledge. In the case of the overly optimistic patient, his noetic faculties allow him to form beliefs helpful for survival, but even if the patients overly optimistic beliefs don't count as knowledge per say, it would not be right to suggest that his noetic faculties are *malfunctioning*. Rather, it seems more appropriate to recognize that his belief forming mechanisms serve multiple purposes, and in this case, they were *not* aimed for truth; for this reason, clarification concerning the purposive design of one's noetic faculties is in order.

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[70] *Ibid*, page 13

[71] *Ibid*, page 16. Plantinga specifically insists that these kinds of survival scenarios are good examples of our cognitive faculties functioning in a way that is not aimed truth. He specifically mentions this kind of optimism in the face of sickness and death.

To emphasize the importance of the design plan further, suppose that there exists a hypothetical world in which people never die. In such a world, it would seem *prima facie* absurd to form overly optimistic beliefs in the way the overly optimistic patient formed his belief about his capability to beat his sickness, because in a world without death, the need for doxastic optimism in the face of death is not necessary. As a result, overly optimistic beliefs in this hypothetical, immortal utopia might be the result of an epistemic malfunction of sorts, because the world does not demand exaggerated optimism, given that improbable survival scenarios do not exist. The general point is that cognitive agency seems to be conditioned by the real demands of one's cognitive environment, and malfunction, at the very least, occurs when one's faculties misfire, or fail to meet their intended purpose and function within a congenial cognitive environment. In the interest of knowledge—as opposed to the other ends of our cognitive faculties—and in order for one to have warrant, Plantinga suggests that one's noetic faculties must be functioning properly within an environment that they are designed to operate within, and they must also be aimed at truth. Plantinga writes:

> We take it that when the organs (or organic systems) of a human being (or other organism) function properly, they function in a particular way. Such organs have a function or purpose; more exactly, they have several functions or purposes, including both proximate and more remote purposes.[72] ... The purpose of the heart is to pump blood; that of our cognitive faculties (overall) is to supply us with reliable information: about our environment, about the past, about the thoughts and feelings of others, and so on.[73]... What confers warrant is one's cognitive faculties working properly, or working according to the design plan insofar as the segment of the design plan is aimed at producing true beliefs. But someone whose holding a certain belief is a result of an aspect of our cognitive design that is aimed not at truth but at something else won't be such that the belief has warrant for him; he won't properly be said to know the proposition in question, even if it turns out to be true.[74]

[72] *Ibid*
[73] *Ibid*, page 14
[74] *Ibid*, page 16

While the example of the overly optimistic patient demonstrates that noetic faculties serve multiple purposes, Plantinga emphasizes that the part of the design plan that confers warrant is the *aimed-at-truth* component. In essence, for warrant to be conferred, there needs to be proper functioning of one's noetic faculties that are aimed at truth, and this operation needs to occur within an environment that said faculties were designed to operate within. But there is still one more condition lacking according to Plantinga's theory.

To be sure, Plantinga affirms that proper function within a congenial cognitive environment is not quite enough for warrant alone, and for this reason, there needs to also be added a condition of high probability and reliability of one's epistemic faculties. Thus, the one thing lacking is a degree of **reliability** or cognitive excellence in producing true beliefs. Plantinga writes:

> What must we add? That the design plan is a good one—more exactly, that the design governing the production of the belief in question is a good one; still more exactly, that the objective probability of a belief's being true, given that it is produced by cognitive faculties functioning in accord with the relevant module of the design plan, is high. Even more exactly, the module of the design plan governing its production must be such that it is objectively highly probable that a belief produced by cognitive faculties functioning properly according to that module (in a congenial environment) will be true or verisimilitudinous. This is the reliabilist constraint on warrant, and the important truth contained in reliabilist accounts of warrant.[75]

Plantinga notes that his final component is consistent with broader epistemological reliabilism. In essence, Plantinga's model suggests that one has knowledge *if and only if*:

I. S believes that p

II. p is true

III. S has warrant for believing that p

[75] *Ibid*, page 17

1.6 Problems with Justification and Warrant

While Plantinga opted to shift the paradigm by replacing justification with epistemic warrant, many philosophers questioned the central role of justification and warrant altogether in the knowledge concept. Linda Zagzebski published an article entitled *The Inescapability of Gettier Problems* that addressed problems with Plantinga's theory. In this article she not only argued that JTB renditions cannot escape the Gettier problem, but that any JTB account of knowledge—knowledge as true belief + something else—will always fall prey to Gettier cases of epistemic luck. As it stands, Zagzebski makes it clear that Plantinga's theory of warrant is no exception, and the same goes for any reliabilist theory.[76]

To demonstrate the problem of reliabilism, Zagzebski alludes to Alvin Goldman's famous barn façade example. This example begins by suggesting that you, on a bright and beautiful sunny day, find yourself driving through the countryside examining a manifold of barns whose façade has the appearance of a real barn, but in actuality, most of the barns are fake. The reason for this is that the people of the town erected three false barns for every real one, and from a distance, the fakes are indistinguishable from the real ones. Given that your eyesight is working properly, and that you could normally spot fake barns from up close, you see a *real* barn off in the distance and form the true belief *that's a nice barn*. On general reliabilist grounds, even though your cognitive faculties are functioning properly—that is, your eyesight and judgement faculties lead you to form true beliefs reliably—it still remains that your true belief is true by accident and does not count as knowledge, because you could have easily mistaken the real barn for a fake one.[77] In short, your true belief does not count as knowledge, because at the

[76]Zagzebski, Linda. "The Inescapability of Gettier Problems." *The Philosophical Quarterly (1950-)* 44, no. 174 (1994): 65-73. Accessed March 6, 2020. doi:10.2307/2220147. Page 66 in the journal.
[77]*Ibid*—I have paraphrased Zagzebski's articulation of this famous analogy. This is a famous example that is commonly referred to by epistemologists, originally offered by Alvin Goldman.

end of the day, your forming a true belief is a serendipitous case of luck. The fake barn analogy is significant because it demonstrates that both *internalist* and *externalist* justification theories fall prey to Gettier problems.

Regardless of whether or not one takes an externalist or internalist approach to justification, the force of Zagzebski's argument ultimately rests on the Gettier problem itself. That is, whether or not one adds conditions to JTB Theory or attempts to completely revise justification altogether—as was the case with Plantinga's project—so long as justification is central to the knowledge concept, and so long as there is dissonance between the justification component and the truth component, Gettier's problem will always find a foothold. What is more, as just mentioned, Plantinga's theory has not escaped the problem either. Zagzebski writes:

> In discussing Gettier problems Plantinga concludes: 'What is essential to Gettier situations is the production of a true belief despite a relatively minor failure of the cognitive situation to match its design'. But this comment is problematic on his own account. As we have seen, Plantinga considers warrant a property that admits of degree, but it is clear that the degree of warrant sufficient for knowledge does not require faculties to be working perfectly in an environment perfectly matched to them. In Gettier-style cases such as the case of Mary, either the degree of warrant is sufficient for knowledge or it is not. If it is not, then a multitude of beliefs we normally think are warranted are not, and there is much less knowledge in the world than Plantinga's numerous examples suggest. On the other hand, if the degree of warrant is sufficient for knowledge, then Plantinga's theory faces Gettier problems structurally identical to those of the other theories.[78]

The main thing to conclude here is that any case of knowledge that allows for some independence between the closely connected truth component and the justification/warrant component are inevitably susceptible to Gettier problems.[79] That is, so long as there is any independence between justification and truth, Zagzebski argues there will always be a

[78]Zagzebski, Linda. "The Inescapability of Gettier Problems." Page 69
[79]*Ibid*, page 73

conceivable scenario in which one accidentally has a justified or warranted true belief; and unless one is willing to admit that knowledge is true belief + x + luck, then a different approach to knowledge altogether is needed.[80] As a result, the Gettier problem has led many epistemologists to forsake justification as a central component of knowledge altogether. That is not to say that justified belief is not a valuable thing, nor does this imply that epistemologists are disinterested in justification, but rather, that many epistemologists no longer view justified belief to be a central aim of epistemology.

Given these problems with JTB Theory, Zagzebski partly led the charge to a surge in virtue epistemology, which will be examined in Chapter 2. Before moving forward, it will be prudent to identify some of the deeper problems with Gettier-era epistemology; to identify some of the underlying methodological problems which led to a mass exodus away from the JTB tradition. While Zagzebski demonstrated the insufficiency of the various responses within the JTB tradition post-Gettier by highlighting further problems with justification and warrant, it is helpful to probe just a little deeper to uncover a few basic methodological concerns.

1.7 Deeper Methodological Issues with Gettier Era Epistemology

Virtue epistemologist John Greco emphasizes that the key distinction between epistemology in the JTB era and the twenty-first century is a difference of overall approach and methodology. Greco writes:

> In summary form, the story goes like this: During the Gettier era, the methodology of epistemology was roughly what Chisolm called "particularism" and Rawls called "the method of reflective equilibrium." The driving concern of this kind of methodology was to get the extension of the concept right, i.e. to provide necessary and sufficient conditions for something's counting as a case of knowledge. Various developments forced an abandonment of this Gettier era methodology, in favor of several new

[80] *Ibid*

> constraints on an adequate theory of knowledge. Specifically, questions about the nature of epistemic normativity, the relations between knowledge and action, the value of knowledge, and the social dimensions of knowledge, all became important for adjudicating among competing theories of knowledge.[81]

There are a few formal concepts that Greco introduces that will be helpful to briefly examine. Greco identifies two common approaches to epistemology in the Gettier-era; these approaches are what Roderick Chisolm calls "Particularism" and what John Rawls calls "The Method of Reflective Equilibrium."[82] Particularism is the common Gettier-era approach which gives first priority to one's intuitions when determining which *particular cases* count as knowledge. For a Particularist, once a particular case of knowledge has been intuited, only then is an epistemologist in a position to evaluate certain conditions for obtaining knowledge.[83] Contrary to Particularism, Greco stresses that what Chisolm calls "Methodism" is the reverse, as it tends to first prioritize intuitive accounts of the conditions needed for knowledge, and then, by extension, evaluate whether or not certain cases meet the requisite conditions and principles set forth.[84] Once the epistemic conditions are set, the epistemologist is in a position to examine particular cases of knowledge.

In addition to both of these, John Rawls position is a synthetic approach to Particularism and Methodism, in which he views both intuitions about particular cases and general epistemic conditions for knowledge as equally significant; therefore intuitions of both kinds should both be prioritized and brought together in equal harmony.[85] Nevertheless, Greco identifies

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[81]Greco, John. "Epistemologia Pós-Gettier." *Veritas (Porto Alegre)* 60, no. 3 (October 2016): 421. https://doi.org/10.15448/1984-6746.2015.3.24265. Page 422.
[82]For further reading on these subjects, Greco cites the following sources:
-Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971.
-Chisolm, Roderick M. The Problem of the Criterion. In: IDEM. *The Foundations of Knowing*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982. p. 61-75.
[83]*Ibid*, page 424.
[84]*Ibid*, David Hume is a good example of a Methodist, whose Verification Principle was offered in the previous section.
[85]*Ibid*, page 425

Particularism, Methodism, and Rawls theory of equilibrium as different forms of a similar methodology, a methodology that he calls Intuitionism.[86] To be sure, Particularism as a form of Intuitionism best represents the various JTB amendment theories that were explored earlier in this section, because each theory was largely crafted as a response to hypothetical counterexamples that just [intuitively] don't seem to count as knowledge (i.e. Gettier cases of epistemic luck, fake barns, the coffee shop mix up, etc.).

Alongside the concerns advanced by Zagzebski, Greco points out three fundamental problems with Gettier-era Intuitionism as a general approach to epistemology. First, he notes that Intuitionism tends to produce epistemologies that are superficial in nature. He writes:

> Specifically, these methodologies emphasize getting our extensions right, but an analysis might do that while failing to generate philosophical insight or understanding. That is, an analysis might successfully state necessary and sufficient conditions, but without getting at the nature of things, or getting at essences, or "cutting things at the joints." That such is the case is suggested by the inelegance of many of the analyses generated during the Gettier era. Famously, accounts of knowledge in that period became increasingly more complex and ad hoc, creating the impression that intuitions were being accommodated but not explained.[87]

Secondly, Greco stresses that one's pre-theoretical intuitions largely dictate the overall shape of one's knowledge theory.[88] That is, any number of theories guided by intuition could coherently account for the data of a particular case, but that coherence does not necessarily entail that one's theory is reflective of reality.[89] Lastly, Greco notes that there have been various empirical studies undertaken which show intuition to be largely subjective as opposed to evidentially objective. These studies reveal cultural variance concerning intuitions about Gettier cases, as well as variance between trained philosophers and non-philosophers.[90] The aforementioned problems of

[86] *Ibid*, page 426
[87] *Ibid*
[88] *Ibid*
[89] *Ibid*
[90] *Ibid*

Intuitionism, coupled with Gettier and Zagzebski's criticisms, represent some of the key motivations which led to an epistemological paradigm shift in the twenty-first century.

