Virtues and Intellectual Practices

Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood

Introduction

This paper is excerpted from a book in which we argue for the epistemic importance of traits that would usually count as moral virtues. We argue that they are crucial for the production and communication of the high level and difficult knowledge that most of us seek in science and other academic subjects, morality, and religion. In our book we pursue our argument primarily by exploring the epistemic value of such particular virtues as love of knowledge, firmness, courage, caution, humility, autonomy, generosity, and practical wisdom. But in introductory chapters we argue more generally that properly functioning intellectual faculties do not deliver the epistemic goods unless they are put to use by people with certain virtues and intellectual skills, and in the chapter from which the present paper is adapted, we explore some ways that virtues support the intellectual practices in which epistemic goods are pursued.

Some examples of intellectual practices are observation, hypothesis formation, hypothesis testing, critical discussion, teaching, interviewing, and reading. We could call the items in this list practice-*categories*, because each of them has many sub-species. The practice of observation, for example, takes many forms, some highly disciplined and others casual, some performed with the naked eye and others with elaborate instrumentation requiring special skills to manipulate. Hypothesis testing can take many forms, for example, casual observation, empirical experimentation, thought-experimentation, critical discussion, and trial by counterexample. No doubt many of the practices just listed have parts that are also practices. For example, critical discussion involves listening to one’s interlocutors, giving criticism, receiving criticism, and responding to criticism, among other things. Many practices are thus practice-

clusters. Teaching (say, in the humanities) would be a practice-cluster encompassing such practices as lecturing, leading discussion, expounding and interpreting texts, demonstrating and using visual aids, and grading and commenting on student work. But leading discussion could also be regarded as a practice-cluster, encompassing questioning, listening, responding to questions, responding to criticism, analyzing, interpreting, paraphrasing, and expanding what an interlocutor has said. Intellectual practices form a network or mosaic of partially discrete but also overlapping parts, variants, and sub-species.

Practices

William Alston proposes a "doxastic practice" approach to adjudicating principles that "lay down conditions under which one is justified in holding beliefs of a certain kind."[1] Alston's paper, being in the reliabilist tradition, focuses firmly on faculties, mechanisms, and processes. He thinks we can make headway on developing a reliabilist conception of justification by shifting the focus slightly from epistemic principles to epistemic practices. His chief example is the "sense perceptual doxastic practice" (SPP). He writes,

> The term 'practice' will be misleading if it is taken to be restricted to voluntary activity; for I do not take belief-formation to be voluntary. I am using 'practice' in such a way that it stretches over, e.g., psychological processes such as perception, thought, fantasy, and belief-formation, as well as voluntary action. A doxastic practice can be thought of as a system or constellation of dispositions or habits, or, to use a currently fashionable term, mechanisms, each of which yields a belief as output that is related in a certain way to an "input" (p. 5).

Alston warns against taking ‘practice’ to imply ‘voluntary,’ and some of his practices are ‘mechanisms.’ However, he also mentions practices that are voluntary and could not be tied very definitely to any one faculty, for example the “Christian doxastic practice” and the “scientific doxastic practice” (p. 18). On the one end, Alstonian practices seem to be just properly functioning faculties, and on the other very large bodies of what we would call practices.

By contrast with Alston, none of the practices that interest us are faculty-specific. Nor are they dispositions, mechanisms, or habits, though the skilled or virtuous practitioner will have dispositions to practice the practice, and will no doubt possess relevant mechanisms and habits that are brought into play in the practice. Further, we do think of practices as primarily voluntary activities, undertaken with a more or less explicit intention of acquiring or transmitting warranted beliefs, understanding, and first-hand insight. They are activities, in a robust sense, and not just “processes.”

