MORAL AND EPISTEMIC VIRTUES:
A THOMISTIC AND ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE

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I.

There is a well-known distinction between rule-based and virtue-based ethics. The former focuses upon acts and maintains that these are moral or not to the extent that they conform, or fail to conform, to certain rules or principles. Virtue-based ethics focuses upon agents and maintains that morality rests not upon rules, but upon moral qualities. In particular, it rests upon *virtues*, which are dispositions to act in certain ways in certain circumstances. There is much controversy among moral philosophers as to whether this distinction is as radical as I have indicated. But it is not important here to decide this point. It seems correct to think that in rule-based ethics, *acts*, *moral rules*, and *moral principles* are the main concepts, whereas in virtue-based ethics, *moral dispositions* and *emotions*, *states of character*, and the *flourishing of human beings* through the best development of their own nature (what the ancient Greeks called *eudaimonia*), are the main concepts. There is another very important contrast between these two ethical perspectives: unlike virtue-based ethics, rule-based ethics claims that morality is universal, in the sense that it is not specifically related to the person who acts and to the conditions of his or her act. Universality means complete independence from anything that would singularize a reason to act or the act itself. The moral person must act as if his or her act were determined by a universal law. In virtue ethics, morality is intimately related to the person who acts, to his or her character and situation. The same act could be morally right or wrong depending on *who* acts and *the conditions under which* the act is done. It could even be a question of luck. From the perspective of rule-based ethics such dependency may in itself constitute immorality.

By a quite strong analogy, one can distinguish between rule-epistemology and virtue-epistemology.[1] The former says simply that there are epistemological rules that one must follow in order to judge whether or not some belief is justified. Perhaps these rules are implicit. But the role of philosophers could be to articulate them, as Descartes did, among other things, in his *Règles pour la direction de l'esprit,* his *Discours de la méthode* and his *Méditations Métaphysiques*. It would be our *duty* as believers to reform our understanding by following the rules that warrant our belief. A person is epistemically justified in believing *p* if and only if her believing *p* is licensed by correct cognitive rules.[2] Virtue epistemology is a set a theories that are not focused on the notion of cognitive rules. For virtue epistemologists, the right question is not "What are the *criteria* of the legitimate belief?", but "What makes us *confident* in our belief?" We do not ask whether our belief is right or not by wondering whether some *criterion* has been respected. Believing is *responding in a certain way.* Our response is the right one if it results from reliable dispositions directing our sensible and cognitive faculties: dispositions that are motivated by the attempt to get the truth. These dispositions must be *virtues*, like intellectual courage, sobriety, open-mindedness, and so on. Justified belief does not result from the application of rules to our beliefs during a sort of "belief-examination". It results from the correct functioning of our faculties, our desire for truth, and, especially, the exercise of sound epistemic dispositions. Our chance to entertain justified beliefs, and to know, is not related to the reform of our understanding, for we cannot decide whether to believe a thing or not. It results from our epistemic character. Virtuous epistemic agents have justified beliefs, even if not infallible ones. They are the right persons to have opinions in a given set of circumstances. And they are also models for our intellectual education.

Not all virtue epistemologists agree about the kind of process that warrants knowledge. In particular, some of them think that epistemic virtues supervene on a reliable causal process of perception, while others feel that there is something more reflective in the justification of knowledge. This distinction is sometimes presented as a difference between "reliabilism"

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[1] See R. Pouivet, *Le réalisme esthétique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2006), chapter 2: "L'épistémologie des vertus"; "Pourquoi les homes ont-ils besoin des vertus épistémiques?", in T. Bénatouïl and Michel Le Du, *Les Cahiers Philosophiques de Strasbourg,* 20 (2006): *Le retour des vertus intellectuelles.*

[2] See John Greco, "Virtue and Rules in Epistemology", in A. Fairweather and L. Zagzebski, eds., *Virtue Epistemology: Essays on Epistemic Virtue and Responsibility* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 118.

and "responsabilism". Clearly, epistemic justification could not be merely the result of a normal causal process, because it is *normative* and therefore not simply causal: this is the distinction between a well-functioning thermometer that indicates the right temperature and a human being with a warranted belief. But virtue epistemologists generally agree that, more than anything, good intellectual *habits* ground our pretensions to warranted beliefs, and to knowledge. And habits are properties of persons, not of beliefs.