In summary, Linda Zagzebski has pointed out that both internalist and externalist *JTB* theories cannot escape the Gettier problem. What's more, Alvin Plantinga's decision to replace the justification concept altogether with warrant fares no better. This section has demonstrated that there is an overall conceptual and methodological problem with JTB Theory. These problems have ultimately led many epistemologists to abandon the basic idea of knowledge as justified, true belief. In other words, one might say that JTB Theory went down with the sinking ship, given that the remains of the theory were unsalvageable from its detrimental clash with Gettier's article. In addition to Zagzebski's criticism, John Greco noted that Gettier-era Intuitionism is problematic as a methodology because of the overall subjective nature of intuition, which fails to secure epistemological theories that get to the essence of reality. It also seems that JTB amendment theories are developed *ad hoc* for the sake of methodological consistency, and therefore coherence comes at the expense of both a pragmatic use of the word knowledge, as well as a common sense understanding of reality.

One could further postulate that the Gettier problem is the ultimate result of the longstanding spirit of Cartesian skepticism. The modern era of philosophy was born out of Descartes's attempt to establish epistemic foundations of thought which provide humans with attitudes of axiomatic, epistemic certainty. Justification has long been the vehicle to satiate the modern appetite for Cartesian certainty in all epistemic concerns. In a roundabout way, the end of the previous millennium highlights various failures to absolutely secure non-basic knowledge, given that possible worlds can always be conceived where one's knowledge is merely the result of chance or happenstance; where one's 'knowledge' could have easily been false.

To give credit where credit is due, the no-defeater proposal offered by Lehrer and Paxson seems to be the best proposal for Gettier problems in the JTB tradition; it was a stroke of genius. Nevertheless, their position seems to unveil the seemingly impossible condition needed to grant epistemic certainty; the impossible condition of one's *being certain that there exists no defeaters for one's belief that p*. This impossibility is revealed as the question is begged: How can one ever be certain that there does not exist some defeater, unbeknownst to the agent, lurking in the shadows? Unfortunately, as Zagzebski has shown, and given the fact that humans are not omniscient, Gettier wrenches can always be thrown into any given JTB or Plantingian case of knowledge *ad infinitum*.

Chapter 1 Summary

The beginning of this Chapter introduced key themes from Plato's *Theaetetus* as the foundational concern of contemporary epistemology. One of the primary aims of epistemology is to offer an account of what is needed for knowledge beyond mere true belief. Logical Positivists in the twentieth century acknowledged this Platonic desideratum, and responded by adopting David Hume's Verification Principle of empirical justification as the needed link for knowledge; but the Gettier problem showed this account to be problematic. In response to this, dubious attempts to remedy JTB Theory were offered, and many epistemologists even opted for a shift towards externalist accounts of justification.

Alvin Plantinga was one such philosopher who argued for externalist Reliabilism, and suggested that justification should be replaced with epistemic warrant. The epistemic status of warrant is conferred on a belief if and only if one's belief-forming faculties are aimed at truth, and if they are functioning properly within a congenial environment that they are designed to

function within. However, Linda Zagzebski argued that Plantinga's account of warrant is just as susceptible to the Gettier problem as JTB theories, and she therefore argued that the Gettier problem is inescapable for both JTB Theory and Plantingian Reliabilism. Digging beneath the surface, John Greco insisted that Gettier cases of epistemic luck unveiled deeper methodological concerns with Gettier-era intuitionism, and these concerns led many epistemologists to shift the paradigm altogether.

2. The Virtues of Character and the Intellectual Virtues

This chapter will treat some of the fundamental concepts of virtue epistemology, and close by offering a general model for it as a methodology. Given that virtue epistemology is largely concerned with intellectual virtues, many prominent virtue epistemologists have drawn parallels between epistemology and virtue ethics. There are different approaches to virtue ethics in the broader Aristotelian tradition (i.e. eudaimonist virtue ethics, agent-based and exemplarist virtue ethics, and target-centered virtue ethics), but there is a common Aristotelian thread that runs through all of them pertaining to the basic nature of character virtues.[91] That is, most virtue ethicists will affirm that character virtues are excellences; that character virtues are involved with human flourishing (*eudaimonia*); and that character virtues require practical wisdom (*phronesis*).[92]

As it pertains to the 'virtues' of virtue epistemology, there are two categories of intellectual or epistemic virtues that will be identified in this section: *intellectual faculty virtues* and *intellectual character virtues*.[93] The latter is an ancient and medieval concept that was largely reconceptualized by Linda Zagzebski in her seminal work *Virtues of the Mind*. Chapter 2 will briefly examine character virtues in the Aristotelian tradition to serve as an effective springboard into the concept of *intellectual character virtues*. The reason for this is to establish a good framework from which to propose virtue epistemology as a paradigm shifting, post-Gettier approach to epistemology.

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[91]Hursthouse, Rosalind and Pettigrove, Glen, "Virtue Ethics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/ethics-virtue/>. Section 1. The main differences amongst competing virtue theories typically have to do with normative force (ought claims) and the metaphysics of value, but this will not be treated here.

[92]*Ibid*, section 1.1

[93]These are terms that I specifically owe to John Greco, who did a video lecture series on virtue epistemology through the University of Edinburgh.

Beginning in section 2.1, this chapter will start with an examination of Aristotle's virtue ethics proposed in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. Following this, section 2.2 will take a look at Aristotle's virtues of thought, where a definition of intellectual faculty virtues will be offered. Once this has been accomplished, the chapter will turn to examine the concept of intellectual character virtues. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a brief examination of virtue epistemology in general. The ultimate reason for this is to provide a framework by which to analyze intellectual humility and self-knowledge, where it will later be argued in Chapter 3 that intellectual humility is necessary for self-knowledge.

2.1 Aristotle's Account of the Character Virtues

It should come as no surprise that virtue has its western roots amongst the ancient Greeks, given that the concept was largely used by Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. Generally speaking, the Greek word for virtue is *arete* (ἀρετή), which can be translated as an "excellence." As it pertains to its broad use in the ancient Hellenized world, *arete* was used to denote an *excellent feature* or *function* of something.[94] As a few examples, the *arete* or *virtue* of a knife is its blade; the blade is the excellent feature of the knife which allows it to serve its purpose, to cut well. The *arete* or *virtue* of a runner is one's legs; the legs are the excellent feature of a runner which allows one to run, and to run well. The *arete* or *virtue* of the Cathedral Church of Saint Peter in Exeter, England is its stone-vaulted ceiling; this medieval style ceiling is the longest of its kind

[94]To be sure, the Socratic philosophers wrote in the *attic* Greek dialect common to the philosophers of Athens; this dialect is to be distinguished from *koine* Greek, which was the common tongue dialect spoken throughout the broader Hellenized world.

in the world (315 ft long), and it is certainly the most excellent and beautiful feature of the Exeter Cathedral.[95]

For all intents and purposes, character virtue can be defined as *an excellent dispositional trait of a person that is conducive for flourishing*.[96] It is a character trait inasmuch as it is a deep-seeded quality of one's character, and it is a dispositional trait inasmuch as it facilitates habitual tendencies or patterns of behavior. When examining the fountainhead source of western virtue ethics— Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*—there are a handful of notable features of virtuous character traits. **1.** A character virtue is a *mean* between the two extremities of deficit and excess; i.e. bravery is a mean between cowardice (deficit vice) and rashness (excessive vice).[97] **2.** Character virtues are voluntary and acquired through habituation.[98] **3.** Character virtues are praiseworthy.[99] **4.** Character virtues are good inasmuch as they have *eudaimonia* as their telos.[100] **5.** Lastly, character virtues are governed by practical wisdom (*phronesis*).[101]

When it comes to human nature, Aristotle believed that humans are not virtuous or vicious by nature but rather, only have a natural capacity to become virtuous or vicious, implying that moral development is the result of free agency.[102] To put this differently, Aristotle believed that humans have an innate capacity of sorts for rational character formation, which is a volitional and integral part of being human. For this reason, he strongly emphasized the necessity of implementing good habits into one's life that are conducive for virtue acquisition

[95]Note this is probably not how Aristotle would use this term. He would probably refer to its primary function as a gathering space.
[96]*Ibid*, section 1.1
[97]Aristotle, & Irwin, T. (n.d.). *Nicomachean ethics / Aristotle; translated by Terence Irwin*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub., c1985. Book II, Chapter 6 §10-13 and §15-18; see chapters 8 and 9 for a thorough discussion on virtue acquisition.
[98]*Ibid*, Book II, Chapter 1 §3; Chapter 2 §1
[99]*Ibid*, Book I, Chapter 12
[100]*Ibid*, Book I, Chapter 7 §13-16
[101]*Ibid*, Book I, Chapter 13 §19; Book VI, Chapter 5, 8, and 13
[102]*Ibid*, Book II, Chapter 1 §3; Chapter 5

and good character development.[103] Furthermore, it is important to stress here that character formation does not happen by fiat of the will, rather, virtuous character traits are slowly formed by one's exponentially acting in a virtue conducive manner over time; that is, one's habitually acting in such a way that is consistent with how a virtuous person would normally act. In other words, good habits are the vehicle by which one develops virtuous dispositions for action.

It should be noted that there is a distinction between someone *acting* as if virtuous and someone *being* virtuous.[104] *Being* virtuous means that one is virtuous in character, and will normally behave according to one's good character. Someone who is not virtuous can still act as if virtuous. Take for example someone who is not courageous but who commits an *act* of courage. While the action might seem virtuous in and of itself, according to Aristotle someone's acting courageously does not necessarily entail that one *is* courageous.[105] As a matter of fact, and as noted above, acting as if virtuous is what largely makes virtue acquisition possible, for when one habitually acts like a virtuous person, one *can* slowly become virtuous over time. All in all, virtue acquisition is more complex than just being a good actor. Alongside acting like a virtuous person, virtue acquisition in the Aristotelian tradition requires authentic change, emphasizing the need for one to develop good habits and character dispositions. This also includes learning to develop the right motivations and emotions, alongside one's developing good moral judgement.[106]

To illustrate this distinction between *being virtuous* and *acting as if virtuous*, a good example can be found in Steven Spielberg's classic war film "Saving Private Ryan." In this

[103]This is not the case in the modern world. Many psychologists and philosophers will be quick to point out the distinction between a predisposition and a disposition; to point out the difference between nature and nurture.
[104]See Book II, Chapter 4 for an in-depth treatment of this topic.
[105]*Ibid*, Book II, Chapter 4 §4
[106]Annas, Julia. "The Structure of Virtue." *Intellectual Virtue: Perspectives from Ethics and Epistemology*. Oxford: Clarendon press, 2007. Section III.

critically appraised film, Corporal Timothy Upham—played by actor Jeremy Davies—serves his American platoon as a German and French translator. When push comes to shove, there are multiple scenes where the platoon feels that Upham's timidity hinders the squad, and this ultimately comes back to haunt them. There is a particular scene in the film where Upham's fellow brother in arms, Private Stanley Mellish—played by actor Adam Goldberg—finds himself in a hand-to-hand deathmatch with an enemy German soldier. As this brutal deathmatch unfolds, Upham is stationed outside the room where the fight is happening. As he hears the echoes and screams of his friends dance with death from the nearby stairwell, he stands there, rifle in hand, frozen by fear, doing nothing as his comrade is bested by a German foe. All that to say, when his comrades needed him most, Upham's character rose to the surface to reveal his deep cowardice. To the viewing audiences surprise, Upham does have a stroke of glory and redemption at the end of the film in a one-off stunt of bravery. However, this one-off stunt of bravery hardly seems to imply that Corporal Upham was a courageous man on the battlefield. No, while he acted with courage in one particular scenario, make no mistake that Upham is by-and-large portrayed as a coward. The simple point to draw here is that one act of courage, though possible, does not mean that someone is a courageous person, and the like holds for other character virtues and vices.

