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**THE EPISTEMOLOGY  
OF LINDA ZAGZEBSKI**

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## INTRODUCTION

*The segmentation of knowledge, with its splintered approach to truth  
and consequent fragmentation of meaning, keeps people  
today from coming to an interior unity.*

Pope John Paul II<sup>1</sup>.

*Yet the response to fragmentation is reunification, and as I have argued,  
contemporary virtue theory, with one leg firmly rooted in classical  
philosophy and the other in pragmatic naturalism, provides  
a most powerful and promising resource to fuel that endeavor.*

Guy Axtell<sup>2</sup>.

Pope John Paul II is not alone in his call for «a unified and organic vision of knowledge»<sup>3</sup> as a means of promoting authentic human development in the truth. Is a return to the intellectual virtues and faculties the solution?

*Fides et Ratio* is a response to the soul-destroying relativism of many total hermeneutic and neo-positivist philosophies<sup>4</sup>. Deep seated truths that can be found in all cultures, in any age, about who we are and why we are here, need to be recognised and fostered, rather than simply *interpreted* as grammatical quirks or emotional desires that have been articulated by the imagination. Nor can the human being be reduced to his or her genetic make-up and studied entirely according to the empirical method of the natural sciences. Where quark *B* will serve equally well as quark *A* in a

1. JOHN PAUL II, *Fides et ratio*. On the Relationship between Faith and Reason [online]. Available: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp\\_ii\\_enc\\_15101998\\_fides-et-ratio\\_en.htm](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp_ii_enc_15101998_fides-et-ratio_en.htm) [1998, Sept 14] (last checked: 2002, Jan 29), no. 85.

2. G. AXTELL, «The Role of the Intellectual Virtues in the Reunification of Epistemology», *The Monist*, 81 (1997) 507 (in advance: RIV).

3. Cfr. JOHN PAUL II, *Fides et ratio*, n. 82.

4. Cfr. *ibid.*, nn. 85, 96.

physics experiment, Queen Elizabeth the Second could not be so easily substituted for by Atilla the Hun in a historical survey of the monarchy. The difference between them is one of character. In effect, individual character distinguishes the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*) from the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*) according to the way in which each one freely forges their own personality. Even Popper acknowledges the role of creativity and interpretation at each stage of the scientific method: in the formulation of new hypotheses, in the formulation and reception of empirical statements that serve to verify (falsify) those hypotheses, and in the evaluation of the hypotheses in the light of the available evidence<sup>5</sup>.

Is there some rational principle according to which our personally acquired habits of character and thought in research (and life in general) should be guided? Or are our life practices (*Lebensformen*) their own justification?<sup>6</sup>

Everyday experience, not only of our own existence, but also of the finitude of that existence as we know it, pushes us towards some sure foundation from which to guide our lives. And all truth, however partial, if it is really true, presents itself as universal. What is true should be true for everybody, always<sup>7</sup>. As a result, men and women should be able to verify their ability to reach knowledge of the truth via the *adequatio rei et intellectus* of the Scholastics<sup>8</sup>. Modern concerns for justification should not be disassociated then from the rational investigation procedures that lead to truth. Such rationality is not something coldly scientific but is, rather, intimately bound up with virtuous conduct. And the responsible agent is also a veritatively reliable one. The truth is a «thick» concept, a transcendental, that allows for ever deeper levels of understanding. Scientific demonstrations do not provide us with the last word on meaning in human life. For that reason the Roman Pontiff has made an appeal to all philosophers, and especially to Christian ones, to promote a truly sapiential vision of life to their sisters and brothers in the human race. A dimension that is all the more necessary given the pace with which our technical power to transform the human being himself advances<sup>9</sup>.

Coincidentally, a similar debate is under way in the specialist philosophical journals of the United States regarding the possibility of a «Virtue

5. M. ARTIGAS, *La mente del universo*, Eunsa, Pamplona 1999, p. 235. Cfr. E. MOROS, «La filosofía analítica y la encíclica *Fides et Ratio*», *Anuario Filosófico*, 32 (1999) 707.

6. Cfr. *ibid.*

7. Cfr. JOHN PAUL II, *Fides et Ratio*, n. 27.

8. Cfr. *ibid.*, n. 82. I would add that the Pope's use of *res* in relation to the truth reflects a concern that real being, and not just rationalist *veritative* being, be the measure for our judgements about the world (cfr., E. MOROS, «La filosofía analítica y la encíclica *Fides et Ratio*», p. 722).

9. Cfr. JOHN PAUL II, *Fides et Ratio*, n. 81.

Epistemology». *Virtue Epistemology* says that the interior unity of the epistemic agent is the key to the reunification of epistemology, and that the virtues have a critical role to play in achieving interior unity. The intellectual and moral habits that we form in our natural faculties provide us with a real, and not artificially imagined, basis for a corresponding integration of the different fields of knowledge into a hierarchy.

The current debate centres on Linda Zagzebski's *Virtues of the Mind*, a book that claims to have resolved the epistemic problems posed by Edmund Gettier in 1963<sup>10</sup>. According to Gettier, the traditional definition of 'knowledge' as justified true belief is insufficient<sup>11</sup>. But Zagzebski has successfully formulated criteria that justify our knowledge according to Aristotelian notions of virtue<sup>12</sup>. Although she is not a Thomist, her own thought follows that of St Thomas in many points and is of great interest to Thomistic philosophy<sup>13</sup>. Indeed, Linda Zagzebski has been spearheading a recovery of many Aristotelian doctrines in contemporary epistemology, most notably the virtue of *phronesis*<sup>14</sup>. I think that Linda Zagzebski's virtue-based prescriptions can be given a firm ontological grounding in the faculties of human nature.

The awakened interest of epistemologists in the Greek virtues is a somewhat logical consequence of the popular interest that *Virtue Ethics* itself has spurred in the United States over the last thirty years<sup>15</sup>. The idea of there being a parallel *Virtue Epistemology* was first touted by Ernest Sosa in his «The Raft and the Pyramid»<sup>16</sup>. How might work in *Virtue Ethics* apply to the normative problem of justification in epistemology? That is the task that Linda Zagzebski has undertaken in her book *Virtues of the Mind*<sup>17</sup>.

10. L. ZAGZEBSKI, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996, p. 298 (in advance: VOM).

11. E. GETTIER, «Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?», *Analysis*, 23 (1963) 121-123.

12. Cfr. E. MOROS, «La filosofía analítica y la encíclica *Fides et Ratio*», p. 722.

13. Cfr. T.S. HIBBS, *Book Review of Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* [online]. Was available: <http://www.thomist.org/97BHibbs.htm> [1997], p. 2.

14. Cfr., *ibid.*

15. Cfr. G. AXTELL, «Introduction», G. AXTELL (ed.), *Knowledge, Belief, and Character: Readings in Virtue Epistemology*, Rowman and Littlefield, Maryland 2000, p. xi. Also, [online]. Available: <http://www.scsr.nevada.edu/~axtell/introduction.html> [2000], p. 1.

16. E. SOSA, «The Raft and the Pyramid: coherence versus foundations in the theory of knowledge», E. SOSA (ed.), *Knowledge in Perspective, Selected Essays in Epistemology*, Cambridge University Press, New York 1991, pp. 189-190. Cfr., VOM, p. 4.

17. Cf., VOM, p. 2.

During Linda's visit to the University of Navarre in the spring of 2000, I was fortunate to be able to discuss the current state of *Virtue Epistemology* at length with her. She told me that although the word «virtue» is now being bandied about within epistemic circles, almost nobody has actually read all the literature behind the term. It would appear that many authors are using it as a «stop-gap» measure within a consequentialist or «act-based» paradigm not suited to the virtues. I told her of the all the work being carried out on the virtues in the Spanish language at the University of Navarre, and that my intention was to draw from this rich reserve and present it to an English speaking audience which is unfamiliar with Mediterranean philosophy (past and present). Linda assured me that the presentation of Thomistic philosophy within the framework of contemporary problems of knowledge would be at the epistemic cutting edge. This doctoral thesis looks to critique and continue the path-breaking work undertaken by Linda Zagzebski in the Anglo-American literature on the virtues and rationality.

I am most grateful to Professors Linda Zagzebski, John Greco and Guy Axtell for their time, prompt e-mail responses and helpful advice, for the direction of my thesis supervisor Fr Enrique Moros as well as to Fr Erlito Maraya and Professor David Twetten for their incisive observations. I would also like to thank Dr Lourdes Flamarique, Dr Juan Fernando Selles, Professors Alejandro Llano, Jaime Nubiola and Fr Modesto Santos in the Faculty of Philosophy in the University of Navarre whose work and teaching of St Thomas Aquinas, Professors Leonardo Polo and Antonio Millán-Puelles form the kernel of my observations on the Virtue Epistemology debate. A last thank you goes out to the Ecclesiastical Department of Philosophy in the University of Navarre.

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# THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF LINDA ZAGZEBSKI

## 1. ZAGZEBSKI'S MOTIVATION-BASED VIRTUE THEORY

Zagzebski circumvents the Gettier problems associated with justified true belief by turning the focus of justification onto the method of inquiry rather than onto the belief itself<sup>1</sup>. Plantinga counselled a divorce between the internalist and externalist features of the epistemic stalemate as a possible way out, but virtue theory adds to our list of options in marriage guidance. The paradigm of the virtues and vices provides us with the means for making a marriage work between the internal and external aspects to epistemic justification. According to a virtue approach, a justified belief would be derived from a virtue in the same way that a right act is said to derive from the concept of a moral virtue.

Linda Zagzebski has looked to provide an account of virtue that is theoretically strong, practically useful, and in agreement with the «pre-theoretical» notion of virtue gleaned from its usage throughout history down to our own day<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, she is recognised as having provided the most comprehensive agent-based Virtue Epistemology to date<sup>3</sup>. Zagzebski has mapped out a first approach to what such a study might look like, and is well aware that the motivation-based theory that she has put forward as the fruit of her labours in the specification of moral and intellectual virtues will sound novel and even unacceptable to many virtue theorists<sup>4</sup>. But that has not been an impediment to her looking to try and develop virtue ethics in new ways:

1. A solution inspired by the virtue approach to moral arguments where an analogous dispute rages between deontologists and consequentialists.

2. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996, pp. 266-268 (in advance: VOM).

3. Cfr. G. AXTELL, «The Role of the Intellectual Virtues in the Reunification of Epistemology», *The Monist*, 81 (1997) 492 (in advance: RIV).

4. Cfr. VOM, 74.

«the question of which comes first, end or motive, is the point at issue between a virtue theory that is happiness-based and an agent-based theory of the form I have called motivation-based. The former has the advantage of tradition; the latter has the advantage of novelty»<sup>5</sup>.

Although Zagzebski has provided us with a detailed account of what a virtue-epistemology theory should look like, she believes that more work will need to be done on the connections that exist between the internal and external aspects of intellectual virtue and of intellectually virtuous acts<sup>6</sup>. On the empirical side of such a project, major advances in the history of ideas like freedom and human rights, and in the history of inventions, still await study by psychologists in order to determine what the intellectual traits were that allowed for such gains in knowledge. On the analytical side lie the fundamental questions of just what a good belief is, what it is that gives us understanding, and how we ought to go about finding the truth. But this also means looking at what people actually do in these situations, especially at that subset of persons who are prudent (practically wise)<sup>7</sup>.

### 1.1. Dual Component Moral Virtues

Hilary Kornblith, in «Ever Since Descartes», proposed a reconciliation between the reliabilists' concern for truth and the responsibilists' concern for personal effort via a recognition of the different levels of descriptive and evaluative analysis that go into an epistemic evaluation<sup>8</sup>. He distinguished 3 simultaneous tiers of justification:

- i. objective reliability in the belief arrived at and in the actions performed.
- ii. subjective coherence in the belief arrived at.
- iii. subjective responsibility in the actions performed (regulated by a desire for truth).

Linda Zagzebski attempts a solution of this sort by using the virtues as the foundational paradigm for the mix of «responsibility in motive» with «reliability in end». It is her belief that the normative component to knowledge is epistemic virtue and that knowledge itself can be described as true belief grounded in epistemic virtue<sup>9</sup>.

5. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 338.

6. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 334.

7. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 337.

8. Cfr. H. KORNBLITH, «Ever since Descartes», *The Monist*, 68 (1985) 264-276.

9. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Religious Knowledge and the Virtues», L. ZAGZEBSKI (ed.), *Rational Faith: Catholic Responses to Reformed Epistemology*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame 1993, p. 209.

The virtues put us in a position to know *and* in a position to attune ourselves to our environment (shades of *Befindlichkeit*), in a way that dodges the irenic nature of the reliabilist's consequentialism (who apply the agent-based terminology of the virtues to what are basically belief-based concepts). Where Sosa has combined Kornblith's first two levels of objective reliability and subjective coherence, Zagzebski goes a step further in also examining the responsibility of the agent for his «own-lights» subjective coherence. The agent may very well have a coherent set of beliefs, but did she seek out possible evidence to the contrary or did she intentionally prefer to remain in the dark? A responsibility constraint is needed in order to render reliable belief formation, and Sosa's inner coherence or Goldman's «own standards», consistent with one another.

Zagzebski makes an original incursion into the field of virtue, then, adopting a wholly agent-based approach where the goodness of a virtue depends not upon some external object to be sought after, but rather upon the intrinsic goodness of the motive by which one acts. The concern for reliability is also incorporated into this agent-based approach, where success is defined in terms of achieving the aim of the motive. Zagzebski is keen to explore its possibilities as a novel approach in the epistemic literature, yet she says that it is not so far removed from the literature of the Stoics or of Confucius himself<sup>10</sup>.

## 1.2. Intellectual Virtues as Moral Virtues

An intellectual virtue has traditionally been seen as a habit which aids possession of the truth, whereas a moral virtue is concerned with the pursuit of goodness. This Aristotelian split between objective reasoning and our passions and will has tended to dominate the history of Western thought<sup>11</sup>. The Greeks focused their attention on the intellectual side of the division<sup>12</sup>, and the Christians chose to investigate the moral side instead in their belief that «God is love»<sup>13</sup>. What, though, is the relationship between the true and the good and the virtues that aid their attainment? At the dawn

10. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «An Agent-Based Approach to the Problem of Evil», *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 39 (1996) 130. Also, VOM, p. 211, ft. 57.

11. Spinoza and Hume disagreed. Spinoza, because he made understanding the key to all virtues —the mind considering as good only that which leads to understanding— (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 138). Hume, because he regarded the distinction as merely verbal, since «virtue» is a question of praise and blame alone, and so also includes mere defects and talents in his list of virtues and vices.

12. St Thomas Aquinas lamented the Greeks lack of attention to the will in his *De Veritate*, c. 24, a. 4, r. 9, «*Et ideo philosophi in voluntate non posuerunt aliquem habitum nec naturalem nec acquisitum*».

13. 1 John 4:16.

of the third millennium, the various branches of knowledge have spread so far away from each other that it would seem that there is no real relationship between truth and truth let alone between the true and the good<sup>14</sup>. Everyday life shows us, however, that they do relate to each other: on the one hand a good choice is generally agreed to be an informed choice, and on the other hand a passion for truth, or at least finding something interesting, can help one pay attention to what one is studying and so aid the acquisition of knowledge. The problem of how the true and the good, and the intellectual and moral virtues, relate to each other is complicated as there are multiple points of contact. Does it lie at some metaphysical level with the «transcendentals»? Or in the *transcendental* agent who possesses the virtues? It is a knotty problem and it would seem that we have not yet done enough philosophical contortions to unravel it.

Zagzebski takes sides with Montmarquet and states that the intellectual virtues ought to be modelled according to Aristotle's treatment of the *moral* virtues.

«Intellectual virtues are a subset of moral virtues and justification is not just a normative property; it is a moral one. [...] Intellectual virtues do not differ from moral virtues in any important way. Both are acquired by imitating virtuous persons and developing habits aimed at controlling emotions and developing the cognitive and perceptual abilities necessary to know how to apply the virtues in the appropriate circumstances»<sup>15</sup>.

The Aristotelian division of the soul into «thinking and feeling» would appear to lead to an artificial division of the virtues into intellectual and moral categories when in fact the intellectual virtues should really be dealt with as a subset of the moral ones<sup>16</sup>. Zagzebski views Aristotle's distinction as a functional one whereby «the thinking part commands, and the feeling part obeys»<sup>17</sup>. A division followed by St Thomas who describes the intellectual virtues as rational by nature and the moral ones as rational by participation in the appetitive (*appetitus* – tend towards) part of the soul<sup>18</sup>.

Although Aristotle says that there is no necessary link between how he has determined the potencies of the soul and his distinction of the virtues, Zagzebski rejects that claim<sup>19</sup>. The Aristotelian distinction of the ha-

14. Deleuze and other postmoderns compare knowledge to a series of entwined tubular roots —emphasising the different, the particular, and the other, rather than to a Cartesian tree of unity in the sciences—.

15. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Précis of Virtues of the Mind», *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research*, 60 (2000) 172-173.

16. Cfr. VOM, pp. 139-140.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

18. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 141.

19. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 141-143.

bits is drawn from the distinction of the faculties, and the faculties are distinguished by their objects<sup>20</sup>. The intellectual and moral virtues are distinguished according to a division of the incarnated soul into *logos* and *pat-hos*<sup>21</sup>. Aristotle gives three basic justifications for this division:

1. The experience of conflict between choice and desire<sup>22</sup>. Aristotle says that desires cannot conflict with each other<sup>23</sup>. But Zagzebski disagrees and says that we could as easily continue a division of the soul on the basis of conflicting desires<sup>24</sup>.

2. We feel pleasure and pain in the passions but not in the mind<sup>25</sup>. But moral virtues (said to be associated with the passions) such as generosity and kindness have little to do with pleasure and pain, nor does the feeling that accompanies curiosity. On the other hand, the intellectual virtues and vices are closely accompanied by pleasure or pain as when we finally understand something or get confused. The moral virtues of justice, honesty, sincerity and trustworthiness have little to do with feeling, whereas the passion for truth can be very strong indeed. Zagzebski feels that the aspect of «taming» has stood out in morals —the taming of the libido or of fear for instance— but such taming of passion is just as necessary in the intellectual sphere, against clinging to old beliefs or against egoism which leads to hypocrisy and self-deception. As with the moral virtues, so too with the intellectual ones, it would appear that error can fall on the side of lack. Thirst for the truth can be every bit as wanting as benevolence and kindness. And a pathological indecision due to continued weighing up of argument and counter-argument can be matched by an opposite extreme of drunken confidence where one is quite certain but not sure exactly of what. And there are, moreover, states which blend feeling with thinking, as is the case with curiosity, doubt, wonder and awe.

3. The intellectual virtues are taught but the moral virtues are acquired by practice and imitation<sup>26</sup>. This does not seem to stand up to the evidence. How is one to teach «open-mindedness, the ability to think up an explanation for a complex set of data, or the ability to recognize reliable authority»?<sup>27</sup>. Practical wisdom is as necessary here as with the moral vir-

20. Cfr. ARISTOTLE, *On the Soul*, II, 4, 415a14-21. From an abstract point of view the objects of *episteme* and *phronesis* are sharply distinct. But *in situ*, in the habits themselves, the distinction begins to blur.

21. Cfr. ARISTOTLE, *Eudemian Ethics*, II, 1, 1220a5-13.

22. Cfr. VOM, p. 143.

23. Cfr. ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics*, III, 2, 1111b15-16.

24. Cfr. VOM, p. 143.

25. Cfr. ARISTOTLE, *Eudemian Ethics*, II, 2, 1220a36; ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics*, II, 5, 1105b21-23.

26. Cfr. ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics*, II, 1, 1103a14-20.

27. VOM, p. 150.

tues since no amount of rule-following is sufficient to tell us when to place intellectual trust in the reliability of another. Who has acquired the intellectual virtues wants to trust whom she knows she should trust and does not want to trust the untrustworthy or unreliable.

What Aristotle seems to refer to as being taught would actually qualify as intellectual *skills* and not as virtues. It is only through the imitation of virtuous persons and training — passing through a stage of self-control against contrary inclinations (intellectual *akrasia*)— that one eventually acquires the habit of wanting to think well and enjoy the experience of doing so. At the bottom end of the scale, for instance, we have the intellectual vices of «intellectual pride, negligence, idleness, cowardice, conformity, carelessness, rigidity, prejudice, wishful thinking, close-mindedness, insensitivity to detail, obtuseness, and lack of thoroughness»<sup>28</sup>. It is likely, moreover, that for each intellectual virtue, there will be two corresponding extremes (as mentioned just a little earlier). An intellectual extreme could even verge on the pathological e.g. indecision through over sensitivity to detail versus the sheer conviction with which one sweats in every pore of their body whilst under the influence, but without the least idea of what it is he is convinced of.

Nobody starts off from a position of intellectual vice, but a higher cognitive state than simple ignorance is that of intellectual *akrasia* when one indulges in a form of self-deception preferring flattery or prejudice to the truth. An *akrasia* that may involve an even greater amount of self-deception in belief than with moral acts, due to the even stronger link between believing and believing in a justified way, than with doing and believing in a justified way. After *akrasia* one looks to intellectual self-control. One consciously stops oneself from falling into prejudiced judgement about others. The behaviour of such a person is correct but it does not yet possess the firm character of the virtues of «intellectual carefulness, perseverance, humility, vigor, flexibility, courage, and thoroughness, as well as open-mindedness, fair-mindedness, insightfulness, and the virtues opposed to wishful thinking, obtuseness, and conformity. One of the most important virtues, I believe, is intellectual integrity»<sup>29</sup>. Integrity would appear to be a higher order virtue, since one cannot be true to one's moral self when not so to one's intellectual self. A hypocrite actually starts to believe in what she, at first, had only said for cynical reasons. Her moral failing leads to the intellectual failing of not knowing herself and so she suffers a psychic split which is opposed to her integrity i.e. her unity of life<sup>30</sup>.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

30. Hypocrisy is different to *akrasia* where someone personally fails but counsels otherwise.



What we are to deduce from the above arguments is that the intellectual and moral virtues do not lead separate lives. Intellectual failings result from moral vice —pride and egotism can lead one to seek to win an argument rather than to pursue the truth—. Patience, perseverance, and courage are necessary moral virtues for the intellectual ones hence. Other virtues are both intellectual and moral such as prudence in knowing when to be autonomous and when to trust<sup>31</sup>. And moral virtues like honesty call for the possession of the (Zagzebskian) intellectual virtues because

«(an) honest person is *careful* with the truth. She respects it and does her best to find it out, to preserve it, and to communicate it in a way that permits the hearer to believe the truth justifiably and with understanding. [...] She must be attentive, take the trouble to be thorough and careful in weighing evidence, be intellectually and perceptually acute»<sup>32</sup>.

