



THE  
JUBILEE CENTRE  
FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

## From 'Ordinary' Virtue to Aristotelian Virtue

**Nancy E. Snow**

This is an unpublished conference paper for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues conference at Oriel College, Oxford University, Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2016.  
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## Introduction

In two earlier papers, I began to explore how “ordinary people” acquire virtue.<sup>i</sup> By “ordinary people,” I mean people who are not specifically or directly concerned with becoming virtuous, but who have goals or aims the pursuit of which requires them to develop virtue. E.g., parents acquire patience and generosity in the course of pursuing their goal to be good parents; those concerned with being peacemakers acquire tact and diplomacy in the pursuit of that goal, and so on. These virtues can be viewed by those who acquire them in these ways to be of instrumental and not intrinsic or constitutive value, that is, needed for goal attainment but not necessarily valuable in their own right or as integral parts of a flourishing life. Moreover, the virtues so acquired need not be substantially informed by reflective deliberation (Aristotelian *phronēsis*). In this essay, I continue the exploration of ordinary virtue begun in earlier work with an eye to revealing possible pathways by which ordinary virtue can take on the characteristics of full Aristotelian virtue. In the spirit of empirical collaboration, I suggest these pathways of virtue development as testable hypotheses.

In part I, I offer a brief overview of how “ordinary” virtue is acquired. In II and III, I explore two different yet interrelated pathways by means of which ordinary virtue can develop into Aristotelian virtue. The first is via the development of sensitivities or responsiveness to different kinds of value. I hypothesize that as people grow in virtue, they become more aware of differences in value, specifically, more sensitive to, and appreciative of, differences in instrumental, constitutive, and intrinsic value. The second pathway is the development and use of phronetic capacities, that is, capacities of thought and reflection that come to inform and shape ordinary virtue, transforming it into the reason-infused virtue that Aristotle regards as full virtue. These capacities are complex and here I focus mainly on two types: capacities for self-knowledge and self-appraisal.<sup>ii</sup> I conclude the essay with two final contentions about the deeply social nature of virtue and about kinds of flourishing. First, were we not social animals, as Aristotle claims, we would not be able to develop any kind of virtue, ordinary or otherwise. Second, though ordinary virtues allow for a kind of flourishing, that flourishing is deepened and amplified through the attainment of full, Aristotelian virtue.

### I. Developing Ordinary Virtue: A Brief Overview

In another paper, “How Habits Make us Virtuous,” I introduce the notion of the “habits of the folk,” and argue that these habits are means whereby ordinary people who are not directly interested in developing virtues can nevertheless become virtuous.<sup>iii</sup> The primary mechanism there explored by means of which habits can enable such people to develop virtue is goal pursuit. This can happen in more or less conscious ways. For example, soldiers and policemen consciously develop courage in the course of the training required by their professions, and monks consciously cultivate piety in the course of pursuing the religious life. Soldiers and policemen do this through training that requires them to “toughen up,” to develop “nerves of steel,” physical endurance, and so on. Monks perform rituals, engage in regular prayer, and seek to develop mindsets that bring them closer to God and guide them away from worldly temptations.

Aside from these cases, in which specific virtues needed for success in a profession or vocation are deliberately inculcated as part of courses of training, ordinary life reveals many goals the pursuit of which can enable people to develop virtues, though far less consciously. In the course of pursuing the goal of being a good parent, a young father might develop patience, generosity, and compassion, without deliberately aiming to do so. These virtues are acquired in the way in which he performs the tasks of parenting. Patience is acquired in teaching an infant how to eat or how

to walk, or, when the child is older, in answering interminable “why” questions. Generosity is developed by the parent who spends time with his children, and compassion, in tending to injuries large and small that the child incurs in the course of learning to walk, run, play, be with other children, and so on.

Pursuing goals such as being a good parent, good nurse, pursuing peace, and so forth – which I have elsewhere called ‘virtue-relevant’ goals, is one way in which ordinary people can develop virtue outside the level of conscious awareness, that is, without realizing that they are indeed acquiring virtue (see Snow forthcoming). Other ways include following practical advice and emulating role models. A nurse trainee might follow the practical advice in a nursing handbook for making a patient comfortable during a procedure, and an aspiring teacher might imitate a favorite professor in seeking to become fair in dealing with students. In each case – goal pursuit, following practical advice, and imitating role models – the virtuous behavior consists in how actions are performed. The repeated performance of such actions over time builds up habits that express virtue. Habitual actions eventually form virtuous dispositions. Thus, virtues can be acquired in the course of daily life by ordinary folk who are not directly interested in becoming kind, patient, generous, and so on. Their acquisition of virtue is not conscious or deliberate, but takes place as a kind of by-product, outside of conscious awareness.