Even if one is not familiar with Aristotle's philosophy, there is an obvious distinction between being virtuous and acting as if virtuous; the first is a state of being while the latter is a kind of action. As stated above, it is possible for one to act as if virtuous while not being virtuous, so long as one acts in a way that a virtuous person would normally act. In the case of Corporal Timothy Upham, his one-off spout of courage at the end of the film was an action inspired by the countless examples of bravery set forth by his courageous comrades. As a result,

he acted like a courageous person normally would because he had seen it done before, even though he was not himself courageous. Given this distinction between being and action, Aristotle suggests the following concerning genuine acts of virtue:

> But for actions in accord with the virtues to be done temperately or justly it does not suffice that they themselves have the right qualities. Rather, the agent must also be in the right state of mind when he does them. First, he must know [that he is doing virtuous actions]; second, he must decide on them, and decide on them for themselves; and, third, he must also do them from a firm and unchanging state.[107]

This reference adds to the key distinction between *acting as if virtuous* and *being virtuous*. That is, a genuinely virtuous person will not only be disposed to act virtuously, but will do so from a firm and unchanging state, which entails that one has the appropriate feelings and reasons for action that are relevant to a given character virtue. For example, a genuinely courageous person will by default have an attitude of confidence in the face of fear; she will know that she is acting courageously, and will do so from a firm state of character; she will be motivated by the appropriate emotions (i.e. a righteous anger or benevolence); and she will choose to do so because it is the right thing to do.

2.2 Aristotle's Account of the Intellectual Virtues

While character virtues were defined above as excellent dispositional traits, Aristotle's concept of intellectual virtues is quite different. To prime this distinction, it will be important to appeal to his basic understanding and division of the human soul. When it comes to souls, Aristotle affirmed that plants, animals, and humans all have souls, and therefore have similar soulish features or capacities. Aristotle believed that the ontological similarities amongst all living beings begins with the most basic capacity or function of life (*bios*), e.g. the vegetative

[107] *Ibid*, Book II, Chapter 4 §3, 1105a 29-35

capacity for nourishment and growth. Furthermore, what distinguishes animals and humans from plants, according to Aristotle, is a soulish capacity for animals and humans to *perceive* suitable objects.[108] Finally, the main distinction between animals and humans is that humans have both mind (*nous*) and the capability to reason.[109] Given these distinctions, Aristotle divides the soul as follows (see ***Figure 1*** below):

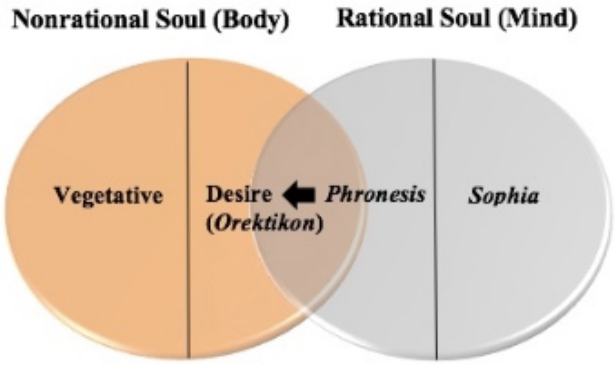

Figure 1

The left section of the **Nonrational Soul** entitled "Vegetative" denotes the capacity of the soul to be nourished, as mentioned above. The right section of the **Nonrational Soul** entitled "Desire (*Orektikon*)" indicates bodily appetites for action.[110] *Orektikon* is derived from the Greek word *orexis*, and it is used by Aristotle to denote a bodily capacity for desire, which is fundamental to Aristotle's philosophy of action. In essence, bodily desires play a fundamental role in human action, and it is actions, as well as states of mind (i.e. attitudes), that character

[108]Shields, Christopher, "Aristotle's Psychology", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/aristotle-psychology/>. Section 6. "Suitable" entails an objects acting in such a way that it affects one's soul *via* the senses—this is strikingly similar to Socrates' idea of perception being akin to impressions in a lump of wax, as discussed at the beginning of the previous section.
[109]*Ibid,* Section 4.
[110]*Ibid*, section 8. "Desire"

virtues are concerned with. Furthermore, Aristotle divides the rational soul into two parts (see "***Figure 1***" above), he writes:

> Let us call one of these the scientific part, and the other the rationally calculating part; for deliberating is the same as rationally calculating, and no one deliberates about what cannot be otherwise. Hence the rationally calculating part is one part of the part of the soul that has reason.[111]

Aristotle calls these two rational parts of the soul "*phronesis*" and "*sophia.*" Very clearly, Aristotle indicates that someone who possesses the virtues will be practically wise; that is, one will be prudent (*phronesis*) in one's deliberation or rational calculation.[112] Additionally, one who is virtuous in thought will be theoretically wise (*sophia*), and utilize theoretical wisdom for knowledge of necessary truth.[113]

However, Aristotle would certainly *not* suggest that everyone is practically wise or theoretically wise by nature; it is actually quite the opposite. Just as one is *capable* of becoming virtuous, one has natural capacities for being practically and theoretically wise. To be sure, a practically wise person will possess *phronesis* inasmuch as she knows how to act prudently when the situation demands it. The rational state of *phronesis* serves as a sort of practical reason that governs a virtuous person's decision making, and this is why there is an arrow pointing from *phronesis* towards *orektikon* (desire).

As it pertains to the human mind specifically, Aristotle affirmed that there are five virtues or excellences of thought: *Episteme (*scientific knowledge), *technē* (craft knowledge), *phrōnesis* (prudence or practical reason), *sophia* (wisdom or theoretical reason), and *nous* (understanding).[114] These virtues are quite distinct in nature from Aristotle's main character

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[111]Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI, Chapter 1 §6
[112]*Ibid*, see Book VI, Chapter 5, specifically see §8
[113]*Ibid*, see Book Vi, Chapter 7. See previous footnotes comment.
[114]*Ibid*, Book VI, Chapter 3§1

virtues: bravery, temperance, generosity, and justice. Aristotle's list of intellectual virtues are not so much character traits as they are kinds of knowledge or cognitive faculties and capacities. In short, Aristotle considers human understanding to be an excellent function of the rational soul and mind which is capable of inductively grasping universals: the metaphysical first principles of each science (i.e. the principles of causality in physics).[115] Scientific knowledge (*episteme*) is defined as a deductive logical demonstration of a given theoretical sciences first principles.[116] It is a knowledge of things which are necessary and everlasting; things which could not be otherwise. On the contrary, craft knowledge is a kind of knowledge that is concerned with the production of contingent things, i.e. things that could be otherwise. Aristotle draws multiple distinctions between production and action, because ultimately production has its end in a *product*, whereas action has its end in itself.[117] Therefore, while both production and action both require deliberation, production does not require prudence (*phronesis*). Both *phronesis* and *sophia* will be defined momentarily, but it will be prudent to first define intellectual faculty virtues.

While Aristotle's virtues of thought are essentially different kinds of knowledge, as well as excellent cognitive functions, what is meant by intellectual faculty virtues in the twenty-first century has more to do with innate cognitive functions and abilities.[118] For all intents and purposes, an ***intellectual faculty virtue*** can be defined as *an excellent and reliable cognitive function or capacity that is innate to the mind*. The commonly accepted faculties are perception, introspection, understanding or rational intuition, reason, and memory.[119] Furthermore, one

[115]*Ibid*, Book VI, Chapter 6 §1
[116]*Ibid,* Terrence Irwin's' commentary on page 347 of the glossary offers a concise treatment of this kind of knowledge.
[117]*Ibid*, Book VI, Chapter 4 §1; Chapter 5 §4. This is a clear distinction between instrumental value and inherent value.
[118]*Ibid*, Book VI, Chapter 1 §7 1139a 16-18
[119]Sosa, Ernest, *Knowledge in Perspective*, page 225, section II

might break these down into sub-faculties of sorts: Acute perceptivity of one or more of the senses, comprehension, memorization and memory recollection, abstraction, imagination, etc. Ernest Sosa notes that it is helpful to distinguish cognitive faculties into two categories: generative faculties and transmission faculties. That is, sensory faculties such as sight and hearing as well as rational intuition generate beliefs, while memory preserves and transmits beliefs internally.[120] Before moving to define intellectual character virtues, it will be important to briefly treat *phronesis* and *sophia*, because deliberation over these two forms of wisdom have a special place in the conceptual origination of intellectual character virtues.

Turning first to *sophia*, Aristotle defines it as the excellence of the scientific part of the rational soul, which has an appetite for both human understanding and scientific knowledge (See "***Figure 1***" above).[121] By scientific, one must take into consideration that Aristotle means that which is logically derived from metaphysical first principles. In essence, the faculty or function of human understanding is tasked with grasping first principles, whereas Aristotle viewed scientific knowledge as a logical demonstration of said first principles.[122] The kind of 'sciences' that he seems to have in mind are logic, metaphysics, and mathematics. He goes on to add that understanding and knowledge make up the concept of *sophia* because it has as its *telos* the most honorable things of nature; that is, necessary truth and universals.[123] In short, Aristotle defines *sophia* as a virtuous state of the soul—a theoretical wisdom—and its primary function is to govern the faculties of the human mind in the epistemic pursuit of science and first principles.

Turning now to *phronesis*, Aristotle clarifies that it is the virtue of the rationally calculating part of the soul, which has an appetite for contingent things and not for the necessary

[120]*Ibid*
[121]*Ibid*, Book VI, Chapter 7 §3
[122]*Ibid*, Book VI, Chapter 6 §1
[123]*Ibid*

truths of *sophia*. In essence, *phronesis* is an excellence of the rational part of the soul which has an appetite for good action and the common practices of mankind, or that which is *good for* a person; *phronesis* is concerned with contingent things, i.e. anything that could be otherwise. Thus, *phronesis* is concerned with voluntary actions because they are contingent. Aristotle writes: "The remaining possibility, then, is that prudence is a state of grasping the truth, involving reason, concerned with action about things that are good or bad for a human being. For production has its end in something other than itself, but action does not, since its end is acting well itself."[124] Prudence, then, for Aristotle, is a virtuous truth grabbing state of the rational soul which has an appetite for the good, where the good comes from good actions arising from virtuous character traits.[125] In short, the key distinction that Aristotle draws between the two is that *phronesis* is concerned with human action, deliberation of the good, and ultimately human flourishing (*eudaimonia*), while *sophia* is concerned with scientific knowledge and human understanding.[126]

To speak in plain language about these two virtues, it is much easier to conceptualize *prudence* as practical reason, and *wisdom* as theoretical reason. In essence, Aristotle suggests that someone who is flourishing needs to *know how* to act well in scenarios that require moral deliberation or judgement. This much was made clear by point **5.** in the list of key features of Aristotle's character virtues above, which suggested that character virtues are in accordance with practical reason (*phronesis*). On a similar note, Aristotle emphasized that someone who pursues mathematics, the sciences, and metaphysics needs to be taught how to excellently navigate these disciplines with a theoretical kind of wisdom. Interestingly enough, and contrary to the

[124]*Ibid*, Book VI, Chapter 5 §4
[125]*Ibid*
[126]See Book VI, Chapter 7 for thorough discussion concerning the differences between *phronesis* and *sophia*.

obtainment of character virtues, Aristotle suggests both prudence and wisdom—as virtues of thought—are obtained through being taught, and *not* through habituation. Nevertheless, while both prudence and wisdom are obtained in similar fashion, there is a sharp contrast between their respective applications: *phronesis* is concerned with character virtue, action, and knowledge of particulars; while *sophia* is concerned with human understanding and scientific knowledge.[127]

2.3 Intellectual Character Virtues

In the contemporary era there has been a reconceptualization amongst some Aristotelian thinkers concerning the sharp distinction between *phronesis* and *sophia*. In Linda Zagzebski's book *Virtues of the Mind* she articulates her dissatisfaction with Aristotle's bifurcation of *sophia* and *phronesis*, because such a bifurcation does not emphasize the kind of responsibility involved in any pursuit of knowledge.[128] Her project by and large aims to overlap these kinds of wisdom so as to extend *phronesis* into the realm of theoretical contemplation and knowledge. In essence, Zagzebski argues that there are forms of intellectual virtue that are character-based in nature. What is more, these *intellectual character virtues* govern the practical use of one's cognitive faculties and are necessary for knowledge. One might say that there is a moral agent driving the cognitive faculties of the mind, and because there is agency behind the machinations, practical wisdom (*phronesis*) must extend into the territory of *sophia*. As it happens, where *phronesis* extends, character virtues must be present in some way, shape, or form.[129] Zagzebski writes: "This should lead us to suspect that if Aristotle and Aquinas are right that practical wisdom is a

[127] *Ibid*, Book VI, Chapter 7 §6-7
[128] Zagzebski, L. T. (2002). *Virtues of the mind: An inquiry into the nature of virtue and the ethical foundations of knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Page 218
[129] *Ibid*, page 219

necessary and sufficient condition for moral virtues, then practical wisdom is also a necessary and sufficient condition for the intellectual virtues."[130]

To better define intellectual character virtues, it will be prudent to recapture the definition of intellectual faculty virtues for the sake of immediate contrast. On the one hand, an ***intellectual faculty virtue*** *is an excellent and reliable cognitive function or capacity that is innate to the mind.* On the other hand, an ***intellectual character virtue*** *is an excellent dispositional character trait of a person that's purpose is epistemic in nature*.[131] This includes the obtainment, retainment, and the transmission of knowledge. As it pertains to this kind of intellectual virtue, philosopher W. Jay Wood writes:

> Following the model of a moral virtue, we can analyze intellectual virtues as abiding, reliable traits that allow us to orient our intellectual lives—our believings, perceiving, reasoning habits, and so on—in ways that contribute to human flourishing. Intellectual virtues, on this analysis, ought not to be equated with reliably functioning natural faculties such as sight, hearing, memory or capacity for introspection, though the absence of properly functioning natural capacities could very well interfere with my being able to perceive, feel and act reliably as virtue might require.[132]

To be sure, here is a basic list of just a few noteworthy intellectual character virtues: intellectual carefulness, studiousness, originality, intellectual accountability, intellectual thoroughness, intellectual honesty and open-mindedness, intellectual courage, intellectual perseverance, and intellectual humility. The virtue of *intellectual humility* will be treated at great length shortly, but before turning to examine intellectual humility, it will be prudent to examine virtue epistemology as an epistemological framework for the intellectual virtues.