I would say that the root objection of Zagzebski to Aristotle's division of the intellectual from the moral virtues lies in the fact that what she takes to be an intellectual virtue is what Aristotle would have recognised as a *moral* virtue applied to the intellectual sphere. Let us take a list of what she considers to be intellectual virtues:

«*Intellectual virtues*

- the ability to recognize the salient facts; sensitivity to detail
- open-mindedness in collecting and appraising evidence
- fairness in evaluating the arguments of others
- intellectual humility
- intellectual perseverance, diligence, care, and thoroughness
- adaptability of intellect
- the detective's virtues: thinking of coherent explanations of the facts
- being able to recognize reliable authority
- insight into persons, problems, theories
- the teaching virtues: the social virtues of being communicative, including intellectual candor and knowing your audience and how they respond»<sup>33</sup>.

Some of these virtues are clearly intellectual virtues i.e. the ability to recognise the salient facts or think up coherent explanations or have insight are examples of *scientia* and understanding, and the recognition of reliable authority pertains to prudence or practical wisdom. But the rest of

31. We trust someone not to damage something of value to us, just as we trust someone to tell us the truth when they are in a position to lie.

32. VOM, pp. 158-159. Cfr. *Naivety* where intellectual failing seems to actually cause moral goodness!

33. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

the virtues indicated correspond to a more general moral virtue e.g. fairness, humility, perseverance and diligence, adaptability (meekness) and receptivity. A more salient division of these two groups of virtues could be made according to those habits that allow for the grasp of universal principles versus those habits that assist the carrying out of concrete actions. Zagzebski objects, however, that the traditional division of the intellect into its speculative and practical uses leaves «contingent knowledge» for its own sake (and not for use) in limbo<sup>34</sup>. I think that she fails to capture the essential difference, however, between the universal nature of our speculative knowledge and the concrete and contingent nature of the particular realities that we know<sup>35</sup>.

### 1.3. Motivations

The historical picture of virtue as a corrective force over our emotions seems to paint emotion as a negative factor in our practical judgement but it can be a spur to better judgement (attention, etc) if channelled properly. The nexus between feeling and virtue would seem to lie in our (emotional) motivations hence.

34. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 214.

35. With regard to the necessity or contingency of our knowledge St Thomas Aquinas says the following: «We have some cognitive potencies and habits in which there can never be falsity, as, for example, with our senses, science, and intellection of the principles; there are, on the other hand, others in which falsity is possible, as with the imagination, opinion and estimation. Falsity is produced in someone's knowledge because something is learnt as being different to how it is in reality. [...] Once the contingent actually exists, a judgement can be made by that potency or habit in which falsity does not occur, as for example, the senses should judge that Socrates is sitting down when he is seated. [...] then our sight does not err in seeing contingent beings when they are present, and yet this does not impede their still being contingent themselves» (*De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 12, co). When we see something, we do not err in the fact that we are seeing *something*, whatever it might actually be. Now, «It is one thing to attribute something to an entity according to how it is in itself, but it is something quite different to attribute something to that entity according to how it is known. What is attributed to something in itself pertains to its way of being, but what is attributed to it or in what follows from it, insofar as it is known, pertains to the way of knowing of the knower» (*De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 12, ad. 7). In fact, in reply to the objection that God's knowledge must be variable because He knows variable things St Thomas responds that «the assimilation of knowledge to the known thing is not realised in conformance to the nature but rather according to the representation, for which it does not follow that there is a variable knowledge of variable things» (*De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 13, ad. 1). «the mode of knowing is in the selfsame knower but the thing known is not in the knower according to its nature, and so the variability in the modes of knowing will make a science variable and not the change in the things known» (cfr. *De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 13, ad. 8, my translations).

### 1.3.1. *Intrinsic Worth vs. Eudaimonia*

Aristotle's supposedly flimsy justification for his «division» of the soul is not Zagzebski's only qualm with his happiness-based epistemology<sup>36</sup>. An additional difficulty with the teleological paradigm is that, following Spinoza's and Hume's damnation of finality, it is a particularly unpalatable notion for most contemporary philosophers. Many contemporary ethicists seem to have despaired in ever being able to give a clear and plausible account of *eudaimonia*, and although it seems right that there must be something common to all human beings which makes them human, the traditional concept of «nature» has really taken a battering as «outdated biology»<sup>37</sup>. Zagzebski does not rule out the possible success in epistemology of an *eudaimonia*, or happiness-based virtue approach, in advance. Indeed she takes her hat off to its long established tradition and its deeper metaphysical roots whereby the good and the true are founded in a «love of being» (strange as such language may sound to the contemporary ear)<sup>38</sup>. But the obstacles in its way seem to be daunting. In order to find customers in the epistemic marketplace, a traditional virtue approach would need to provide some hard-sell that personal happiness is both recognisable and possible<sup>39</sup>.

A candidate alternative to Aristotle's «agent-prior» or good-based virtue theory can be found in an «agent-based» theory that makes the inner trait of a virtue good in itself<sup>40</sup>.

«The type of theory I want to describe is a strong form of virtue ethics lately called “agent-based virtue ethics”. Like all virtue theories this theory focuses its analysis on the inner traits of [a] person —their virtues and vices, and on the components of virtues and vices, particularly motivations—. Virtue theories do not derive the concept of virtue from the concept of a right act, either as a disposition to perform right acts, or by relation to right acts. [...] The motivations or behavior of virtuous persons is what *makes* an act right. An act would not be right if it were not for its rela-

36. Cfr. VOM, p. 140 & pp. 200-202 & p. 210. Zagzebski's concern with the «split» between the cognitive and feeling is that, although it runs counter to modern psychology, it is even more pronounced today with the dominance of the computer model and the associated imagery of human knowledge as a form of information processing (we speak of having limited RAM when we feel overloaded with facts, etc., cfr. *ibid.*, p. 257). Narrative literature on the human situation tends to avoid these kinds of splits given that is more impartial from particular theories i.e. the didactic is not its aim.

37. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «The Virtues of God and The Foundations of Ethics», *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers*, 15 (1998) 538-539.

38. Cfr. VOM, pp. 198-199, 210.

39. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 201-202.

40. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 80. Also, L. ZAGZEBSKI, «The Virtues of God and The Foundations of Ethics», pp. 540-544.

tion to virtue or virtuous motivation. Agent-based ethics makes the stronger claim on the relation between virtue and rightness.

»[...] Common teleological forms make the concept of a good life the fundamental ethical concept and a virtue is explicated in terms of its contribution to a good life, either as a means to it or as a constituent of it. Aristotle's ethics is arguably of this kind. A more radical, non-teleological form of virtue ethics makes the virtues or other internal properties of the agent ethically fundamental, and the good is treated as a derivative concept. This is what I am calling agent-based ethics»<sup>41</sup>.

Goodness is said to just "shine" from a good person, because that person is *noble* and not simply currying their own favour through good behaviour<sup>42</sup>. They are not said to be good in relation to anything independently of them which is identified as good<sup>43</sup>. Although an intrinsic virtue

41. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «An Agent-Based Approach to the Problem of Evil», *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 39 (1996) 129.

42. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 130. Zagzebski says that the most compelling reason for preferring an agent-based approach is experiential, given that we can know a person to be good, from the sanctity that exudes from them, prior to an investigation of their behaviour (cfr. *ibid.*). I think that we need to distinguish here, though, between how we know of someone's goodness and the actual causes of goodness in that person.

43. Once again, I would comment that although the shine of goodness may very well be an indicator of rightness and virtue, L.'s discussion of the ontological grounding of goodness does not explicitly address the relation between being (*esse*) and the good. Zagzebski says that the inner goodness of human beings is *derived* from the inner goodness of God (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 132), and that human motives are good in so far as they are similar to the divine motives since God's nature is the metaphysical foundation of all value (cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «The Virtues of God and The Foundations of Ethics», p. 540). «God is internally perfect and the goodness of the objects of his choice derives from the goodness of his own nature. Something is good if and because it is the object of choice of an innerly perfect being» («An Agent-Based Approach to the Problem of Evil», p. 132), «given an agent-based ethics, it follows immediately that whatever God is motivated to bring about is good and whatever God is motivated to do is right» (*ibid.*, p. 134). What though is God's nature? Linda Zagzebski believes that God has motivations and proposes a Divine Motive Theory as a replacement for the Divine Command Theory, «My proposal is to retain the focus of moral evaluation on the person, but to shift it away from the will, both when we are talking about God and when we are talking about human beings, and to focus instead on emotion. I suggest that moral properties in the primary sense attach to emotions. Emotions are good or bad in themselves; they do not derive their goodness or badness from their relation to anything else that is good or bad» (L. ZAGZEBSKI, «The Virtues of God and The Foundations of Ethics», pp. 540-541). According to her agent-based ethics, then, L. Zagzebski argues that although a parent's love for her child is good, she does not act that way *because* it is good (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 133). And so «the reason why one person loves another is independent of the goodness of the person loved and even of the goodness of the love itself» (*ibid.*, p. 134). Both Divine Command Theory and Divine Motivation Theory overlook the relation between God's choices and His intellect. The more fundamental notion of God's nature as *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* (cfr. ST T. AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 4, a. 2, co & r. 3), moreover, leads us to a discussion of the morality of a human act as dependent upon the *object*

theory has the additional difficulty of needing to articulate the goodness of each virtue on its own merits, the implication from the above considerations is that a teleological virtue theory would not attract the interest of philosophers in the epistemic field<sup>44</sup>.

«The most important difference between happiness-based and motivation-based theories is that the former explain the good of a virtue teleologically. Virtue is good because of its connection to the thing that is more fundamentally good, namely, *eudaimonia*. In the motivation-based ethics I will present, virtues are not good because they lead to or are components of something else that is the primary good, so their goodness is not explained teleologically. [...] The difficulty for this kind of theory is to make it plausible that each of the virtues is good in a fundamental, non-derivative way, and if the theory goes on to derive the concepts of the good and of a right act from the concept of a virtue, the virtues must be such that they are capable of having such a function. One advantage of this type of theory is that many philosophers like the concept of virtue but are suspicious of teleology»<sup>45</sup>.

A concrete agent-based virtue theory is developed by Zagzebski in line with Montmarquet's idea about characterising the virtues according to motivation<sup>46</sup>. A proper motivation distinguishes a reliable cognitive faculty or intellectual skill from a moral virtue. While Zagzebski thinks it intuitively right that thinking and feeling be different states, and the empirical experience of slow saints and smart sinners confirms such intuition, she believes that instead of «splitting» thinking from feeling, we should look rather to the nexus between them: the emotions that motivate us. If we are to continue speaking of intellectual rather than moral virtues then, it is only on the «theoretical grounds» that the intellectual ones are motivated by knowledge and the moral ones by the good, keeping in mind that knowledge is a form of good and her belief that the intellectual virtues should be a subset of the moral virtues<sup>47</sup>.

The goodness of a virtuous act does not depend upon the goodness of the object it pursues but rather upon the nobility or goodness of the motive with which it was inspired (and its success in achieving the aim of the

of an act and not just the intention with, or motive from, which it is performed. What matters is that a parent love her child *according to* the right order of things and not that it be done in a strictly calculating way. Just because we do not usually run consciously through the rules of forming a correct syllogism does not mean that they are of no account in our everyday judgements. So too, the rectitude with which we love, and its ontological grounding, are of the utmost importance to our consideration of the good and of the virtues.

44. Cfr. VOM, p. 83.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

46. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 174.

47. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 139.

motivation). But when it comes to specifying a particular virtue we find that the distinguishing factor is not so much the motivational force of the agent, but rather that such motivational force is defined in terms of the object it pursues:

«benevolence [...] is characteristically motivated to bring about the well-being of others and is reliably successful in doing so. Courage [...] to risk danger to himself when something of greater value is at stake [...] Justice [...] to respect others as persons»<sup>48</sup>.

The internal is manifested by the external, and the external is seen in the objects pursued. The virtuous motivations themselves are distinguished, then, according to their aim i.e. the intentional object of the motivation<sup>49</sup>. The aim of an intellectual virtue need not be confined to the alethic pursuit of true belief, but may also include such considerations as wisdom and understanding<sup>50</sup>. Motives are held to be broader than aims however.

«I think it confuses the nature of motives to identify them solely by their ends for several reasons. For one thing, more than one motive can have the same end, e.g., there is more than one motive aimed at getting a job. More importantly, even though the end does figure into the psychological structure of the motive, there is more *in* the motive than the end at which it aims. Motives are essentially pushy states, not pulling states, and we can see this by comparing motive-explanation with means-end explanation of human action.

»[...] A motive explanation tells us why the agent does x, not because x leads to y and the agent aims at y, but because x-behavior exhibits motive M and we understand what it is like to be in state M and we see that x-behavior is part of a pattern of behavior exhibiting M. This is why insight

48. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

49. Zagzebski says that the intellectual virtues all arise from the motivation of knowledge, but each has a particular motivational component that distinguishes it from the other intellectual virtues, «to the extent that the motivational component of a particular virtue can be traced to a deeper motivation, an act of virtue of that kind must be successful in bringing about the end of the deeper motivation, as well as the particular one. [...] an act of open-mindedness must not only be successful in making the agent receptive to new ideas and arguments but must contribute in a significant way to the agent's acquisition of knowledge» (*ibid.*, pp. 252-253). She puzzles over wisdom however as it does not seem to have any particular end (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 133). Zagzebski does not speak about the intentional nature of these ends but Fairweather has no qualms in so doing, «This end will be defined in terms of the intentional content of a certain desire (or set of desires). The type of desire we are interested in as epistemologists is the desire for truth» (A. FAIRWEATHER, «Epistemic Motivation», L. ZAGZEBSKI, A. FAIRWEATHER (eds.), *Virtue Epistemology*, Oxford University Press, New York 2001, p. 70).

50. Cfr. VOM, pp. 168-176. Also A. FAIRWEATHER, «Epistemic Motivation», p. 70.

into the emotions of characters in novels explains so much of their behavior, and why insight of this kind leads us to predict the future behavior of others. Motive explanation gives us understanding of the agent's psychic structure»<sup>51</sup>.

Zagzebski also says that a motive tells us why someone did what they did i.e. if an end provides us with an explanation for a certain act, a motive provides us with an explanation for the end pursued<sup>52</sup>. For all that, the interesting point to note from Zagzebski's distinction of virtues/motivations according to ends is that, at least for heuristic purposes, teleology has not been altogether abandoned in her motivational theory. But the teleological dimension to her motivation-based theory goes deeper than that because she believes that these motivations can be trained and so normatively regulated<sup>53</sup>. If we are to *seek* something that we do not yet possess, be it happiness, or nobility, or an intrinsically good motivation, or a soul in harmony, then we are dealing with a teleological virtue theory because we are dealing with purposes for action (final causes). In fact, as will be seen in our discussion about naturalist normativity and the «value problem», Zagzebski seems to have now changed tack in her agent-based project by grounding the value of her motivations in the more fundamental motivation for *eudaimonia*<sup>54</sup>.

### 1.3.2. *Motivations as Stable Emotions*

Zagzebski finds support for her theory of virtuous emotions in the work already undertaken by Hilary Kornblith and James Montmarquet who say that the agent *desires* to have true beliefs<sup>55</sup>. Zagzebski's focus on motivation for ethical assessment parallels Kant's evaluation of practical reason, however, with the difference that the emotions take the place of the will or practical reason. The role of the rational will in belief is absent from Zagzebski's work because she doubts that the will itself exists<sup>56</sup>, and so choice depends upon the internal motivation of emotion rather than on a clearly defined volitional intention in reference to an exterior object. «There may typically be a difference in the degree of the voluntariness of fee-

51. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Hot and Cold Irrationality», *pro manuscripto*, 2001, p. 11.

52. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 12.

53. Cfr. VOM, p. 132.

54. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «The Search for the Source of Epistemic Good», *pro manuscripto*, 2002, p. 22.

55. Cfr. VOM, p. 174.

56. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Responses», *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research*, 60 (2000) 216.

lings and virtues, but it is probably not a difference of kind»<sup>57</sup>. Our intentions boil down to being motivations then. What is a motivation? «A motivation is an emotion-disposition that initiates and directs action towards an end»<sup>58</sup>.

In her correspondence with me, Zagzebski states that what she means by an emotion is the following:

«emotion is a state that has both cognitive and affective components that are necessarily connected. An emotion is not just a feeling. It is not even a feeling that is in response to some perception. A certain way of perceiving, under what I call a thick affective concept, is an intrinsic part of the emotion. A judgment can be an expression of emotion in that the agent can judge that her way of construing the intentional object of her emotion is correct. Both the state of emotion itself has a cognitive component, and the expression of emotion in a propositional judgment, is cognitive. That is important for motivation-based virtue theory because a motive is just what we call an emotion when it is producing an act. A good motive is hence a good emotion, and a good emotion is one that is correct. It fits the way the world is in a way that suits the emotional capacities of the human being. That is intended to be analogous to the good of true belief. A true belief is a belief that fits the way the world is in a way that also fits the cognitive (and maybe perceptual) capacities of the human knower. So motivation-based virtue theory is intended to be based on what we might call emotional accuracy»<sup>59</sup>.

This to me seems right in the sense that a good philosopher or researcher should also react affectively, and not just «logically», in determined ways with respect to the world e.g. someone who gazes on the starry heavens *should* be filled with awe and wonder. One is reminded of St James's observation that although the devils might hold a true belief in the existence of God, they tremble<sup>60</sup>.

57. VOM, p. 128. It must be pointed out, however, that Zagzebski has a very broad understanding of what an emotion is because she does not confine such a state to those who have bodies. She interprets the «feeling» state of an emotion more as a state of consciousness in the way that Descartes did, and translates Aquinas' intellectual «*affectiones*» of love and joy as «emotions» (cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «The Virtues of God and The Foundations of Ethics», pp. 545-546). An emotion has a cognitive as well as a «feeling» component (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 541). It is for this reason that Zagzebski can make the following claim, «I submit that God has emotions» (*ibid.*, p. 544). She cites compassion, forgiveness and love as examples of what motivates God (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 546).

58. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Précis of Virtues of the Mind», p. 172. Fairweather describes a motivation as a desire that exerts power over our conduct (cfr. A. FAIRWEATHER, «Epistemic Motivation», p. 70).

59. This quote has been taken from an e-mail Linda sent me on the 18th of March, 2002.

60. Cfr. James 2:19.



Zagzebski argues that by focusing on the epistemic motivation we can see not only what a person believes but also why someone came to the belief that they did<sup>61</sup>. If the process followed in the formation of a belief has been a non-veritic one e.g. in wanting to be socially accepted rather than that of acting according to the evidence, then that belief can hardly be taken as a justified one, even if it should turn out to be true<sup>62</sup>. In other words, «*S*'s belief that *p*» is not justifiable if the good reasons *S* might have for believing *p* have not motivated *S*'s belief. The evidence needs to be used *as evidence*<sup>63</sup>, and our alethic motivations provide us with the psychological link that joins belief to evidence<sup>64</sup>. The same could also hold for Sosa-like reflective knowledge about our perceptual beliefs. An animal forms beliefs about its environment according to sensory impacts. The more intelligent an animal is, the better it can contrast its perceptual reports with (remembered) background information and contrary evidence. In humans, our reflective knowledge not only calls for a certain understanding of the origin of our perceptual impressions in conformity with some form of coherence constraint (Sosa), it should not be formed in an irresponsible way (Zagzebski) either<sup>65</sup>.

Motivations also play an important role in the (Greco-like) reliability of our beliefs as true ones. When faced with the same evidence, different epistemic agents can wind up with quite different beliefs due to their having different motives. The different situations of the prisoners in Plato's cavern are a result of the different desires each type has in seeking cultural opinion, logical rationality or (possibly uncomfortable) truth<sup>66</sup>.

«A person motivated by the goal of holding novel beliefs will respond differently to evidence that makes *P* likely to be true than would a person motivated to have true beliefs. For the former, the evidence for *P* would serve as a disincentive to accepting *P*, since *P* is the typical thing to believe in the circumstances. For the latter, the evidence for *P* serves as an incentive to accepting *P*, since *P* is likely to be true»<sup>67</sup>.

61. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Précis of Virtues of the Mind», p. 71.

62. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 74.

63. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 75.

64. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 79.

65. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 77-78. The role of motivations in our perceptually based beliefs is admittedly weak. It is not easy to imagine cases of the irresponsible but coherent formation of perceptual beliefs (be they right or wrong) in anyone that is not (by definition) suffering from some severe psychic disorder.

66. Cfr. A. LLANO, *Enigma de la representación*, Síntesis, Madrid 1999, Chapter 3.

67. A. FAIRWEATHER, «Epistemic Motivation», p. 71. It is not the case that *S* should already believe *p* to be a true proposition and therefore desires to believe *p*. Rather, *S* believes that there are strong indications of *p*'s truth, and it is on that count which leads *S* to affirm that *p* (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 72).

In short, someone who is interested in getting to the truth of a matter makes the kind of cognitive effort that confers justification and makes for the reliable formation of true beliefs; epistemic failure is usually due to a lack of motivation<sup>68</sup>.

What would motivate someone to want knowledge? To possess power (Hobbes) or at least sufficient power in order to effectively interact with the world (Dewey). «Hobbes says that cognitive virtues and vices arise from differences in a motivation, and that motivation is a passion that admits of excess, deficiency, and distortion of various sorts, and this seems to me to be generally right»<sup>69</sup>. Says Hobbes,

«The causes of this difference of wits are in the passions, and the difference of passions proceeded partly from the different constitution of the body and partly from different education. For if the difference proceeds from the temper of the brain and the organs of sense, either exterior or interior, there would be no less difference of men in their sight, hearing, or other sense than in their fancies and discretions. It proceeds, therefore, from the passions, which are different not only from the difference of men's complexions, but also from their difference of customs and education.

»The passions that most of all cause the difference of wit are principally the more or less desire of power, of riches, of knowledge, and of honour. All which may be reduced to the first —that is, desire of power—. For riches, knowledge and honour are but several sorts of power.

»And therefore a man who has no great passion for any of these things but is, as men term it, indifferent, though he may be so far a good man as to be free from giving offense, yet he cannot possibly have either a great fancy or much judgement. For the thoughts are to the desires as scouts and spies, to range abroad and find the way to the things desired, all steadiness of the mind's motion, and all quickness of the same, proceeding from thence; for as to have no desire is to be dead, so to have weak passions is dullness; and to have passions indifferently for everything, GIDDINESS and *distraction*; and to have stronger and more vehement passions for anything than is ordinarily seen in others is that which men call MADNESS»<sup>70</sup>.