Elsewhere I’ve explained in some detail the psychological mechanisms that can enable people to acquire virtues in the ways suggested in this all-too-brief sketch.<sup>iv</sup> The account draws on dual process theory in psychology, according to which the mind’s operations are explained in terms of conscious and nonconscious processing. Conscious processing occurs when we turn our attention to something, which is salient in our awareness. When I choose a new outfit, I am consciously aware of my clothing choice. By contrast, nonconscious processing, which does the lion’s share of our mental work, occurs outside of conscious awareness. When I type these letters, for example, I do not consciously have to tell myself, “now put your pinkie finger on the ‘a’ key and press,” and so on. Because I have learned how to type and have typed for years, I perform that action without having to focus my attention on what I’m doing. Similarly, when ordinary people acquire virtue through the direct pursuit of other activities, their actions express compassion, kindness, and other virtues without their realizing it.

Three features of this account are important. The first is that virtue acquisition occurs outside of conscious awareness, so that those who are acting virtuously don’t realize they’re acting virtuously (unless, of course, they pause to think about how they’re performing the relevant actions). The second is that virtue-expressive actions can become habitual through routinized activities and performances. The third is that virtue-expressive actions are not narrowly situation-specific, but can extend across different types of situations. For example, Sam is patient with his son not only during meals, but also on the playground, while doing homework, and at bedtime. Moreover, Sam’s patience can apply not only to his son, but also to other children, and perhaps, to other parents, to people in general, and in performing challenging tasks. In other words, Sam’s responses to the kinds of cues that elicit patient behavior in interactions with his son are flexible and intelligent, not mindlessly rote. Empirical studies have shown that we are indeed capable of this kind of flexible, intelligent action in our habituated responses to environmental cues (see Snow forthcoming and Snow 2010, chapter two).

Given this account of how virtue can be nonconsciously acquired in the course of daily living, our question is: how can it rise to conscious awareness, such that ordinary virtue becomes Aristotelian virtue?

## II. From Ordinary Virtue to Aristotelian Virtue: Sensitivities to Types of Value

As mentioned earlier, I plan to explore two pathways by means of which ordinary virtue can develop into fully-fledged Aristotelian virtue: shifts in sensitivities to types of value and the development of self-focused pathways of rational deliberation. As noted, too, I believe these pathways are interrelated. Ideally, they would be complementary aspects of the development of the person's moral self-identity as a virtuous agent.<sup>v</sup>

Fully-fledged Aristotelian virtue is expressed in actions taken by deliberate choice, guided by practical wisdom (*phronēsis*), and done from the appropriate motivation. For Sam's patience to qualify as an Aristotelian virtue, Sam would have to deliberately choose patient actions in his interactions with his child (and with others) because the actions are patient, and because patience is the right way to act in the circumstances.<sup>vi</sup> This is a considerable shift in perspective from the way in which Sam has conceptualized his ordinary virtue of patience, if he has recognized it at all. If Sam realizes that his actions express patience, this ordinary virtue develops as a by-product: he wants to be a good parent, and being patient is an effective means to this end. Yet bringing this thin conceptualization – of patience as an effective means of achieving a desired end – to conscious awareness is the initial step toward Sam's development of Aristotelian virtue.

How might Sam's first inkling of the instrumental value of patience – that it is a good way to achieve the outcomes he desires -- dawn on him? Sam, as a rational being, would have to reflect on his interactions with his child, and ferret out what is going right, as well as what is going wrong. In this he might be aided by practical advice, by imitating others, and by discussions with other parents, relatives, and friends. Important here is that Sam's reflections do not occur in a social vacuum, but are informed by the experiences and collective wisdom of those around him. The social nature of Aristotelian virtue and its development is extremely important.

Instrumental value can, of course, be of great importance, and this fact is true of Sam's patience. This point should be evident, but it is brought home by considering the numerous forms of damage, to children and relationships, that can be caused by parental impatience in interactions with children. Moreover, if Sam's patience extends to his interactions with other children, adults, and his pursuit of other tasks, patience, as an instrumental value in Sam's life, takes on global scope and import. Yet its importance is still that of a means to valued ends; if patience did not advance these ends, Sam would have reason to abandon it.