In short, rule-epistemology and virtue-epistemology differ mainly concerning the *ethics of belief.* According to the former, our individual duty is to follow cognitive rules without being influenced by emotions and circumstances. According to the latter, we must have the *epistemic luck* to be cognitively well educated within an epistemic community that gives high value to epistemic virtues. The rule-ethics of belief gives the main role to universal principles that each mind must follow in the search for truth, which is the search for justification. The virtue-ethics of belief considers that there is an epistemic good life we must live if we are to have warranted beliefs. This sort of ethics concerns itself with the ways in which our epistemic lives can be conducted well or poorly.

But is the ethics of belief really *ethics*? Can it be said that, in the end, virtue epistemology is a part of virtue ethics? It is clear that epistemology in general, and not only virtue epistemology, uses a terminology that is characteristically ethical. There are *good* and *bad* hypotheses. We *ought* to trust our memories, or not. Some inferences are *permissible*, others *faulty*. Our theories can be *correct* or *incorrect*.[3] We are *entitled* to believe something, or not. We are supposed to be *responsible* for our beliefs, or at least for some of them. Surely, we can be *blamed* for some of them, not only because of their content (racist beliefs, for example) but for the way in which we acquired them (by guessing, for example). That ethics and epistemology are both normative was generally accepted by philosophers until some of them proposed to "naturalize" epistemology, which means to dissolve it into the natural sciences. This would signify the end of epistemology; for justification is manifestly normative. Jaegwon Kim says that:

> … just as it is the business of normative ethics to delineate the conditions under which acts and decisions are justified from the moral point of view, so it is the business of epistemology to identify and analyze the conditions under which beliefs, and perhaps propositional attitudes, are justified from the

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[3] Roderick Firth, "Are Epistemic Concepts Reducible to Ethical Concepts?", in A.I. Goldman and J. Kim, eds., *Values and Morals* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1978), p. 215.

epistemological point of view. It is probably only a historical accident that we standardly speak of 'normative ethics' but not of 'normative epistemology'. Epistemology is a normative discipline as much as, and in the same sense, as normative ethics.[4]

So, clearly, epistemology is normative. But does this mean, first, that it is a sort of ethics and, second, that it is, in particular, virtue ethics when it is virtue epistemology? Linda Zagzebski goes that far when she affirms that "epistemic evaluation just *is* a form of moral evaluation" and that "knowledge is at root a moral notion".[5] She also says that:

> The relationship between the evaluation of cognitive activity and the evaluation of acts in the overt sense usually reserved to ethics is more than an analogous one. I will argue that the intellectual virtues are so similar to the moral virtues in Aristotle's sense of the latter that they ought not to be treated as two different kinds of virtue. It follows that intellectual virtue is properly the object of study of moral philosophy. This claim is intended . . . to extend the range of moral concepts to include the normative dimension of cognitive activity. . . . If I am right normative epistemology is a branch of ethics. Either discipline ignores the other at its peril.[6]

For my part, I would like to show that the confusion between the two disciplines is also full of perils.

In a sense, Linda Zagzebski is right. One would like to think that epistemically good people are also morally good people. But there are remarkably intelligent persons (in what we call "intellectual matters") who are not very virtuous morally: selfish, self-possessed, arrogant, and completely unscrupulous; and there are persons whose intellectual abilities are very limited (who are intellectually simple), but who are kind and gentle, and perhaps even moral models.[7] And, of course, there are many people who are in between: not very intelligent, not very bad, with moments of stupidity and moments of gentleness. The question of the unity of virtues is not

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[4] Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind,* pp. 218-219.

[5] See note 1. Here Linda Zagzebski adds that "the separation of knowledge from moral concerns is a development inherited from Descartes". This could be challenged. Of course, Descartes says that the foundation of knowledge and the foundation of morals must be distinguished. The first can be delayed not the second. But at the beginning of the *Méditations Métaphysiques* it is quite clear that it would be for René a *"faute"* not to examine his own mind to ground his knowledge. And the use of the term "faute" has some moral connotation.

[6] Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind*, pp. xiv-xv.