Dewey, too, sees the foundation of these virtues as being a motivation, because knowledge of good intellectual methods alone is insufficient for one to know well; one also needs the desire or will to employ them, and vice-versa.

«Because of the importance of attitudes, ability to train thought is not achieved merely by knowledge of the best forms of thought. Possession

68. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 73.

69. VOM, p. 170.

70. T. HOBBS, *The Leviathan*, Macmillan, New York 1958, Part I, Chapter 8, pp. 68-69. Cited in VOM, pp. 169-170.

of this information is no guarantee for ability to think well. Moreover, there are no set exercises in correct thinking whose repeated performance will cause one to be a good thinker. The information realizes their value except as he is personally animated by certain dominant attitudes in his own character. [...]

Knowledge of the methods alone will not suffice; there must be the desire, the will, to employ them. This desire is an affair of personal disposition. But on the other hand the disposition alone will not suffice. There must also be understanding of the forms and techniques that are the channels through which these attitudes operate to the best advantage»<sup>71</sup>.

Zagzebski makes the observation that, «He thus traces a path from our motivations to believe truly and to act effectively to the formation of “attitudes” or intellectual virtues that lead us to employ certain methods of thinking and forming beliefs»<sup>72</sup>. A virtuous person is *motivated* to act with the intellectual qualities of open-mindedness, etc, when forming and sustaining their beliefs. Motivations that need to be entrenched, in the face of resistance, in order for them to be virtues, and such entrenchment aids their leading to the truth. A properly functioning mind is suitably trained, thus, to care about the right things<sup>73</sup>.

When our motivation for truth becomes a well balanced emotion, it can assist reason by presenting it with appropriate items to focus on, can help maintain our attention on those items we are reasoning about, and then help us to retain that knowledge in our memory<sup>74</sup>. Homework done by a student slouched in front of a TV displays a different degree of quality from that done by a more motivated individual who studies in silence at a well illuminated desk. Well trained emotions also enable us to empathise with others. Oliver Sacks' *An Anthropologist on Mars*<sup>75</sup> recounts the story of an autistic scientist who was quite unable to understand plays like Romeo and Juliet or tell when people were pulling her leg because she could not experience the same range of emotions as a normal person could<sup>76</sup>. Wood continues,

«Aesthetic insight and interpretative understanding, no less than matters of personal relations, require the contribution of tutored emotions.

71. J. DEWEY, *How We Think*, D. C. Heath and Co., Boston 1933, pp. 29-30. Cited in VOM, pp. 172-173.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

73. Cfr. W.J., WOOD, *Epistemology, Becoming Intellectually Virtuous*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove (USA) 1998, p. 175.

74. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 178.

75. Cfr. O. SACKS, *Un antropólogo en Marte: siete relatos paradójicos*, Anagrama, Barcelona 1997.

76. Cfr. W.J., WOOD, *Epistemology*, p. 179.

Imagine asking a person of limited or stunted emotional development to provide a nuanced analysis of the characterization in a psychologically complex novel. To grasp sufficiently the motivational structure of its key personalities would require empathic skills sufficient to see things from the point of view of its characters. Someone emotionally shallow or perverse would likely be blind to these subtleties. Anyone with a dictionary can discover what the words of a poem mean, but not necessarily the sentiments such words are meant to convey»<sup>77</sup>.

Right affections do not manufacture evidence but they do allow us to put the evidence into proper perspective in a way that vices such as self-deception or excessive self-interest do not<sup>78</sup>. They help us have eyes to see and ears to hear. Does it take virtue (or properly ordered affections) to recognise virtue? Must we enter into the hermeneutical loop of using information *en route* to understanding that same information? Wood says that such circularity is not vicious since, as with any basic belief, we must regard our received traditions as *prima facie* justified — a justification which can be overridden<sup>79</sup> —.

Zagzebski believes that, with training, emotions can become stable states of the soul<sup>80</sup>, somewhat akin to the Romantic ideal of the beautiful soul (*schöne Seele*). «Motives tend to be persistent and become dispositions, at which point they become components of enduring traits of character — virtues or vices —»<sup>81</sup>. A virtuous person would be motivated by a praise-worthy emotion e.g. to protect something valuable (courage), or to see people treated equitably (fairness)<sup>82</sup>. Nor do they need to be dramatic emotions in order to motivate us, just as thirst successfully regulates our liquid intake without our paying much attention to it. Zagzebski gives the examples of such «low-level» emotions as pride in one's work or of a dull sense of anxiety, which push us to get our jobs done<sup>83</sup>. Motives can range

77. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

78. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 190-191.

79. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 195-196.

80. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 132.

81. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «The Virtues of God and The Foundations of Ethics», p. 541.

82. Hatred, bitterness, and envy are held to be blameworthy, just as love and sympathy are praised, without particular regard to the circumstances (cfr. VOM, pp. 126-127). Aristotle would not disagree with that claim however, because the irascible and concupiscent appetites participate in the cultivation of the rational faculties, i.e. the will and intellect. But Zagzebski also rejects Aristotle's claim that the virtues are different from the passions as modes of choice (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 127). She argues that virtues such as patience, compassion, kindness, or bravery are no more modes of choice than are such passions such as anger or fear. My present fear depends upon my previous cowardice, which depends upon my previous choices. Both feelings and virtues are indirectly and not directly affected by choice. Virtues and passions are not easily distinguished thence.

83. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 132.

from instinctive feelings, hunger and thirst; then emotions; and then onwards to duties that go entirely against the grain. Motives initiate and direct our action, and they tend to be persistent. Zagzebski holds virtues, entrenched emotional motivations, to be different to fleeting feelings on the grounds that virtues are excellences, and that feelings cannot be refrained from, in a given moment of time, as an act can, or a habit (in a derivative way).

### 1.3.3. *Motivations and Moral Judgement*

Zagzebski's theory of motivation comes to the fore when considering our everyday moral evaluations: «that's wrong», «that's groovy», «he's lying», «fascist!». These are «thick» descriptions because they are also evaluative in such a way that the description would change in meaning if were to «thin» it of its normative content. The problems that our everyday «thick» evaluations pose to purely cognitivist or purely emotive theories of moral knowledge arise when we consider why epistemic agents might view the same descriptive intentional content in different ways or why similarly «thick» descriptions motivate some agents to act in consequence more than with others.

From a logical point of view, the formation of a moral proposition is a purely cognitive state that is either true or false, and in itself does not imply that an agent need act in consequence with what is a purely speculative judgement. Many a thief would denounce the evils of robbery. A Cartesian philosopher need not surprise herself that the inclinations of the body should be quite independent of the mind's decisions. But it so happens that the truth is actually a motivating force.

«If we want to convince someone to act a certain way for moral reasons, we direct our efforts towards convincing her of the truth of a particular moral judgment. As long as we can get her to make the judgment unreservedly herself, we normally think that she will thereby be motivated to act on it. Of course, we know that she may not be *sufficiently* motivated to act on it because she may also have contrary motives, but the point is that we think that all we need do to get her to feel a motive to act on a moral judgment is to get her to make the judgment»<sup>84</sup>.

Zagzebski says that moral judgements are both cognitive and motivating, and refers to this thesis as «Motivational Judgement Internalism»<sup>85</sup>. In classical theory a *practical* judgement to do this or avoid that always involves a command of the will that is permeated through by a knowledge

84. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Emotion and Moral Judgment», *pro manuscripto*, 1997, p. 1.

85. Cfr. *ibid.*

about what should be done. It seems, however, that Zagzebski is referring more here to the persuasive power of the plain truth in the build up to our speculative judgements (beliefs) about the ethics of certain actions or beliefs. The problem that she poses is the following. «Cognitivists» study the speculative side to our moral judgements but can give no account as to how they motivate us, and non-cognitivists face the opposite problem of being unable to account for the cognitive and intentional content of our emotions. Zagzebski says that this dilemma is reflected in *akrasia* or moral weakness, which is something that not only exists, but that its very existence should surprise us<sup>86</sup>.

«It often happens that a person makes a moral judgment while understanding the judgment perfectly well, and yet lacks sufficient motivation to act on it. Notice that if the making of a moral judgment is a purely cognitive state this is no mystery on the standard psychology since on that view motivation does not come from the judgment anyway. But that does not solve the problem of moral weakness; it simply refuses to see it as a problem. Ever since Aristotle the existence of *akrasia* has been treated as something that needs explaining because in some sense we think Socrates in the *Protagoras* must have been right: If a person *really* understands what she is doing when she makes a moral judgment, she would automatically feel motivated to act on it and, in fact, she *would* act on it and would not have to struggle to do so»<sup>87</sup>.

Cognitivists are not surprised that a given decision should call for struggle to be put into practice because they believe that there is nothing intrinsically motivating about the decision. But surely this interior split within the unified agent is something quite odd? Cognitivists are not surprised about the unified agent's internal contradictions but they should be. Emotivist theories accept that there is such a thing as moral strength or moral weakness but it cannot comprehend how a moral agent could be apathetic i.e. make moral judgements and then not act on them<sup>88</sup>. Emotivists are right to be surprised but they cannot give an adequate account for thinking one thing and doing another. Perhaps we could say that the virtuous person is less clouded by desire and so is better able to recognise the more salient moral features in a judgement than is the continent or akratic person. But, says Zagzebski, if cognitive activity *per se* is not intrinsically motivating, then there is no reason why a more intense cognitive perception should lead to a more motivated choice in line with that perception<sup>89</sup>. Zagzebski's response is to urge that our feelings not be disassociated from our thinking.

86. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 2.

87. *Ibid.*

88. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 3.

89. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 5.

«So the compassionate person appreciates the fact that a co-workers child is gravely ill in a way that the discompassionate does not. The envious person appreciates the fact that a co-worker's salary is higher than his own in a way that the non-envious does not. This suggests that to appreciate is not just to understand, but to *feel the force* of that which is appreciated»<sup>90</sup>.

When we approve of one thing or condemn another, we do not separate our cognitive from our affective states because the structure of emotion requires that they be connected<sup>91</sup>. We need an epistemic theory that explicitly recognises that our «thick» «here and now» judgements that «that's a lie» or «he is contemptible» or «that is rude» are of inseparable evaluative and descriptive content<sup>92</sup>. This is where Zagzebski's motivation-based theory steps in.

«Specifically, I will propose that a ground level judgment has the following features: (1) It is an expression of emotion, and for that reason is intrinsically motivating. (2) It is propositional in form, with a truth value (and it is not always false), and the agent asserts that proposition when making the judgment»<sup>93</sup>.

Zagzebski seeks to underline the co-existence of feelings with our cognitive judgements.

«The thesis that cognitive and affective states are necessarily distinct is generally accompanied by the view that affective states are responses to cognitive or perceptual states. That is, we have feelings in response to a prior state of representing the world a certain way. And it cannot be denied that some feeling states are nothing but responses to a prior representational state. But not all are, and this is important»<sup>94</sup>.

She uses the example of «that is rude» to show how, whether or not the actual concept should mix evaluative and descriptive content, it is important to recognise that in the agent that grasps this concept he needs to be in more than just a cognitive state in order to appreciate the force and meaning of the judgement<sup>95</sup>. Says Zagzebski,

«there is no purely descriptive feature of the object of offense that adequately captures that which is offensive. This is not to deny that the cognitive

90. *Ibid.*

91. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 6.

92. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 7. Zagzebski does not reject the objectivity of these «ground-level» moral judgements out of hand, but neither does she make a case for the realism of said judgements.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

95. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 11.

grasp of purely descriptive features of some situation, together with my emotional dispositions, *causes* my emotional response; in fact, I believe that that is probably the case. Nor is it to deny that offensiveness supervenes on those descriptive features, although I am not going to address the supervenience thesis here. It is simply to say that to see something as rude is not just to see it as having those descriptive properties, nor is it to see that something has caused me to feel offended, nor is it to see the two together. It is to see it as the intentional object of the feeling of offense. I do not just feel offended *by* the rude behavior, I feel offended *at* it. *Rude* is, then, a concept that combines descriptive and affective in a way that cannot be pulled apart. The conclusion is that *rude* is a thick affective concept»<sup>96</sup>.

I think that it is interesting to note here that Zagzebski allows for a certain causal priority in our descriptive knowledge upon which our evaluative judgements like «that is rude» or «she is kind» depend. We see here an implicit recognition of the difference between those cognitive acts that are directed toward a knowledge of how the world is and a knowledge of how the world and ourselves should in some way depend upon us. As a result, I don't see why we should not be able to distinguish between the moral and practical intellectual virtues of Zagzebski's motivation-based virtue theory and the speculative intellectual virtues of classical theory. Her thesis is that people who are in different emotional states will see the intentional descriptive content within a moral judgement in a different way. To sum up,

«The general picture of moral judgment I have been describing goes as follows: A situation has certain descriptive features D. My perceptual and cognitive awareness of D, together with my emotional dispositions, causes me to be a certain emotional state E. E is an affective state whose intentional object is the D situation seen as falling under a thick concept A. I cannot see situation D *as* A without being in emotion E. I can express emotion E by making the judgment, "That is A." For example, a situation has the descriptive feature of being a remark that expresses disdain for me and is uncalled for. My awareness of this feature, together with my emotional dispositions, leads me to be in a distinctive emotional state consisting of feeling offended at the rudeness of the remark. In this emotional state I see the remark as rude. I may express my emotion by simply saying "That is rude". This judgment expresses an intrinsically motivating state since it expresses an emotion; it is also propositional in form with a truth value, and I am asserting that proposition when I say "That is rude"»<sup>97</sup>.

96. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 16.



1.4. Reliability and Epistemic Luck: *Virtu et Fortuna*

«The motivation to gain knowledge of a certain sort and to act in a certain way does not reliably lead to success, although it reliably leads the agent to do as much in her power to be successful»<sup>98</sup>. Motivation and success are distinct components to a virtue. A virtuous person must know something of the world in which they apply their virtue — which is what distinguishes the courageous from the foolhardy, or the prudent from the cowardly— and so a reliability component is built into the nature of a virtue, «a virtuous person cannot be systematically wrong in her judgements about the world as they apply to her feelings and choices»<sup>99</sup>. A virtuous agent is concerned about external success, which is indeed one of the reasons why we call a virtue by that name in the first place. Intellectual virtues are knowledge-conducive by definition, because failure to do so would lead us to not classify such trait as an intellectual virtue. It is not sufficient to have a praiseworthy motivation, then, in order to be held in fullest esteem. One must also be reliably successful in achieving the goals aimed at, and that means confronting the issue of luck.

Zagzebski puts the internalist-externalist dispute down to ambivalence over the role that luck plays in normative theory<sup>100</sup>. Moral luck involves blame or praise that goes beyond one's immediate control of a situation based upon the consequences of that blameworthy or praiseworthy action<sup>101</sup>. One may be responsible for what one does or believes, even if what one does or believes depends upon factors that are beyond our control<sup>102</sup>. Let us take Nagel's example of the conferral of the Nobel Prize<sup>103</sup>. If the Nobel Prize were to be awarded in retrospect, it would preferentially go to Einstein rather than to poor Sir Isaac Newton. Other instances of moral luck crop up in our justice system. A drunken driver who swerves and hits people is charged with manslaughter; a drunk who swerves but hits no one faces lesser charges<sup>104</sup>. Moral luck is also present in the different cir-

98. VOM, p. 133.

99. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

100. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 39. Zagzebski says that the concept of «moral luck» is certainly something that we find «repulsive» but it exists, nevertheless, at least in what people are morally evaluated *for*, indeed, «the problem is pervasive in the practice of morality as we know it» (L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Religious Luck», *Faith and Philosophy*, 11 [1994] 397, 400).

101. Cfr. VOM, pp. 70-71.

102. Cfr. G. AXTELL, «Epistemic Luck in Light of the Virtues», L. ZAGZEBSKI, A. FAIRWEATHER (eds.), *Virtue Epistemology*, Oxford University Press, New York 2001, p. 161. Epistemic *compatibilism* concerns the conjoint existence of cognitive freedom from coercion and causal factors beyond our control (cfr. *ibid.*).

103. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 162.

104. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Religious Luck», p. 398.

cumstances faced by similar people. Citizens of Nazi Germany are more severely judged for their tacit co-operation than are the citizens of other countries who were living under different circumstances<sup>105</sup>. Two people sin mortally, one dies but the other lives and then repents and receives sacramental absolution. The first one goes to hell and the latter to heaven. Says Zagzebski, «Both moral and religious luck involve an inequality in the way persons are treated by the institution of morality itself»<sup>106</sup>. Instead of just shrugging our shoulders at the presence of life's unfairness, a rational response to the problem of luck is to seek to minimise its impact, and that means shifting from consequentialist paradigms, where the greatest degree of luck exists, to character based ones<sup>107</sup>.

«If we [...] trace a line backwards from the consequences of an act, to the physical act itself, to the intention to perform the act, to the psychic states out of which the intention is formed, to the enduring character traits from which the act arises, we find that the farther back we go, the less luck there is»<sup>108</sup>.

Epistemic externalists regard luck as working for us under normal circumstances. The reliabilist condition to knowledge reduces the probabi-

105. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 399.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 403. Zagzebski goes on to say that, «If there is no incompatibilist free will, then our moral acts, choices, and traits of character are wholly a matter of luck. If there *is* incompatibilist free will, then they are only partly a matter of luck. This is because the claim that there is incompatibilist free will is merely the claim that past circumstances, including many beyond a person's control, strongly influence a person's choice. So no matter which way we go on free will, there is luck» (*ibid.*, p. 403). Zagzebski says that this is just as true for our character traits (our virtues and vices) because they chiefly depend upon our imitation of the people we grow up with, and that is a factor well beyond our control (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 400). Although Zagzebski tackles the question of God's providence head on in her article «Religious Luck», I am not in agreement with her on this point. She leaves out the question of gaining merit for heaven (as though heaven were enjoyed in equal amounts by all) and the question of *correspondence* to the unequal amount of graces received. Zagzebski doubts that there is such a thing as the *proportion* of control we have in our evaluated actions given that our actual circumstances and so virtues (of sincerity for example) are factors largely beyond our control (cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 408-409). But surely external influence is taken into account in God's judgement, even with respect to our character traits, so that responsibility be determined *qua* what is truly free in our past and present decisions. Although we ourselves would prove unreliable judges on this point (1 Cor 4: 3-4) an all knowing agent would be quite up to the task without the need for an *apocatastasis* and unhitching of morality from salvation in order to eliminate all moral luck as suggested by Zagzebski (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 411). Says Davidson, «just because something strongly influences my choice, this does not make my choice a matter of luck, especially if even very strong influences can be resisted in acting freely» (S. DAVISON, «Salvific Luck», *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 45 [1999] 129-137).

107. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «The Virtues of God and The Foundations of Ethics», p. 401.

108. *Ibid.*

lity of a Gettier coincidence occurring — lucky guesses are few and far between<sup>109</sup> —. But even that assumption may be largely relaxed in a virtue approach because character traits reduce the component of luck<sup>110</sup>. The motivational component to epistemic virtue eliminates even Gettier cases because the agent acts on the evidence in the light of the evidence.

Axtell argues that the presence of luck in knowledge is a tricky one that cannot be easily dispensed with<sup>111</sup>. Indeed, even an «incompatibilist» approach, which simply filters out all cases of epistemic luck from our knowledge claims, is itself open to the skeptical challenge of being prone to luck<sup>112</sup>. In reply to a skeptic's objection that despite all our efforts are epistemic beliefs are all wrong because we might be inhabiting a demon controlled world, the responsible internalist must simply put that possibility down to veritic luck<sup>113</sup>. The presence of veritic luck means that, all else being equal, in some given counterfactual situation your belief could easily have turned out to be false<sup>114</sup>. Recall our Gettier examples. Had Brown not been in Barcelona, then Smith's belief that Jones owns a Ford or Brown is in Barcelona would have turned out to be a false. Likewise, in the fake barn example, the motorist could easily have spotted a fake barn instead and so she would have formed a false belief about the quality of the barn<sup>115</sup>.

Externalism is meant to counter these skeptical considerations in their source because, whatever the process used for coming into a knowledgeable state, it must be veritically reliable. But there is no real reason why an internalist approach cannot ask that the grounds for one's belief be reliably truth-conducive<sup>116</sup>. Where externalism carries more favour is that we increase our chances of being veritically lucky if we relax the internalist constraint that said factors need also be cognitively accessible to the knowing subject. Note that I say «veritically lucky» because it is surely a matter of luck whether or not an externalist is externally justified or not<sup>117</sup>. The externalist cannot chuckle at the internalist's misfortune, because the skeptic then asks what makes him any different from his doppelganger in the demon world<sup>118</sup>. It is simply a matter of evidential luck that you are fed valid inputs and your doppelganger is not. Evidential or «justification-oriented» luck occurs where, given the circumstances, the agent could ea-

109. Cfr. G. AXTELL, «Epistemic Luck in Light of the Virtues», p. 165.

110. Cfr. VOM, p. 72.

111. Cfr. G. AXTELL, «Epistemic Luck in Light of the Virtues», pp. 166-167.

112. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 167.

113. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 168.

114. Cfr. V. HAMID, «Knowledge and Varieties of Epistemic Luck», *Dialectica*, 55 (2001) 336-337.

115. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 358.

116. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 352.

117. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 353.

118. Cfr. G. AXTELL, «Epistemic Luck in Light of the Virtues», p. 168.

sily have been unjustified in her belief<sup>119</sup>. Consider the case of the assassinated president. In order to buy time while they work out what to do Pentagon officials leak false reports to the different news agencies that only an aide of the president's has been shot. By coincidence Jill just happens to tune into the only radio station that is broadcasting the truth of the matter because its reporter was an eye-witness to the event. Jill's true belief, that the president has been assassinated, could easily have been the false one, that he had not, had she turned to any other news source.

There is no *prima facie* advantage of externalist responses over internalist ones in the issue of luck therefore. Whether or not such luck precludes our having knowledge or not will depend upon whether the counterfactual possibilities of getting it wrong are serious or not<sup>120</sup>. If the fake barns are miles away then the motorist's belief that she has a fine barn in front of her is veritically lucky, but not in a knowledge-precluding way because the chances of spotting a fake barn are close to zero. The less accessible some defeating source of information is, the less likely it is that the justification of Jill's belief (which has been based on a usually reliable source of information) will turn out to be evidentially lucky in a knowledge-precluding way.