Though Aristotelian virtues have instrumental value, they are also intrinsically valuable and constitutively valuable for flourishing lives. How does Sam come to recognize that patience is valuable in these ways? I suspect that Sam comes to see patience as having these kinds of value, if he does, by first realizing that it is a constitutively valuable part of his life – something that makes his life good, that makes his life go better than it went before he developed patience. If so, we can see Sam's sensitivities to the value of virtue developing along a kind of outward-expanding trajectory. He first realizes that patience is instrumentally valuable in helping him to achieve what he wants; he then realizes that it is constitutively valuable as a part of his life that contributes to its overall goodness; and finally, he makes the step to realizing that patience is good in and of itself – that it is valuable in its own right.

Again, Sam's reflections on his patience, aided by nudges from others, can help him to realize the distinctive ways in which patience is valuable. In terms of realizing the constitutive value that patience has for his life, we can imagine a spouse or a friend remarking to him how good he is with children, or how calm he is when performing valuable tasks, and what a contrast that marks vis-à-vis earlier behavior that was lacking in patience. Aristotle's account of friendship points us in just this direction: it is through friends' observations of us that we come to develop our characters.

Those who live with or near Sam notice how patience helps him to live well; their remarks can spur him to self-reflection and an appreciation of how patience improves his interactions with others, how it makes his life go better.

Seeing how Sam might come to realize the instrumental and constitutive value of patience through reflection on his own life is fairly straightforward. Barring mental illness, depression, and other factors that cause us to lose interest in our lives and become alienated from ourselves, we take an interest in how our lives are going. Reflecting on our lives can lead us to the awareness that having virtues is valuable, both instrumentally, as ways of achieving valued goals, and constitutively, as parts of who we are and how we live. But how do we come to acknowledge the intrinsic value of virtues?

One plausible pathway is through an expansion of our appreciation of the constitutive value of virtues. Sam might recognize that patience is not only constitutively valuable in his life, but also in the lives of his spouse, friends, relatives, and so on. Sam's reflection, one can hope, is not focused solely on the similarities among the roles that virtues play in his life and the lives of others, but also on the differences. So Sam might, for example, recognize that physical courage plays both instrumentally and constitutively valuable roles in the lives of soldiers, policemen, and firefighters, though it does not have those roles in his own life. He might become aware that physical courage is not only valuable in helping these professionals to attain goals, but it is constitutively valuable for them in that having it makes them better all round – sharper, more alert, readier to engage in whatever challenges their professions put in their way. Sam might realize that having physical courage constitutes, in part, what it means to be a good soldier, policeman, or firefighter. If so, he has taken an important step in his practical understanding and appreciation of the value of virtues, for he now recognizes diverse forms of value they can have for people in circumstances that differ from his own.

A further step is for Sam to recognize that institutions and policies can express virtues, and this expression constitutes part of their value. A just institution, by virtue of being just, is constitutively more valuable than an institution that serves the same purpose, but in an unjust way. A policy that expresses generosity is by its very nature more valuable than a policy that lacks it. For example, Germany's doors were opened to hundreds of thousands of migrants fleeing the turmoil of the Middle East. These people were met with food, shelter, and safety.<sup>vii</sup> Generosity is constitutive of this policy – part of what makes it valuable.

In these observations about the virtues expressed by institutions and policies, we have a clue as to how someone might take the step from acknowledging the constitutive value of virtues to recognizing their intrinsic value. Skeptics abound as to whether Germany's generosity toward migrants will be successful. Can the nation handle the economic strain? How will the diverse multitudes be received? Will they be accepted? Will social tensions become acute? These are all fair questions. Yet one recognizes the intrinsic value of virtues when one comes to realize that, even when the policies, institutions, actions, and plans that express them raise serious questions, don't work, or carry costs, the virtues that they express are still worth having and worth implementing. That is, we judge virtues to be valuable even when they don't have instrumental value or even constitutive value as parts of our lives. This is what it means for something to have intrinsic value – it is valuable in and of itself, apart from any beneficial consequences it might bring about.

We can see how the realization that virtue has intrinsic value might occur in the quotidian circumstances of Sam's life. Suppose he encounters a day in which his patience with his child just doesn't work, or even an extended period in which this happens. If Sam believes that it was better to have tried the patient tack and failed than to have succeeded by proceeding brusquely or with

impatience, he has come to recognize the intrinsic value of patience, for he realizes that patience is valuable even when it doesn't advance his goals nor, during a certain time period, is constitutive of the quality of his life.

Philosophers have interpreted the intrinsic value of the virtues in two ways: non-naturalistic and naturalistic. (Sam, an ordinary person not conversant with philosophy, will not be privy to these views.) Non-naturalists are aptly represented by Plato and G. E. Moore, both of whom think intrinsic value is separated from the natural world humans inhabit. Naturalists are aptly represented by Aristotle and John Stuart Mill, who believe that the value of goods and virtues lies in their being a part of the natural order – typically constitutive of what makes human lives, *qua* human, go well.