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[130]*Ibid*

[131]I don't want to be committed to assuming that a character-based intellectual virtue is only epistemically motivated or purposed. I have all the confidence in the world that these kinds of virtues contribute to intellectual flourishing, and ultimately human flourishing. Nevertheless, there needs to be a distinguishing component to differentiate these intellectual virtues from moral character virtues.

[132]Wood, W. J. (1998). *Epistemology: Becoming intellectually virtuous*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. Page 47.

2.4 Virtue Epistemology

The aim of this section will be twofold. First, given that there are various approaches to virtue epistemology, it will be important to identify some of the core and unifying features of the methodology as a whole. After this, the two common approaches of Responsibilism and Reliabilism will be defined.[133] It is important to remember that the ultimate aim of this inquiry is to investigate the virtue of intellectual humility, and not to evaluate the core themes of virtue epistemology by and large; such an endeavor is well beyond the scope of this project. Nevertheless, given that there has been a large shift over the past 25 years in epistemology towards the social and normative dimensions of the field, an inquiry into intellectual humility will indirectly prove to show some of the overall advantages of virtue epistemology as a post-Gettier approach.

The term *arete* or 'excellence' is a broad term, and this can make things difficult when trying to get a grasp on virtue epistemology. There are many different intellectual excellences or virtues that could *prima facie* be classified as an excellence or virtue of the mind. For the task at hand, it will be helpful to keep in mind the two kinds of intellectual virtues defined in the previous section to gain a rough understanding of virtue epistemology as an epistemic method (i.e. intellectual traits and faculties). In every account of virtue epistemology, the intellectual virtues serve as keystone pieces; their primary role serves as the universal thread amongst the various approaches. Just to be sure, the primacy of the intellectual virtues naturally entails a few methodological commonalities.[134]

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[133]These two are not the only options, there are other approaches that dismiss contemporary knowledge concerns altogether in an effort to completely normalize epistemology.

[134]Hookway, Christopher. "How to be a Virtue Epistemologist" *Intellectual Virtue: Perspectives from Ethics and Epistemology*. Oxford: Clarendon press, 2007. Section 1. This is an excellent source that engages with the problems of skepticism from virtue epistemologist perspective.

First and foremost, virtue epistemologists affirm that intellectual virtues are necessary for knowledge and serve as an adequate means for answering skeptical challenges. While the philosophical force of skepticism is viewed differently amongst virtue epistemologists, many critical realists are not very concerned with skeptical arguments at all. Virtue epistemologist Christopher Hookway suggests that responding to skepticism is potentially a mark of intellectual incontinence inasmuch as it entertains problems that arise solely from unnecessary and unrealistic spouts of reflection. In short, if epistemic inquiry involves experience, understanding, reflection, and judgement, then entertaining skepticism to the nth degree irresponsibly gives an undue amount of reflective attention to abstract and hypothetical challenges, which are largely irrelevant outside of the guild or the study.[135]

As it pertains to the concept of knowledge, virtue epistemologists agree that knowledge cannot be accidentally true belief, rather knowledge is a belief that is true because of one's intellectual virtue.[136] In *Virtues of the Mind* Linda Zagzebski suggests that "*knowledge is a state of true belief arising out of acts of intellectual virtue*."[137] That is, true belief is necessarily bound to one's making cognitive contact with reality *via* an exercise of intellectual excellence.[138] A general definition could be put as follows: *S knows that p if:*

I. S believes that p

II. p is true

III. True belief p is virtuously formed

Given that intellectual virtues are necessary for knowledge, most virtue epistemologists draw parallels to virtue ethics, suggesting that intellectual virtues lead to an excellent and

[135]*Ibid*, sections IV. and V.
[136]Turri, John, Alfano, Mark and Greco, John, "Virtue Epistemology." Section 5. Knowledge.
[137]*Ibid*
[138]Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind*, page 270

successful thought life; a life of intellectual flourishing. In order to intellectually flourish, one needs to form true beliefs in a virtuous way, which emphasizes the importance of one's *being* or *becoming* an intellectually virtuous person.[139] For example, someone who is intellectually thorough—specifically when crafting an essay—will be disposed to be clear and concise in her writing, and will thus, by default, seek to apportion the appropriate amount of relevant content into her essay in order to succeed. Furthermore, her epistemic pursuits will demand the employment of her faculty virtues, i.e. good comprehension or reasoning skills, trained eyesight; or perhaps she will employ her imagination in a powerful and colorful manner, so as to enhance the thoroughness and clarity of her insights.

Some virtue epistemologists who are reliabilists have continued to engage with Gettier-era problems (e.g. John Greco). As was seen in Chapter 1, all sorts of skeptical wrenches and cases were tossed at the epistemic concepts of knowledge and justified belief. The general response to the Gettier problem from a virtue epistemologist is that S does not know that p because S did not form true belief p at time t with one's virtues.[140] While Alvin Goldman and Ernest Sosa had a secondary interest in intellectual virtues during the Gettier era, the distinguishing mark of virtue epistemology is the *primary* role that virtues play in explaining the concept of knowledge. What is more, some virtue epistemologists (reliabilists) affirm that justified belief is ultimately reducible to the intellectual virtues. This implies that what is commonly meant by 'justified' is a term that applies directly to a particular agent's intellectual character, as opposed to a property of some epistemic method, piece of evidence, or internal feature of one's conscious.[141]

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[139]This really only holds for more moderate positions such as Responsibilism or Reliabilism. More radical virtue epistemologists are altogether disinterested in analyzing states of mind.
[140]Turri, John, Alfano, Mark and Greco, John, "Virtue Epistemology" Section 5. Knowledge
[141]Hookway, Christopher. "How to be a Virtue Epistemologist" Sections IV. and V.

Given that intellectual character traits play a primary role in virtue epistemology, there are inevitably normative implications here. To emphasize this, Christopher Hookway makes a distinction between what he calls static and dynamic forms of epistemic evaluation. Static epistemic evaluation tends to focus on particular states of mind such as knowledge or justified belief, while dynamic evaluation focuses on goal-oriented activities such as inquiry or deliberation, which are epistemic in nature. Given that there are all sorts of epistemic activities one engages in (i.e. reflection, observation, studying, etc.), should not epistemologists discuss how one *ought* to go about these activities?[142] The general point to draw from Hookway is that constraining epistemology to only static forms of evaluation neglects normative epistemological endeavors such as inquiry and deliberation, which are fundamental to intellectual flourishing.

Another normative concern has to do with epistemic desert-based claims. One might ask: Does one deserve to be praised for one's true beliefs that are virtuously formed? As it pertains to this particular issue, John Greco has developed the concept of "credit" for knowledge, which serves as an epistemic parallel to moral praiseworthiness for virtuous actions.[143] That is, if one has knowledge then one deserves to be given credit. He writes:

> But one of the central functions of knowledge attributions is to give credit for true belief. When we say that S knows that p, we imply that this is not just an accident that S believes the truth with respect to p. On the contrary, we mean to say that S gets things right with respect to p because S has reasoned in an appropriate way, or perceived things accurately, or remembered things well, etc. We mean to say that getting it right can be put down to S's own abilities, rather than to dumb luck, or blind chance, or something else.[144]

Greco's credit theory is a good bridge into the notion of epistemic value. Virtue epistemologists are collectively interested in the value problem of knowledge, and therefore want to give an

[142]Hookway, "How to be a Virtue Epistemologist." Section IV.
[143]Greco, John. "Knowledge as Credit for True Belief." *Intellectual Virtue: Perspectives from Ethics and Epistemology*. Oxford: Clarendon press, 2007. See section V. for a thorough development of his knowledge theory.
[144]*Ibid*, Section III.

adequate account of why knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief. This is a problem that dates back to the ancient world, and has roots in Plato's *Meno*.[145]

Greco believes that a parallel to Aristotle's virtue ethics is telling of the value of knowledge. The reader might recall Aristotle's distinction between acting as if virtuous and acting virtuously, which suggested that an act of virtue must come from a firm and unchanging state.[146] Greco notes that this kind of action for Aristotle is both intrinsically valuable and ultimately conducive to *eudaimonia*. He therefore suggests that true belief and knowledge are an epistemic parallel to acting as if virtuous and acting virtuously, inasmuch as knowledge comes from a firm and unchanging intellectual state. That is, forming true beliefs *via* one's intellectual virtues is more valuable than obtaining a true belief by chance or happenstance because it has both instrumental and inherent epistemic value.[147]

2.4.1 Reliabilism and Responsibilism

To echo the point made at the beginning of this section, given that the term *arete* is used broadly, there are many different approaches to virtue epistemology. Many of these approaches are concerned with the skeptical challenges postulated by Descartes and Hume, while some radical approaches view responding to skepticism as taking the bait, and playing the skeptics games. Nevertheless, there are two particular strands of virtue epistemology that represent more moderate engagements with modern philosophy: Responsibilism and Reliabilism. As a brief word, it is important to recognize that the field at large values both categories of intellectual virtues. While the two accounts below differ in priority over intellectual traits and faculties, a

[145]Turri, John, Alfano, Mark and Greco, John, "Virtue Epistemology", Section 6 "Epistemic Value."
[146]See *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II, Chapter 4 §3, 1105a 29-35.
[147]Greco, "Knowledge as Credit for True Belief." Section VI. Concluding remarks, part B.

synthetic approach is more representative of the present state of the field. That is, the virtues tend to generally complement one another, and there is no need for strong methodological divisions concerning one class of intellectual virtues over another.

Reliabilism as an approach to virtue epistemology gives priority to faculty virtues, which are virtuous precisely because they are successful in achieving the general goal of obtaining more true beliefs than false beliefs. Alvin Plantinga's reliability component of epistemic warrant was introduced in Chapter 1, which serves as a good framework for reliabilism here. To be sure, while Plantinga's contributions can be viewed as stages in its evolution, virtue epistemology as a form of reliabilism is largely derivative of the more recent works of Ernest Sosa, the founder of this general approach. For Sosa, the kinds of virtues that he has in mind are the intellectual faculty virtues defined in the previous section. He stresses that the excellence of a faculty virtue lies precisely in its overall reliability to lead one to it its proper end, where its proper end is one's being in a proper relation to the truth.[148] That is, the excellence of a cognitive faculty virtue is its reliability to secure one's having a surplus of true beliefs over false beliefs.[149] For example, the excellence of memory is its reliability to store and transmit true beliefs, and this much is clear when one recalls to mind something one knows but does not have in mind at a particular moment in time.