Zagzebski's virtue-based «mixed» externalist approach to justification provides us with a more adequate response to the skeptic<sup>121</sup>. The dual component account of motivations and reliability in virtue is an acknowledgement of the «gaps problem» within epistemology<sup>122</sup>. The very need to hold a mixed account is already a sign that purely internal or purely external constraints cannot provide the right conditions for *epistemizing* justification<sup>123</sup>. Internalist theories face a «veritic» gap between the truth of their belief and its justifiedness. The veritic gap correlates with the consequentialist form of luck to which internalists must cow-tow<sup>124</sup>. Externalist theories, on the other hand, conceive of a necessary connection between knowledge and its object, and so they do provide a conceptual link between justified belief and truth (assuming that we have been lucky enough to encounter a veritically reliable means of belief-formation). But they face their own gap between belief (propositional acceptance) and good reasons or adequate evidence. Axtell calls this the «zetetic» gap in reference to the quality of the researcher and the evidential or circumstantial luck the researcher might have in winning the Nobel prize or not<sup>125</sup>. A virtue approach

119. Cfr. V. HAMID, «Knowledge and Varieties of Epistemic Luck», p. 357.

120. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 360.

121. Cfr. G. AXTELL, «Epistemic Luck in Light of the Virtues», p. 170.

122. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 172.

123. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 173.

124. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 171-172.

125. Cfr. *ibid.* Nagel's constitutive luck is associated by Axtell with Hookway's epistemic *akrasia* or Axtell's *enkratic* gap (cfr. *ibid.*).

promises to be able to handle the epistemic importance of these gaps and provide positive accounts of knowledge and justification in the light of them, instead of simply sniping at the other camp's misfortunes<sup>126</sup>. If any epistemic agent is likely to seek to minimise the chances of «easily» forming the contrary belief in close possible worlds, the virtuous epistemic agent is. The virtues help prepare us for the contingencies of consequential or circumstantial luck in life.

### 1.5. Agency and Self-Awareness

The subject of the intellectual and moral virtues is the person in whom knowing and acting are integrated. A faculty is not an isolated unit in the body but works under the behest of a CEO (the agent) upon whom all else depends and to whom all else is subordinated. Our operations depend upon a power to be able to so operate, and these powers or faculties in their turn are co-ordinated in the human being by some principle that allows us to have a personal identity. It is more properly said to be Smith who talks behind your back and not his vocal chords, or García who knows about football and not his eyes and legs. Zagzebski defines action and agency as follows,

«An agent is the kind of being that acts. To act is to exert power and, at least typically, to bring about a certain kind of effect through the exercise of that power. [...] In the strict sense only conscious beings have powers. [...] If event causation is to be distinguished from agent causation, that is because it is maintained that the cause of an act is not an event, not even the event of an agent's performing the act; it is the agent herself»<sup>127</sup>.

An effective epistemic *agent* has a high proportion of success in reaching truth and in avoiding falsehood, but unlike general reliabilism, this success is to their own credit and not to something else<sup>128</sup>. A study of the counterfactual conditionals can prove illuminating for an analysis of the causal relation, and of power, responsibility and even knowledge, since it allows us to consider what the agent would do under different circumstances<sup>129</sup>. In fact, non-determinists often promote the Principle of Alternate

126. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 174. The challenge is one of successfully integrating the empirical research of the cognitive sciences in knowledge, with responsibilist concerns for agency and the virtues (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 175).

127. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Must Knowers Be Agents?», L. ZAGZEBSKI, A. FAIRWEATHER (eds.), *Virtue Epistemology: Essays on Epistemic Virtue and Responsibility*, Oxford University Press, New York 2001, pp. 142-143.

128. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 146.

129. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 143, 147.

Possibilities as a condition for moral responsibility: a person is not responsible for his act unless he could have done otherwise<sup>130</sup>. So-called Frankfurt cases falsify this Principle of Alternate Possibilities. The standard Frankfurt case runs as follows:

«Black, an evil neurosurgeon, wishes to see White dead but is unwilling to do the deed himself. Knowing that Mary Jones also despises White and will have a single good opportunity to kill him, Black inserts a mechanism into Jones's brain that enables Black to monitor and to control Jones's neurological activity. If the activity in Jones's brain indicates that she is on the verge of deciding not to kill White when the opportunity arises, Black's mechanism will intervene and cause Jones to decide to commit the murder. On the other hand, if Jones decides to murder White on her own, the mechanism will not intervene. It will merely monitor but will not affect her neurological function. Now suppose that when the occasion arises, Jones decides to kill White without any "help" from Black's mechanism. In the judgment of Frankfurt and most others, Jones is morally responsible for her act. Nonetheless, she seems to be unable to do otherwise since if she had attempted to do so, she would have been thwarted by Black's device»<sup>131</sup>.

The Principle of Alternate Possibilities must be waived but the case does not constitute an argument for determinism<sup>132</sup>. The relevant counterfactuals are not possibility conditions for the possession of a power. They are a sign of something deeper, a sign of the presence of agency, and hence a sign of responsibility<sup>133</sup>. But whether my belief be voluntary or not, the acquisition of belief depends upon agency<sup>134</sup>. Zagzebski argues that agency is a sufficient condition for knowledge even when the agent might not be a reliable one (given evil demon scenarios or Frankfurt cases)<sup>135</sup>. On the other hand, reliability cannot make up for the absence of agency<sup>136</sup>. A parrot might be a reliable mnemonic aid, but it does not know what it's saying. Indeed, even with cases of simple perception or of automatically formed beliefs, we might argue that if Mary Jones were a responsible epistemic agent (homicidal tendencies aside), she could have stopped to reflect upon

130. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 146.

131. *Ibid.*, pp. 146-147. An important difference between Frankfurt cases and Evil Demon scenarios is that the evil demon gives the agent misleading sensory inputs, but the agent's control over her own reasoning process is not altered (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 149).

132. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 147.

133. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 148. They are important signs, however, for the lack of previous choices undoubtedly affects my current choice: we learn how to decide and become moral agents. The counterfactual manipulator may have interfered with her power to be an agent (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 151).

134. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 149.

135. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 152.

136. Cfr. *ibid.*

a sudden change of mind. If every time she was on the point of deciding not to kill White, she were to suddenly decide in favour of killing him, surely she would seek to find a convincing explanation for that<sup>137</sup>. The Greeks said as much in response to skeptical challenges about our sense perception; it is thanks to the intellect that we realise that the appearance of broken oars in the water can be deceiving.

«Perceptual beliefs are typically unimportant, and there is no great need for reflective endorsement in many cases. But when the consequences of believing them are serious, reflective endorsement is called for. [...] An agent reflects about her beliefs from time to time, particularly when they are either suspicious in their origin or of special importance. And this includes perceptual beliefs. True perceptual beliefs earn the believer epistemic credit when the agent exercises her agency over them at the level of reflective endorsement»<sup>138</sup>.

The difference made by the exercise of *agency* in a causal process is that it means that my epistemic success is due to me<sup>139</sup>. Zagzebski mentions that the term «agent causation» was popularised by Roderick Chisholm, who traced the term back to Thomas Reid (although we can go back still further to Aristotle)<sup>140</sup>. An understanding of causation presupposes an understanding of *active power*, the which stems from a knowledge of ourselves as rational and moral agents<sup>141</sup>. Zagzebski does not necessarily endorse Reid's standpoint but mentions him in order to focus epistemological attention on the places of acts and agency in the acquisition of epistemic states, responsible beliefs, and knowledge<sup>142</sup>.

«While knowledge and justification are often connected with causation in the contemporary literature, agent causation is rarely mentioned. Although Aristotle and Aquinas referred to the “act of knowing”, nowadays knowing is more commonly construed as a state rather than as an act. [...] The mind itself is now often viewed as a passive information processor rather than as an active agent. This view has led to a shift in the prototype of the act in modern philosophy. We no doubt find it curious that in Aquinas the act par excellence is a mental act since in contemporary discussions the prime example typically given of a basic act is the raising of one's arm. So these days when we think of an act we usually think either of an act of will or of a willed bodily movement. Cognitive and perceptual acts only make sense on this view if preceded by acts of the will. The broader Aristote-

137. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 152.

138. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

139. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 151.

140. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 143.

141. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 144.

142. Cfr. *ibid.*

lian category of the voluntary and the even broader category of acts both voluntary and non-voluntary have generally disappeared from discussion»<sup>143</sup>.

Zagzebski ponders over meta-epistemological issues that have generally been left to gather dust. What, for instance, is the cause of our idea of causation? Is it due to our self-knowledge as agents, or to the testimony of nature? Are the objects of perception (or the sensations and impressions) the real cause of our perception, or is it the epistemic agent who brings about this effect?<sup>144</sup> She says that the nature of the self also needs to be broadened out from Kant's «notoriously» narrow one<sup>145</sup>. Our *primus primum* first order beliefs and desires are of as much concern as our second order endorsements and acceptance, for we could hardly talk about an integrated character or personal equilibrium in someone who does not identify with many of his first order desires and beliefs<sup>146</sup>.

Analytical philosophy holds knowledge to be non-accidentally true belief, and justification or warrant lies in whatever it is that converts true belief into knowledge. Agency and agent causation is of importance to the explication of knowledge so defined because the agent's subsequent reflectiveness makes a belief her own at a second level in a way that non-agents cannot. Epistemic credit is only gained by an agent when her agency is operative —either in the initial acquisition of a belief or in her subsequent second order acceptance of it<sup>147</sup>—. In Zagzebski's Virtue Epistemology explication of knowledge, epistemic credit is a component of knowledge precisely because it depends upon agency. Any causal explanation that ignores agency in how someone arrived at a true belief will simply fall short of providing a proper account of how beliefs are formed<sup>148</sup>.

### 1.6. «Weird» Virtues

Even though truth conduciveness or reliability is a necessary component to intellectual virtue, it is not a sufficient one. Philosophical and scientific investigation entails making many misses in order to get a few hits. Creative people have intuitions which they later subject to rule follo-

143. *Ibid.*

144. Cfr. *ibid.* These are precisely the sorts of issue with which Thomistic-inspired treatises of the Middle Ages were concerned with (cfr. A. LLANO, *Gnoseología*, Eunsa, Pamplona 2001).

145. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Must Knowers Be Agents?», p. 154.

146. Cfr. *ibid.*

147. Cfr. *ibid.*

148. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 154-155.



wing and procedure (to the canons of that science). «The knowledge-motivated person will want to have the virtues of creativity to the extent that she is able, and that gives us another reason why the motive to know includes more than the motive to follow procedures known to be reliable»<sup>149</sup>. Creativity and originality would seem to be connected with something other than the desire for true beliefs. The intellectually virtuous are motivated by the search for knowledge, and not a simply objective truth, because knowledge includes the human dimension of understanding. Creativity, moreover, leads to the extension of human knowledge rather than to the generation of higher proportions of true to false beliefs. Robert Audi says that without intellectual curiosity and creativity we would not pursue the truth as much as we do, and so would have less knowledge and less insight<sup>150</sup>.

Creativity and originality are «weird» character traits because they require one to break free of habitual moulds<sup>151</sup>. They are virtues without apparent order. How are they to be acquired then? And what does that mean for the definition of a virtue? Creativity and originality, the same as caution and humility in following the traditions established by others, need to be governed by prudence in order to rate as virtues. The ability to make a pun or solve a cryptic crossword calls for a combination of intelligence, study, and lateral thinking. A virtuously prudential mix of said combination will depend to a large degree upon the circumstances of each one — whether or not the person is an artist, the chairperson of the Federal Reserve, an intellectual seeking to challenge conformist views, or an accountant—. I argue that it may well be the case that the success of a creative performance depends upon previous creative ventures. Even if one concrete creative venture bears little resemblance to another, the attitude of the person to be creative, to think laterally, to be daring, is reinforced in each case.

### 1.7. Zagzebski-Type Virtue

From the above discussion we could sum up Linda Zagzebski's approach to the moral and intellectual virtues as follows:

- i. a virtue is an acquired excellence of the soul — «a quality we would ascribe to a person if asked to describe her after her death»<sup>152</sup>—.

149. VOM, p. 183.

150. Cfr. R. AUDI, «Epistemic Virtue and Justified Belief», L. ZAGZEBSKI, A. FAIRWEATHER (eds.), *Virtue Epistemology*, Oxford University Press, New York 2001, pp. 85-86.

151. «Virtue without order? Strange Virtue!» (J. ESCRIVÁ DE BALAGUER, *The Way*, Four Courts Press, Dublin 1985, n. 79).

152. VOM, p. 135.

- ii. a virtue is acquired through a process of time and effort, of habituation, by the agent (though creativity may be an exception to this process).
- iii. virtue has an intrinsic value that is wanting in the skills.
- iv. virtue has a motivation component. Something seen not only by means of the end to which it aims, but also in reference to an emotion disposition — a set of orientations toward the world that emerge into action given the appropriate circumstances— which is harder to name.
- v. virtue has a reliability component. «A person does not have a virtue unless she is reliable at bringing about the end that is the aim of the motivational component of the virtue. [...] we are impressed with moral success, not to the exclusion of an interest in people's cares and efforts, but in addition to it»<sup>153</sup>.

Zagzebski gives us thus the following definition of a virtue: «a deep and enduring acquired excellence of a person, involving a characteristic motivation to produce a certain desired end and reliable success in bringing about that end»<sup>154</sup>.

Ordinary language would seem to focus only on the particular components of a virtue: feelings, desires, motivations, or patterns of acting, but not on a virtue as a whole. Does that mean that no general account of virtue actually exists i.e. that virtues are of different kinds, as Aristotle maintained in his distinction of the moral from the intellectual virtues? Zagzebski is not prepared to concede such without a fight<sup>155</sup>. Zagzebski believes her definition to be broad enough to cover both the intellectual as well as the moral virtues<sup>156</sup>. Both involve a combination of understanding some aspect of the world and training of the feelings, are learned, and are voluntary.

## 2. KNOWLEDGE THROUGH DOXASTIC RESPONSIBILITY

Traditional approaches to belief justification in Analytical philosophy have depended on deontological or consequentialist argumentation. Virtue Epistemology says that the good qualities of a belief are due to some special quality of the agent who formed that belief. Faculty Reliabilists justify a belief according to the agent's healthy cognitive faculties. Virtue Responsibilists also justify the person for holding a good belief because she has been responsible (and thereby rational) in her investigation

153. *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

154. *Ibid.*, p. 137, bold-type removed.

155. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 135.

156. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 137.

prior to forming that belief. Zagzebski's believer-based (as opposed to belief-based) normative theory places the foundational source of a belief's justification in what the practically virtuous person would characteristically do or believe. Her unease with the consequentialism of the Faculty Reliabilists leads her to downplay the role of the faculties in her explication of virtue, however. As a result, Zagzebski's theory of justification is not as well able to handle Goldman's and Greco's objections about the justification of beliefs held by little children (or animals) whom, as yet, lack virtue<sup>157</sup>.

In the analysis that follows, we will see how Zagzebski looks to resolve the internalist-externalist split in justification by providing us with «deeper» agent-based grades of assessment for belief-justification rather than focus simply upon the (deontological) rule-concordance or (externalist) reliability of the belief.

## 2.1. Grades in Deontic Concepts

«Justification» is a messy concept that seems to be carrying more weight than it can handle, but that by no means entails that the internalist aspects to knowledge can (or should) be done away with, reducing epistemic normativity to what is merely externally warranted<sup>158</sup>. By turning to the deeper notion of «virtue» within an agent-based epistemology, not only can we seek to avoid blame by identifying what is «right» or «permissible», as per a deontological regimen, but we can also seek to reach as high a level of justification as we can<sup>159</sup>. Zagzebski recognises, therefore, that there are degrees of justification, unlike Plantinga who argues in on-off terms about beliefs and who reasons that if a belief is not wrong then it must be right<sup>160</sup>. Right acts and justified beliefs should be subject to further levels of evaluation.

«A crucial task for any pure virtue theory is the derivation of deontic concepts such as that of duty and of a right act from the concept of a virtue. [...] An important feature of my account of these concepts is that it is

157. Robert Audi, for instance, believes that a virtuously grounded belief will be a justified one but he questions the necessity of virtue for justification as being too strong a criterion. What, he asks, *constitutes* justified belief if justification can be conferred apart from epistemic virtue? Cfr. R. AUDI, «Epistemic Virtue and Justified Belief», L. ZAGZEBSKI, A. FAIRWEATHER (eds.), *Virtue Epistemology*, Oxford University Press, New York 2001, p. 89. I argue that the deeper notion of virtue calls for the intermediate notion of faculties.

158. Cfr. VOM, pp. 36-37.

159. Cfr. *ibid.*, 28.

160. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 243, ft. 74.

indeterminate with respect to either a pure virtue theory or the weak form of virtue theory [...] but they need to be read differently [...] It is only within [a pure virtue theory] that they are actually definitions»<sup>161</sup>.

The paradigm for evaluation is what a virtuous person would characteristically do or feel in the same circumstances.

«A *right* (permissible) act is an act a virtuous person might do in like circumstances. That is, it is not the case that she characteristically would not do it. A *wrong* act is an act a virtuous person characteristically would not do in like circumstances. A *moral duty* is an act a virtuous person characteristically *would* do in like circumstances»<sup>162</sup>.

Zagzebski believes that moral theory has a wider scope than it is given credit for: «My aim is to show that the concept of the moral is too narrow as commonly understood and that it ought to be extended to cover the normative aspects of cognitive activities»<sup>163</sup>. Our external acts are not the only objects of moral evaluation. How we think can also be subject to normative assessment. Following upon Scotus' division of the acts<sup>164</sup>, a corresponding treatment of beliefs may be given, with particular importance being laid on the notion of epistemic duty:

<i>velle</i>	choose	believe
<i>nolle</i>	refuse	disbelieve
<i>non velle</i>	not choose	lack belief

The «justification» of a belief may be derived from moral properties hence. Beliefs are not thought of as acts, they are held to be cognitive states, but they result from the operation of character traits of virtues and vices. Zagzebski holds our beliefs to be just as indirectly voluntary as our acts are when we get drunk or give in to passion<sup>165</sup>. At this point, however, it would seem that what we are actually dealing with is an application of morality to our intellectual endeavours, in which case the virtues under discussion are actually *moral* virtues (Zagzebski would agree with me here) and *not* intellectual ones (Zagzebski would disagree with me here).

«A *justified* belief, the counterpart of a right act, is what an intellectually virtuous person might believe in like circumstances. It is not the case that she characteristically would not believe it. An *unjustified* belief is a belief an intellectually virtuous person characteristically would not believe in

161. VOM, pp. 231-232.

162. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Précis of Virtues of the Mind», p. 173.

163. VOM, p. 255.

164. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 242.

165. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 67.

like circumstances. An *epistemic duty* is a belief an intellectually virtuous person characteristically would believe in like circumstances»<sup>166</sup>.

We have an epistemic duty therefore, to believe when it is virtuous to do so, to disbelieve when it is virtuous to do so, and to withhold belief when it is virtuous to do so. And if there is no one propositional attitude a virtuous person would adopt in the circumstances, then there is no related epistemic duty hence<sup>167</sup>.

An intellectually virtuous person has a reliable understanding of the world (follows the rules properly) and is motivated to acquire the necessary skills of getting to the truth, just as a morally virtuous person seeks the means needed to grade students fairly, or effectively comfort a bereaved person. When someone forms the same belief that a practically wise person would form, then that belief is justified. Justification does not extend to guesswork or clairvoyance hence, because they lack the understanding one needs to be virtuous. So too, justification may be obtained by a brain in a vat, or hooked up to the virtual reality of *Matrix*, according to its motives and the habits it acquires from experience (which is something an imaginary «adjustment» machine can't make provision for).

The first and weakest level of deontological assessment is that of justification or of having done the right thing. To be in the right is to be justified, but one needs to be so for the right reasons in order to be praised for doing so. Duty has more to do with avoiding blame, whereas virtue focuses on praiseworthiness. Virtue theory does not simply look to avoid evil as act-based conflict resolution and deontological legalist moral bottom lines do. It pursues the good. «What a virtuous person might do includes acts completely outside the moral realm, such as reading a book, [...] But it would be going too far to say that a person has merited praise for acting rightly in reading a book»<sup>168</sup>. Her point is that simply being right or justified are weak concepts for the evaluation of an act or a belief, though I must say in passing that I do not think it would be «going too far» to say that a truly free human act —be it reading a book or catching the bus— should lie outside the moral realm! Be that as it may, to read a book or forgo an opportunity of acting generously (if not in violation of moral duty) is a permissibly right act but not an especially praise-worthy one. Praise is given to those who go beyond the call of duty when they exercise a virtue.

A stronger level of evaluation of one's acts and beliefs would incorporate the praiseworthy or blameworthy intention with which the act or be-

166. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Précis of Virtues of the Mind», p. 173.

167. Cfr. VOM, pp. 242-243, ft. 73.

168. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

lief was carried out or adopted. The concept of human flourishing allows us to make gradations in moral acts from:

- (a) virtue – chastity
- (b) moral strength – continence
- (c) moral weakness – incontinence
- (d) vice – licentiousness
- (e) the monstrous.

I would add that a parallel can be drawn for belief:

- (a) embrace belief
- (b) assent
- (c) make exceptions
- (d) incredulity
- (e) fanatical loathing.

The difference between continence and chastity, or assent and embraced belief illustrate the difference between being right and being virtuous<sup>169</sup>. One must not only do the right thing, it has to «feel» like the right thing to do.

A third and even stronger evaluation may be brought to bear, however, given that virtue is a success term, in the sense that someone does not have a specific virtue unless she is reliably successful in bringing about its aim (which is the aim of the motivation for Zagzebski)<sup>170</sup>. A virtuous act is an extension of the right act in so far as it is successful in bringing about the end of the virtue (due to the features of a virtuous motivation and the necessary understanding). Despite the best of intentions, failure is a source of moral luck which lies outside the agent's control. In everyday life we draw distinctions between the praise due to a successful act in comparison to a merely good-intentioned act that has fallen wide of the mark<sup>171</sup>.

The strongest evaluation of all is when the end (both ultimate and proximate) is reached due to the praiseworthy features of the act. The act is good, then, in every way.

«An act is an *act of virtue A* just in case it arises from the motivational component of *A*, is something a person with virtue *A* would characteristically do in the circumstances, and is successful in bringing about the end of virtue *A* because of these features of the act»<sup>172</sup>.

169. Alvin Goldman makes a similar argument about degrees of belief. A veritistic value scale captures the differences between persons who have «high» level of belief in true propositions —the well informed— and those who have no real opinion —the uninformed— through to those who have very low levels of belief for true propositions —the misinformed— (cfr. A.I. GOLDMAN, «The Unity of the Epistemic Virtues», L. ZAGZEBSKI, A. FAIRWEATHER (eds.), *Virtue Epistemology*, Oxford University Press, New York 2001, pp. 36-37).