[7] I here borrow some formulas from Pascal Engel, "La volonté de croire et les impératifs de la raison", *Revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto,* 2001.

new. A very intelligent person who is morally repugnant disconcerts us, but such people clearly exist, as do perfectly good, but stupid, people. We might be tempted to doubt, in the last-named case, that the person was *really* stupid and might posit a "very special form of cleverness". But be that as it may, the relation between intellectual and moral virtues seems to be contingent. This makes the Zagzebskian thesis that normative epistemology is a branch of ethics a very problematic one.

<div align="center">II.</div>

There are at least four arguments against Linda Zagzebski's assertion that epistemology is a branch of ethics.

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*1. The Argument from the Difference between Moral
and Epistemic Duty*

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If I believe that today is Friday, that I am now in France, that Aquinas died in AD 1274, etc., I cannot decide to believe that today is Saturday, that I am in Poland, or that Aquinas lived in the eighteenth century. As Richard Swinburne says "believing is something that happens to a man, not something that he does."[8] This is not a psychological point, but a logical one:

> If I choose at will to believe that I now see a table, then I would realize that this belief originated from my will and so had no connection with whether or not there was a table there, and so I would know that I had no reason for trusting my belief, and so I would not really believe.[9]

The involuntariness of belief implies a radical difference between moral duty and epistemic duty. For moral duty requires that we decide to do what morality demands because morality demands it. We must act not only *according to* duty, but *from* duty. If belief is involuntary, then we cannot decide to believe what is evident because it is evident; so either there is no such thing as epistemic duty, or else epistemic duty is something other than this, in which case it could not be viewed as closely analogous to moral duty.

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[8] Richard Swinburne, *Faith and Reason* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 25.
[9] *Idem.*

Further, one can say:

(1) If you ought *morally* to do something, you can do it.

But I think that, at least in most situations, it makes no sense to say:

(2) If you ought *epistemically* to believe something, you can believe it.

So, moral evaluations and epistemic evaluations do not answer to the same *modal* norms. Moral obligation implies moral possibility. Epistemic obligation does not imply epistemic possibility. Could you be blamed for not believing what is evident, if you really do not believe it? What could you do to in order to believe what you do not believe?

2. The Argument from Categorical Difference

Very often, virtues like open-mindedness, fairness, and honesty, are presented as epistemic virtues. One simply adds "intellectual" before them. But these are clearly not intellectual virtues for Aristotle or Aquinas, and one can wonder whether presenting them as such could be more than a misleading metaphor. Arguably, all human virtues are simply moral virtues. To label them as "intellectual" or "epistemic" does not change their essentially moral character. So, virtue epistemology is perhaps not really epistemology, but simply a moralization of epistemic attitudes. Coming at the matter from the opposite side, the term "ethics of belief" is arguably misleading. Finally, it may be asked in the same vein where the *moral* aspect is to be discerned in the justification of beliefs. And the same may be asked about the "moral" vocabulary that we use in epistemology: *correct* hypotheses, *permissible* accounts, the *obligation* to use a theory to examine a problem, and so on. Are these not simply metaphors? In this way it may be maintained, on two different grounds, that epistemological and moral evaluation are distinct: (a) even if "epistemic virtues" are expressed in a "moral" vocabulary, this does not mean that they are really moral virtues; and (b) even if we apply moral norms to the intellectual life (saying for example that we must be honest in our intellectual work), this does not transform the moral norm into an epistemic one. Such a norm is moral, not epistemic. The two categories of morality and epistemic justification still remain completely distinct.

It is possible to argue that "epistemic virtues" constitute a special set of moral virtues, being moral virtues, to be sure, but having a particular char-

acter that other moral virtues don't have.[10] But even in this case, epistemic virtues could not be said simply to be moral virtues. They would be moral virtues with a very special character which would have to be specified. It would still be a confusion simply to identify epistemic and moral virtues.