We emphasize the cultivation of the would-be knower’s will in the formation of the intellectual virtues. We can divide intellectual goods into two kinds, using a distinction that Alasdair MacIntyre has revived. MacIntyre distinguishes goods internal, from goods external, to a practice. Roughly, goods are internal to a practice if and only if they belong to a class such that, to practice the practice well, one *must* aim at them. Goods are external to a practice if they accrue to its excellent practitioners with some regularity but one can practice the practice without aiming at them. For example, it is perfectly possible for someone to attain the very highest powers of violin-playing without ever aiming to become rich or famous; but it is not possible to attain such powers without aiming to understand the musical logic of pieces of the violin repertoire, to execute runs and trills well, to produce a beautiful sound, etc.

Intellectual practices aim intrinsically at such goods as knowledge, understanding, experiential acquaintance, and the justification of beliefs. Other intellectual practices (those of education, broadly speaking) aim at the communication of the above goods and at nurturing the powers and skills by which people gain more of the intrinsic epistemic goods for themselves. So communication skills and the personal powers by which agents acquire understanding, knowledge, and justification and warrant of beliefs become goods that are intrinsically sought through intellectual practices.

These, then, are some of the goods that are internal to intellectual practices. Such practices also have external goods. People make money from their research; scientific discoveries and book sales can be financial bonanzas. Honors come to people who perform well intellectually. Some of the extrinsic rewards may further the intrinsic goods: money may free one for further, less fettered inquiry, and tenure and other positions may do the same. But as before, the very highest of intrinsic intellectual goods may be achieved with little or no associated extrinsic goods, and occasionally large amounts of the extrinsic intellectual goods may come to persons of modest intrinsic achievements.

In general, intellectual virtues are dispositions to use our epistemic faculties well — in the excellent pursuit of the goods internal to cognitive practices. The person who pursues these goods, but pursues them only as means to goods external to the practices, is unlikely to achieve the internal goods as well as the person who pursues them at least partly for their own sake; a greater preponderance of intrinsic motivation is not only a mark of greater intellectual virtue, but is also, we judge, more "efficient" at realizing the goods. So if these goods really are the ticket for achieving the goods external to the intellectual practices (and it is abundantly clear that they *need not* be treated as such), then intellectual virtue will be the more reliable way to achieve the

goods external to the practices. Through James Watson and Francis Crick's discovery of the structure of DNA, they achieved the Nobel Prize. But it is arguable that an important part of the value of the Nobel Prize is the high scientific reputation that it entails. Watson's account of the discovery of the structure, and the fall-out of his account, effectively lowered the scientific esteem in which other scientists and the larger public hold Watson and Crick. Their shenanigans and their motivations, when known, reduced the luster that the Nobel Prize would have conferred had they made the discovery with full intellectual integrity. So it looks as though the very highest degree of the external good of reputation is achieved only when the internal intellectual good is achieved via intellectual virtue (or at least appears to have been so achieved).

But our concept of a practice also differs from MacIntyre's. He writes,

> By 'practice' I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended (*After Virtue*, p. 187).

MacIntyre tells us that bricklaying is not a practice, but architecture is; planting turnips not a practice, but farming is. We can imagine him saying that slide-preparation and pathology microscopy are not practices, but medical research is; reading not a practice, but historical research is. But it is not clear that bricklaying and turnip planting are excluded by his formulated definition of 'practice.' Both are coherent, modestly complex, and socially established in a broad sense; they have standards of excellence and aim at such internal goods as well-made walls and

first-rate turnips. It seems a bit arbitrary to make it definitive of practices that they systematically extend "human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved." Even if turnip planting and bricklaying did not evolve, they would still count as practices in our book. The stipulation that no activity is a practice if it does not extend human powers to achieve excellence seems motivated by the role MacIntyre assigns the concept of a practice: the role of grounding the concept of a virtue after the demise of the Aristotelian biological foundation. Our concept of a practice is not designed to provide any such conceptual foundation.