Responsibilism is an approach to virtue epistemology that originates from the works of philosopher Lorraine Code. Contrary to Reliabilism, responsibilists stress the primacy of intellectual character virtues for knowledge; Code particularly views epistemic responsibility to be the virtuous core of the epistemic life.[150] To become intellectually responsible as an inquirer,

[148]Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, page 225, section I.
[149]*Ibid*, page 227, section III.
[150]Code, Lorraine. "Father and Son: A Case Study In Epistemic Responsibility." *The Monist* 66, no. 2 (1983): 268-82. Accessed April 7, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/27902805. Page 271.

one must have an openness to truth and a willingness to self-reflect in order to obtain self-knowledge and insight into the state of one's character.[151] What is more, the responsibilist will recognize that one's context and broader epistemic community plays an essential role in the obtainment, retention, and transmission of knowledge.[152] Humans are social creatures by nature, and if one looks, for example, at the modern educational system, one will notice that it is built around intellectual *communities* that value expertise and epistemic collaboration. If an intellectual community is not collectively responsible, then they are capable of obstructing intellectual flourishing at a corporate level, and this emphasizes the need for communal epistemic virtues (i.e. honest public discourse, diversity, standards of academic honesty, etc.). Code writes:

> This is an approach which denies the autonomy of the known, and insists upon the epistemological significance of the nature of the knower, and of his/her environment and epistemic community. These require elaboration as enabling and/or constraining factors in the growth of knowledge as such, both for the individual and the community. And it is here that a "thickly" descriptive account is the only kind that will do.[153]

In short, Responsibilism as an approach to virtue epistemology gives priority to intellectual character virtues, which are excellent inasmuch they lead to responsible habits and patterns that are knowledge-conducive for both the individual and the broader epistemic community.

It is important to clarify that prioritizing intellectual traits does not necessarily make one a responsibilist. There is a bit of a radical twist to virtue epistemology that is gaining traction amongst those who value intellectual character traits. Philosophers by the likes of Linda Zagzebski, Christopher Hookway, Robert C. Roberts, and W. Jay Wood seem to be moving in

[151] *Ibid*, page 272
[152] *Ibid*, page 275
[153] *Ibid*, 274

this direction.[154] Furthermore, philosophers of this approach tend to stress that the idea of a 'faculty-virtue' distorts the concept of an intellectual virtue altogether, and should not be categorized in the same vein; this much was made clear in Wood's definition of intellectual virtues offered in the previous section.[155] As it pertains to a more radical approach, moral philosopher David Solomon suggests that "It would not be belief-based; it would be agent—or end—based in that virtue would be more basic than belief. It would focus on the cognitive life of the agent rather than on episodes of cognitive activity in isolation."[156]

Chapter 2 Summary

Virtue epistemology was introduced in this chapter as a popular alternative to JTB Theory. The reason for having done this is because the main argument in Chapter 3 will operate under the general framework of virtue epistemology. In order to better understand virtue epistemology as an option, Aristotle's concept of a character virtue was examined in section 2.1. Virtue epistemologists commonly draw parallels between virtue ethics and epistemology, and have thus conceptualized intellectual character virtues to be structurally similar to Aristotle's model of a character virtue in *Nicomachean Ethics*. In section 2.3, an intellectual character virtue was defined as *an excellent dispositional character trait of a person that's purpose is epistemic in nature*. This was contrasted alongside the concept of an intellectual faculty virtue, which was treated in section 2.2, and was defined as *an excellent and reliable cognitive function or capacity that is innate to the mind*. The key motivation behind introducing these concepts

[154]Christopher Hookway calls this shift 'radical' because this approach to epistemology is disinterested in analyzing mental states. See Hookway, "How to be a Virtue Epistemologist."
[155]See Wood, *Becoming Intellectually Virtuous*, page 47.
[156]Solomon, David. "Virtue Ethics: Radical or Routine?" *Intellectual Virtue: Perspectives from Ethics and Epistemology*. Oxford: Clarendon press, 2007.

was to establish a conceptual framework for the virtue of intellectual humility, which was classified as an intellectual character virtue.

This chapter concluded with a broad examination of virtue epistemology. The central thread of all virtue epistemology accounts is the *primary* role that the intellectual virtues have in each account. Reliabilism and Responsibilism were introduced as two common accounts of virtue epistemology, and it was noted that their main difference is between which kind of intellectual virtue plays a more integral role for knowledge: faculties or intellectual character traits. While both kinds of virtues are valued, many epistemologists argue that calling an intellectual faculty a 'virtue' is a misunderstanding of terms. It was shown in section 2.3 that W. Jay Wood does not view the intellectual faculties as virtues per say, and therefore they should not be equated with intellectual virtues. While these epistemological issues are still ongoing, it is important to note that many virtue epistemologists do not want to be constrained by modern epistemological concepts. Some radical epistemologists desire to see the field become an entirely normative discipline, where analyzing mental states is of secondary interest, if not decentralized altogether.

3. Intellectual Humility and Self-Knowledge

To begin this final chapter, it is helpful to ask: Why do humble people seem to have self-knowledge? The answer that will be entertained here is that an intellectually humble person has dispositions that are conducive for honest and realistic self-reflection, which leads one to accept and own one's cognitive limitations. Given that there are many natural obstacles to self-knowledge—as Kant suggested—intellectual humility plays a necessary role in tackling some of the greatest obstacles. In light of the many challenges that obstruct self-knowledge, the thesis statement that will be argued here is that: ***Intellectual humility is necessary for self-knowledge of one's character because this kind of self-knowledge requires critical self-reflection***

There are all sorts of western adages that talk about the 'blinding' nature of pride as a vice. This common notion has carried into the discussion of intellectual humility where intellectual forms of pride obstruct epistemic goods such as knowledge, justified belief, knowledge transmission, rationality, epistemic collaboration, and communal flourishing. But the recent literature only presupposes the historic correlation between intellectual humility and self-knowledge. Why is this? One answer *could* be that self-knowledge accounts have not caught up with the revival of Aristotelian philosophy. One such philosopher at the forefront of this issue is Quassim Cassam. This chapter will very briefly introduce some of his basic ideas about self-knowledge offered in his book *self-knowledge for humans*.

This chapter will begin in section 3.1 by examining two leading accounts of intellectual humility: the Limitations-owning account and the Low-concern account. Following this, section 3.2 will take a look at some of the social benefits of intellectual humility, where the work of John Greco will be introduced. Section 3.3 will introduce Quassim Cassam's basic idea that substantial self-knowledge has a bit of a high entry fee. There will be a distinction between

Cassam's notion of trivial and substantial self-knowledge, as well as a brief highlight of some of the common challenges to self-knowledge espoused by Cassam. In section 3.4 the main argument will commence. In this section two notorious challenges to self-knowledge will come into focus: The problem of fantastical self-conception, and the problem of blameworthy self-ignorance. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a few important clarifications in section 3.5.

3.1 Two Leading Accounts of Intellectual Humility

The *Limitations-owning* account proposed by Dennis Whitcomb, Heather Battaly, Jason Baehr, and Daniel Howard Snyder essentially affirms that the intellectually humble person is attentive to and owns one's intellectual limitations. They write:

> Limitations-Owning. IH consists in proper attentiveness to, and owning of, one's intellectual limitations. So much for what IH is. Why suppose it is ever a virtue? Arguably, for a character trait to be a virtue, the motivations that underlie it must make its possessor good as a person. We won't attempt to determine which motivations make one a morally good person, but we think that appropriately desiring epistemic goods such as truth, knowledge, and understanding makes one an intellectually good person, whether or not it makes one a morally good person. So we propose that IH is an intellectual virtue just when one is appropriately attentive to, and owns, one's intellectual limitations because one is appropriately motivated to pursue epistemic goods, e.g. truth, knowledge, and understanding.[157]

This account very basically suggests that intellectual humility consists of a host of behavioral, cognitive, motivational, and affective dispositions that lead one to take an appropriate stance towards one's intellectual strengths.[158] Furthermore, it also consists in a similar set of dispositions that lead one to *own* one's strengths. That is, when the intellectually humble person is in a position where she needs to be attentive to her strengths, she is disposed to both be aware

[157]Whitcomb, Dennis, Heather Battaly, Jason Baehr, and Snyder, Daniel Howard. 2017. "Intellectual Humility: Owning Our Limitations." *Philosophy & Phenomenological Research* 94 (3): 509–39. doi:10.1111/phpr.12228. Section 3. IH stands for Intellectual Humility.
[158]*Ibid*, section 5.2*(i)*

of her strengths, and to own them. The like holds for intellectual weaknesses.[159] The pressing point is that the Limitations-owning account paints a picture of a humble person as being someone that has substantial self-knowledge of one's own intellectual abilities and weaknesses, and therefore would value the intellectual strengths of others.[160] As it pertains to self-knowledge, a person with *Limitations-owning* dispositions will be willing to engage in critical self-reflection, and will be willing to accept the reality of oneself even if it is less than ideal.

The Low-concern account of intellectual humility proposed by Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood views humility as a broad virtue, because its counter-vice pride takes a plethora of different forms. This position is more Augustinian in nature given that humility serves as a negation to pride, and because there is *not* an account of humility in excess (i.e. servility).[161] Roberts and Wood are particularly interested in three forms of intellectual pride: vanity, arrogance, and dominance. Vanity is more or less defined as a disposition to excessively admire one's own achievements while also having a strong desire to be praised by others.[162] Arrogance is defined as a disposition to think, act, and feel in a way that stems from unwarranted entitlement claims.[163] Lastly, dominance is defined as a disposition to control and dominate both others and situations.[164] Humility, then, serves as one or more dispositional traits that counteracts prideful traits. Roberts and Wood define intellectual humility as follows:

> What, then, is intellectual humility? The foregoing analysis suggests it is an unusually low dispositional concern for the kind of status that accrues to persons who are viewed by their intellectual communities as intellectually talented, accomplished, and skilled, especially where such concern is muted or sidelined by intrinsic intellectual concerns—in

[159] *Ibid*
[160] Dennis Whitcomb, Heather Battaly, Jason Baehr, and Daniel Howard Snyder do *not* explicitly mention self-knowledge. But what is the difference between having a strong self-awareness of one's own limitations and having self-knowledge of one's own limitations?
[161] Augustine thought that it was impossible to be to humble.
[162] Roberts, Robert C. W. Jay Wood. "Humility and Epistemic Goods." Intellectual Virtue: Perspectives from Ethics and Epistemology. Oxford: Clarendon press, 2007. Section II. "Humility as opposed to vanity"
[163] *Ibid*, Section III. "Humility as opposed to arrogance"
[164] *Ibid*

> particular the concern for knowledge with its various attributes of truth, justification, warrant, coherence, precision, and significance. It is also a very low concern for intellectual domination in the form of leaving the stamp of one's mind on disciples, one's field, and future intellectual generations. As the opposite of intellectual arrogance, humility is a disposition not to make unwarranted intellectual entitlement claims on the basis of one's (supposed) superiority or excellence.[165]

The gist of the Low-concern account is that epistemic humility serves as a virtuous trait which constitutes a host of dispositions that serve to negate various forms of intellectual pride, where the most common forms of intellectual pride are vanity, dominance, and arrogance. These forms of pride are more basically connected with egotistical and narcissistic self-conceptions. In the academy, Woods and Robert argue that the intellectually humble academic is *not* primarily interested in the status or accolades that come with success, but in the general pursuit of epistemic goods. The kind of goods that Roberts and Wood would have in mind are things such as rationality, knowledge, justification, insight, and intellectual flourishing within an epistemic community.[166]

3.2 The Social Benefits of Intellectual Humility

Intellectual humility has gained a lot attention for its social benefits. It is relatively clear that some epistemic goods are attainable at a communal level if a community collectively values the aforementioned characteristics of intellectual humility. One of the central epistemic norms connected with intellectual humility is a collective reliance on reliable testimony as an excellent vehicle for knowledge transmission. As it happens, the entire academic world is structured around experts, libraries, classrooms, and conferences. The academy as a whole revolves around expertise and well researched literature, as well as different forms of epistemic collaboration. But none of these are possible without a collective reliance on reliable testimony. That is, the

[165]Roberts, Robert C. W. Jay Wood. "Humility and Epistemic Goods." Section IV. Intellectual humility
[166]*Ibid*, section V Humility and epistemic goods

basic *structure* of the academy is built around epistemic social interdependency; an ancient vision that is well reflected in Socratic midwifery and Hebraic discipleship. If one visited the famous Library of Alexandria in the ancient world where scrolls were read out loud, the halls would have rung with the curious inflexions of individuals who were studiously dependent on others for insight. While the structure of the academy is an ancient and medieval vision, the modern operation of the academy has drifted away from intellectual interdependency towards modern forms of individualism.

John Greco believes that epistemic individualism is largely the result of modern forms of internalist and externalist accounts of testimony, and thus it takes intellectual humility to recognize the general interdependency of peers within an epistemic community. As it pertains to justification within testimonial accounts of knowledge transmission, he identifies evidentialism as a common form of externalist justification. Evidentialism places the *receiving agent* of a testimonial source in a central and autonomous role during knowledge transmission.[167] That is, the reader or listener plays the role of a receptionist who autonomously validates—evidentially—whether or not the source or testifier is trustworthy, and whether or not she will use the content of the testimony within her own epistemic pursuits. There is a twofold examination happening here: The receiving agent judges whether or not the distribution source is evidentially grounded, and also judges whether or not the content of the testimony is justified based on whether or not it is grounded in factual evidence. Greco writes: "The facts about the individuals evidence determine the facts about the individual's epistemic status (of one sort or another)."[168] I.e. the

[167]Greco, John. "Intellectual Humility and Contemporary Epistemology: A critique of epistemic individualism, evidentialism and internalism." Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020. Section 2. "Epistemic Individualism defined"
[168]*Ibid*, Section 3. "Evidentialism defined"

receiving agent's factual evidence is what confers the epistemic status of 'justified' or 'warranted.'