I raise this point because taking a naturalistic Aristotelian perspective allows us to explain why Sam could reasonably have the insight that patience and other virtues have intrinsic value even when they do not contribute instrumental or constitutive value to his own life and fail in these respects in the lives of others, institutions, policies, and so on. If he takes the wider view that I've sketched here, he'll understand that virtues typically enhance the value of human lives and their institutions, policies, and plans, even though there are specific occasions on which they fail to do this. Their intrinsic value lies in their natural suitability for the kind of creatures humans are; their naturally being suited to us also explains why they are constitutively as well as instrumentally valuable in our lives. Given human fallibility and the vicissitudes of circumstance, however, the virtues cannot be expected to contribute constitutive and instrumental value on every single occasion we have to practice or implement them. Furthermore, there are social contexts, such as those created by unjust societies, in which having and expressing virtue would be positively dangerous (see Foot 2001; Hursthouse 1999). Yet, overall, when social circumstances are not hostile to virtue, it helps us to achieve our goals and live our lives well. The virtues do this because they are intrinsically valuable, that is, suited by nature for us.

Sam might not make it the entire way to a naturalistic understanding of the intrinsic value of virtues, for this is highly theoretical, though their naturalness might be felt by him if he feels comfortable in practicing the virtues, i.e., if he feels better, more at ease, happier and at peace with himself, when he is patient, generous, etc., than when he fails in these virtues. We should note, too, that he likely would not, upon reflection, admit to himself that patience is, *qua* virtue, instrumentally, constitutively, and intrinsically valuable under those rather technical philosophical descriptions. That said, I believe Sam can come to understand the different ways in which virtues are valuable, provided that he is thoughtful about his life and the circumstances of living in general, and is reinforced in his reflections by like-minded others. Thus, the pathways sketched here are plausible ways in which ordinary folk can come to develop sensitivities to the different kinds of value that virtues have. Rational reflection is important at each step of the way. To this issue we now turn.

### **III. Phronetic Capacities for Self-Knowledge and Self-Appraisal**

Many philosophers have written about practical wisdom or *phronēsis* with deep insight and fidelity to Aristotle's text.<sup>viii</sup> Though I hope what I say here is not totally devoid of insight, I do not plan to frame my discussion of practical wisdom in traditional Aristotelian terms. Instead, I hope to show the compatibility of some of the kinds of rational capacities Aristotle thinks necessary for fully-fledged virtue with work in social-cognitive psychology, namely, the theory of knowledge and appraisal personality architecture (KAPA) advanced by Daniel Cervone and his colleagues. Specifically, I discuss how these capacities work in conjunction with reflection upon the types of

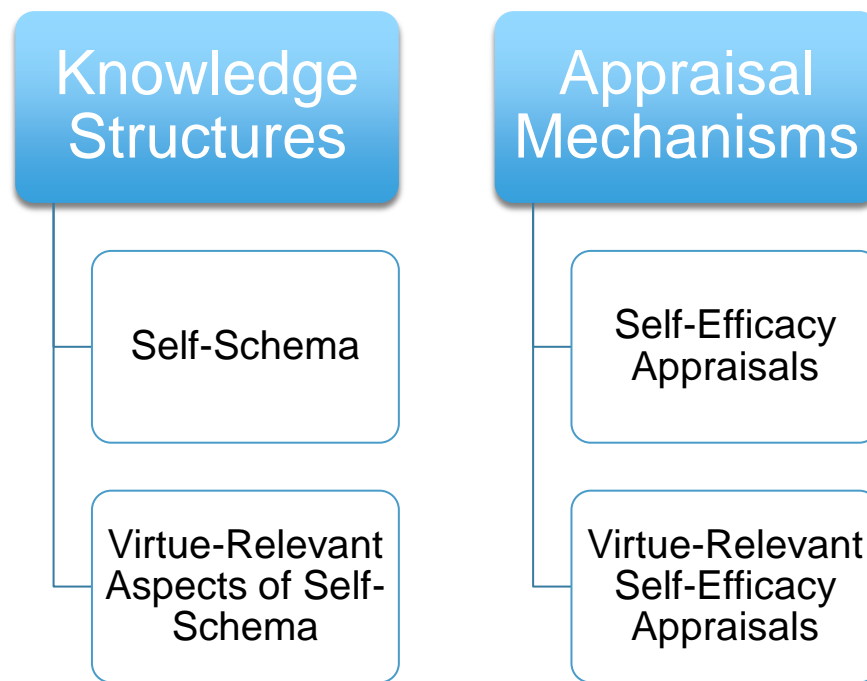
value that virtue possesses to enable people to move from ordinary to Aristotelian virtue.<sup>ix</sup> The advantage of couching this discussion in terms of KAPA is that KAPA has been empirically studied and evidence adduced in its favor. Thus, in the spirit of interdisciplinary collaboration, I hope to suggest the broad compatibility of the transition from ordinary to Aristotelian virtue with empirical psychology.