3. The Argument from the Confusion between the Theoretical and the Practical

Some ideologies (Nazism, Communism, but also some forms of "Nietzscheism" and certain religious ideologies) take their supposed practical consequences to be a criterion for epistemic validity. For example, Louis Althusser—a French philosopher who in the sixties was the guru of what is now in English-speaking countries called "French Contemporary Philosophy"—remarked that, according to Lenin (and thus, he assumed, the truth) "philosophy is nothing other than class war, that is, politics."[11] Therefore, the norms of theoretical value are in fact practical ones. Building upon this premise, people say such things as: "you are wrong, because the consequences of your theory are such and such." They may say, for example, that one or another account must be rejected because it would be favourable to a capitalist analysis of society (Communism), or because it would be a symptom of weakness (Nietzscheism); epistemic justification is never more than practical preference. It is, in short, impossible to distinguish theoretical and practical questions, according to this view; *praxis* is the norm of scientific and philosophical inquiries.

Not only French Marxists, but also some Pragmatists (Richard Rorty, for example) and Post-Modernists (among them, Michel Foucault) maintain views of this kind. They confuse rationality with persuasion or ideology and tend to think that appeals to rationality are nothing more than hopes, desires and social attitudes clothed in the language of "reason-giving". Of course, virtue epistemology and Linda Zagzebski's idea that "knowledge is at root a moral notion" seem to be very far from Post-modernism. But is there not the same underlying principle—that to think correctly is to conform to certain practical or moral attitudes? That rational justification is to be judged in practical or moral terms, and according to practical and moral norms? In my estimation, the fact that some intellectual or even moral values are incorporated into epistemic life does not mean that we are allowed

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[10] Mikael M. Karlsson proposed this objection. Many thanks to him for his critical reading of my text.

[11] Louis Althusser, *Lénine et la philosophie* (Paris: Maspéro, 1969), p. 53.

to *confuse* facts and values and to say that values (moral or epistemic ones) come down to what we prefer, or should prefer, for practical reasons.

4. The Argument from the Moral Merit of Unjustified Beliefs

Sometimes an unjustified belief is not morally bad. A person can believe, against the evidence, that his or her spouse is faithful. This person's beliefs are perhaps epistemically faulty, but in such a case a certain amount of self-deception may be morally laudable. Failure to cleave to epistemic propriety might save a marriage and the life of a family. It is true that generous personal trust can invite degrading credulity. But even without confusion between epistemological and moral matters, it is sometimes possible to consider the moral consequences of a hypothesis to be good reasons for accepting or rejecting it, even against the evidence. This would not mean that our reasons for believing are *dictated* by moral or political considerations (as in 3), but that our moral reasons can constitute, in some cases, valid reasons for epistemic circumspection. When the evidence for not-*p* is not absolutely complete, the only reason for believing that *p* might be that not-*p* has deplorable moral consequences. That would not show that epistemic evaluation is moral evaluation but simply that moral evaluation can enter into our epistemic life by alerting us to the possibility that certain evidence is finally not sufficient to warrant epistemic commitment, even if it would convince someone else, who was not aware of, or exercised by, the moral consequences.

These four arguments make Linda Zagzebski's claim that "epistemic evaluation just *is* a form of moral evaluation" appear very dubious.

III.

The thesis that moral and epistemic evaluations are the same cannot be true because of a strong difference of finality. Moral virtues are directed to the good, epistemic virtues are directed to truth. Saint Thomas even maintains that intellectual and moral virtues do not concern the same parts of the soul, but attach respectively to the intellectual and appetitive parts. Intellectual virtues are speculative habits that make us perceive the truth immediately (the knowledge of simple intellection) or in the wake of a rational inquiry. Intellectual virtues, even if they support our capacity to act rightly, do not guarantee their own morally approvable use. The "false prudence" of the robber is a way to be intellectually excellent. One can speak about the axi-

ological neutrality of the businessman or the sailor. Some people apply their intelligence studiously to accomplish wicked things, and—*pace* Plato, who seems to believe the contrary—do this knowingly and voluntarily.