Alongside evidentialism, individualism also includes forms of internalist accounts in which one is justified—in regards to some testimonial datum—by some *occurrent* factor within the agent's mind that supervenes on one's conscious; some of these accounts are strikingly reminiscent of Kant's transcendental project, given that Kant was an internalist.[169] As it pertains to internalism, Greco writes: "The facts about an individual's epistemic status (of one sort or another) supervene on facts that are 'internal' to the individual."[170] That is, internal factors of the receiving agents mind are solely what justify the incoming testimony.

Epistemic justification of these two kinds—really just JTB externalism and internalism in relation to testimony—are classified as a kind of *epistemic individualism* by Greco, which is now being countered by forms of *anti-individualism* given the social and normative implications of intellectual humility. Roughly speaking, on individualist grounds, whether external or internal, justification solely depends on an individual's ability to autonomously validate what is being testified to. On the contrary, *anti-individualism* accounts of testimony suggests that the *agent testifying* plays a more direct and prominent role in the transmission process than individualist accounts presume, given that the listener/reader does not merely believe the testifier but *trusts* the testifier.[171] But trust does not come without a set of epistemic norms that foster and govern a responsible and trustworthy epistemic community. There needs to be a set of governing epistemic guidelines and norms to ensure that trust and communal interdependence serve as a

[169]*Ibid*, Section 4. "Internalism defined"
[170]*Ibid*
[171]Greco clarifies in a lecture on this paper that he is not insisting that individualists are inherently prideful, only that these accounts of justification do not account for the substantial amount of epistemic work that one's community plays in the generation and transmission of knowledge. Greco, John. "Intellectual Humility and Social Epistemology." Youtube video, 40:14, July 13, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eabKkp6N5yo

reliable and effective norm within the community (i.e. academic peer reviews, librarians, thorough publishing guidelines, qualified speakers, etc.).

The essence of Greco's position is that intellectual humility, within an epistemic community, fosters a reliable and trustworthy communal environment that holistically, and externally, justifies its members. The community overall creates an environment where cognitive faculties can function with excellence, and where intercommunal relationships are sensitive and safe, making it possible for its members to intellectually depend on one another regularly.[172] Such a community helps to counteract prideful forms of vanity given that its members regularly defer to one another on matters of expertise and have norms that contribute to corporate intellectual flourishing. In short, Greco's general argument is that externalist warrant ought to extend into one's epistemic community where the environment plays a significant role in knowledge, and where intellectual humility as a social norm and ideal enhances the flourishing of the community as a whole.

If one harnesses insights from both the Limitations-owning account and Greco's social view, the intellectually humble person is portrayed as someone who will not only own her strengths, but who will also be aware of the strengths of her peers and of her general dependency on her broader epistemic community. Thus, she will prudently own her intellectual limitations whenever the situation warrants it (i.e. defer to a colleague or a written source, admit when something is beyond her training, etc.). Furthermore, the humble person will do so with an attitude that is appropriate to humility, i.e. she will not do so begrudgingly. It is helpful to call to mind Aristotle's idea of friendship here, where he notes that a good person takes pleasure in the

[172] *Ibid*

excellent actions of a friend. An intellectually humble person will value the brilliance and excellence of a friend or epistemic peer given that humble people are generally other-centered.[173]

3.3 Substantial Self-knowledge

Since Descartes's famous *cogito* statement, philosophers have predominately been interested in metacognition accounts of self-knowledge stemming from the modern notion of the private inner sense. In other words, philosophers have been interested in the implications of the human capacity to analyze propositional attitudes from the vantage point of the inner sense, given that it provides an exclusive perspective that is inaccessible to others. This perspective grants authority to the individual because of one's exclusive vantage point.[174] One might say that the inner sense affords a kind of first-person epistemic awareness of one's own mental states that is privately confined to the agents own consciousness.

Descartes *cogito* provided a level of direct awareness of thought from which an agent could not be wrong about one's own mind, and this is typically referred to as strong foundationalism. For example, how could one ever be in a position to authoritatively tell another person that they are not in pain, or that they do not have a certain desire for something? Kant, on the other hand, believed that it was impossible to view oneself in an objective sense, as Descartes suggested. Thus, self-awareness is an indirect phenomenon that somewhat parallels Kant's own understanding of the *a priori* categories of pure reason. Coming off of the tail end of nearly half a millennium of Cartesian, Lockean, and Kantian accounts of self-knowledge has left behind the

[173]Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book IX, Chapter 9 §5. One should consider the value of insight from a trusted friend or peer, especially as it pertains to self-knowledge concerns.
[174]Gertler, Brie, "Self-Knowledge", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/self-knowledge/>.

ancient and medieval vision of a virtuous thought life. While *cogito* accounts of self-knowledge are remarkably fascinating, self-knowledge for the Socratics played a more substantive and practical role in leading to a virtuous life in general.

As it pertains to self-knowledge, it is fair to suggest that the propositional content of a belief is what largely dictates its value. As an example, I know that I believe myself to be wearing a blue cardigan right now, and I also know that I believe there is a computer directly in front of me that I am currently typing on. In short, my knowing a belief of mine indicates that I have self-knowledge about my own belief-states or propositional attitudes. While these examples of self-knowledge might prove to be useful at times, this kind of propositional content does very little in the way of contributing to human flourishing.[175] On the other hand, if I were to say that I know that I have a tendency to routinely sleep past my alarm, then I demonstrate insight into a behavioral tendency of mine that could be indicative of a character vice. Self-knowledge about vices is valuable if one wants to take proactive steps to change. As another example, if one has irrational fears that contribute to unhealthy episodes of obsessive anxiety, then having knowledge of one's own irrationality could be the first step in developing effective coping mechanisms. These examples are vastly more valuable in nature, given that the propositional content is of things that threaten human flourishing.

The simple point is that self-knowledge of one's character traits, emotions, strengths, and desires plays a much more substantial role in human flourishing. As it pertains to self-knowledge of one's character, Aristotle thought it was necessary to have insight into one's motivations for action in order to determine the quality of one's character. If one's overall

[175]This example is similar to an example that Cassam offers in chapter 3 of *self-knowledge for humans*. To be clear, this statement is concerned with the value of propositional content. Many accounts of self-knowledge view the *modus operandi* to be what makes self-knowledge interesting, while content is more or less valueless. The argument here is that certain propositional content is of more value than others.

attitude is in harmony with one's good actions, and if this harmony reflects how one usually acts and feels in similar scenarios, then this is indicative of character virtue. Learning how to examine one's own attitudes and motivations is crucial for determining whether or not one possesses a specific virtue or vice, and this kind of self-knowledge is fundamental to human flourishing and character development.

As it pertains to knowledge of one's own mental states, such as knowledge concerning one's beliefs or propositional attitudes, it seems intuitively obvious that the propositional content of a belief largely dictates its *practical* value. To be sure, knowing that I believe that I am wearing a blue cardigan seems rather trivial or unimportant, but when compared to my knowing that I believe that I love my wife, there is no question that this kind of belief is substantially more valuable than the former. The reason is simple: The latter belief leads me to know why I act lovingly towards my wife, and this self-knowledge gives me insight into how I can enhance our marriage. Knowing that I love my wife can lead me to further act in ways that are conducive to our mutual flourishing; to internalize obligations that are necessary for a healthy relationship. When challenges in our marriage make it difficult to act lovingly, having self-knowledge of my love for her helps me to scrape up the motivation to continue acting in a loving manner. From this awareness I can learn to develop and maintain patterns of behavior that maximize our flourishing as a couple, even when it is tough.

While both of these examples of self-knowledge represent particular beliefs of mine, the propositional content of the beliefs examined largely determines their worth. As such, one might draw a distinction between what Quassim Cassam calls *trivial* self-knowledge and *substantial* self-knowledge.[176] These two kinds of knowledge both technically count as self-knowledge, but

[176]Cassam, Quassim. *Self-Knowledge for Humans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

just to be sure, their respective content largely dictates their value.[177] What is more, there is not a staunch categorical distinction between these two kinds of self-knowledge, rather the propositional content is either more substantial or trivial in nature, admitting a mere difference in gradation or degree. It should be noted that Cassam's account is different from Kant's account of substantial self-knowledge briefly alluded to in the Introduction. What Cassam has in mind seems to be indicative of what Kant meant by derivative self-knowledge: knowledge that is particular to the self-inquiring agent.

On the one hand, trivial self-knowledge is concerned with knowledge that is of little value or consequence, such as my knowing that I believe that I am wearing a blue cardigan. On the other hand, substantial self-knowledge is knowledge of things that are significantly more important to an agents overall flourishing, such as knowledge of one's own values, desires, emotions, and character traits.[178] Given that knowledge of one's *character traits* is included as a form of substantial self-knowledge, Cassam stresses that the higher end of the trivial/substantial spectrum naturally begins to include knowledge of things that are more ontologically basic than mere trivial mental states.[179] Once more, trivial self-knowledge examines mental states that do not have any practical value, while substantial self-knowledge goes beyond this to examine things that are more ontologically basic and integral to human flourishing, such as one's character and personality traits.

To briefly revisit the idea of a gradual difference between trivial and substantial self-knowledge, Cassam offers a set of general conditions that are indicative of one's having

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[177] *Ibid*, page 29.
[178] *Ibid*
[179] *Ibid*. There is a metaphysical issue with including character traits in the same vein as mental states. I am of the persuasion that character traits are ontologically more basic than mental states, which can be fleeting and temporary. Nevertheless, it is important to note that many will disagree with me on this, as many moral philosophers do not believe in character traits. I.e. many deontological ethicists and situational ethicists deny the existence of character traits.

substantial self-knowledge; the more conditions one meets, the more substantial one's self-knowledge is.[180] To be sure, these are not as much formal conditions as they are suggestive costs and features of substantial self-knowledge. While Cassam's list will not be examined in its entirety, there are a few particular conditions that will be helpful to briefly examine for the sake of the current inquiry.

The first is *The Fallibility Condition*. This condition largely indicates that one's beliefs about oneself are susceptible to fallibility.[181] For example, many will argue that humans are capable of being self-deceptive.[182] Even if one is presented with strong evidence that one's character is vicious, humans maintain a natural tendency to view themselves in a positive light.[183] Nevertheless, if one thinks that one has substantial self-knowledge, one is always susceptible to self-deception given the complex dynamics of self-hood.[184] On this note, self-deception serves as a good bridge into the next condition, *The Obstacle Condition*. The crux of this condition is that there are common obstructions that keep one from obtaining self-knowledge. For example, when a close friend or family member offers negative feedback about some character flaw that one has—maybe said person dominates conversations—the gut response is often to go on the defensive as a means of resisting negative feedback.[185]

Another noteworthy condition is *The Self-Conception Condition*. The general idea here is that self-knowledge must carefully navigate the complexities of one's own self-conception.[186]

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[180] *Ibid*, page 29
[181] This is a Kantian notion.
[182] Not everyone will agree with this. Whether or not self-deception is actually possible, the general point here has more to do with the human tendency to see oneself in a positive even when confronted with evidence or insight that says otherwise.
[183] This is not always the case. Thus, I later add the condition that some humans also have a tendency to undervalue themselves.
[184] *Ibid*, page 30
[185] *Ibid*
[186] *Ibid*, page 31

Self-conceptions are often opaque given that they are enmeshed with one's passions and morals; often times self-judgements are the product of hazy intuitions connected to one's deepest desires and ideals, making it hard to distinguish who one really *is* from who one aspires to *be*. The crux of this condition is that human self-conception often misses the mark. That is, humans are capable of self-conceiving in a way that is conceitful or bashful; put another way, one is capable of either undervaluing or overvaluing oneself. What is more, some obstacles to accurate self-conception are not volitional at all.

The final condition to mention is *The Corrigibility Condition*. This condition more or less affirms that self-knowledge ought to be constantly open to reform given that one is often not the best authority over oneself. As it happens, another person might have a better understanding of your own character than you do.[187] It is often said that when taking a personality test it is helpful to have a spouse or close friend take the test on your behalf. This emphasizes the corrigibility condition, given that others are often in a better position to speak insight into your character traits or behavioral patterns than you are. What is more, humans are not static agents, but dynamic agents that are constantly changing and developing overtime. Therefore, one's basic overall epistemic posture should be open to truth, given the inherent dynamics of selfhood.