Before beginning this discussion, let me note that it might seem odd to speak of “capacities for self-knowledge” in the plural. One might think we either have self-knowledge or we don’t; we are either capable of knowing ourselves or we aren’t. I think this is too simplistic. In order to explain how someone might move from ordinary to Aristotelian virtue, we need to add nuance to the simplistic view. For one thing, we might be capable of knowing ourselves only through our own eyes, in which case, our capacity for self-knowledge is quite limited. A greater capacity for self-knowledge is to be had when we are able to see ourselves through the eyes of others. I might come to see myself as my friend sees me, for example. If I take on certain roles, I might come to see myself as others see me in that role. The visions others have of me can differ considerably from the perceptions I have of myself. I might see myself as a benevolent professor, for example, whereas my students see me as an overbearing tyrant. Granted, I need not internalize and adopt the perspective of the other, and sometimes, it is better if I do not do this. But enhancements of self-knowledge are possible even through coming to recognize that others see ourselves differently than we do.<sup>x</sup>

Cervone maintains that knowledge structures and appraisal mechanisms are two central components of cognition that are essential for modeling the architecture of personality. He writes: “Knowledge consists of beliefs about actual or prospective attributes of persons or the environment. Elements of knowledge, then, are enduring mental representations of a feature or features of oneself, other persons, or the physical or social world” (Cervone 2004, 186). Additionally, knowledge varies in the extent to which it is linked to specific domains or generalized. This conception of knowledge is largely consistent with philosophical accounts of knowledge as beliefs or mental representations.

Appraisals are “. . . relational judgments that concern the meaning of encounters for oneself ... In the appraisal process, people construct personal meaning by relating features of the self (one’s concerns, aims, and capacities) to features of an encounter (its opportunities, threats, and constraints) (Cervone 2004, 186-187). For our purposes, we can broaden Cervone’s understanding of appraisal processes to include features of the self other than one’s concerns, aims, and capacities, and features of encounters other than opportunities, threats, and constraints.

More complexity can be given to these initial definitions, but here I want to focus mostly on a particular knowledge structure, namely the self-schema or self-conception, and a specific kind of appraisal mechanism, namely, appraisals of self-efficacy. In an earlier paper (Snow 2013), I argued that knowledge structures and appraisal mechanisms form parts of what I called ‘the ‘personality scaffolding’ of virtue, namely, personality features, external to virtue, that can either help or hinder it. I now wish to suggest that certain aspects of the self-schema or self-conception, conjoined with self-efficacy appraisals in certain domains, are self-regarding phronetic capacities that are integral to Aristotelian virtue. Their development is, accordingly, essential for moving from ordinary to Aristotelian virtue. The direction in which I wish to focus our attention is depicted in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Knowledge Structures and Appraisal Mechanisms at Varying Levels of Generality**

In this scheme, knowledge structures and appraisal mechanisms operate at the highest level of generality, with the self-schema and self-efficacy appraisals occupying an intermediate level. More specific are virtue-relevant aspects of the self-schema and virtue-relevant self-efficacy appraisals. The movement from ordinary to Aristotelian virtue can be described as one in which the content of one's self-schema, that is, how one conceptualizes oneself, becomes more detailed in terms of virtue-relevant knowledge. Self-efficacy appraisals, in particular, those relating to virtue-relevant encounters, are processes by means of which one judges one's effectiveness as a virtuous agent. They can enrich one's self-schema with virtue-relevant content, and can help one maintain perspective on one's progress in becoming virtuous and sustaining virtue. As sketched in the previous section, rational reflection, often spurred by others, on the various types of value that virtue possesses and can bring into our lives, is integral to the process of developing as a virtuous person. Reflection on these forms of value, I contend, is part and parcel of developing a conception of oneself as a virtuous agent, and functions with knowledge structures and appraisal mechanisms in the process of moving from ordinary to Aristotelian virtue. Let us illustrate these abstract thoughts with concrete examples.