170. Cfr. VOM, p. 247.

171. Zagzebski feels that this distinction should be generalised in speech to the other virtues (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 251).

172. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Précis of Virtues of the Mind», p. 175.

Both Kvanvig and Kornblith say that it is not clear that there is any one understanding of a situation a virtuous person *would* have as opposed to what they *might* have. There is no guarantee that an actual person would believe the same thing for the same reasons as a hypothetical person. The virtues of a specific individual cannot be judged in comparison to someone else<sup>173</sup>. But Zagzebski is concerned about the dependence of a belief's justification upon the dependence of the justification of the background beliefs.

«If p is believed on the basis of q but q is unjustified, p is unjustifiable as well. So p might be the belief that a UFO has landed in my backyard, where q is a set of crazy beliefs about the ubiquity of UFOs and their propensity for landing in the backyards of philosophers. But even if p would be justified on the basis of q, surely p is unjustified»<sup>174</sup>.

The constraint of the understanding a virtuous person would have if placed in the agent's shoes does not imply a unique understanding<sup>175</sup>. It means that the practically wise person would eliminate any strange background beliefs and would supplement for any common-sense beliefs that are lacking. Now if it turns out that an epistemic agent is so irrational that she lacks most of the background beliefs that a practically wise person would have, it can come as no surprise that the vast majority of her beliefs should turn out to be unjustified. On the same count, we need to keep in mind the distinction between having an epistemically permissible belief — shared by experts and so justified — and a praiseworthy belief — where one is actually aware of expert opinion<sup>176</sup> —.

Kvanvig also argues that the notion of virtue in justification is itself misplaced since the justification of a belief needs also to explain the prior concept of the justification of a proposition i.e. that one have adequate evidence as prior to the propriety of how one has based their belief on that evidence. Virtue Epistemologists are then said to indulge in «doxasticism» because they justify the proposition in terms of the justification of the belief. Even if the order of dependence were to be reversed, such can't be put into practice because what a hypothetical virtuous person *would* believe cannot be used as an adequate comparison for the actual person's propositions<sup>177</sup>. Zagzebski rejects the claim by saying that the role of justification

173. J. KVANVIG, «Zagzebski on Justification», *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research*, 60 (2000) 191-192. And H. KORNBLITH, «Linda Zagzebski's *Virtues of the Mind*», *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research*, 60 (2000) 198-199.

174. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Responses», p. 214.

175. *Ibid.*

176. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 215.

177. Cfr. KVANVIG, «Zagzebski on Justification», pp. 192-196.

in contemporary epistemology is far too inflated. Kvanvig's argument is taken to actually be a point in favour of drastically reducing the scope of justification from propositions and restricting it to belief instead<sup>178</sup>.

The definition of a justified belief in terms of intellectual virtues is the point of connection between Zagzebski's work and that of Goldman and Sosa, although the latter do very little to investigate an intellectual virtue itself but look rather to its effects in producing a high ratio of true beliefs over false ones<sup>179</sup>. Zagzebski's own re-working of moral theory attributes the goodness of an act to the goodness of the motivation with which it is carried out. As such the Zagzebskian motive bears some resemblance to the Kantian will because they are both good in themselves. A similar virtue definition of justification could be elaborated, however, by taking on board the teleological concerns of Sosa and the reliabilists. «I will not attempt in this book to work out the way my project can be linked up with Sosa's or Goldman's, but I see no reason to think it cannot be done»<sup>180</sup>. I think that the articulation of how this can be done would be especially fruitful and an initial sketch is made by me in the criticisms I make later on about Zagzebski's work.

## 2.2. Knowledge and Moral Justification

The traditional definition of knowledge as being a justified true belief has been abandoned due to Gettier counterexamples and disagreement over the term «justification» itself. As a Virtue Epistemologist, Linda Zagzebski works a Copernican revolution from the belief to the agent herself and to her traits (intellectual and moral virtues) as the source of that belief's justification. The following definitions of knowledge incorporate Zagzebski's grades of deontological justification.

### 2.2.1. *Knowledge through Acts of Virtue*

That a belief be justified does not mean that it is actually true, rather it contains a property that tends to lead us to the truth. Knowledge, however, is a state where the truth has been reached. The question of justification hinges on the truth arising out of certain properties of the belief itself, paralleling what Zagzebski defined as being a virtuous act. «So an act of intellectual virtue [...] must lead to the truth because of the operation of the virtue»<sup>181</sup>.

178. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Responses», p. 213.

179. Cfr. VOM, p. 246.

180. *Ibid.*, cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

181. *Ibid.*, p. 269.



«An act is an act of intellectual virtue *I* just in case it arises from the motivational component of *I*, is something a person with *I* would characteristically do in the circumstances, and is successful in leading to the immediate end of *I* and to the truth because of the features of the act»<sup>182</sup>.

In order to get «knowledge», the investigator should be receptive to new ideas and arguments opposed to her own (open-mindedness), exhaustively investigate the evidence (thoroughness), and resist mere fashion or peer pressure for its own sake (courage). «So each intellectual virtue has an end that is unique to that virtue, but since every intellectual virtue arises out of the general motivation for knowledge, an intellectual virtue also includes knowledge as its ultimate end»<sup>183</sup>. As the definition of an intellectual virtue does not include the concept of knowledge, knowledge may now be defined in terms of an intellectual virtue without circularity arising therefrom. William Alston says that Zagzebski has been brilliant in handling Gettier problems therein. By requiring a true belief to be formed *through* the virtuous motivation, she closes the gap between what makes a belief true and the way the true belief was actually formed<sup>184</sup>.

Zagzebski herself spells out three different approaches to knowledge, according to the motive and the object<sup>185</sup>. In the first case both the motive and the object sought are good (a passion for truth). In the second case the motive is awry (smugness or greed), and in the third case the object is also bad (vengeful prying). Interestingly enough, in neither of these three cases does one fail to obtain knowledge, «we do not yet have a case in which a belief satisfies reliabilist conditions for knowledge but not intellectual virtue conditions and yet is intuitively a case of knowledge»<sup>186</sup>. Her own test for justification and knowledge only requires that the person do what a virtuous person in their shoes would characteristically do.

«The definition requires that the knower be motivated out of a desire for truth, but it does not require that the agent value the truth for its own sake, nor does it require that the agent's other motives be pure. Having knowledge in my sense is compatible with having an ulterior motive such as the desire for praise, money, or social status»<sup>187</sup>.

Fine for an intellectual virtue, but would such really count for a moral virtue that demands an integrated character? It would seem that, given

182. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Précis of Virtues of the Mind», p. 176.

183. VOM, pp. 269-270.

184. Cfr. ALSTON, «Virtue and Knowledge», *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research*, 60 (2000) 188.

185. Cfr. VOM, pp. 311-319.

186. *Ibid.*, p. 318.

187. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Responses», p. 218.

that Zagzebski is reluctant to distinguish a trait from a virtue (as argued earlier), she would allow for a person to possess one moral virtue in the absence of others. In the case of a greedy person, Zagzebski calls on the authority of Aristotle to say that this is so:

«In that case the knower may be like the Laconians, whom Aristotle describes as being motivated to be virtuous for the sake of natural goods like honor. It is interesting that Aristotle is willing to say that they are good (*agathos*), but they are not noble (*kalos*)»<sup>188</sup>.

In her nosy-neighbour scenario she says that,

«Her desire to believe ill of someone is surely not a natural good or any sort of good. But she may also be able to perform acts of intellectual virtue for the same reason the medical researcher [driven by fame] can perform such acts. As long as the definition of intellectual virtue does not preclude ulterior second-order motives (even bad second-order motives such as envy or pride), she can perform acts of intellectual attentiveness, perseverance, etc. She must, of course, have the particular motives unique to each of these virtues, but there is no reason to think that she lacks these motives. Her problem is the rationale for the motivations themselves»<sup>189</sup>.

The problem here concerns the possibility of possessing one moral virtue — perseverance — without all the others. The traditional view is that while an intellectual virtue like *scientia* may be exercised virtuously *secundum quid*, regardless of the overall moral goodness of the act, for a moral virtue like courage to be exercised virtuously, it must be exercised virtuously *simpliciter*, as a good act in every respect. In other words, a courageous but unjust act would be an exercise of the trait of courage and not the virtue of courage. As Zagzebski believes that there is no inherent difference between the intellectual and moral virtues neither does she believe that one virtue should be defined as dependent upon the possession of the others<sup>190</sup>. I think that this understanding of moral virtue arises, however, more within the context of her own motivation-based account and not within a teleological paradigm of moral virtue.

A foreseen objection to Zagzebski's responsibilism concerns the specific case of unreliability even where someone behaves responsibly. Let us consider someone who acts virtuously by trusting in an expert when dealing with a matter that was outside his own competence, and yet that expert himself had formed his belief on weak evidence. Zagzebski says that this case illustrates,

188. *Ibid.*

189. VOM, p. 318.

190. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

«the importance of the social nexus of knowledge and the need to refine the account of an act of intellectual virtue accordingly [...] To the extent that a person relies for knowledge on somebody else, her resulting state is not knowledge if that someone else does not also have knowledge»<sup>191</sup>.

To have faith in what one does not fully understand, on the basis of reliable authority, counts as knowledge to the extent that such authority is reliable. Those who constitute such authority have a moral responsibility thus, because passing on what is not knowledge is a way of harming others in our society. But does Zagzebski also mean that if the person did not get knowledge when she trusted but was disappointed, her belief was *morally* unjustified as a result of bad luck and not just epistemically so? If the intellectual virtues are a subset of the moral virtues that conclusion is hard to escape.

### 2.2.2. Knowledge as «Cognitive Contact»

Zagzebski defines knowledge as a state of cognitive contact with reality arising from acts of intellectual virtue<sup>192</sup>. Restricting the definition to more Cartesian terms (i.e. in terms of an individual state of belief), we can alternatively say that knowledge is a state of belief arising from acts of intellectual virtue<sup>193</sup>.

By describing knowledge as a state of cognitive contact that arises from acts of intellectual virtue, Zagzebski has looked to define knowledge in a rigorous but attainable way<sup>194</sup>. It is a definition that handles contemporary concerns of the internalists and externalists, such as Gettier problems, but which is not simply an *ad hoc* response to a given counter-example because it has all the theoretical power of a background virtue theory<sup>195</sup>. Along with precision, she has sought to provide us with simplicity, elegance, conciseness, an explanation of the data, put to rest unanswered questions and be practically useful (as opposed to definitions like «non-accidentally true belief» because one should be able to recognise when one has knowledge, the same as when one has a good life or happiness)<sup>196</sup>.

Despite her close paralleling of ethical and epistemic concepts, Zagzebski says that the concept of knowledge itself does not have an ethical counterpart<sup>197</sup>. «If there were an ethical counterpart to my definition of

191. *Ibid.*, p. 319.

192. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 270.

193. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Précis of Virtues of the Mind», p. 177.

194. Cfr. VOM, p. 263.

195. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 265.

196. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 266.

197. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 176.

knowledge, it would satisfy the following schema: x is a state of y arising out of acts of moral virtue»<sup>198</sup>. Unlike moral acts, knowledge is not the act itself but is said to be, rather, the state that arises from the «intellectual» act<sup>199</sup>.

Virtue theory is clearly superior to atomistic individual belief state approaches when dealing with «high-grade» knowledge of understanding and wisdom<sup>200</sup>, and can deal with justified belief and knowledge as well. Someone who is cognitively integrated knows that she knows, is coherent, and with *phronesis* can see the relative value of the truths she has. The «low-grade» knowledge of perceptual or short-term memory beliefs may be more certain but is of lesser cognitive value. That said, perceptual beliefs are said to be included in Zagzebski's definition of knowledge because a virtuous act may be performed by someone who does not yet possess the habit (is on the way there). Reliance on one's memory and perceptual beliefs, where there is no reason to think otherwise, is an act of intellectual virtue. Zagzebski says she is broadening the notion of knowledge to the mundane, hence, in a way that Plato did not deem worthy of philosophical investigation<sup>201</sup>. The point that Zagzebski would like to make is that rationality (and not perceptual beliefs) should be the paradigm of human knowledge, because rationality is what makes us most specifically human.

### 3. CRITICISMS OF VIRTUE RESPONSIBILISM

Julia Driver is adamant in maintaining that the attraction of Zagzebski's mixed account, which combines praise of an agent's good motives with the intuition that systematic failure is bad, comes at a significant theoretical price — the treatment of perception as a virtue and not as a ca-

198. *Ibid.*, p. 272.

199. Robert Audi also concurs with Zagzebski in saying that our beliefs are not actions (cfr. Audi, R., «Epistemic Virtue and Justified Belief», p. 86). As already pointed out, there would seem to be a general lack of appreciation for immanent acts in Analytical philosophy.

200. Virtues that improve our insight and our ability to pick patterns.

201. She also says in passing that St Thomas excludes apprehension by the senses from the realm of knowledge (cfr. VOM, p. 277), though what he actually said is that sense knowledge involves the intellectual judgement of the mind's conformity to reality. Aristotle and St Thomas refer to knowledge from the senses as a type of knowledge, «*Quaedam enim cognoscitiva virtus est actus organi corporalis, scilicet sensus. Et ideo obiectum cuius libet sensitivae potentiae est forma prout in materia corporali existit. Et quia huiusmodi materia est individuationis principium, ideo omnis potentia sensitivae partis est cognoscitiva particularium tantum*» (St T. AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 85, a. 1). They even deem it to be a necessary part of our knowing material individuals as individuals via the *conversio ad phantasmata* (cfr. *ibid.*, q. 86, a. 1).

capacity—<sup>202</sup>. By the same token, Bonjour’s irresponsible clairvoyant need not be deprived of «knowledge» if his beliefs are being formed by a simply unrecognised faculty<sup>203</sup>. Virtue Responsibilists need to modify their epistemic theories in order to take into account those instances of knowledge when responsibility is not at issue i.e. in those cases when the will and the emotions do not intervene in the operation of a cognitive faculty. Even Montmarquet himself recognises the distinction between epistemic virtues that are motivated by truth (or other epistemic *desideratum*) and epistemic «qualities (virtues and vices)» that are not subject to our direct control at all<sup>204</sup>. Instead of trying to argue that an agent is somehow responsible when screening out rare perceptual beliefs, I think that Zagzebski’s epistemic theory of the virtues would benefit from the inclusion of epistemic faculties and the recognition of a set of speculative intellectual virtues of *contemplation* that are of a different species to the moral virtues that aid us in our research and investigation.

### 3.1. Need for a Faculty-Basis to Virtuous Justification

According to Zagzebski’s motivation-based theory, knowledge can only be attributed to animals and little children if they believe what a virtuous agent might believe. But why should what an animal or a little child believes coincide with what a virtuous person might believe? It seems to me that there is some deeper ontological reason for this.

«[I]t may be true that someone with perceptual knowledge does “something a person with virtue would do” in the circumstances. But now that “something a person with virtue would do” will not be something the virtuous person does qua virtuous person. In other words, Zagzebski-type intellectual virtues will be doing no work in the resulting definition of knowledge, and so knowledge will no longer be defined in terms of Zagzebski-type intellectual virtues»<sup>205</sup>.

If a child who is not yet in use of her reason can be justified in her beliefs, this will be due to the involuntary but proper functioning of her cognitive faculties. Computers or robots cannot be knowing agents becau-

202. Cfr. J. DRIVER, «Moral and Epistemic Virtue», G. AXTELL (ed.), *Knowledge, Belief, and Character: Readings in Virtue Epistemology*, Rowman and Littlefield, Maryland 2000, pp. 125-126.

203. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 127.

204. Cfr. J. MONTMARQUET, «An Internalist Conception of Epistemic Virtue», G. AXTELL (ed.), *Knowledge, Belief, and Character: Readings in Virtue Epistemology*, Rowman and Littlefield, Maryland 2000, pp. 137-138 & p. 145.

205. J. GRECO, «Virtues in Epistemology», *pro manuscripto*, 2001, pp. 15-16.

se they have no *faculty* for understanding nor for any sort of immanent act whatever<sup>206</sup>. We, on the other hand, have operative powers or faculties that enable us to see, taste, think and love.

### 3.1.1. *The Virtuous Use of Cognitive Faculties*

Plantinga's Proper Function theory defines knowledge in a way that refers only to the person's faculties and the environment for which those faculties were designed. The implication is that parts of a person (eyesight, memory, etc) are designed by God to hook up with parts of the environment, past or present. When they match correctly, the person gets knowledge. All of this can go on completely independently, however, of the persons' self-consciousness. Linda Zagzebski says that it is the *person* that knows and so the faculties should not be examined in isolation from the subject. It seems reasonable that the conditions for knowledge are conditions that the person must satisfy, and not simply the person's faculties. Although Zagzebski speaks about the virtues, she does not seem to be particularly keen to speak about the faculties that are the ontological support for the virtues i.e. where the virtues are the good habits of a particular power. In the conclusion of her *Virtues of the Mind*, however, she raises the possibility of tweaking Plantinga's definition of «faculties that function properly» to «faculties that function in accordance with virtue»<sup>207</sup>.

206. A computer which is great at processing large amounts of information in a very short time, never getting tired or having a bad day, doesn't understand what it's doing. Searle shows as much in the Chinese Room experiment. A machine has to work on a purely empirical basis, intuiting from repeated patterns in such a way that it only discriminates between what is a useful pattern and what is not, on the basis of its program's rules. Sorting the wheat from the chaff is an incredibly complex and mysterious process in a world rich in variety. Without a common sense that coordinates all the information received, and a faculty for esteeming what is useful, any agent exposed to the world would malfunction from information overload. Now legendary is the sense a computer tried to make out of a Japanese proverb that «Time flies like an arrow». One of the possibilities it contemplated was that of a previously unencountered species known as Time flies, who as it happened, were really quite fond of arrows. A «learning» robot is capable of literally any action, no matter how bizarre, depending upon the effects of an unforeseen variable. Animals, however, are quite good at sizing up a situation and deciding whether to hang around or to scamper. «Intelligence» is not just following the rules, it is an analogical notion, applied in different ways to different mammals. Locke may have erred in his decomponential understanding of abstraction, but he was on track in saying that it differentiates us from the brutes. Social animals can communicate and even follow human instructions with sufficient familiarity and involvement. What makes «human» intelligence different is that we not only follow rules, as animals and machines do, we understand them, we discuss them, and we even make them up and publish them.

207. VOM, p. 323.

A fuller definition of knowledge would be able to accommodate both Zagzebski's virtues and Sosa's faculties if it looked to how a person knows according to his or her *capacity* to know. The first step in knowledge is perception, but as we grow we become more perceptive. As a person grows, so do her cognitive capacities, and our definition of knowledge needs to be flexible enough to recognise that. This calls for a distinction between faculty-based situations of valid knowledge and virtue-based ones, without splitting up the notion of knowledge itself. It means that our definition of knowledge (and justification) should be sensitive to the capacity and limits of the knowing agent when we check to see if the cognitive powers are being «properly» actualised.

*S* knows *p* if, and only if, *S* forms the belief *p* in an epistemically virtuous way according to *S*'s cognitive faculties.

Building on Plantinga's «moderate foundationalism» we can say with Wood that, «[to] function cognitively in a proper way is to function in a virtuous way»<sup>208</sup>. Since a virtue is a good habit of the *faculty*, what counts as virtuous behaviour will depend upon the nature of the faculty in question. Good sight is a product of use and nature, whereas being just and prudent has a lot to do with one's free choices.

A child is in no wise motivated to believe that there is a tree in front of her. Where motivations do play some part in her beliefs they tend to team up with an uncontrolled imagination about imaginary friends or monsters under the bed. The different kinds of justifiable beliefs she may form will be somewhat restricted by the fortuitousness of the match between her environment and her senses. Quite obviously if she were sent in a rocket to Alpha Centauri the majority of her beliefs would be invalid due to the unsuitability of Alpha Centauri conditions for her faculties. However, as capacity increases, so does the scope for virtue and knowledge increase because the agent is able to carry out different sorts of immanent acts: reason to conclusions and achieve insight. An astronaut sent to Alpha Centauri is capable of being more skeptical about her unaided perceptual impressions and so could form many more positive epistemic beliefs.

Bigger children and adults who are able to use their power of reason are capable of intellectual knowledge. The epistemic virtues that they acquire are the intellectual ones of understanding, prudence and wisdom. Nevertheless, back here in the Milky Way, it would be hard to see how we could deny the status of knowledge to a child's beliefs that «This is mummy» and «That is a doggy». As her faculties develop, so she will be able to channel her will and intellect towards a broader range of justifiable beliefs along the lines of a «high church» view of virtue.

208. W.J. WOOD, *Epistemology*, p. 192.

### 3.1.2. *Epistemic Normativity and the Faculties*

The attraction of the naturalist explanation of epistemology wanes when we consider that the ideal and universal mind really does make an intentional cognitive contact with material reality. We see then that normativity is no longer a question of blind impulse from physical organs (or Kantian will). Reality is seen to have an intrinsic nature and finality that can be grasped by our intellectual acts and virtues<sup>209</sup>. By capturing the *physis* and *telos* of things in the world, the intellectual virtues help us to determine the appropriate normative oughts that pertain to all fields of knowledge, including ethics. These virtues also self-referentially discover and determine the appropriate epistemic *oughts*. The notion of a virtuous use of our faculties precedes a normative notion of knowledge therefore. But the normative notion of knowledge must be preceded by some non-normative notion of understanding or insight. Says Robert Audi,

«The development of knowledge seems to precede that of epistemic virtue, and the concept of knowledge seems prior at least to the epistemic virtue concepts that are knowledge-entailing. Insight may be one of these, at least if an insight cannot be false and cannot be constituted by a merely justified true belief»<sup>210</sup>.