As a brief conclusion for this section, here is a compact and succinct synthesis of these conditions. *The beliefs one has about oneself are prone to fallibility given their close relationship to one's self-conception, and the complex nature of self-conception often obstructs self-knowledge. Furthermore, given that humans are dynamic agents that change overtime, self-knowledge is corrigible, which demands an overall epistemic posture that is conducive for self-knowledge in the face of change.* In the next section, two specific *problems* will be identified

[187] *Ibid*

that require intellectual humility for self-knowledge: fantastical self-conception and blameworthy self-ignorance.

3.4 Intellectual Humility as Necessary for Self-Knowledge

In this final section it will be argued that intellectual humility is necessary for obtaining substantial self-knowledge because self-knowledge requires critical forms of self-reflection.[188] Critical self-reflection is a virtuous means of obtaining self-knowledge which involves the intellectual virtues of honesty, humility, carefulness, and sometimes courage. In the interest of self-knowledge, there are at least two normal obstacles that all humans face: wishful self-conception and self-ignorance.[189] These challenges are not inherently bad, but they do serve as natural inlets for pride, therefore the intellectually responsible agent will recognize these things, and will recognize the necessity of critical self-reflection for self-knowledge. The virtuous life in general requires intellectual humility because a virtuous person needs to critically examine oneself often in order to properly obtain self-knowledge of one's character, which is necessary for character development.

While self-conceptualization and self-ignorance are normal phenomenon, the former is largely what makes pride possible in the first place. But regardless of whether or not one is prideful, these obstacles highlight the imperfection of human self-awareness in general. Thus, the *Limitations-owning* account flexes its muscles here, given that the humble person will critically self-reflect *because* one's basic self-understanding is naturally prone to being compromised. For this reason, the Low-concern account is particularly advantageous for

[188]The forms of self-reflection that I have in mind are one's examining behavioral evidence, drawing inferences about oneself, consulting a trusted peer or mental health professional for insight, or private reflection *via* memory recollection and/or introspection.
[189]Self-concept is being used here to denote the general set of beliefs one has about oneself; i.e. one's ego.

substantial self-knowledge because it offers an account of humble dispositions that are consistent with how a virtuous person would usually self-reflect, just as the very idea of *becoming* virtuous presupposes vice and imperfection.[190] *Low-concern* dispositions are also at play here because humility disposes one to be *dis*interested in grandiose idealization, something that is often lacking in arrogant and vain individuals.

3.4.1 Fantastical Self-Conception

Arrogant and vain people just seem to have a dodgy relationship with their limitations, given that they often seem to have self-concepts that are out of touch with reality. In some cases, arrogant self-estimation is just an exaggeration of oneself, but in more serious cases intellectual arrogance can be altogether self-deceiving. As just mentioned, arrogant and vain individuals often have a self-concept that more or less reflects an ideal self rather than a real self, where the beliefs one has about oneself are loosely grounding in reality. In *The Sickness Unto Death* Kierkegaard speaks to this phenomenon and suggests that there needs to be a balance between the possible self and the real self. He writes:

> Surely what the self now lacks is actuality; that at least is what would normally be said, and indeed we imply this when we talk of a person's having become unreal. But on closer examination what the self really lacks is necessity. For it is not the case, as the philosophers would explain it, that necessity is a unity of possibility and actuality; no, actuality is the unity of possibility and necessity. Nor is it merely lack of strength that makes a self lose itself in possibility, at least not as usually understood. What is really missing is the strength to obey, to yield to the necessary in one's self, what might be called one's limits. Nor therefore is it the misfortune of such a self not to have become anything in the world; no, the misfortune is that he did not become aware of himself, that the self he is is a quite definite something, and thus the necessary. Instead, through this self's fantastically reflecting itself in possibility, he lost himself. Even to see one*self* in a mirror one must recognize oneself, for unless one does that, one does not see one*self*, only a human being. But the mirror of possibility is no ordinary mirror; it must be used with the utmost caution. For in this case the mirror is, in the highest sense, a false one.

[190]I am not convinced that there needs to be one knockdown dispositional account of intellectual humility that reigns supreme. Pride takes many dispositional forms, why shouldn't humility?

> The fact that in the possibility of itself a self appears in such and such a guise is only a half-truth; for in the possibility of itself the self is still far from, or only half of, itself.[191]

The general point that Kierkegaard is raising here is that humans can often get lost in the fantasy of possible selves. One might call this ***the problem of fantastical self-conception***. The human imagination plays a vital role in the development of a person, just as one is capable of imagining a manifold of possible realities that could obtain. But it is idealistic and possibly even vicious to get too lost—like Don Quixote—in the manifold of possible selves that could obtain, whereas some human desires altogether lack any necessity or grounding in the limitations of one's own reality.[192] Critical self-reflection serves as a constant ego-check against fantastical self-conception, where many individuals are altogether ignorant of the arrogant or unrealistic self-concepts they have. It takes humility to get back down to earth; to meet reality on realities terms.

One might consider the foothold that wishful thinking and pride gains through the faculty of memory recollection as an example of this. There are certainly times when memory recollection of past experiences are not always clear representations of the past, making wiggle room for exaggeration and sensationalized story telling. Neuroscience studies have shown that retrieved memories return to the memory bank with modifications.[193] In other words, retrievable memories become distorted the more they are accessed, making them less reliable. Psychiatrist Dr. Bessel Van Der Kolk writes:

> As long as a memory is inaccessible, the mind is unable to change it. But as soon as a story starts being told, particularly if it is told repeatedly, it changes—the act of telling itself changes the tale. The mind cannot help but make meaning out of what it knows, and the meaning we make of our lives changes how and what we remember.[194]

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[191]Kierkegaard, Søren. The Sickness unto Death. London: Penguin, 2008. Page 40.
[192]Stokes, Patrick , 'Kierkegaard's Mirrors: The Immediacy of Moral Vision', Inquiry, 50:1, 70 - 94
[193]Van der Kolk, Bessel A. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. New York (New York): Penguin Books, 2015. Chapter 12, "The Science of Repressed Memory." page 193.
[194]*Ibid*

To add to what Dr. Van Der Kolk is saying, the more that a particular memory is retrieved the more susceptible it becomes to distortion and possibly even misuse in the hands of an egotistical person. While less than accurate story telling is often times the harmless byproduct of an imperfect testimony from memory, the vain person may use this as an opportunity to impress others with tall tales that are dishonest and exaggerative. If someone tends to retrospectively sensationalize one's past experiences in order to make oneself out to be more than one truly was (i.e. someone who excessively relives the good old days), then low concern dispositions for status could promote more honest reflections that neutralize exaggerative tendencies spurred on by less than accurate memory recollection. Someone who is intellectually humble and who has a general awareness of the fogginess of commonly accessed memories will usually recognize the limitations of memory recollection, and will have a willingness to own their own shortcomings as it pertains to this faculty. What is more, the intellectually humble person may even suspend judgment on hazy past selves altogether, or might seek further insight from another source, if possible, to supplement one's deficiency.

3.4.2 Blameworthy Self-Ignorance

Another problem is that ***humans are often self-ignorant towards their vices***. As it pertains to self-ignorance, a pressing point that Cassam raises is that some vices fly under the radar and are notoriously difficult to detect. Cassam calls theses vices stealthy vices.[195] Alongside the fact that general self-concepts are susceptible to error, which can often be tied to different forms of pride, it is important for a virtuous person to critically self-reflect because one might be altogether self-ignorant of some character vice one has. Cassam insists that stealthy

[195]Cassam, Quassim. Vices of the Mind: from the Intellectual to the Political. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. Chapter 7 "Stealthy Vices."

vices often have intellectual dispositions that obstruct the agent from self-knowledge of its very existence in the first place, hence pride is often referred to as 'blinding'

The pressing question to ask is whether or not self-ignorance of a character vice is something that is blameworthy? To continue with arrogance as an example, is it right to blame an arrogant person for their lack of insight into the very fact that they are arrogant? Cassam says yes, and he notes that it is possible for self-ignorance to be blameworthy *if* one has been presented with suitable evidence that one possesses a particular vice.[196] He further argues that stealthy vices are partially debilitating for good character formation because they obstruct self-knowledge, whereby self-knowledge is the key to vice management and good character development.[197] The implication here is that self-knowledge has practical value because one needs to be aware of one's vices *if* one wants to develop good character.[198] As the Socratic proverb suggests: 'To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom.'

What Cassam ultimately suggests is that critical reflection requires a host of intellectual virtues because stealthy vices are *not* self-intimating.[199] Intellectual arrogance is a common stealthy vice that obstructs critical self-reflection; therefore, intellectual humility is needed for self-knowledge in the case of intellectual arrogance. Cassam writes:

> A willingness to engage in self-criticism requires epistemic humility and openness. Epistemic vices are epistemic deficits, and being open to the possibility that one has such deficits is a form of epistemic humility, that is, 'attentiveness to one's own cognitive limitations and deficits.' Such attentiveness is clearly needed for critical reflection on one's epistemic vices.[200]

He goes on:

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[196]Cassam, *Vices of the Mind*, chapter 6.
[197]*Ibid*, chapter 7
[198]Cassam treats this at length in chapter 8.
[199]*Ibid*, chapter 7
[200]*Ibid*

> The epistemic vices that are contrary to epistemic humility are arrogance, vanity, and hubris. It is possible to be arrogant and humble about different things, and it is even possible to be arrogant and humble about the same thing, as when one is in two minds about it. However, a person who is *intellectually arrogant* is unlikely to be seriously attentive to his cognitive deficits and limitations since he may well think he doesn't have any serious deficits or limitations. By the same token he is unlikely to have much interest in the project of *reflecting* on his limitations and deficits, even though regarding oneself as intellectually superior to other people isn't strictly speaking incompatible with recognizing that one is vice-free. A person with an intellectual superiority complex can acknowledge that he is far from perfect, but his cognitive imperfections are likely to strike him as less important and less worthy of serious critical reflection than would be the case if he didn't have the sense of himself as special.[201]

The main point is that the ethical life requires a willingness to admit that one might be vicious in some way, shape, or form given the hiddenness of certain vices. The ethical or virtuous life requires responsible and critical self-inquiry. This kind of self-reflection requires intellectual humility, which is an essential virtue of *critical* self-reflection; and critical self-reflection is the means of obtaining substantial self-knowledge of character, given the two obstacles to self-knowledge just identified (e.g. fantastical self-conception and self-ignorance).

A common form of intellectual arrogance is an *un*willingness to self-reflect, which is motivated by overconfidence and cognitive bias. Cassam notes that intellectual arrogance often leads to self-ignorance of one's own incompetence, which is a kind of intellectual version of the Dunning-Kruger effect, whereby incompetent and arrogant individuals often lack the skills and abilities needed to *know* that one is incompetent *via* a superior cognitive self-bias.[202] Cassam insists that sneaky vices demand thorough and honest epistemic investigation given their blinding nature, and this is where intellectual humility enters the picture. Because humans are both imperfect in self-conception, and are capable of forming sneaky vices, virtuous people must critically self-reflect often in order to stay grounded.

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[201] *Ibid*
[202] *Ibid*

In *Either/Or* Kierkegaard emphasizes that the ethical life demands mediated forms of self-reflection in order to realize the moral capacities of the self. At the most basic level of human existence is the aesthetic mode of being: a life of immediacy, emotion, and pleasure. Kierkegaard suggests that the aesthetic man is not a full self because he is merely shaped by his external environment and appetites, and therefore lacks any deeper and reflexive understanding of himself.[203] However, the ethical life denotes a life of reflection by which one internalizes societal obligations and norms, whereby one realizes a more concrete self that is not lost to the every changing tides of externality. Kierkegaard's 'Judge Wilhelm' in *Either/Or* insists that one who internalizes universal duties into one's physical being creates a bridge between the *particular* and *universal* modes of human being, whereby this internal synthesis of the aesthetic and ethical modes gives birth to true individuality; an individuality that is continuous through time and change. Kierkegaard writes:

> Now let us compare an ethical and an aesthetic individual. The main difference, on which everything turns, is that the ethical individual is transparent to himself and does not live 'out in the blue' as does the aesthetic individual. From this difference everything else follows. The person who lives ethically has seen himself, knows himself, permeates his whole concretion with his consciousness, does not allow vague thoughts to fuss around in him, nor tempting possibilities to distract him with their legerdemain; he himself is not like a witch's letter which, depending on how you turn the pages, give you first this image, then that. He knows himself. The expression *gnothi seauton* is repeated often enough and one has seen in it the aim of all human striving. Quite right, too, but it is equally certain that it cannot be the goal unless at the same time it is the beginning. The ethical individual knows himself, but this knowledge is not mere contemplation, for then the individual would be specified in respect of his necessity; it is a reflection on himself, which is itself an action, and that is why I have been careful to use the expression 'to choose oneself' instead of 'to know oneself'. In knowing himself the individual is not complete; on the contrary, this knowledge is highly productive and from it emerges the true individual.[204]

[203]Stokes, Patrick , "Kierkegaard's Mirrors: The Immediacy of Moral Vision"
[204]Kierkegaard, Søren, Victor Eremita, and Alastair Hannay. Either/or: a Fragment of Life. London: Penguin Books, 2004. Page 549.