Consider again the case of Sam. As hypothesized, Sam begins the journey from ordinary to Aristotelian virtue by wanting to become a good father. This isn't possible unless Sam already has a schema of "the good father," that is, a conception of what it is to be a good father. What he wants to do is to become that kind of father, so he needs to envision himself doing the sorts of things he has come to understand good fathers do and having the qualities he believes them to have. In other words, he needs to modify his current self-schema so that he can imagine himself doing "good father" kinds of things in "good father" kinds of ways. What might this involve? We can make some conjectures. Sam might need to stop seeing himself as someone who is always up for a drink after work with his friends, or who spends his weekends in sports pursuits. Instead, he needs to start seeing himself as someone who spends time at home with his child, who goes to playgrounds, teaches his child to play games and sports, and so on. His self-schema needs to be modified from Sam-the-guy-who-interacts-with-friends-during-his-spare-time to Sam-the-loving-father-who-spends-his-spare-time-with-his-son. Part of this whole picture, for Sam, is interacting well with his son, that is, being patient, generous, fair, compassionate, and so on. In a word, Sam



needs to be virtuous (if only, at this stage, for instrumental reasons).<sup>xi</sup> Appraisal mechanisms are his check on how well he achieves that goal. He needs to reflect on his encounters with his son, asking himself how well they went, if he (Sam) achieved his goal in that situation. He needs to ask what was good about the encounter and why, and what was bad about the encounter and what he (Sam) can do to improve the quality and outcome of that kind of interaction. The point is that certain kinds of knowledge structures and appraisal mechanisms are integral to Sam's reflections on his interactions with his son, and help him to achieve the virtues he wants for those encounters to go well.

There is no reason to think that knowledge structures and appraisal mechanisms play less important roles in Sam's evolving understanding of types of value. Indeed, as Sam ponders more deeply what it is to be a good father, aided, perhaps, by his new experiences, his conception of a good father and how a good father interacts should, we hope, deepen accordingly, in ways that allow him to appreciate that virtues are not just instrumentally valuable for parent-child interactions, but also, constitutively valuable qualities of good fathers and the lives they lead. As Sam comes to appreciate the constitutive value of virtues in his life, his self-schema, and with it, his moral identity, should change. He should come to see himself as someone who possesses and wants to continue to possess certain virtues because they are integral parts of his life. He should come to see himself as a good father who is just, kind, patient, caring, and so on, and his appraisal mechanisms, ideally, should be calibrated to help him monitor how well his life and actions express these virtues.

This is an important point in Sam's moral development, for he now sees himself as someone who is consistently and integrally virtuous and appraises himself to ensure that he keeps this up. Before discussing the more complex levels of sensitivity to the types of value virtue has – of being constitutively valuable in lives other than one's own and of being intrinsically valuable -- we should pause to register some observations.

First, it is possible for someone to be mistaken in their self-conception and biased in their appraisal mechanisms. Sam could falsely believe he is a caring parent and bolster that false belief by being biased or partial in his self-efficacy appraisals. This form of "confirmation bias" can be countered in several ways that involve both the motivation to be virtuous, and the possession of virtues such as humility and open-mindedness. If Sam genuinely wants to be virtuous, he should be humble enough to accept criticism from external sources. He should be open to advice from well-meaning friends who know that he can and should be more caring. He should be intellectually open to evidence of his failures. Quite apart from interventions by friends, he should be able on his own to identify situations in which he has not been caring, and emotionally secure enough not to ignore or discard these encounters in his self-evaluations. If Sam consistently refuses to take the advice of others and/or ignores evidence of lack of caring, we can question whether he genuinely wants to be virtuous. In other words, the desire to be virtuous entails constitutive desires, such as the desire to know when, how, and why one is failing in virtue, and the desire to improve. If someone lacks these constitutive desires, this is *prima facie* evidence that she doesn't really want to be virtuous.<sup>xii</sup>

Second, examining how people develop sensitivities to the different types of value that virtue has enables us to see how certain knowledge structures and appraisal mechanisms are not merely parts of what I earlier called the "personality scaffolding" of virtue, by which I meant structures and mechanisms external to virtue and character that could either help or hinder their development and maintenance (see Snow 2013). They can also be integral to the process of attaining, maintaining, and growing in virtue. As the case of Sam illustrates, as one deepens one's knowledge and appreciation of the types of value virtue can have, one's self-conception changes,

as do one's self-appraisals. As Sam comes to appreciate the instrumental value of virtue for achieving his parental goals, and then its constitutive value as part of his identity, he comes to see the self-schema of the good father not from an outsider's perspective, but from the deepening vantage point of someone who is coming to inhabit that role and internalize its normative requirements, who is coming to be a good father in his own life and his own way. The knowledge structure of the good father with its characteristic virtues becomes a part of how Sam sees himself – seeing himself in this way is a part of his capacity for self-knowledge that is not external to, and supportive of, virtue, but a part of what it now means for Sam to be and to see himself as virtuous. Similar remarks apply to self-efficacy appraisals of how well Sam is doing in being a good father – of how well he is actually performing in the role he now inhabits. Thus, in the course of moving from ordinary virtue to Aristotelian virtue, phronetic capacities develop and become integral to who one is as a virtuous person. They become internalized in different, and, I believe, more sophisticated forms, as an individual develops more nuanced sensitivities to the types of value that virtue displays.