The question of the first step in our intellectual virtues (and insight and thence to normative knowledge), can be resolved if we include the faculties in our definition of knowledge. The «justification» of our foundational true beliefs derives from our epistemic faculties. Zagzebski-type

209. With the rational knowledge from our *nous* we know the *physis* or form of something; with rational habits like *scientia* we discover how a *physis* unfolds in time; and, building upon the *nous* and *scientia*, we *wisely* discover the *telos* or fitting good that something *should* tend towards. The mind reads the intellectual and essential content of different realities e.g. «plankton», and then reasons to its goal e.g. «plankton supports the food-chain in an eco-system». Failure to capture this order leads to unwise behaviour e.g. accelerating global warming: «the bounded waters should lift their bosoms higher than the shores, and make a sop of all this solid globe» (W. SHAKESPEARE, «Troilus and Cressida», Act I, Scene III, *The Illustrated Stratford Shakespeare*, Chancellor Press, London 1993, p. 619). Now, *logos* not only deals with the rational, it also involves freedom of the will (*boulesis*). We are free, to a certain extent, in the habits that we form through our cognitive actions, in our ability to see or work out the *telos*. If we act well we come to a better understanding and, vice-versa, if we act sloppily or with a jaundiced eye we culpably come to a poorer understanding. So far as our own lives are concerned, the intellectual virtues allow us to better integrate past and present towards a sought after future that is more of our choosing rather than by circumstance. With freedom, we knowingly choose a future goal, the *telos* to be tended towards, but we do not make up the rules and consequences of that future, nor do we guarantee ourselves of its accomplishment. Our intellectual habits help point the way to where we *should* go, and through our moral virtues we set our faces in its direction.

210. R. AUDI, «Epistemic Virtue and Justified Belief», p. 91.



acts of (ethical) virtue are not necessary, then, for all human knowledge. We need not speak of the intellectual virtues as faculties or skills. They are not. But neither are they moral virtues. Insofar as someone has exercised their cognitive faculties correctly (with the corresponding intellectual habits that have been formed as a result), they will ascertain truth or reality as an essential consequence<sup>211</sup>.

The moral traits of paying attention, being courageous, etc, help one in the exercise of their cognitive faculties. But, says Greco,

«the accounts of intellectual virtue defended by Zagzebski and Montmarquet are ill suited to address either the nature of knowledge or the dispute between foundationalism and coherentism over the structure of knowledge. An account of the intellectual virtues modelled on Aristotle's account of the moral virtues is too strong for these purposes»<sup>212</sup>.

An *idiot savant* provides us with a special case where the degree of attention required in order to carry out certain calculations is minimal. Greco uses it as a counter-example to Zagzebski's requirements by saying that a mathematical genius who is not open-minded and fair can know more than many others<sup>213</sup>. We cannot say that she does not have knowledge; she simply acquires knowledge in some other way (with a more powerful faculty). Zagzebski acknowledges that the case is a challenging one, but states that she is probably exercising an intellectual virtue in the case in question, with the exception that it is quite an unusual sort of intellectual virtue in whom is a rather unusual sort of person. At any rate, the *idiot savant* cannot be said to have knowledge if she can't justify how she came to possess it<sup>214</sup>. But is this not a confusion of insight with justified belief? If we truly possess the objective truth in virtue of our properly functioning cognitive faculties, surely this counts as objective knowledge — whether it can be internally justified or not—. A witness to a crime has seen a crime whether they can prove that in court or not. Says Greco,

«[Zagzebski's] reply seems off the mark on two counts. First, nothing in Zagzebski's account requires that one can explain, or give a description of, how one knows. Therefore, requiring the mathematical genius to do so adds something new to the conditions for knowledge that Zagzebski has previously defended. Second, and more importantly, few people can give an adequate account of how they come to have perceptual knowledge

211. I take issue with the Modern philosophers here over primary and secondary qualities and side with Aristotle in saying that we do not normally err in regard to the *proper sensibles*.

212. J. GRECO, «Virtues in Epistemology», p. 16.

213. Cfr. J. GRECO, «Two Kinds of Intellectual Virtue», *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research*, 60 (2000) 182.

214. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Responses», pp. 208-209.

—for example, that there is a table in the room—. And many people, including many epistemologists, get it all wrong when they try. But this does not prevent people from having perceptual knowledge»<sup>215</sup>.

Zagzebski counts beliefs based on our memory or perception as virtuous if they are what a virtuous person would also believe. I have no qualms with that definition so long as intellectual virtue is understood as the proper exercise of a cognitive faculty and not as a moral trait.

Perhaps it would be going over the top, then, to say that Zagzebski-type acts of virtue are necessary for human knowledge. Since the road to virtue begins with the first step, it is not necessary that a person actually possess the virtue in order to perform an action that a virtuous person would characteristically so do. But then how are we to discriminate between those that are on the way to virtue and those that have performed the action by chance or in a fleeting way? Zagzebski looks to rule out the case of fleeting processes by having recourse to the motivation with which one has acted<sup>216</sup>. But that does not put paid to Greco's objection that the requirement that an agent be herself reliable, and not just an imitator of a reliable person, unreasonably restricts knowledge to those who are already virtuous<sup>217</sup>. Robert Audi says that it is one thing to argue that the instability of the basis to one's belief can undermine its justification, and quite another to say that this means justification requires the enduring and stable basis of epistemic virtue<sup>218</sup>.

«It seems to me, indeed, that there is less difficulty —even if not ultimate success— in explicating epistemic virtue as a kind of trait that yields justified beliefs and, in some cases, knowledge, than in explicating justified beliefs or knowledge by appeal to an independent notion of virtue and construing them as the kind of belief it tends to produce. [...]

»The possibility of explicating epistemic virtue in terms of non-aretaic standards of justification and knowledge does not imply the reducibility of virtue concepts to other kinds, such as rule concepts. That rigor and insightfulness and logicality, for instance, can be explicated by appeal to such notions as enduring success in forming justified beliefs, and acquiring knowledge, in response to certain kinds of grounds does not entail that this is all there is to those virtue notions. Virtue concepts have a certain descriptive autonomy. [...]

»The notion of epistemic virtue can, then, serve as a basis for developing illuminating necessary and sufficient conditions for justified belief and knowledge, even if these concepts are not analyzed by appeal to it as the more basic notion»<sup>219</sup>.

215. J. GRECO, «Virtues in Epistemology», p. 16, ft. 26.

216. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

217. Cfr. J. GRECO, «Two Kinds of Intellectual Virtue», p. 183.

218. Cfr. R. AUDI, «Epistemic Virtue and Justified Belief», p. 90.

219. *Ibid.*, pp. 93-95.

The answer is, I have set out above, an inclusion of the role that our epistemic faculties play in the obtainment of understanding, insight, and knowledge. Unlike the moral virtues which require the use of freedom, the intellectual virtues begin to be formed in the womb as soon as our epistemic faculties become operative. *Pace* Zagzebski, the moral virtues can very well aid somebody in the exercise of gathering knowledge (being conscientious, paying attention in class, etc), but the «spontaneity» of the knowing act itself pertains to the cognitive order and not to the volitional order of the will i.e. the cognitive faculties are determined in their activity and are not free<sup>220</sup>. Freedom is attributed to the human agent herself, and not to the cognitive faculties which she possesses. It is the agent who is subsequently free to direct her thoughts and focus on this thing and not another (and so exercise an indirect control over her knowledge)<sup>221</sup>.

### 3.1.3. *Social Justification*

Is a Zagzebski-type act of virtue at least sufficient, then, for knowledge? I think so. But the normative considerations involved cannot be identified with ethical ones. This is more clearly seen from Zagzebski's social viewpoint. Let us consider the case of an intellectually vicious individual in a virtuous epistemic environment; could we still praise the agent by covering his intellectual (moral) fault with a virtuous social blanket?

Imagine the existence of a lazy speculator who spent all his university years surfing but got the job because he is the nephew of one of the brokering firm's directors. The only thing he remembers from the photocopies he made of his classmates' notes is something about the efficient market hypothesis, which states that systematic patterns that emerge in the stock-market — close high on Friday, open low on Monday — are quickly discovered, exploited, and thereby destroyed. As relevant company information is assimilated in a matter of seconds, the only way of beating a market average index is to turn to insider trading. But he is too lazy to cover his tracks in insider trading, so he simply directs all investments into indexed funds. His method of gaining knowledge is intellectually sloppy but reliable and motivated.

Here we have a reliable process that does not seem to be the result of intellectual *virtue*, not even in the self-interested sense of the speculator who studies company fundamentals, since he hasn't expended any effort at all. Following Zagzebski's line of argument, however, I think that we could argue that where it counts he has actually acted virtuously by trus-

220. Cfr. R. VERNEAUX, *Epistemología general*, Herder, Barcelona 1967, p. 105.

221. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 106.

ting in the right people rather than take a strawpoll at the donut diner or entrust his investment decisions to a blind-folded monkey throwing darts at the company listing (though more than one wag could argue that it is an empirically reliable method). But the individual who places his trust in reliable authority in an intellectually virtuous manner may still be morally flawed in doing so, because the lazy stockbroker unjustly free-rides on the intellectually virtuous acts performed by the Harvard graduates.

### 3.2. Intellectual Virtues are not Moral Virtues

Amelie Rorty takes Zagzebski to task over the subsumption of the intellectual virtues under the moral virtues. Even if character and cognitive traits can go hand in hand in an intellectually virtuous believer — someone who is persevering, honest, able to work in a group or independently — there is no ready correlation between a passion for truth and the talent for discovering it<sup>222</sup>. Zagzebski, however, did not claim that virtuous motivation was sufficient for virtue. The passion for truth is only one of the components of her intellectual virtues, which must also be accompanied by the component of reliable success<sup>223</sup>. The question at hand, though, is whether intellectual virtues require a motivational component as do the moral ones.

#### 3.2.1. *Virtue «Secundum Quid»*

In Montmarquet's «intellectual virtue as a moral virtue» case, truth is restricted to the category of a good to be pursued, without consideration of its universal, immanent and intentional nature in the intellect, held according to the nature of its intellectual possessor<sup>224</sup>. Truth is subsumed,

222. Cfr. A. RORTY, «Distinctive Measures of Epistemic Evaluation: Character as the Configuration of Traits», *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research*, 60 (2000) 205-206. Although her statement that «virtues are reliable habits *tout court*» (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 204) would actually favour a subsumption of the intellectual virtues under the moral ones (or vice-versa). Moreover, Rorty's examples of sharp lawyers and greedy attorneys would seem to parallel the case of the young student who seeks high marks and not the truth which had already been dealt with by Zagzebski (but is not mentioned by Rorty). Amelie even goes so far as to claim that an Aristotelian *phronimos* would lie or manipulate when it is *appropriate* to do so (*ibid.*, p. 204), though Aristotle would never have deemed any situation appropriate for an action that runs counter to our *physis* e.g. a lie or manipulation.

223. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Responses», p. 217.

224. «[...] *nam receptum est in recipiente per modum recipientis. dicendum est ergo quod anima per intellectum cognoscit corpora cognitione immateriali, universaliter ergo necessaria*» ST T. AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 84, a. 1, co.

then, under the practical intellect's command to *do* one thing and avoid another, without consideration of its first *coming to be* according to its grasp by the sensory cognitive faculties and the purely speculative operations of the intellect. In point of fact, he does so because he is not dealing with the intellectual virtues at all but with the moral virtues applied to intellectual considerations<sup>225</sup>. He does not distinguish, then, between getting knowledge and getting knowledge in a prudent fashion. Axtell picks up on the need to better explicate the relation between responsibility and reliability when he asks the virtue responsibilists how they are going to avoid the need for drawing up two lists of virtues, one conducive to knowledge, and one conducive to justification, without severing the truth connection<sup>226</sup>.

Let us consider a reliable belief-forming mechanism that is irresponsible e.g. one which does not include the motivation to know (which is a weakly internalist element). We might think of the student who acts in an intellectually virtuous way, aware that such procedures will be truth conducive, but who is motivated purely by the need for good marks in order to get a good job and who couldn't care less about the actual truth achieved by her efforts. In fact, certain classes of vice can actually be reliable truth conducive procedures on occasions! A vice can lead to the truth as its object, and to what seems like a good outcome, in violation of the goodness of a moral act, as the result of a twisted intention. If the motivation that lead one to give alms was one of smugness then such act would not be praiseworthy. So too, if the motivation that lead one to the truth were not love of truth but rather one of envious prying, or of greedy speculation, then the epistemic act would be morally irresponsible.

When the truth is useful for the sake of something else, we have a case of mixed motives<sup>227</sup>. A greedy speculator who exercises the intellectual virtues associated with interpreting company fundamentals, values those virtues not because they are noble and splendid to have, but rather because it «pays» to have them<sup>228</sup>. Indeed, even a nosy neighbour's sleuthing efforts may rate as acts of intellectual virtue, and so the truth that he has irresponsibly attained can qualify as knowledge. Zagzebski's dual-component theory of virtue duly awards these instances with knowledge but distinguishes

225. It is this criticism of responsibilism that most directly affects Zagzebski's work in her dependence upon Montmarquet's classification of the intellectual virtues as a subset of the moral virtues (cfr. VOM, p. 174).

226. Cfr. G. AXTELL, «Recent Work on Virtue Epistemology», *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 34 (1997) 18 (in advance: RVE).

227. Cfr. VOM, p. 316.

228. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 317. The ingratiating student can be said to have knowledge in the same sense, but in the case of a nosy neighbour, not only do we lack nobility in the motive, we actually strike perversion because her ulterior or second-order motive is not a natural good — a good job — but rather something evil as she wants to find reasons to think badly about someone.

between the different degrees of praiseworthiness according to the first-order intentions for truth and the second-order ulterior motives.

It could be argued in defence of the responsibilists that moral faults will not be truth reliable in the long-run: the snoop will often jump to conclusions, or the proud person cling to contradicted premises out of an inordinate need to be right<sup>229</sup>. A student that is eager to please in exams will as easily believe what is false, upon a change of teacher, so long as it leads to a good mark, and so an intellectual vice is not reliable where the reliability test is applied to a wide set of beliefs. Where the truth is not wanted for its own sake, it will be substituted for, if something else can be used to satisfy the primary motive. Somehow, somewhere along the line, proud, vain, and nosy people will trip up due to their loss of the relative epistemic value of different portions of the truth<sup>230</sup>.

Aside from asking just how long the long run needs to be, when the truth is a necessary means to some other end, as in the case of the greedy speculator, we have no reason to believe that a morally delinquent person cannot also be virtuous *secundum quid*. Zagzebski's nosy neighbour is just such a morally vicious person who cultivates the intellectual virtues. Alongside our nosy neighbour we could also take the cases of a greedy speculator, a street-wise gangster or a lawyer engaged in sharp business practice. The special insight they possess into the ways of the world is proof sufficient that someone can be both smart and nasty at the same time. So too, other morally flawed types can also exhibit certain morally good traits, but they are always good *secundum quid*. A Nazi could be courageous or a biased judge compassionate in over awarding compensation payments to the wrong party. How is an intellectual virtue treated any differently from a moral virtue then?<sup>231</sup>

*Secundum quid*, good intellectual and moral habits are treated the same in Zagzebski's motivation-based virtue theory because each moral virtue stands alone without there being any intrinsic connection to justice. Within an Aristotelian-Thomistic teleological-based virtue theory, *simpliciter* only the moral virtues are held to be good i.e. only the moral virtues are «virtues» in *sensu strictu*. It is quite possible to have an intellectual habit *secundum quid* (other than prudence which is also a moral virtue) and still work evil, whereas, through the personal integration implied by a virtue, the possession of one moral virtue *simpliciter* automatically means the possession of all of them.

229. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 315.

230. Zagzebski argues that in the case of a voracious fact collector, he would epistemically fail insofar as he would not have an integrated doxastic structure being too focused on trivia and so not able to see the wood for the trees (cfr. *ibid.*, p. 315).

231. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 139 & p. 158.

The reason St Thomas gives for Aristotle's distinction between the intellectual and moral virtues is that the intellectual virtues deal with universal principles and so, while someone can be correct about the general principle, she can be waylaid by passion in the particulars: human actions are always particular ones<sup>232</sup>. When the moral virtues, which perfect our particular actions, are governed by prudence, such errors do not arise because prudence governs our *particular* human actions with regard to the *particular* means to an end. There is no necessary link to the motivation with which one has sought that truth. When the will is sovereign in actually making a practical choice motivation then counts. In order to be morally virtuous, a person must wish others well and seek to make that wish reality in practice (which means cultivating the intellectual virtues too). An intellectually virtuous person sees the theoretical need to cultivate the moral virtues but need not put that knowledge into practice.

### 3.2.2. *The «Intentionaliter» Distinction*

Although Aristotle dedicated greater attention to intellectual perfection ahead of the emotions, he did not ignore the affective side to virtue. Not only does someone take pleasure in the exercise of virtue<sup>233</sup>, both inferior and superior appetites are an expression of the *unitary* rational and emotional tendency of an agent. If the intellectual virtues are distinguished from the moral virtues, that will have more to do with the ontologically different ways their respective ends are obtained rather than whether pleasure should accompany the working out of a maths problem or be absent from a work of justice or charity.

Zagzebski's «state» of knowledge is understood as the end of a process and not as an immanent act of *praxis teleia*<sup>234</sup>. If knowledge is just a product of inquiry then that quite naturally leads her to a study of the moral virtues insofar as they lead one to *work* well towards some end-product. She fails, as a consequence, to make a distinction between those acts which finally *get* knowledge, like understanding, and those which simply improve our chances of getting it or prepare us for its reception: by being open-minded, paying attention, etc.

232. «Cum virtus sit habitus quo perficimur ad bene agendum, [...] Sic igitur ad hoc quod homo bene agat, requiritur quod non solum ratio sit bene disposita per habitum virtutis intellectualis; sed etiam quod vis appetitiva sit bene disposita per habitum virtutis moralis» (ST T. AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 58, a. 2). «Respondeo dicendum quod aliae virtutes intellectuales sine virtute morali esse possunt; sed prudentia sine virtute morali esse non potest. Cuius ratio est, quia prudentia est recta ratio agibilium; non autem solum in universali, sed etiam in particulari, in quibus sunt actiones» (*ibid.*, q. 58, a. 5).

Although the objects of knowledge and desire are intentional and ordained to an end, they have different ways of being intentional<sup>235</sup>. Reason makes the end manifest, producing a formal object in so doing, whereas the will inclines toward the end<sup>236</sup>. The immanent act of knowledge leads to a union of act and object in the one same act. This is an intentionality of *similitudo*. The act of desire, however, underlines the otherness of the inclination and the object it seeks after. This is an intentionality of otherness. The Thomistic tradition holds that the truth (*verum*) of something (*ens*) is captured by the intellect in a speculative way and is known as good (*bonum*) for the person in a practical use of the same intellect i.e. as *fittingly* worth going out and getting. The intellect is regarded as sovereign in specifying *what* one should choose since it pertains to the intellect to determine what reality actually is and not what we might wish (*boulesis*) it to be<sup>237</sup>. As Zagzebski herself recognises, to do good one has to *know* what is good and how (and when) to do it<sup>238</sup>.

Properly speaking, truth and falsity pertain to the mind, whereas goodness and badness applies to real things themselves<sup>239</sup>. The will and the intellect can be distinguished as separate orectic and noetic faculties, therefore, because the operation of the will ends in the real things themselves (which are good or bad) whereas the operation of our understanding ends in the mind (and the mind is the ground of the true and the false)<sup>240</sup>.

Even though it is commonly thought that we think first and that then we act (usually with some form of sense information first), thinking itself is but one sort of act, and our conscious thinking and acting is often in such a jumble that it is not linearly separable into “now I think” and “now I act”. Zagzebski says that, «[it] takes tremendous philosophical ingenuity to devise a theory that separates these activities enough to permit a division in normative theory between ethics and normative epistemology. It is my position that this ingenuity is misplaced»<sup>241</sup>.

Now, Aristotle and Aquinas do not refer to conscious temporal steps in our thinking and acting «processes» when they distinguish them. The

233. Cfr. ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 8, 1099a.

234. Cfr. VOM, p. 272.

235. Cfr. ST T. AQUINAS, *In I Sentiarum*, 3, 4, 4, co. Also, J.F. SELLES, *Conocer y Amar, Estudio de los objetos y operaciones del entendimiento y de la voluntad según Tomás de Aquino*, Eunsa, Pamplona 1995, p. 121.

236. Cfr. ST T. AQUINAS, *In II Sentiarum*, 41, 1, 1, co. Also, J.F. SELLES, *Conocer y Amar...*, p. 122.

237. Cfr. ST T. AQUINAS, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 3, a. 1, ad 3. The intellect «configures» the act.

238. Cfr. VOM, pp. 158-159. To be kind, for example, we need a knowledge of the world so that we actually exercise charity with others instead of annoying them.

239. Cfr. ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics*, VI, 4, 1027b25-27.

240. Cfr. ST T. AQUINAS, *De Veritate*, q. 4, a. 2, ad 7.

241. *Ibid.*, p. 231.



distinctions that they make are ontological and refer to the fact that we cannot love what we do not know — a possibility condition independent of our conscious awareness of what we are knowing —. Aquinas says that the good is a «motor» of the will, but the motive that leads to an act depends causally upon a prior presentation to the will (or to Zagzebski's «emotional» faculty) of the object that has already been presented to the intellect<sup>242</sup>. It is «first» (ontologically speaking) known universally as true, and then known as a particular good, under which aspect it is presented to the will. The speculative or «contemplative» virtue of *scientia* in our understanding deals with the ability to demonstrate what holds universally and necessarily rather than simply counsel about the best course to take in the contingent future. Let us suppose that we are interested in the contingent subject matter of «Socrates sitting down» or in the «dictates of fashion» for purely theoretical and not for use purposes. Prior to all the practical applications of our reason we already have a theoretical apprehension of reality when we use it as a guide to what we do<sup>243</sup>. In other words, our knowledge of some truth under its aspect as something good or useful to have, is already knowledge of the truth *as such*. Our plan of attack always involves some *idea* of what it is that we want to achieve. Insofar as we make a scientific (and purely noetic) study we form speculative or contemplative virtues that help perfect an immanent act of *coactualisation* of the act of knowing and the object known (formed in that act)<sup>244</sup>. When we *use* that knowledge about contingent affairs in practical matters we form habits in operations that depend upon the known object having already been actualised by the speculative operations of the intellect<sup>245</sup>.

### 3.3. Emotional Motivation vs. Contemplation

Zagzebski is committed to a continued internalist presence in epistemology and seeks to retain the conscious knower in pride of place. Where naturalistic epistemologists want to make epistemology a field of psychology (or engineering), Zagzebski wants to make it a branch of ethics<sup>246</sup>. Virtue Epistemology is not naturalistic in the Quinean sense therefore, because it is not confined to purely biological explications. She says that it is

242. Cfr. ST T. AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 9, a. 2, co.

243. «In ordine autem agibilium, primo quidem oportet sumere apprehensionem finis» (*ibid.*, q. 15, a. 3, co). Cfr. «Quod intellectus speculativus per extensionem fit practicus» (*ibid.*, I, q. 79, a. 11, sed contra).

244. Cfr. J.F. SELLES, *Conocer y Amar...*, p. 12.

245. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 13.

246. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Recovering Understanding», en M. STEUP (ed.), *Knowledge, Truth, and Duty*, Oxford University Press, New York 2001, p. 235.

only «naturalistic» to the extent that Aristotelian ethics can be taken as naturalistic<sup>247</sup>.

Zagzebski points out that the naturalist approach may very well yield excellent results about our knowledge of the physical world, but not of knowledge as such<sup>248</sup>. Although aware of responsibilist concerns, naturalists cannot *properly* find room for them in their world-view. An empirical study of the intellectual traits that surround the birth of great ideas is something that we should warmly welcome, but the fundamental questions about understanding or how we ought to seek after the truth show that empirical studies are not the whole of epistemology<sup>249</sup>. In related issues regarding the emotions and the nature of knowledge, however, she appears to be too conciliatory with Quine's naturalist point of view. Zagzebski says that she does not want to go into the nature of the objects of knowledge<sup>250</sup>. But this issue is too important to let pass by.

Linda Zagzebski has made an admirable attempt to make Virtue Epistemology of broad appeal to contemporary epistemologists. It has come at the price, however, of providing an ontological account of virtue that is sufficiently thin enough to be open to materialist interpretations of knowledge. Zagzebski does not specify whether her «cognitive contact with reality» is via the mediation of concepts or whether it is some form of anti-representationalist functionalism or what have you. Her abandonment of a reality-based teleology (and her silence on immanent acts and intentional forms) has naturalist ramifications for her theories of knowledge and ethics that lead to a conflation between our concrete noetic psychological acts and emotions and the universal noema contained within those acts. This helps explain why she subsumes the intellectual virtues under the moral ones and her amazement at the Aristotelian division of the uses to which the intellect is put,

«What is so striking about this distinction to the contemporary mind is that it leaves out one of the most common uses of the intellect — grasping the contingent—. Most of the virtues I have called intellectual virtues govern precisely the employment of the intellect that Aquinas and Aristotle overlook. [...] the lack of a set of virtues dealing with belief about contingent matters is a serious omission from the point of view of a contemporary investigation into the nature of intellectual virtue. [...] One thing that is surprising about this passage [*Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, 5, 1140b12-20] is that he has ignored opinions about contingent matters other than those concer-

247. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Introduction», L. ZAGZEBSKI, A. FAIRWEATHER (eds.), *Virtue Epistemology*, Oxford University Press, New York 2001, p. 5.

248. Cfr. VOM, p. 335.

249. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 337.

250. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 281-283.

ning what is to be done. But in addition, anyone familiar with the practice of the natural sciences will probably be amazed at Aristotle's claim that opinions about the subject matter of mathematics and the natural sciences (what *he* considers the necessary) are undistorted by desires and emotions»<sup>251</sup>.

Zagzebski touches here upon the issue of how the emotions (and the will) can influence the intellect. In order to respond to Zagzebski's challenge let us first examine Zagzebski's resolution of the «value problem» in the light of naturalist normativity, then the intentional nature of an emotion, and finally the role that motivations should play in our intellectual lives.

### 3.3.1. *Naturalist Normativity and the «Value Problem»*

The naturalist point of view may either be epistemological — the best methods of inquiry are those which are based upon the natural sciences and not some super-scientific vantage point — or ontological — only natural objects are real and «natural» is whatever the natural sciences say they are —<sup>252</sup>. But then where do ethics and abstract notions like «ought» come from when everything just simply «is»? To what do we owe the human consideration of what I do and what I might or might not do? The paradox of naturalism lies in its self-referential failure as a theory about the absence of theory. A riddle made all the more ridiculous when we consider the moralising of many naturalists about how we *ought* to decide our ontological commitments when they deny the existence of real duties as an apodictic facet of the moral order<sup>253</sup>. The headache produced by naturalist normativity is referred to in John Dewey's *The Reconstruction of Philosophy*. There he argues that the split between what we *can* do and what we *should* do is the deepest problem of modern life.

«The problem of restoring integration and co-operation between man's beliefs about the world in which he lives and his beliefs about the values and purposes that should direct his conduct is the deepest problem of modern life. It is the problem of any philosophy that is not isolated from that life»<sup>254</sup>.

251. *Ibid.*, pp. 214-216.

252. Cfr. J. DIETERLE, «Ockham's Razor, Encounterability, and Ontological Naturalism», *Erkenntnis*, 55 (2001) 62-63.

253. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 65.

254. J. DEWEY, «The Reconstruction of Philosophy», *The Middle Works 1899-1924*, vol. 12, 1920, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale and Edwardsville 1982, pp. 77-202. Text cited from Axtell, G., *RIV*, p. 502. The split between the *ought* of reason and normativity and the *can* of the physical world is deeply rooted in our Wes-

The naturalist solution to the problem of value has been one of reducing reason and normativity to simple bodily functions<sup>255</sup>. Most proponents of reliable-process theories, for instance, have typically tried to develop a naturalistic theory that strips justification of its normative implications<sup>256</sup>. A naturalist in epistemology wants to be able to locate such things as knowledge, certainty, epistemic justification, and probability «in the world in the way that tables, colours, genes, temperatures, and so on can be located in the world»<sup>257</sup>. As seen in the case of Alvin I. Goldman, the naturalist tradition ties together the belief and truth conditions of knowledge in such a way that only non-epistemic concepts are employed in their explication<sup>258</sup>.

«When we discern a shape or colour before us, we do so presumably in terms of a distinctive impact that such a shape or colour has on us. We are put systematically into a certain distinctive state X when we are appropriately related, in good light, with our eyes open, etc., to the presence in our environment of that shape or colour. Such a state X thus comes to represent for us the shape or colour in question, and we thus begin to grasp that shape or colour. [...] What makes one's distinctive state a state of thinking of *sphericity* rather than something else, is that it is a state tied by systematic causal relations to the presence of sphericity in one's normal environment»<sup>259</sup>.

The naturalist tradition describes knowledge as a merely natural phenomenon that occurs in a wide range of subjects: children and adult hu-

tern heritage and can be traced back to the late Middle Ages. Says Llano, «Modernism views the harmony between *physis* and *lógos* —*physis* and *praxis*— as an anthropomorphic illusion of the pagans, in need of a more intelligible control in the ambit of representations. [...] Thus began a rationalism that enshrined man as a being that, with the faculty of reason, can carry out his own activities free of nature. Man came to be spontaneous, shaping nature and, above all, himself. As Gerold Prauss has indicated, this led to Rousseau defining man not as an *animal rationale* but rather as an *animal liberum*» (A. LLANO, *Enigma de la representación*, p. 77, my translation).

255. Naturalist solutions were already being propounded in Descartes' time as alternatives to his own dualism. Gassendi, for instance, could not envision how it could be possible for the heterogeneous substance of the spirit (or *logos*) to connect with, and so influence, the body (or *physis*). Descartes' only way out was to say that the non-extended spirit joins with the extended body in the pineal gland. An Aristotelian solution is to say that far from being heterogeneous substances, the spirit informs the body in all its parts, life gives the body its unity as one sole substance. The soul *is* the body transitively (cfr. A. LLANO, *ibid.*, p. 116).

256. Cfr. G.S. PAPPAS, «Epistemology, History of», E. CRAIG (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol. 3, Routledge, New York 1998, p. 380.

257. M. STEUP, «The Analysis of Knowledge», in *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* [online]. Available: <http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/stanford/entries/knowledge-analysis>, [2001].

258. Cfr. *ibid.*

259. E. SOSA, «Introduction», *Knowledge and Justification I*, E. SOSA, (ed.), Dartmouth, Cambridge 1994, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

mans simply arrive at knowledge in ways that do not appear to involve any reasoning whatever e.g. if someone should tell us that it was warm outside two hours ago, our belief in their testimony is perfectly justifiable on the basis that a reliable causal source for our knowledge is sufficient for justification<sup>260</sup>. Quine, thus, believed that traditional epistemology ought to be replaced by a naturalised epistemology —hence the title *Epistemology Naturalized* (1969)—<sup>261</sup> as a cognitive branch of psychology via an empirical investigation into the ways that people form beliefs<sup>262</sup>. Goldman explains:

«It would be a scientific study of how the subject takes sensory stimulations as input and delivers as output a theory of the three-dimensional world. This formulation appears to eliminate the normative mission of epistemology. In later writing, however, Quine has suggested that normative epistemology can be naturalised as a chapter of engineering: the technology of predicting experience, or sensory stimulations»<sup>263</sup>.

Contemporary evolutionary epistemology/psychology looks to explain away the humanities in general, and ethics in particular, as the result of a natural selection of random processes whereby certain gene-types blindly compete for continuation through their human carriers —even completely self-sacrificing acts need to be seen in the wider context of the common gene-type where one individual carrier sacrifices itself on behalf of the other same gene-type carriers—<sup>264</sup>. Soldiers, for instance, are prepa-

260. Cfr. P.D. KLEIN, «Epistemology», Craig, E. (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy Volume 3*, Routledge, New York 1998, p. 363. I would point out, however, that our trust in the testimony of others is not without an explanation. Knowing when to trust in someone else is a matter of prudence.

261. W.V. QUINE, «Epistemology Naturalized», in *Ontological Relativity and other Essays*, Columbia University Press, New York 1969, pp. 69-90.

262. Cfr. R. FELDMAN, «Epistemology and Ethics», E. CRAIG (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy Volume 3*, Routledge, New York 1998, p. 367.

263. A.I. GOLDMAN, «Naturalistic Epistemology», *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, New York 1999, p. 598.

264. F. WRITES HEYLIGHEN, in «Epistemology, introduction», *Principia Cybernetica Web*, [online] Available: <http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/EPISTEMI.html> [Sept 1993] (last checked: 2001, Dec 24): «A most recent, and perhaps most radical approach, extends this evolutionary view in order to make knowledge actively pursue goals of its own. This approach, which as yet has not had the time to develop a proper epistemology, may be called memetics. It notes that knowledge can be transmitted from one subject to another, and thereby loses its dependence on any single individual. A piece of knowledge that can be transmitted or replicated in such a way is called a “meme”. The death of an individual carrying a certain meme now no longer implies the elimination of that piece of knowledge, as evolutionary epistemology would assume. As long as a meme spreads more quickly to new carriers, than that its carriers die, the meme will proliferate, even though the knowledge it induces in any individual carrier may be wholly inadequate and even dangerous to survival. In this view a piece of knowledge may be successful (in the sense that it is common or has many carriers) even though its predic-

red to lay down their lives for their family or country in protection of their gene-type, although cases like Mother Theresa would seem to be the outliers that prove the rule of the blindness of natural selection. But the very fact that we are now aware of what our gene or meme types have been driving at frees us from biology as destiny. That same freedom now distinguishes us from the rest of nature in kind and not just in degree!<sup>265</sup> Reason would seem to have gained some independence of the body.

The human being is, paradoxically, a *cultural* animal by *nature*. Although all human infants express the innately determined behaviour of crying, clutching, smiling, babbling and making eye-contact, the influence of culture can override even the strongest instinctive impulses of reproduction and nutrition. The human species' despecialisation to its environment in both body and soul is explained by some as the result of an evolutionary «defect» that has worked in our favour. The basic argument is that humans are born too early, and are then bombarded by more perceptions than they can handle i.e. receive more perceptions than they can put into immediate pragmatic effect. A «space» is provided hence for culture, for the theoretical, and out of this hiatus we develop such ideas as God, the immortality of the soul, and duty<sup>266</sup>.

Interest and guidance make room for a normative concept of justification within a naturalist paradigm<sup>267</sup>. Although evidential justification

tions may be totally wrong, as long as it is sufficiently “convincing” to new carriers. Here we see a picture where even the subject of knowledge has lost his primacy, and knowledge becomes a force of its own with proper goals and ways of developing itself. That this is realistic can be illustrated by the many superstitions, fads, and irrational beliefs that have spread over the globe, sometimes with a frightening speed.

»Like social constructivism, memetics attracts the attention to communication and social processes in the development of knowledge, but instead of seeing knowledge as constructed by the social system, it rather sees social systems as constructed by knowledge processes. Indeed, a social group can be defined by the fact that all its members share the same meme (Heylighen, 1992). Even the concept of “self”, that which distinguishes a person as an individual, can be considered as a piece of knowledge, constructed through social processes (Harré, 19), and hence a result of memetic evolution. From a constructivist approach, where knowledge is constructed by individuals or society, we have moved to a memetic approach, which sees society and even individuality as byproducts constructed by an ongoing evolution of independent fragments of knowledge competing for domination».

265. Matt Ridley is not warranted in his remarks that there is nothing unique about uniqueness, as if human consciousness (which is *not* to be identified with the internal sense of imagination) were comparable to an elephant's trunk or a chimpanzee's large testicles (cfr. M. RIDLEY, «Re-reading Darwin», *Prospect*, Bristol August/September 2001, p. 76).

266. Cfr. W. PANNENBERG, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, translated by O'Connell, M. J., T & T Clark Ltd, Edinburgh 1999; pp. 28-29 & 39.

267. Cfr. P.K. MOSER, «Epistemology», R. AUDI (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, New York 1995, p. 275.

boils down to simply meaning evidential support, the ability to give a causal explanation of something does not preclude a place for responsibility (though it never really gives an ultimate justification for it). A reliabilist is usually concerned about being justified, even where justification itself does not yield the truth. Indeed, if an epistemic agent is worried about reliability it is usually because they are seeking to change epistemic behaviour i.e. reliability has a prescriptive value. How, though, is justification possible as a *normative* guide in a non-moral world of facts and figures? A good number of contemporary epistemologists would seem to have taken a leaf out of Hume's book and pursued an instrumental role for reason in our lives. They place the truth at the service of our passions, and this is something that can be done in a better or worse way. In other words, an objective argument may be held over epistemic means, whatever someone's ultimate goals might happen to be. Justification can be construed, then, according to the utilitarian (and not deontological) criterion of the «epistemic good» i.e. that process which maximises truth and minimises error<sup>268</sup>.

Pragmatists like Sosa argue that we desire the truth insofar as we desire correct answers to the questions we are interested in and not simply the truth «as such» i.e. not just any old truth<sup>269</sup>. This can be readily seen by way of a negative example,

«Suppose you enter your dentist's waiting room and find all the magazines missing. Deprived of reading matter, you're sure to doze off, but you need no sleep. Are you then rationally bound to reach for the telephone book in pursuit of truth? Were you not to do so, you would forfeit a chance to pluck some desired goods within easy reach.

If random telephone numbers do not elicit a wide enough yawn, consider a randomly selected cubic foot of the Sahara. Here is a trove of facts, of the form *grain x is so many millimeters in direction D from grain y*, than which few can be of less interest<sup>270</sup>.

No one is interested in mere facts. We apply our brains, rather, to the resolution of crosswords, religion, management problems, and wooing. These are the pursuits of life that we are interested in. Truth *simpliciter* is almost never a human end<sup>271</sup>. But Sosa tells us nothing about the peculiarity or perversity of the epistemic agent's interests. Supposing that you actually were interested in knowing about the number of grains of sand?<sup>272</sup>.

268. Cfr. *ibid.*

269. Cfr. E. SOSA, «For The Love of Truth», L. ZAGZEBSKI, A. FAIRWEATHER (eds.), *Virtue Epistemology*, Oxford University Press, New York 2001, pp. 50-53.

270. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

271. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Hot and Cold Irrationality», p. 21.

272. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «The Search for the Source of Epistemic Good», p. 12.

There is little or perhaps even negative value in the knowledge of trivia or what your neighbour has been getting up to<sup>273</sup>. The importance of virtue in the field of knowledge is not restricted to the resolution of Gettier problems but also concerns the ethical dimension to research and belief formation.

As we have already seen in Zagzebski's solution to the «value problem», she seeks to establish an explicitly ethical space for our cognitive practices by grounding them in her theory of virtuous motivation. I argue that Zagzebski is in the right when she talks about matters that involve some current or previous use of the will. I take issue however with the purely «emotional» nature of our motivations but that will be discussed in the next section.

True beliefs, or correct answers, or what you will, are goods (from a material point of view) that can be relative to other goods. St Thomas said that after the intellect has presented the will with the truth about goods in general, a true belief may itself be seen as one more good to be possessed, in preference to other possible goods<sup>274</sup>. True beliefs need not be conditioned on their usefulness in the obtainment of other things because some are simply interesting. Most university courses on Latin American poetry or Greek history would fall into that category. But, as with the concrete choice for one good over another, there is always an ethical dimension to it. I might decide to twirl a globe around and study all the names of all the capital cities in Asia rather than go and mow the lawns or save my neighbour from drowning. What I *choose* to do is clearly an ethical matter. Moreover, the permissibility or praiseworthiness of these different acts will also depend upon the epistemic permissibility or praiseworthiness of the beliefs that I have formed<sup>275</sup>. Surely the decision to let my neighbour drown reflects some fairly vicious previous epistemic behaviour on my part to have so lowly valued the dignity of another human being.

What role does the truth play, then, in our lives? If we spend so much time at school doing maths problems it has little to do with the love of algebra and more to do with an intellectual training. Ernest Sosa argues that our ideal of truth is about forming reliable truth-conducive practices in our perception, memory, and reasoning<sup>276</sup>. The value of these epistemic virtues is not intrinsic, however; the value of having a good memory is purely instrumental. Zagzebski turns the tables on the standard JTB procedure and asks not what it takes to convert true belief into knowledge but rather what does it take to turn justified and virtuous belief practices into

273. Cfr. *ibid.*

274. Cfr. ST T. AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 9, a. 1, ad. 3.

275. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «The Search for the Source of Epistemic Good», p. 8.

276. Cfr. E. SOSA, «For The Love of Truth», p. 54.



knowledge? The answer of course is truth<sup>277</sup>. So, the value of knowledge will depend upon the value of the motivation with which it is sought and the reliability of that motivation à la Zagzebski's Motivation-Based virtue theory. And now for the trump card. In contrast to *Virtues of the Mind*, Zagzebski now makes the claim that the admirability of her once intrinsically good motivations of benevolence or truth-seeking depend, now, upon the higher order «motivation» to have a good life i.e. a life of *eudaimonia*<sup>278</sup>.

«If knowing a proposition is more desirable than truly believing it, it is because it is more desirable to believe in an admirable way. But I can see no way to defend that without a general account of *eudaimonia*, or a good life. I conclude that if knowledge is a state worthy of the sustained attention it has received throughout the history of philosophy, it is because its value goes well beyond the epistemic value of truth and it is intimately connected to moral value and the other values of a good life. Epistemic value is not autonomous»<sup>279</sup>.

*Fides et Ratio* embraces the intrinsic worth of our epistemic virtues because they make us better people<sup>280</sup>. But it also raises the discourse about truth up from the pragmatic search for the means that satisfy our pleasure to a quest for meaning in our lives. The discovery of the Truth is the goal that lies behind all our endeavours to know more about reality because the Truth is a sure guide to who we are and how we should live our lives in consequence<sup>281</sup>.

### 3.3.2. *The Cognitive Value of the Emotions*

In a Humean world, our sentiments call and reason responds like a lackey to our emotional behests. But in Linda Zagzebski's motivation-based Virtue Epistemology the self-same emotions are responsive to an education in their own demands. Despite the evident circularity in a process where trained emotions set their own standards for training, little has been said against it. Nor has anyone in the Virtue Epistemology debate, for that matter, taken a deeper look at the rationality of emotionally motivated choi-

277. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «The Search for the Source of Epistemic Good», pp. 20-21.

278. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 17.

279. *Ibid.*, p. 22. I have replaced the bold-type with italics.

280. Cfr. JOHN PAUL II, *Fides et Ratio. On the Relationship between Faith and Reason* [online]. Available: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp\\_ii\\_enc\\_15101998\\_fides-et-ratio\\_en.htm](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp_ii_enc_15101998_fides-et-ratio_en.htm) [1998, Sept 14] (last checked: 2002, Jan 29), n. 98.

281. Cfr. *ibid.*, nn. 1-3.

ces or the truth-value of motivated actions. I will breach that concern in the next section. For now, however, let us address Zagzebski's concern about the need to combine feeling with thinking.

If the emotions were purely private mental events we would not be able to talk about them with others (nor to ourselves). Nor can emotion be merely a mental event, since that would involve our always knowing about the emotions we have. We know when we are feeling blue, but how many people are really aware that they are green with jealousy or puffed up with pride?<sup>282</sup> Gilbert Ryle dismissed the idea of an emotion as a Cartesian «ghostly inner event», but that doesn't mean that it is simply a behavioural expression either<sup>283</sup>. For all the breakthroughs made in neuroscience over the last few decades, neither an analysis of the brain's composition, nor a clinical study of behaviour, can provide us with an adequate explication of emotion.

«Although behaviour and the social circumstances no doubt have much to do with emotion, they alone cannot account for emotion. Behaviour counts as emotional expression just because it is the expression of something else, and the social circumstances do not define but only provide the context for the emotion. [...] Feelings, physiology and behaviour, along with the social circumstances, all fit into the portrait of emotion, but what, nevertheless, seems missing is the emotion»<sup>284</sup>.

Zagzebski is quite right to recognise that the concept of an emotion depends upon a certain sort of cognition or evaluation of reality (independently of whether that cognition be correct or not). Take fear for example. When I see a wasp on my arm you can tell I get scared because I turn wan (a physically describable symptom), I shoo the wasp away from my arm (a determined behavioural response), and from the above you rightfully assume that I have thought the wasp to be dangerous (an evaluation)<sup>285</sup>. My behaviour is not the emotion of fear itself but rather the criteria according to which you concur with me when I say that I have just received a nasty shock. Nor is my behaviour sufficient on its own for you to say that I was scared. How would an AI robot know that my increased heartbeat and perspiring brow indicated fear and not pleasure? Devoid of an empathetic understanding of the context, the amount of information required by a robot to make a proper evaluation of my emotions would seem to be co-

282. Cfr. J.V. ARREGUI, J. CHOZA, *Filosofía del hombre, una antropología de la intimidad*, Rialp, Madrid 1991, p. 231.

283. R.C. SOLOMON, «Nature of Emotions», E. CRAIG (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 3, New York 1998, p. 282.

284. *Ibid.*

285. Cfr. J.V. ARREGUI, J. CHOZA, *Filosofía del hombre*, p. 230.

lossal<sup>286</sup>. The key element to my emotion of fear, however, has been my appraisal of danger. The same goes for the other emotions. Love is «love» only insofar as it is love of something or someone, and ditto hate<sup>287</sup>. Even Freud's «free-floating anxiety» has an object, albeit an unconscious one<sup>288</sup>.

«Philosophers (following Aristotle and the scholastics) have come to call the essential nature of what an emotion is about the “formal object” of emotion, and more recent philosophers have come to call the fact that an emotion is (and must be) about something its “intentionality”»<sup>289</sup>.