Nicholas Wolterstorff proposes that we understand John Locke's basic epistemological project as that of reforming the epistemic practices of his contemporaries. According to Wolterstorff's interpretation, in the middle ages Europeans consulted a more or less canonical set of traditional texts when they wanted to form judgments about religion and morality, but during and after the Protestant Reformation it became more apparent than ever that this body of texts did not speak with one voice. The religious wars of Locke's time provided urgent motivation to fashion new practices that would settle the disputes that could not be settled by interpreting authoritative texts. The practices that Locke discusses, such as seeking evidence for one's beliefs, informing oneself broadly, listening to people with opposing viewpoints, critically assessing one's own prejudices, and reading are the kinds of activities that we wish to call intellectual practices. In the interest of connecting these practices with virtues, we propose a little extension of Wolterstorff's interpretation of Locke. Virtue concepts seem to be integral to Locke's discussions of epistemic practices. For example, the disposition that Locke calls "indifferency," which is a freedom from passionate attachment to particular beliefs combined with an intense concern that one's beliefs be true, is clearly a quality of the will or heart of the

agent, and not merely a skill. And it is a virtue relevant to the practice of seeking evidence for one's beliefs. Wolterstorff also draws a contrast between the regulative epistemology of Descartes, which is oriented toward rule-following, and that of Locke, which is oriented to education. Education links practices to character-formation and thus is more than habituation of rule following. Let us look at two intellectual practices — reading and public debate — and try to discern some of their connections to the virtues.

Reading

People read with a variety of aims, some of which are not epistemic goods, but here we are interested primarily in reading aimed at understanding, warranted belief, and acquaintance with truths, and in seeing how these aims gain, from the virtues, in prospect of success.

Our ability to get knowledge from our reading depends on aptitudes, skills, and accomplishments other than virtues. Clearly, a decently quick intelligence is important. The ability to pay close attention to what one is reading is one such skill, and background knowledge in the subject matter is important to the acquisition of any kind of new knowledge. But our question right now is whether, and if so, to what extent, virtues such as honesty, truthfulness, charity, generosity, respect, diligence, justice, openness, and caution figure in the acquisition of intellectual goods from reading. Consider, as a first example, reading this passage from Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*:

> Vronsky's life was particularly happy in that he had a code of principles, which defined with unfailing certitude what should and what should not be done. This code of principles covered only a very small circle of contingencies, but in return the principles were never obscure, and Vronsky, as he never went outside that

> circle, had never had a moment's hesitation about doing what he ought to do. This code categorically ordained that gambling debts must be paid, the tailor need not be; that one must not lie to a man but might to a woman; that one must never cheat anyone but one may a husband; that one must never pardon an insult but may insult others oneself, and so on. These principles might be irrational and not good, but they were absolute and in complying with them Vronsky felt at ease and could hold his head high. Only quite lately, in regard to his relations with Anna, Vronsky had begun to feel that his code did not quite meet all circumstances and that the future presented doubts and difficulties for which he could find no guiding thread (Part 3, Chapter 20).

The mature reader who grasps the irony of these passages experiences a sort of perceptual acquaintance with the character of Alexei Vronsky from Tolstoy's moral point of view. It is an experiential appreciation of the solidity of morality as it is brought into relief by the silliness and folly of Vronsky's outlook. One might hesitate to call this experience new knowledge, and yet appreciative acquaintance is a kind of knowledge that is always new, a fresh re-seeing of a truth of whose propositional form one may have dispositional knowledge already. Possessing some of the moral virtues that belong to Tolstoy's outlook — or virtues similar to them — contributes to the reader's ability to hear the irony in these passages. And, supposing that Tolstoy's judgments concerning marital relations, payment of debts, and so forth are correct, this perception of the fictional Vronsky as rather ridiculous will count as acquaintance with moral truths.