One might think that at this stage of his development, Sam has reached Aristotelian virtue. After all, he now sees virtue as constitutive of and integral to living well. He recognizes that his life goes well when he is virtuous, and goes badly when he is not. What more could one want of the virtuous?

I believe it is a mistake to think that Sam has at this stage achieved Aristotelian virtue. We can see this by considering his reasons for acting virtuously. When Sam thought virtue was needed only as an instrumental means to achieve specific goals, his reasons for acting virtuously took the form, "I'm being patient in situation X because it helps me achieved my desired goal Y." At the stage now being discussed, Sam's reasons for acting virtuously are more sophisticated. He might say, "I'm being patient in this situation and others like it because doing so makes my life go well." The pitfall here is that Sam might want virtue in his life only because it makes his life go better, and not because being virtuous and acting virtuously is the right thing to do, or is other-regarding in morally appropriate and desirable ways.<sup>xiii</sup> One has reached Aristotelian virtue, however, only when one's reasons for acting virtuously take the form, "I'm being patient because it's the right thing to do," or "I'm being generous because that is the best chance of improving her circumstances." Implicit in statements of this form is the notion that the virtuous option is the right one, even if it fails to achieve a goal or to make one's life go better in the circumstances. The reasons expressed in such statements express the agent's belief that virtue has intrinsic value. Only when a person has recognized the intrinsic value of virtue can we say that she has achieved virtue in the Aristotelian sense.

Remaining to be discussed are roles for knowledge structures and appraisal mechanisms in recognizing the constitutive value of virtue in the lives of others and its intrinsic value. As mentioned earlier, the ability to recognize that virtues have constitutive value in others' lives depends, in part, on being able to see how and why certain virtues that might not loom large in one's own life can play vital roles in the flourishing lives of others. Needed for this kind of realization is knowledge of schemas in addition to the self-schema, and efficacy appraisals other than self-efficacy appraisals. For example, one needs to have a schema of a good soldier to contrast with one's self-conception in order to realize how physical courage constitutes a part of the flourishing of soldiers – how it makes soldiers good in their roles – and how it is not needed in one's own life, if, say, one is an accountant or a philosophy professor. Here, too, appraisal mechanisms have roles, for one needs to be able to evaluate how well soldiers perform in order to arrive at the judgment that physical courage helps their lives as soldiers to go well. To illustrate this kind of reasoning, consider that Sam might think to himself: "Patience has helped me to perform better as a father (appraisal), and I now see myself as a patient father (self-schema). I

acknowledge the general value of patience in my life (judgment of the constitutive value of patience).” His thoughts about the constitutive value of virtue for others might take an analogous form: “Physical courage helps soldiers to perform better in their roles (appraisal), and I now see how and why that happens (schema of the good soldier). I acknowledge the general value of physical courage in the lives of soldiers (judgment of the constitutive value of physical courage in the lives of others).”

Finally, what roles might knowledge structures and appraisal mechanisms play in judgments of the intrinsic value of virtue? Suppose, following our earlier discussion, that Sam, already convinced of the instrumental and constitutive value of patience, reasons as follows: “Patience is valuable even when it does not advance my specific goals and does not enhance my life during extended periods of time.” Sam thus recognizes the intrinsic value of virtue. The schemas and appraisals that enable him to judge the instrumental and constitutive value of virtue “set him up,” so to speak, for his recognition that virtue is intrinsically valuable, by affording him a vantage point from which to see that virtue has value even when it is lacking in value of the other two types – that it is better to try the virtuous path and fail in an objective, for example, than to succeed by not being virtuous.