Does this then imply that moral and epistemic evaluations are completely independent? Perhaps not, since Saint Thomas says:

> The habits of the speculative intellect do not perfect the appetitive part, nor affect it in any way, but only the intellective part; they may indeed be called virtues in so far as they confer aptness for a good work, viz. the consideration of truth (since this is the good work of the intellect): yet they are not called virtues in the second way, as though they conferred the right use of a power or habit. For if a man possess a habit of speculative science, it does not follow that he is inclined to make use of it, but he is made able to consider the truth in those matters of which he has scientific knowledge: that he makes use of the knowledge which he has, is due to the motion of the will.[12]

Saint Thomas assigns a special role to the virtue of prudence, because it is both intellectual (it makes us see what to do and to choose the right means) and moral (it is the right rule of action which requires moral principles). He says that if prudence is essentially an intellectual virtue, "it has something in common with the moral virtues: for it is right reason about things to be done" and "in this sense, it is reckoned with the moral virtues."[13] If the other intellectual virtues (which for Aquinas are wisdom, science and art) can exist without moral virtues, from which they are, in this sense, independent, that cannot be the case for prudence. Prudence constitutes the intellectual disposition to apply intellectually apprehended general principles—for example that one must never pursue evil—in particular cases. This requires prudence to be a moral, as well as an intellectual, virtue: "for the virtuous man judges aright of the end of virtue, because 'such a man is, such does the end seems to him'."[14] Prudence stands at the crossroads of intellectual and ethical matters. This makes prudence *practical reason*.[15]

For Aquinas, "if any habits rectify the consideration of reason, without regarding the rectitude of the appetite, they have less of the nature of a virtue since they direct man to good materially, that is to say, to the thing which is good, but without considering it under the aspect of good."[16] The

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[12] *Summa Theologiae* (*ST*)*,* IaIIae.51.1.
[13] *ST*, IaIIae.58.3.
[14] *ST*, IaIIae.58.5.
[15] *ST*, See IIaIIae.47.2.
[16] ST, IIaIIae.47.4.

truth is good, but not always for the good. This is the reason why "those virtues which regard rectitude of the appetite, have more of the nature of virtue, because they consider the good not only materially, but also formally, in other words, they consider that which is good under some aspect of good."[17] So Saint Thomas can easily explain our feeling that there are "perfect" intellectuals who are not morally good persons. Even if they are intellectually impeccable, their intellectual habits are not directed to the good. Only prudence is both an intellectual and a moral virtue. For intellectual and moral evaluation to be same—for knowledge to be a moral notion—all speculative habits would have to be reducible to prudence. Aquinas suggests something close to this when he says that "memory, understanding and foresight, as also caution and docility and the like, are not virtues distinct from prudence: but are, as it were, integral parts thereof, in so far as they are all requisite for perfect prudence."[18] Intellectual habits might be moral too, were they integrated into the virtue of prudence, which is practical reason in itself. But even if intellectual and moral virtues in a sense overlap, this does not make epistemic evaluation a proper part of moral evaluation or knowledge a moral notion. Epistemic and moral finality are still not the same.

I tried to show that there are arguments against Linda Zagzebski's view that epistemic evaluation is moral evaluation. It is now clear that her thesis is also not Thomistic. (Not that it would be a criticism if it were!) And Aquinas' account seems to me far more interesting and plausible than Linda Zagzebski's. Aquinas' analysis reveals the difficulty that Linda Zagzebski systematically underestimates. It is *really* a problem that someone could be intellectually virtuous but morally vicious, for example a man who applies his intellect to find the best way to do morally horrible things (e.g. to kill all the Jews, cheaply and efficiently).

IV.

Susan Haack maintains that there are at least five possibilities in which epistemic and ethical appraisal might be related:

(1) that epistemic appraisal is a subspecies of ethical appraisal (the *special-case thesis*);

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[17] *Idem*.
[18] *ST*, IaIIae, 57.6.sol. 4.

(2) that positive/negative epistemic appraisal is distinct from, but invariably associated with, positive/negative ethical appraisal (*correlation thesis*);

(3) that there is, not invariable correlation, but partial overlap, where positive/negative epistemic appraisal is associated with positive/negative ethical appraisal (the *overlap thesis*);

(4) that ethical appraisal is inapplicable where epistemological appraisal is irrelevant (the *independence thesis*);

(5) that epistemic appraisal is distinct from, but analogous to, ethical appraisal (the *analogy thesis*).[19]

My previous arguments show, I think, that (1) and (2) are very likely wrong. It would be possible to interpret Aquinas' account as (3) or (4) but also as (5). Linda Zagzebski claims to defend (1), but in fact, contrary to what she declares, she defends something close to (5). For example she says:

> Moral integrity includes having a positive moral evaluation by the self of one's own moral traits, as well as a positive evaluation of the extent to which one has been morally successful. *Analogously,* intellectual integrity involves a positive epistemic evaluation of one's own intellectual traits, as well as a positive evaluation of the results of one's cognitive efforts in the knowledge one has obtained.[20]

> The definition of a justified belief is exactly *parallel* to the definition of a right act.[21]

After making the former statement, Linda Zagzebski speaks about the "functional unity" of moral and intellectual integrity, but it is difficult to understand how she moves from analogy to unity. The notion of analogy or parallelism between epistemic and moral appraisal is clearly assumed very widely in her text.[22] In short, Linda Zagzebski believes that she defends a thesis, the special-case thesis ("epistemic evaluation just *is* a form of moral evaluation")—a thesis which appears to be wrong—while in fact she mainly proposes arguments for another, different, and much better account, the analogy thesis.

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[19] See Susan Haack, "'The Ethics of Belief' Reconsidered", in M. Steup, ed., *Knowledge, Truth, and Duty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 21.

[20] Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind,* p. 162 (my italics).

[21] Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind,* p. 241 (my italics).

[22] Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind,* pp. 19, 25, 32, 58, 61, 74, 109, 150, 151, 155, 162, 230, 233, 235, 241, 243, 245 and 271.

Thesis (5), the Analogy Thesis, has two forms, weak (WAT) and strong (SAT).

(WAT) Epistemic evaluation and moral evaluation are analogous in that both are forms of evaluation. But, beyond that, they belong to two completely different categories, theoretical and practical. We can say that epistemic evaluation is to beliefs what moral evaluation is to acts, but not more than that; this is the extent of the analogy. (Analogy here means a resemblance between two relations whose elements are completely different.)

(SAT) Epistemic evaluation and moral evaluation are forms of evaluation belonging to two different categories, theoretical and practical. But important dependence relations hold between these two categories. The analogy between moral and epistemic evaluations takes account of this categorical interdependence. Thus, positive (negative) moral evaluation and positive (negative) epistemic evaluation are more closely analogous than merely being forms of evaluation.

(WAT) permits us to understand quite well the intuitions that tell us that epistemic evaluation and moral evaluation are both similar and quite different. This is the merit of an analogy, generally speaking. (SAT) seems unable to explain, for example, the relation between modesty and egoism in relation to epistemic vices and virtues. Modesty is a virtuous moral disposition not to exaggerate one's own merits, and even to minimize them. Epistemic modesty is, we may say, a tendency to minimize the force of evidence with which one is confronted. But such modesty can amount to an epistemic vice, a sort of intellectual inertia and timidity. Egoism is a vicious moral disposition to prefer oneself to others. The epistemic reflection of this moral vice can amount to intellectual scrupulousness, for fear of being put in the wrong. So it seems difficult to suppose that a moral vice is necessarily the cause of an intellectual vice, and a moral virtue the cause of an intellectual one. It is very unpersuasive that "the moral virtue of honesty . . . logically entails having intellectual virtues," as Linda Zagzebski maintains.[23] More generally, is there reason to think that there are any general, bi-directional relations of dependence between epistemic and moral virtues?

The (SAT)-defender could reply that when modesty is the cause of epistemic virtues, it is more hesitation or stupidity than *genuine* modesty, and

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[23] Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind,* p. 159.

that when "egoism" is the source of intellectual scruples, this is actually more a clear awareness of one's own intellectual value than true egoism, and so not a vice. This kind of manoeuvre reveals the fundamental perspective that leads the (SAT)-defender to maintain that there are bi-directional relations of dependence between moral and epistemic evaluations. But the (WAT)-defender could raise objections by citing examples such as the following:

(a) moral vices—vanity, arrogance, self-conceit, etc.—contributing to the acquisition, development, and communication of knowledge;

(b) moral virtues—modesty, generosity, goodness, etc—prohibiting the acquisition, development, and communication of knowledge;

(c) epistemic vices—intellectual rigidity, mental narrowness, etc.— contributing to the acquisition, development, and communication of knowledge;

(d) epistemic virtues—intellectual rigor, sobriety, etc.—prohibiting the acquisition, development, and communication of knowledge.