When someone takes my car without asking my permission I get mad, and this madness tells me that the person who took my car has done something wrong. I make a Zagzebskian «ground-level» moral judgement and exclaim «that's unjust!». The passions not only modify our judgements, they also respond to a mode of judging and evaluating reality<sup>290</sup>. The connection between our feelings, the object of those feelings, our organic transformations, and our behaviour, is a logical one, and not an «efficiently» causal one as the emotivists would have it however<sup>291</sup>. Why should it be «logical» that I get upset when I find out that my car has been taken for a joyride or worrisome when I realise that my insurance doesn't cover that eventuality? Our feelings are not the object of a special inner feeling; feelings are the way we gain sense knowledge about our tendencies<sup>292</sup>. Properly speaking we don't simply feel sad, sadness, rather, is the aversion we feel *about* something bad. A girl grabs a boy's hand and squeezes it. The boy's hand begins to tremble and go clammy. Is he in love? Disgust? Fear? The relation that exists between the passions and organic changes is a «formal» one in the sense that the object of the passion is what specifies the type of emotion that one is feeling —hate, love, or fear— and his nervous trembling is the «matter», as it were, of said passion. I think that Linda Zagzebski's concerns that we combine feelings with cognition in our epistemic analysis might begin to be satisfied if we were to view these emotions as one sole event with two different modes: a material one and a formal one, not two separate events joined together by a relation of efficient causality<sup>293</sup>.

286. Dilating and narrowing pupils are clear signs of interest and distaste, but what if I was wearing shades or closed my eyes?

287. Cfr. J.V. ARREGUI, J. CHOZA, *Filosofía del hombre*, p. 230.

288. Cfr. R.C. SOLOMON, «Nature of Emotions», p. 282.

289. *Ibid.*, pp. 282-283.

290. Cfr. J.V. ARREGUI, J. CHOZA, *Filosofía del hombre*, p. 231.

291. Cfr. *ibid.*

292. Cfr. R.C. SOLOMON, «Nature of Emotions», p. 283.

293. Cfr. J.V. ARREGUI, J. CHOZA, *Filosofía del hombre*, p. 233.

«For Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas, the emotions or passions are our subjective perturbations or affections when we evaluate reality, and our consequent desire or rejection of that adjudged reality. [...] Passion is passive, then, insofar as it consists in attraction or repulsion, and so our feelings are things that happen to us. They are active, however, insofar as they are a felt tendency. The passions are specified by their object because they arise out of our evaluation of reality. When we desire a good that is difficult to get ahold of, our subjective attitude is one of hopefulness, when we suffer some present evil then we are sad, etc. In this way, we can define the emotions as evaluations of reality, or the awareness of the adequation and harmony, or lack of such, between reality and our desires»<sup>294</sup>.

Emotion is a «joint-product», so to speak, of various faculties inter-relating with each other. In this sense, Zagzebski is right to say that our appetitive dispositions need to be considered as intrinsically tied up with our cognitive evaluations within the locus of emotion. But the respective contributions and operations of each faculty need to be distinguished. An emotion may be a source of knowledge for the intellect, or aid or obstruct the intellect's task, but its formal object is an evaluation made by the intellect that knows, and not the will that desires, nor the body that feels. Once the intellect finally fixes its gaze over something it is not the will or emotions that do the intellectual knowing. The objective content of a mathematical or scientific judgement is not a question of feelings. When Aristotle or St Thomas speak of contemplation, it leads the modern mind to think of monks in a cloister, but that is not the only form of contemplation. It is the vision of the intellect, and can as well be applied to a consideration of fashion as to the biological study of molluscs. That the will and our feelings can interfere with our mathematical judgements is by no means denied, nor that they affect our concentration, but they do not play a role in the actual grasping of the real (or logical) itself. The will wants and the body feels but it is the intellect that envisions.

### 3.3.3. *A Motivational Component to Intellectual Virtue?*

The Responsibilist's *desideratum* that an epistemic agent be conscientious is held to be a necessary restriction on Sosa's «teleological» account that classifies any truth-conducive procedure as an epistemic virtue<sup>295</sup>. Responsibility not only makes the agent reliable, á la Greco, but it also ensures that the belief has been deliberately produced by the acting

294. *Ibid.* (my translation).

295. Cfr. G. AXTELL, «Epistemic Virtue Talk: The Reemergence of American Axiology?», p. 180.

*agent* and not a non-aware computer or what-have-you. The responsibilist focus on good methods of inquiry overlooks the essential difference, however, between putting oneself into a position to know and actually knowing.

a) Knowing Unwanted Truths

Fairweather says that although he agrees that an agent's motivational state should be a relevant factor for the possession of an intellectual virtue, Linda Zagzebski has not provided us with a direct argument that links a proper motivational state to the satisfaction of the conditions for knowledge and justification<sup>296</sup>. William Alston goes further and takes Zagzebski to issue over the role that motives play in her virtue theory of epistemology. She defines it as an emotion, but «Emotion is a wheel that isn't moving anything in the mechanism»<sup>297</sup>. While that is formally true, Zagzebski defines the motive as an emotion because psychology attributes an important role to the emotions in ethics and so, by analogy, will probably turn out to be important epistemically as well<sup>298</sup>. Alston goes on to lament the lack of any concrete examples of beliefs that are sufficiently voluntary for someone to be motivated to have one<sup>299</sup>. Zagzebski clarifies that a person is motivated in their cognitive activity to be open-minded or fair in order to get the truth and not towards any particular belief<sup>300</sup>. Moreover, what counts as voluntary should not be confused with a clear-cut choice since we can carry an indirect responsibility for such in the same way we do the actions that follow from the character traits we have formed or emotions that we guide<sup>301</sup>.

At the other extreme, we face the objection that we need to include the faculties into a fuller Virtue Epistemology. Zagzebski's motivation-based theory would seem to make it too difficult to justify beliefs that are clearly not voluntary — as with perceptual beliefs — because they lack motivation. To say that a «presumption of truth» should count as an act of virtue to cover these cases would be stretching the point as they do not appear to be «free and conscious acts»<sup>302</sup>. Zagzebski responds that perceptual knowledge is not a purely passive affair since it involves mental activity (although the ontological consequences of perception as a mental activity

296. Cfr. A. FAIRWEATHER, «Epistemic Motivation», p. 68.

297. W. ALSTON, «Virtue and Knowledge», p. 185.

298. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Responses», pp. 210-211.

299. Cfr. W. ALSTON, «Virtue and Knowledge», p. 187.

300. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Responses», p. 211.

301. Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 212. Robert Audi says that we can expose ourselves to evidence or make a determined effort to resist forming beliefs when we lack certain grounds (cfr. R. AUDI, «Epistemic Virtue and Justified Belief», p. 86).

302. W. ALSTON, «Virtue and Knowledge», pp. 188-189.

in humans is not discussed by her). She expands on what she means by that by saying that perception is something that can be potentially questioned, and people *would* do so in the relevant counterfactual circumstances<sup>303</sup>. I would object that the circumstances in which we question our perceptual beliefs are few and far between, and neither should little children be precluded from holding valid Milky Way perceptual beliefs on their own merits.

b) Distinguishing the Message from the Messenger

The muted role of reflective freedom in our perceptual beliefs does not preclude a place for motivation in our intellectual lives. I think that Zagzebski is quite right in her affirmation that the influence of feeling on belief, through our motivating emotions, need not be so defective as many modern philosophers, with the exception of William James, have so regarded it. The emotion of conviction, for instance, is not a cause of belief so much as a part of the belief itself. It is a «sense of reality» akin to Hume's «vivid impression», a feeling state that distinguishes belief from mere thought. Marketing banks on vividness in graphic perceptual images and the emotional reactions to such in the formation of beliefs. Belief comes in degrees and it is closely connected to affective states of wanting, hoping, and expecting or believing. In *Star Trek*, Dr Spock embodies the «objective» belief former who bases his judgements on the facts alone<sup>304</sup>. Yet fear or enthusiasm often aids Captain Kirk in the acquisition of true beliefs because he is then more attentive or possesses his beliefs more vividly. My *proviso*, however, is that although Zagzebski is right to argue that feelings should not be dealt with as separate from our beliefs, they still need to be clearly distinguished from the objective truth content in the beliefs themselves. It is precisely the truth which gives rise to the feeling of conviction.

Instead of conflating feelings and desires with knowledge and the intellectual virtues needed for knowledge, we need to distinguish the universality of the objective and truthful content of our psychic acts from the particularity of the psychic acts themselves, or the practical methods used by our gene-types, in gaining such knowledge. Psychologism and evolutionary cognitive theories are nothing new of course, and the criticisms made by Husserl and Frege over a hundred years ago are just as valid today as they were then.

Husserl the mathematician wrote that counting, summing and multiplying are psychic acts that occur in time, but the ideal species of those acts 1, 2, 3, etc, do not speak about individual facts nor of a localisation in time<sup>305</sup>.

303. Cfr. L. ZAGZEBSKI, «Responses», p. 212.

304. Cfr. W.J. WOOD, *Epistemology*, pp. 175, 180, 187.

305. Cfr. E. HUSSERL, *Logische Untersuchungen*, Gesammelte Schriften 2, Meiner, Hamburg 1992, n. 46 (cfr. nn. 41-51 for a general criticism of psychologism).

Acts of counting have a beginning and ending in time, numbers do not. The number 5 is not my act of counting to 5, it is an abstracted form which is never absorbed by any number of particular cases. When I undertake calculations about trillions the verifications made of the results are ideal and not psychological representations. The sentiment of evidence or necessity may be felt following upon a transformation of the ideal to some concrete case, but where there is no truth as such, or intellectual insight into the truth, then there is no evidence to be *felt* either. A purely logical law deals only with universals e.g. the syllogistic forms of Barbara, Celarent, etc, do not have an empirical extension. Relations of ideas, moreover, such as  $a + b = b + a$  are theoretical truths in the first place which ground the practical usefulness of such knowledge amongst matters of fact in the second place. Says Frege:

«A proposition may be thought, and again it may be true; let us never confuse these two things. We must remind ourselves, it seems, that a proposition no more ceases to be true when I cease to think of it than the sun ceases to exist when I shut my eyes, Otherwise, in proving Pythagoras' theorem we should be reduced to allowing for the phosphorus content of the human brain; and astronomers would hesitate to draw any conclusions about the distant past, for fear of being charged with anachronism — with reckoning twice two as four regardless of the fact that our idea of number is a product of evolution and has a history behind it—. It might be doubted whether by that time it had progressed so far. How could they profess to know the proposition  $2 \times 2 = 4$  was already in existence in that remote epoch? Might not the creatures then extant have held the proposition  $2 \times 2 = 5$ , from which the proposition  $2 \times 2 = 4$  was only evolved later through a process of natural selection in the struggle for existence? Why it might even be that  $2 \times 2 = 4$  itself is destined in the same way to develop into  $2 \times 2 = 3$ ! *Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines!* [...] If everything were in a continual flux, and nothing maintained itself fixed for all time, there would no longer be any possibility of getting to know anything about the world and everything would be plunged in confusion. We suppose, it would seem, that concepts sprout in the individual mind like leaves on a tree, and we think to discover their nature by studying their birth: we seek to define them psychologically, in terms of the nature of the human mind. But this account makes everything subjective, and if we follow it through to the end, does away with the truth»<sup>306</sup>.

### c) Seeing is Believing

Though it is often said that we should hate the sin and love the sinner, it is actually the sinner whom we hold responsible for her actions and not the

306. G. FREGE, *The foundations of arithmetic: a logico-mathematical enquiry into the concept of number*, 1884, translated by J.L. Austin, Basil Blackwell Oxford, Oxford 1959; pp. Vie-VIle.

action itself. Given that beliefs are formed through our actions — Aristotle held contemplation of the truth to be the highest activity of all—<sup>307</sup> it is hard to see why a normative evaluation of duty or responsibility should not fall primarily on the free actor. The tricky part to all the discussion going on between faculty-reliabilists and effort-responsibilists, concerns how the faculties of will and intellect are used and related to each other in the epistemic agent. By delimiting the specific contributions of the will and intellect to our beliefs, I think that we can successfully resolve a major point of conflict between reliabilists and responsibilists.

St Thomas describes the interaction between our faculties of knowing and willing in our particular actions as a constant interplay between them in the following order (going from the most universal to the most particular and concrete with greater room for error in the process of so doing)<sup>308</sup>:

Reason	Will
Sight of the good	Simple willing
The dictate of Synderesis	Appetite
Consideration	Consent
Judgement	Choice and Decision
Command (A mandate to act)	Execution of the act <sup>309</sup> .

Insofar as we are dealing with the free (voluntary) choice to employ a cognitive faculty, we are clearly dealing with moral virtues. But in the actual exercise of a cognitive faculty, and not just a preparation for its exercise in the cases of paying attention or being open-minded, the will effectively has no role to play. As we are not infallible, to what do we owe the phenomena of error then?

«In practical matters, error is possible because what we have is not evidence but *likelihood*. That said, what is of even more importance, however, is that the will, which is always governed by the *subject*, *decides* in practical affairs, and that decision can be incorrect, precipitated. Since in theory a decision is of less interest, the possibility of error will be less. Theoretical error is not directly caused through knowing, but rather it is the *subject* who is mistaken, because he takes for adequate and correct what in fact is not so. [...] The act is not mistaken. Who is mistaken is oneself<sup>310</sup>,

»error is explained precisely by the plurality of the human intellect, which allows for non-logical unions. To not stick to what has been strictly known, be it due to presumption or other motives, voluntary or not, is illo-

307. Cfr. ARISTOTLE, *Politics*, VII, 3, 1325b16-22.

308. «Manifestum est autem quod in rebus agendis cognitio et affectus hominis multipliciter variari et deficere possunt a bono» (ST T. AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 113, a. 1, co).

309. Cfr. J. PIEPER, *Living The Truth*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1989, pp. 179.

310. J.F. SELLES, *Razón teórica y Razón práctica según Tomas de Aquino*, Cuadernos de Anuario Filosófico, Pamplona 2000, p. 65 (my translation).



gical; just as every objective disarticulation is illogical. The intellectual operations adjust themselves to their objects; as there are various, each to its own. This is the internal *congruence* of the intelligence. But a man may force objective integrations which have not really been thought, but rather conditioned by subjective factors, voluntary or affective, prejudices of different types, or ambitions not yet fulfilled, etc. These are incongruences, which lie at the root of formal errors.

»To form an idea of being, even if it be a well established idea, is an incongruence, if being is a first principle that is not ideal. To try and experience causality is incongruent»<sup>311</sup>.

Now, belief needs to be distinguished, then, into what is assented to by the will (*credere*) and the rectitude of the will according to what has actually been grasped as an intellectual principle (*intellegere*)<sup>312</sup>. The epistemic agent integrates his wishes and his knowledge into the one-same act of belief, but this does not imply «doxastic voluntarism»<sup>313</sup> because the rectitude of the judgement depends upon its conformance (*adequatio*) to what the speculative intellect has grasped<sup>314</sup>.

311. J. GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, *Teoría del conocimiento humano*, Eunsa, Pamplona 1998, p. 154 (my translation).

312. Cfr. ST T. AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 56, a. 3.

313. RVE, p. 1.

314. I do not think that the application of the term «cognitive voluntarism» to St Thomas' epistemology is at all fortunate because it might be misconstrued as meaning that the will plays a role in the formation of the intelligible content itself, contrary to what St Thomas Aquinas himself had written: «*Quantum ad determinationem (seu specificationem) actus, qui est ex parte objecti, intellectus movet voluntatem, sicut praesentans ei objectum suum*» (ST T. AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 9, a. 1, ad. 3). The discussion of «cognitive voluntarism» in VOM, p. 64, implicitly includes Aquinas within that tradition, but Aquinas is not Descartes. Aside from the fact that the former is a realist and the latter an idealist, St Thomas states quite clearly that the «movement» of knowledge precedes that of the will given that what we desire is always either imagined or known about in the first place (cfr. ST T. AQUINAS, *In IV Sententiarum*, d. 14, q. 1, a. 2, b, co; also, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 87, a. 4, co; *In IV Sententiarum*, d. 1, q. 2, a. 2, co; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1.I, c. 75, n. 7; *De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 10, co; *De Potentia*, q. 2, a. 3, ad 6; *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 8, co; *De Anima*, q. 13, ad. 12; *De Virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 6, ad. 5; *Quodlibetales*, q. 2, a. 3, ad. 12; etc, etc). That the will depends upon the intellect can be seen in the *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 19, a. 1, co; see also *In II Sententiarum*, d. 24, q. 3, a. 3, ad. 1; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1.I, c. 2, n. 1; *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 1, ad. 2; *De Potentia*, q. 9, a. 9, co; *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 3, ad. 4; *De Virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 6, co; etc, etc). From a dynamic point of view, however, the will transcends the intellect as the perfecting faculty of man as a whole (cfr. C. FABRO, *L'Anima, Introduzione al problema dell'uomo*, Studium, Rome 1955, p. 132). The will has for its object the *telos* of man (the good), which is the first principle of every act, «*Omnis actus voluntatis procedit ab aliquo actu intellectus: aliquis tamen actus voluntatis est prior quam aliquis actus intellectus; voluntas enim tendit in finalem actus intellectus qui est beatitudo*» (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 4, a. 4, ad. 2). In this way St Thomas overcomes the immanent circularity encountered in Aristotle's *practical* intellectualism i.e. where *boulesis* (rational desire) pertains to the *logistiko* (the logistical) (cfr. ARISTOTLE, *De Anima*, III, 9, 432b5).

The responsibilist concern of Linda Zagzebski and Montmarquet is with the method of inquiry, rather than with the contemplation of truth itself<sup>315</sup>. I think that Zagzebski's focus on the transitive acts of *inquiry*, rather than on the immanent acts of *contemplation*, helps explain her and Montmarquet's identification of the intellectual virtues with those moral virtues that facilitate getting knowledge.

### 3.4. Rational Choice

I think that Zagzebski is wrong to reduce our motivations, and by default our intentions, to the purely emotional level. The Cartesian separation of mind and body treated belief as independent of non-cognitive states, and that position is no longer popular in the philosophy of mind. Fine. But Kant recognised two levels of knowledge, sensible and intellectual, which are united in a single judgement through their subsumption under the transcendental ego<sup>316</sup>. And sentiment, for Kant, is the capturing of an empirical intuition which freely flows through all the soul's faculties without actually being subsumed under any particular intellectual category<sup>317</sup>. With Aristotle, however, we can take a further step towards pairing belief with desire. He not only relates sentiment or passion (*páthos*) to our empirical sense data and intellectual knowledge, he also looked to a «higher grade» relation between the intellect and the will (*boulesis*) which leads to freedom. More specifically, he speaks of an aware inclination (*órexis dia-noetiké*)<sup>318</sup> which is the fruit of intellectual knowledge. When it follows the deliberation of reason (in a practical capacity) it constitutes a free inclination (*bouleutikè órexis*)<sup>319</sup>. Each sentiment arises in the subject having already apprehended something and is the subject's response to that object's presentation.

The division of Aristotelian virtue into «thinking and feeling» is a division made by Linda Zagzebski herself and not Aristotle, who speaks rather of a division between the rational and non-rational<sup>320</sup>. Aristotle's division makes allowance for the existence of a rational appetite in the *ló-*

315. Cfr. VOM, p. 4, ft. 2.

316. Cfr. I. KANT, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B. 144 (cfr. I. KANT, *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by N.K. Smith, Macmillan Press Ltd, London 1929).

317. His *Kritik der Urteilskraft* deals extensively with the topic. (cfr. I. KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Verlag von Felix Meiner, Hamburg 1977).

318. Cfr. ARISTOTLE, *Ethica Nicomachea*, I. BYWATER (ed.), Oxford University Press, Oxford 1959, III, 6, 1139b5; p. 115.

319. *Ibid.*, III, 3, 1113a11; p. 48.

320. Cfr. ARISTOTLE, *Eudemian Ethics*, II, 1, 1219b27-36 & 1220a5-13.

gos<sup>321</sup>. St Thomas translated *boúlesis* as *voluntas* or «will»<sup>322</sup>, whereas Jonathan Barnes translates it as «wish». As a result, what in the Thomistic tradition would read as «the will is born from the rational» is translated by Barnes as «for wish is found in the calculative part of the soul and desire and passion in the irrational»<sup>323</sup>.

While it's true that Aristotle was uncertain whether to attribute decision (*imperium*) to the intellect or to the will<sup>324</sup>, the Thomistic tradition distinguishes the *voluntas ut natura* or *télesis* (a necessary tendency in our nature to the universal good) from the *voluntas ut ratio* or *boúlesis* (the indifference of the will before any particular good)<sup>325</sup>. What this means, in short, is that if the «thinking part commands», as Zagzebski puts it, the will or *boúlesis* (which is born from said intellectual act) must follow it. But whether any *practical* judgement of the intellect about a particular good is to be the last one, and correspondingly followed into action, will depend upon the choice of the will<sup>326</sup>. As already stated above, if the truth can be viewed as a good, it is viewed as a particular good, and so the rational will is what moves the intellect in the dynamic exercise of desiring a particular truth<sup>327</sup>.

In what way should we distinguish a rational wish from an emotional desire then? The will would seem to be a more remote, and yet more profound, principle to our choices than the feelings that our closest to them. At a phenomenological level it would make more sense to speak first of motivations rather than about more distant intellectual suppositions such as rational wills, or of external objects that «pull» our appetites towards them. But I suspect that mere emotions will not provide us with a satisfactory explanation about decisions of the heart.

321. «èn te to logistiko gàr è boúlesis gínetai» (ARISTOTLE, *De Anima*, III, 9, 432b5; cited in FABRO, *L'anima, Introduzione al problema dell'uomo*, p. 125).

322. *Ibid.*

323. ARISTOTLE, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, p. 687.

324. «diò è órektikòs nous é proaíresis è órexis dianoetiké» (ARISTOTLE, *Ethica Nicomachea*, VI, 2, 1139b4-5; p. 115).

325. Cfr. ST. T. AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 18, a. 3.

326. Cfr. *ibid.*, I, q. 4, a. 4, ad 2.

327. Cfr. *ibid.*, I-II, q. 9, a. 1, ad 3. If the motivation of an epistemic agent is not concerned with knowledge for its own sake, but rather some practical end that calls for intellectual know-how (as in chess), the value of the intellectual virtues would not be confined to the epistemic realm but cross over, rather, into the moral one. The Thomistic explanation given here of the interplay between the will and the intellect also helps explain the relation between moral and intellectual virtues, each in its own domain.



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