True, a person with a very different outlook from Tolstoy's — say, a confirmed Vronskyite — might also hear the irony in the passage. If so, it would be by virtue of a power of empathy with Tolstoy's viewpoint, an ability to put oneself into that viewpoint in a hypothetical

way. It would be acquaintance with *how Vronsky looks from Tolstoy's viewpoint*, not with *how Vronsky is*. This power of empathic self-transcendence is itself a virtue or quasi-virtue; an inability to see from alien perspectives is a cognitive deficit that is also a personal failing. But the empathic acquaintance of a confirmed Vronskyite with Tolstoyan moral truths is unlikely to be as experientially rich as that of someone with a moral viewpoint, because the individual with the moral virtues *cares* about marital relations and debt-payment in a way that even the most empathic Vronskyite does not. The concern is an important part of the moral virtues, and this caring gives the knower's acquaintance with the irony of Vronsky's judgments an emotional depth and appropriateness that lends understanding to the acquaintance. In other words, the emotional dispositions of moral character are themselves epistemic powers, powers of appreciative acquaintance with moral truths.

Consider now an academic person reading a text by an author of a very different theoretical persuasion or academic style, for example, an analytic epistemologist reading Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method*. We don't mean just sniff around in it for something to make fun of or turn easily to one's own purposes; we mean, really read it, from start to finish (more or less), seriously intending to understand it. It is difficult to imagine, but to do so is to imagine the reader as exhibiting something on the order of heroic virtue. Virtues that come to mind are charity, open-mindedness, patience, humility, perseverance, and self-control. By charity the analytic reader treats Gadamer with respect, reading him as she would want to be read, were the roles reversed.[2] By open-mindedness she reserves judgment about phrases and indeed whole pages that at first blush seem utterly opaque or irrelevant or implausible, and by patience and perseverance she continues to read with attention when the rewards seem meager or elusive. By humility she reads where a person of normal arrogance would feel entitled to skip and dismiss.

By self-control she sets aside her anger and impatience with the jargon and slow pace of the book and exerts real attention and an effort to understand. All such activities seem likely to promote the extraction of epistemic goods from Gadamer's book. Of course it would be imprudent of the analytic epistemologist to lavish her intellectual virtues on just any work with the outward and inward appearances of *Truth and Method*. Presumably, in her prudence she has some reason (and no doubt increasing reason as she reads it virtuously) to trust that there is epistemological gold in that Teutonic mountain.

Reading is one of the intellectual practices on which Locke, in his role of regulative epistemologist, comments again and again in *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*. He emphasizes that reading is much more than just taking in what is on the page and remembering it. Excellent reading is digestion, critical assessment and systematic assimilation of what is read to a coherent view of things. That is, reading is a process of understanding.

> There are those who are very assiduous in reading, and yet do not much advance their knowledge by it. They are delighted with the stories that are told, and perhaps can tell them again, for they make all they read nothing but history to themselves; but not reflecting on it, not making to themselves observations from what they read, they are very little improved by all that crowd of particulars that either pass through or lodge themselves in their understandings. They dream on in a constant course of reading and cramming themselves, but, not digesting anything, it produces nothing but a heap of crudities. If their memories retain well, one may say they have the materials of knowledge, but, like those for building, they are of no advantage, if there be no other use made of them but to let them lie heaped up together (*Conduct*, §13).

The really good reader's reading is integrated into a larger intellectually excellent life. Locke might say, "take the speed-reading course if you like, but do not expect it to teach you how to *read*." The good reader loves knowledge and understands that knowledge is not just a collection of facts; he critically insists on good reasons for affirming what he affirms and denying what he denies. He does not just seek support for his prejudices but is open to learning, willing to take a critical look at his own pre-existing views. But these dispositions are all virtues: Love of knowledge, love of truth, an open willingness to hear another side. Insofar as tutoring can teach these things in the course of a curriculum of reading, it is not just skill-purveyance, but an education, a nurturing in the intellectual virtues.