To know oneself is to know that one is meant for more than an epicurean life of pleasure and immediacy; self-knowledge is the beginning of the ethical life because it is through self-knowledge that one realizes the moral capacities of human agency. To be an authentic individual is to have equilibrium between the aesthetic and the ethical; to choose to have one's foot in both camps simultaneously.[205] The arrogant person lacks self-insight because he lacks the intellectual humility needed for critical self-reflection, which is necessary for an ethical life. Thus, an arrogant person who is self-ignorant to one's own arrogance runs the risk of an altogether 'aesthetic' mode of being, whereby the agent misses the ethical life, because he altogether lacks the desire to critically self-reflect on his own shortcomings and limitations. To be sure, the aesthetic individual may be self-ignorant to his blinding vices, but because he never cares to stop to reflect on the nature of himself in a deeper way, he never truly come to know himself at a deeper level.

3.5 Closing Clarifications

This chapter will close with a few clarifications. The first clarification is that it is not being insisted that all forms of self-knowledge require intellectual humility. For example, if someone is angry, it does not always require intellectual humility to know that one is angry. Simple introspection may do. Nevertheless, there are certainly circumstances where knowledge of emotional states are difficult to come by. For example, it usually takes intellectual humility to admit—or even realize—that one has certain fears that are undesirable. The general argument presented in this chapter is that intellectual humility plays a necessary role in critical self-

[205]A good point that was raised to me is that self-knowledge seemingly needs to be connected with a *telos*. This is a point that Kent Dunnington raises in his article "Intellectual Humility and the Ends of the Virtues: Conflicting Aretaic Desiderata." This is an excellent point, one that needs to be treated at length. This topic will need to tackle the good life and the ends of the human virtues.

reflection, but not that it is necessary for every kind of self-knowledge. Given that humans are prone to fantastical self-conception and blameworthy self-ignorance, critical self-reflection is a necessary endeavor for a virtuous life. Thus, intellectual humility is necessary in order to uncover vices such as intellectual arrogance, but it is not *always* needed to have knowledge of one's own emotions or belief states.

The second clarification is that self-ignorance is not always a bad thing. There are all sorts of things about oneself that one is typically self-ignorant about. While self-ignorance of a vice might be blameworthy *if* one has reasonable evidence to believe that one has a particular sneaky vice such as intellectual arrogance, there are plenty of other forms of self-ignorance that are both natural and maybe even good.[206] For example, the psyche of some early childhood trauma victims often times involuntarily represses bad memories as a defense mechanism. But this kind of ignorance is not blameworthy at all given that the victim has no say in the matter. The point raised in this section is about *blameworthy* self-ignorance.

Furthermore, this is also why Kierkegaard's aesthetic and ethical categories were brought into the discussion, because given the problem of fantastical self-conception, *ethical* self-conception demands critical self-reflection. What is more, the fact that one is often inaccurate in self-conception, and the fact the one is *certainly* self-ignorant in some ways, merely emphasizes some of the cognitive limitations that all humans have. Again, this goes back to Kierkegaard's point that humans need to be in touch with their limitations. The intellectually humble person will own these limitations when applicable because these limitations are universal to all humans.

The third clarification is that it is perfectly plausible for a blameworthy self-ignorant individual to obtain insight into their viciousness. The notion that pride is a 'blinding' vice is a

[206]This is a point that Cassam treats at length in chapter 14 of *self-knowledge for humans*.

proverb not a promise. Aristotle's distinction in Chapter 2 between *acting as if* virtuous and *being* virtuous is a crucial point to raise here, because if a vicious individual was incapable of obtaining self-knowledge of one's vice, then character development is non-volitional. The clarification is that someone who is *not* intellectually humble can still obtain self-knowledge. For example, an intellectually arrogant person could *act as if intellectually humble* and obtain self-insight, even though said person is not disposed to do so, because dispositions do not necessarily determine action. Otherwise the common phrase 'he acted of character' would be nonsense. The distinction between *being* virtuous and *acting as if virtuous* holds in the intellectual realm.

To continue with this notion, a common expression that one often hears is: 'That was a humbling experience.' Arrogant people are often exposed to their arrogance through *failure*, given that their overconfidence often times falls short of what they believe themselves to be capable of. Sometimes 'humbling' moments are catalysts for acts of intellectual humility, by which an arrogant person might open oneself up to honest and humble self-reflection. The trickiest part for the arrogant person will be to own or *accept* the reality of oneself, should one obtain self-insight into one's own arrogance. But to insist that one needs to possess the character trait of intellectual humility to have self-knowledge would be a *very* strong condition. In short, the view espoused here is that it takes *an act of intellectual humility* to obtain substantial self-knowledge in many cases where prideful vices are sneaky. Fortunately, the intellectually humble person is disposed to act humbly, and therefore critical self-reflection should be a fairly routine and common process for said individual.

The final clarification is that not everyone is virtuous. Being intellectually humble presupposes that one is virtuous in some way, shape, or form. Some people gain insight into

their character and have no interest in changing whatsoever. For example, someone who knows oneself to be arrogant but does not care to change is insouciant, while someone who knows oneself to be vicious in a way that hurts other people is malevolent. What's more, some people altogether operate under a moral framework that recognizes humility as a vicious trait. Friedrich Nietzsche famously attacked humility as being a cowardly and spurious virtue. He viewed humility as the virtue that *suppresses* blessed vanity, by which right reason restrains the natural will to power and dominance.[207]

To echo the Kantian notion, to *know oneself is to know that one is human, and to be human is to be imperfect and dependent on others*. To believe otherwise is intellectually arrogant. Keeping this in mind, humility is one of the virtues by which humans collectively realize an altruistic common good. But just to be sure, it is not out of the question to suggest that prideful or vicious individuals could both have self-knowledge and be fully complicit with their viciousness. Those who genuinely want to dominate others may well have self-knowledge that they are maliciously dominant while not giving a care in the world, and they may even view this as a good thing. But what remains to be seen is whether or not they genuinely understand what it means to be human. In the most inhumane cases of malevolent dominance, it is not out of the question to suggest that a malevolently domineering person might have self-knowledge and just relish the evil. But what remains to be seen is whether or not they are blinded by a deeper, and more sinister sneaky vice; a vice that conceals a misunderstanding *not* of their own character, but of what it means to be human in general. To borrow the language of Kierkegaard, there is a level of inhumanity that is indicative of one's being a *half-self*, hence the term inhumane.

[207]Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 1997. Part III, 54 "The Three Evil Things." Section 2. Page 185.

Chapter 3 Summary

In summary, the thesis statement was presented and argued in this final chapter, which insists that ***intellectual humility is necessary for self-knowledge of one's character because this kind of self-knowledge requires critical self-reflection***. To argue this point, two accounts of intellectual humility were introduced in section 3.1 to provide a thorough definitional basis: e.g. the Low-concern and Limitations-owning accounts of intellectual humility. These accounts together offered a good understanding of what intellectual humility is, and they were both frequently alluded to as the thesis was argued throughout the final chapter. Alongside these two accounts, the social benefits of intellectual humility were briefly explored in section 3.2. The social dimensions of intellectual humility are important because classic accounts of moral humility often paint the humble person as being other centered; the same is true for intellectual humility, because the intellectually humble person will recognize one's dependency on others for epistemic goods. What is more, intellectual humility as a common social ideal within an epistemic community helps to realize an interdependent and selfless community.

In section 3.3 Quassim Cassam's basic idea of substantial and trivial self-knowledge was introduced. It was argued that substantial self-knowledge of certain propositional beliefs has more practical value than trivial beliefs. Given that some beliefs are more valuable than others, substantial self-knowledge is often more difficult to obtain because it faces many natural and nurtured challenges. However, there is a point where some natural challenges become problems, because they provide avenues for different forms of intellectual pride. In light of this, the two specific *problems* that were identified in section 3.4 are the problems of ***fantastical self-conception*** and ***blameworthy self-ignorance***. Given that all humans are inevitably prone to

these problems, it was argued that critical self-reflection is needed for self-knowledge, because intellectual humility plays a necessary role in critical self-reflection.

Conclusion

The ultimate purpose of this project was to demonstrate with clarity the intimate and unique relationship between intellectual humility and self-knowledge. Humility is a *very special* virtue given that its application extends into both the moral and epistemological realms of human life. What is more, the shift towards virtue epistemology has fostered an entirely different epistemological framework by which to examine humility's pertinence for self-knowledge with newfound power and clarity. While this statement might seem hyperbolic, when one considers the constraints that were placed on humility by Aquinas, this fresh epistemic perspective unbounds the true power of humility as the key virtue by which one comes to ethically know thyself. Over the past decade intellectual humility has been lavished with philosophical treatment and research-based initiatives, but its most fundamental application remains somewhat untapped by the surge of Aristotelian and Thomistic thinkers that have turned their attention towards it. This statement is by no means meant to serve as a criticism against the thinkers that have treated this virtue, but as a catalyst to begin to further examine the rich connection between self-knowledge and intellectual humility.

While the main aim of this thesis was to argue that intellectual humility is necessary for self-knowledge, there are many different avenues that were left untraveled throughout this project. Intellectual humility serves as a kind of touchpoint between the moral and the epistemic worlds given that it is one of the keys to substantial self-knowledge, and presumably the good life. Perhaps the biggest questions that remain to be answered are questions about human flourishing in general, both at an intellectual and moral level. Quite simply, it goes back to the ancient question: What is the good life, and what end does intellectual humility promote? Alongside humility, it remains to be seen what sort of role the other intellectual virtues such as

honesty or intellectual courage play in self-knowledge accounts within a virtue epistemology framework. But given the rich history that humility has amongst the works of some of the greatest thinkers across the course of human history, it is safe to assume that there are plenty of exciting avenues that are still unexplored, especially when considering the fresh epistemic lens that humility is now being given.

One emerging challenge to self-knowledge is the extension of the human ego across social media and virtual reality platforms. That is, there is an ever-growing demand for self-projection into the online universe. Humans are crafting and creating all sorts of versions of themselves across the virtual world, and virtual self-projection often forces the individual to self-reflect in order to self-project. As the wheels of industry press forward to generate new avenues by which the individual can project oneself across various social media services, the human ego will continue to face new challenges never before encountered in human history. Ethical self-inquiry is not only needed for a virtuous life in *physical* reality, but for responsible and honest self-projection into the world of *virtual* reality.

In an age where online video creators have more influence than major newspapers, there is every need for humble self-projection given the weighty influence that these creators have over the minds of the western world. The reason is simple: Many of these 'content creators' set the precedent for what young minds consider to be the good life, and if someone's self-projection is dishonest and downright unrealistic, then their young followers inadvertently begin to form ideals that are fantastical and unobtainable. In essence, Kierkegaard's vision of the aesthetic life becomes all the more possible, given the manifold of platforms and applications by which one can virtually extend *some version* of their self. In other words, the ego is no longer confined to the physical, because the ego can be projected into a virtual world of limitless possibility.

The relevance of the Greek proverb *gnothi seauton* is more significant at this moment in time than it ever has been, and by extension, so is intellectual humility. In a world of seemingly limitless possibility, despair and anxiety are felt more rampantly than ever because reality is often an afterthought, given that reality hinders the creativity and authority that one rightfully has over one's own self-projection into the virtual world. In the Kantian and Kierkegaardian spirit of self-knowledge, the thing that is lacking most at this point it time is self-knowledge of one's own limitations; there is a wholesale dismissal of the real world for virtual forms of escapism, where the bindings and limitations of the human self are replaced by the boundless nature of the virtual avatar. Western forms of escapism and virtual reality have made Kant's vision of substantial self-knowledge more difficult than ever to obtain, because the real world is boring, unpleasant, and unbecoming. Moving forward, intellectual humility will continue to be ever more relevant for the world, because it takes humility to accept human reality, and to prioritize the real world over the limitless forms of aesthetic self-projection that are possible.

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