If these are genuine examples, as they appear to be, then the analogy between moral and epistemic evaluation can seemingly consist in little more than their both being kinds of evaluation. They are not analogous due to bi-directional relations of dependence in the sense posited by the (SAT)-defender. If there are any such bi-directional relations, the examples, given above, show that they do not support a strong analogy between moral and epistemic virtues.

The (WAT)-defender is right to think that the analogy between the two sorts of evaluation is weak. But the (SAT)-defender is right to remark that when the two sorts of evaluation, moral and epistemic, are not in step with one another, we immediately *feel* that something has gone wrong in the description we have given of the situation. When the moral paragon seems narrow-minded, or the great philosopher morally repugnant, we are unsatisfied. Our feelings evidently reflect what might be called the Principle of the Unity of Moral and Epistemic Virtues:

(PUMEV) When it seems that someone must be evaluated positively from an epistemic point of view and negatively from a moral point of view, or vice versa, the *description* of her epistemic or her moral standing must be faulty.

This principle does not entail that there is a necessary accord between the two sorts of evaluation. But it is compatible with (SAT), which requires

only a relation of dependence, not of *necessary* dependence, between the two sorts of evaluation. What is, then, the thesis we want to adopt?

(A) If someone possesses epistemic virtues, she necessarily possesses moral virtues, and vice versa.

(B) If someone is *described* as epistemically virtuous, the *description* of her as not morally virtuous is dubious and problematic.

We will adopt (B). The dependency assumed by (SAT) is not ontological. It does not say, with Linda Zagzebski,[24] that epistemic virtues and moral virtues have logical and causal interrelations. It simply suggests that it is very difficult to *describe* the same person as both intellectually virtuous and morally perverse, and reciprocally. In such a description, something seems not to be correct. But surely the dependence relation is a contingent one. It admits exceptions, even if they are disturbing.

<div align="center">V.</div>

Asserting the Analogy Thesis in its strong (SAT), descriptive (B) version seems to me to bring us close to Aquinas' account of the relations between intellectual and moral virtues, as presented in *Summa Theologiae* IaIIae.58.5. Why would it seem for us quite strange to describe someone as intellectually virtuous and morally bad? Because, Aquinas says, "it is contrary to prudence 'to sin willingly'". He adds that "prudence cannot be without moral virtue". And prudence is a main intellectual virtue, according to Saint Thomas. This seems obvious. It would be difficult to say that someone is intellectually virtuous but unable to make choices not determined by impulse or passion. Prudence is the intellectual virtue necessary to action, but it is also quite central in speculative matters. One might distinguish two sorts of prudence. One sort would be speculative—regarding truth in the realm of the necessary (according to a certain conception of science). The other sort would be practical—regarding truth in contingent matters (where things could be otherwise than they are). Aquinas examines this possibility[25] and recognizes that prudence regarding practical matters concerns what is contingent. But Aquinas seems to think that prudence

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[24] Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind,* p. 158.
[25] In *ST*, IaIIae.58.5, reply to objection 3.

is one and the same in intellectual matters that are directed to contingent truth and in moral choice and action. I think that we find in this passage exactly the same difficulty concerning the relation between epistemic and moral evaluation I tried to resolve with the Strong Analogy Thesis in its descriptive version (B). Even if epistemic and moral evaluation (epistemic and moral virtues) are not the same, and the relation between epistemic and moral evaluation is only analogical, this does not mean that a description of a morally narrow-minded person or of a morally repugnant clever man would not be problematic.

I conclude that while the Principle of the Unity of Moral and Epistemic Virtues cannot be defended on the basis of a necessary relation between the two sorts of virtues, it may be defended at the level of description. The remaining question is *why* we feel uncomfortable when the same person is described as both epistemically virtuous and morally vicious, or vice versa. Is this simply a matter of "grammar", to use a Wittgensteinian term? Does it mean that in our language there is a logical relation between two sorts of description, without any consequences for the things described? Or does it mean (which is more likely) that there is a unity of virtues and that, in reality, when someone is intellectually good he is also morally good, and the other way around? Take your preferred philosopher, or the best mind you know if she or he is not at all a philosopher, and imagine that you all at once receive information concerning abominable things she or he does. Can you really continue to think that she or he is the best mind that you know?