Public debate

The economist Glenn Loury has written about social and psychological obstacles to clear and truthful transmission of ideas among persons in the context of public debate.[3] These obstacles have the nature of social pressures and the accompanying emotions. People who communicate too clearly or in the wrong "language," or present unwelcome facts, are subject to social sanctions like anger, ostracism, condemnation, and being labeled an "outsider." The clarity-impeding response to these potential sanctions is fear or a utilitarian caution. Loury's essay is longer on clarification of the problem than on solutions, but he himself hints at the kind of solution a virtues epistemology would propose: needed are people with some virtues of communication.

At the beginning of his paper Loury quotes George Orwell, who attributes the failure to speak and write clearly in political contexts to the vice of insincerity, an untruthfulness motivated by fear or a desire to have the fruits of misunderstanding. Orwell comments, "The

great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish squirting out ink" (p. 145). At the end of the paper Loury speaks the language of virtue:

> How, then, are the demagogues and the haters to be denounced? How can reason gain a voice in the forum? How can the truth about our nature, our party, our race, our church come to light when the social forces of conformity and the rhetorical conventions of banality hold sway? How can we have genuine moral discourse about ambiguous and difficult matters (like racial inequality in our cities or on our campuses) when the security and comfort of the platitudes lie so readily at hand? Though it may violate the communal norms of my economics fraternity to say so, I believe these things can be achieved only when individuals — first a few, and then many — transcend 'the world of existences' by acting not as utilitarian calculators, but rather as fully human and fully moral agents determined at whatever cost to 'live within the truth' (pp. 181-182).

What, exactly, is the epistemic problem? And how might moral character be a solution?

Initially we might think that communication and discussion are just matters of people making utterances, and others understanding the utterances, and perhaps objecting to them or accepting them or suggesting refinements of them, as though *who* is making the utterances, and *how* he is making his points, and the *particular* points he is making, do not matter. But Loury points out that much of our speech is loaded with a "meaning-in-effect." The way we say things, and what we say, the kind of vocabulary we use and the kinds of facts we emphasize, often tell something about us the speakers. And how the listener takes the *speaker* will partially determine

what the listener takes *from* the speaker. Where we speakers "stand" is always in principle available to be known, and often is known, by our hearers. In virtue of this meaning-in-effect, our listeners size up both us and what we have to say. They may conclude that we are "of them," or that we are execrable outsiders, not worthy to be listened to because we are bad people. Or we are somewhere in between, meriting a cautious and guarded ear. At the same time, if we are slightly sophisticated, we realize we are being sized up by our listeners, and we have preferred ways to be sized up. So we adjust our speech to have the meaning-in-effect that we want to convey. (We say politicians and their advisors are impression-managers, but we all do it more or less all the time.) And of course the audience is aware of this tendency to adjustment as well, and will be looking for signs of insincerity in the way we present ourselves in our speech.

Loury posits that a discussion community reaches an equilibrium in which people who want to be accepted by the community will censor their own speech, making the meaning-in-effect as acceptable as possible to the party, despite their doubts about the party line. They will tend not to raise certain questions that might mark them as unfaithful or fringe members of the community. Then those who are not faithful members of the community (the real Nazis, the real male chauvinist pigs, the real racists) come to be just about the only ones who do speak in "incorrect" ways, and so the political correctness or incorrectness of everybody's speech becomes an even more reliable indicator of group membership. This equilibrium tends to stifle discussion and learning, and to veil truth. If Loury were an orthodox social scientist, he would regard this equilibrium as the last word on the subject; but he is also a moralist, and at the end of the paper he calls on individuals to disturb such vicious equilibria so as to be agents of truth.

Here a very fine line needs to be hewn to in the interest of the epistemic goods. On the one hand, if in cunning self-protection we succumb to the equilibrium, truth and light are

sacrificed, and along with them, most likely, justice. If, on the other, in unworldly purity of heart we are what Loury calls "naïve speakers," the police state of mind created by the guardians of political correctness will deprive us of our forum. What traits of character would fit us to be agents of understanding, warranted belief, and acquaintance in the world that Loury sketches? Intellectual virtue here will not be naïveté, either in the speaker or the hearer; but neither will it be cynically manipulative or crassly utilitarian. It will be *hermeneutical sensitivity to "meaning-in-effect," and skill at negotiating its strategies, combined with a concern for truth and justice, a concern both to know and transmit truth, and a concern both to receive and to give justice, and whatever epistemic skills will promote the satisfaction of these concerns.* Both over-suspicion of others' communications and over-trust of them are intellectually unvirtuous. The phrase of Jesus comes to mind: wise as serpents and innocent as doves. What are some traits that, in combination, satisfy these conditions?

Consider truthfulness, which is a concern to *convey* the truth as one understands it — not just to "tell" it any which way, but to make it clearly known. This purity of heart with respect to truth is opposed to insincerity, which is compatible with uttering nothing but true sentences. But truthfulness is more than just the concern to communicate the truth clearly; it is also a skill. It takes practice and finesse and empathy with others' point of view to get the truth across in such a way as to evoke genuine understanding on the part of one's receivers, and often the "naïve speaker" is inept at putting the truth in such a way that *it* will get across, rather than some irrelevancy that triggers prejudice. Truthfulness is also a concern to *know* the truth. In some of Loury's examples, inquiry is short-circuited because of evasive expression in response to the pressures of PC; if you are on the recipient side of the discussion, the drive to know the truth will tend to correct such shorts, to pursue the truth, to promote getting the noetic electricity where it

needs to be. Here again, in addition to a strong concern to know, you need hermeneutic sensitivity to the communication dynamics of the social context.

Justice, as a personal virtue, involves a concern that justice be done and injustice avoided or corrected, that individuals be treated justly and institutions justly constituted. Because in political contexts the clear statement of truth is often a key to achieving justice, the desire for justice can be the motivation for clear and truthful expression. In fact, clear truth-telling is itself a kind of justice, if it is unfair to one's hearers to mislead them or leave them in the dark when one could tell them some relevant truth. In this way, justice can be an epistemic social virtue.

Loury imagines a university president in the days of apartheid who has genuine concern about justice for South African blacks, but would like to see open debate about the advisability of divestiture as a strategy for promoting that justice. In other words, this president has not only the virtue of justice, but also the allied virtue of intellectual caution: he is inclined to be careful about his and other people's important beliefs. But he knows that in the present political climate, even to raise the question whether his university should withdraw from its South African investments is to brand himself, in the eyes of the students, as less than fully committed to racial justice. And he doesn't want to risk damaging his reputation as a good liberal.

What kind of epistemic character would it take for optimal performance in this situation? The goal is to keep the debate open, so that the decision about the use of sanctions can be as rational as possible. The last sentence of Loury's essay — which prescribes that individuals act "as fully human and fully moral agents determined at whatever cost to 'live within the truth'" — suggests that this president needs courage. If he raises the questions, he will perhaps tarnish his liberal reputation and lose some credibility with the ideologues who from their careening band-wagon throw caution to the wind. But if his associates are so immature, maybe he shouldn't care

too much about tarnishing his reputation with them. If they are students, one might think his role is to teach them something; and if he doesn't show some courage, he may miss an opportunity to model intellectual caution. But his courage is likely to be more fruitful, intellectually, if it is allied with some traits that we might call virtues of diplomacy and their brands of practical wisdom.

It takes insight to know when we are being pressured or manipulated by the subtler sanctions of PC; we often accommodate to the pressures almost without noticing what we are doing. Insight into how strategic self-expression works, and a nuanced understanding of how to speak truthfully, without losing one's forum, in an environment that is highly charged with unspoken threats against the "incorrect," is an important aspect of epistemic practical wisdom. (Loury's chapter can function as a primer in this bit of practical wisdom.) The speaker who loves truth and justice but knows the dynamics of strategic self-expression will be less a passive victim of the dynamics, but he will not become simply a "naïve communicator." He will count the cost of candor and forthrightness and clarity, and use these sparingly and strategically. He will *prudently* transcend "the world of existences" in the interest of truth and justice. This is not because he would at any cost preserve his good standing with the less intelligent members of his community, but because he will not want to cut off communication too soon by ham-fisted clarity. He will know how to be "diplomatic," as a way of keeping the lines of communication open, but in the end he will not let diplomacy keep him from getting the truth across.

But such diplomacy is not all deliberated PC counterstrategy. Some of it is in the emotional dispositions of the epistemic agent. Both Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1125a25-1126b10) and Jesus (Matthew 5.5) commend a virtue which in translation goes by the variously names of 'gentleness,' 'meekness,' 'good temper,' and 'mildness.' It is a disposition to be

relatively calm in response to offenses, including inflammatory or insensitive language, insult, and political incorrectness. It is akin to forgivingness, a disposition to look past offenses. As an epistemic virtue in the context of discussion, gentleness is a disposition to listen to offensive language without ceasing to "hear" the arguments it expresses; it is even an ability to hear arguments that are only incipient, and not at all well expressed in the heat of invective, an inclination not to be too defensive when you realize you are being verbally assaulted or when somebody is saying something that is ideologically repugnant to you. This would be the ability to discern the truth in statements that are not couched in polite terms, and to respond to them in a measured and reasonable way. Intellectual meekness is a form of openness. It is not the same as noetic spinelessness; the intellectually meek person has integrity. Gentleness is not just a disposition to "hear"; it is also a disposition, in heated contexts, to express oneself mildly, conciliatorily — or as much so as possible — while nevertheless speaking what one takes to be the truth. One is reminded of the Apostle Paul's injunction to "speak the truth in love." Such gentleness, on either the receiving or the expressing side, can do much to defuse the resentment that often makes a barrier to mutual understanding in public debate.

Another virtue, in the neighborhood of gentleness, that counteracts the liabilities of meaning-in-effect, is intellectual friendliness. This trait is a disposition to like other people, to find them attractive and enjoy interaction with them despite an awareness of fundamental disagreement. Intellectual friendliness is an immunity or resistance to the mentality of "us versus them" that arises when people see themselves as not agreeing on important questions. It supplements intellectual courage, inasmuch as, after one has courageously jeopardized one's forum, friendliness, in either the speaker or the hearer, is as good a bet as any that one will keep

the forum. Friendliness, and all the virtues we have sketched in this section, do their work by unbalancing the equilibrium of dialectical isolation that Loury describes.

Conclusion

We have looked at just two of the countless practices by which we acquire and communicate epistemic goods. And we have argued, roughly and by way of illustration, that several virtues that would traditionally be categorized as moral rather than intellectual, are actually crucial to the most successful pursuit of these practices. This seems to give them claim to be, in their way, intellectual virtues too.

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[1] William Alston, "A 'Doxastic Practice' Approach to Epistemology, in *Knowledge and Skepticism*, eds. Marjorie Clay and Keith Lehrer (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), pp 1-30.

[2] Margaret Tate has suggested that the virtue we have in mind here is not charity, but justice. This is indicated by the reference to respect. The analytic reader does not love Gadamer — or at any rate need not do so — but treats him fairly. We acknowledge that such "behavioral" upshots as working hard to understand, not hastily attributing stupidity, and representing the author's views fairly, are just, and we think it possible that in most cases "charitable reading" means "fair or just reading." But the present envisaged case does seem to us to require something like charity or generosity on the part of the reader, as a motive for the just behavior. From the reader's own point of view as an analytic philosopher, his behavior is beyond the call of duty, beyond the requirements of justice. The behavior characteristic of charity or generosity is often indistinguishable from justice, the distinguisher being the motive, the way the recipient of the just behavior is viewed by the agent.

[3] "Self-Censorship in Public Discourse: A Theory of Political Correctness and Related Phenomena," in *One by One from the Inside Out: Essays and Reviews on Race and Responsibility in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), pp. 145-182.