As with the awareness of other types of value that virtue has, judgments of the intrinsic value of virtue access a knowledge base that extends beyond the facts of one’s own life. It requires one to have knowledge of social life, including institutions, policies, and so on, and to be able to evaluate how well they work. In other words, recognition of the intrinsic value of virtue requires a wide range of types of schemas and the application of efficacy appraisals appropriate for a variety of types of subject – not only people occupying various roles, but institutions, etc. Yet, judgments of the intrinsic value of virtue that require knowledge and appraisals of subjects other than the self can start with the kinds of knowledge structures and appraisal mechanisms that ground judgments of the intrinsic value of virtue based on one’s own life. Key to making these judgments is the realization, brought about by rational reflection, that the value of virtue is not exhausted by its instrumental and constitutive value. As I’ve suggested, the intrinsic value of virtue often becomes most salient when we know the virtuous course will not have instrumental or constitutive value. This is not to deny that virtue has intrinsic value when it is also instrumentally or constitutively valuable, but to maintain that intrinsic value “shines forth” when the other forms of value are not in evidence. When we recognize the intrinsic value of virtue, we have reached the point at which we can be said to have achieved Aristotelian virtue – provided our motivations align with our awareness of virtue’s value. Our awareness of the intrinsic value of virtue should be accompanied by the desire to act and to be virtuous, not because virtue will advance our goals or make our lives go better, though it can surely do this, but because it is valuable in its own right.

## **Conclusion**

In this essay I’ve sketched possible pathways by means of which people who possess ordinary virtue can come to have Aristotelian virtue. The pathways involve the recognition of the various types of value that virtue has, as well as the development and use of certain phronetic capacities. I’ve drawn on the work of social-cognitive psychologists to describe these capacities in order to relate the development of Aristotelian virtue to empirically grounded research.

In a more ambitious moment, I had thought to explore the social underpinnings of these pathways of development, as well as their contribution to deeper levels of flourishing. Here I can only repeat what I intimated at the outset. Virtue is deeply social, and the odyssey of moving from ordinary to Aristotelian virtue is made possible, in part, by imitating others and openness to advice and interventions from friends. Social knowledge and experience, too, are integral to developing

Aristotelian virtue. Additionally, the deeper and more varied one's knowledge of the value of virtue, the more one can integrate it into one's life and outlook. This, allows, I believe, for deeper, qualitatively richer, forms of flourishing. These topics, fascinating though they are, must be left for another day.

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## Notes

<sup>i</sup> See "How Habits Make Us Virtuous," in Annas, Narvaez, and Snow, eds., (forthcoming), and "Notes Toward an Empirical Psychology of Virtue," in Peters, ed. (2013).

<sup>ii</sup> One way of understanding the work offered here is in terms of John McDowell's theory of virtue (see McDowell 1979). What I am describing is how someone might come to have something like the orectic state of the virtuous person, and see her life as one embodying virtue. I say "something like" the orectic state of the virtuous person because, unlike McDowell (1979), I do not think the mental states of the virtuous person are unitary (see Snow 2010, chapter four). Unlike McDowell (1979), I think that virtues are dispositions or traits, and not sensitivities, though sensitivities to value are integral to the virtuous person's perspective. On this latter point – the importance of sensitivities to the types of value virtue has – I believe I am close to McDowell.

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<sup>iii</sup> See Snow (forthcoming). The section of Snow (forthcoming) drawn upon here is in turn an expansion of Snow (2010, chapter two).

<sup>iv</sup> Here I offer only a few non-technical highlights of the psychological explanations for my claims. I refer readers to Snow (forthcoming) and Snow (2010, chapter two) for more detail.

<sup>v</sup> My thinking about the importance of moral self-identity to the process of developing from ordinary virtue to Aristotelian virtue has been influenced by Daniel Lapsley, "Moral Self-Identity and the Social-Cognitive Theory of Virtue," in Annas, Narvaez, and Snow (forthcoming).

<sup>vi</sup> Patience is not on Aristotle's list of the virtues (see *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book IV), so, strictly speaking, when I refer to patience, I need to qualify my account by saying it is an "Aristotelian-type" virtue, instead of an "Aristotelian" virtue. This would be too cumbersome, so I assume that readers know what I mean.

<sup>vii</sup> See Melissa Eddy, "As Germany Welcomes Migrants, Some Wonder How to Make Acceptance Last," September 5, 2015. [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com). Accessed September 7, 2015.

<sup>viii</sup> See, for example, Russell 2009, Curzer 2012, and Kristjánsson 2015.

<sup>ix</sup> See, e.g., Cervone (2004). In explaining KAPA, I draw on Snow (2013).

<sup>x</sup> In addition, consider that I have a greater capacity for self-knowledge if I can see myself in terms of a possible ideal self that I might someday come to be, instead of as my actual self, which falls short of the ideal in various respects. To add to this, consider that I have a better, more realistic capacity for self-knowledge if the ideal self I espouse is, in fact, a possible development of my actual self, and not simply a pie-in-the-sky, unrealistic dream of who I might become. The ideal self that I envision, can, of course, be described in multiple ways. Examples include the dutiful or "ought" self, and the aspirational self (see Shadel and Cervone 2006). The dutiful self does what she should or ought to do, and reflects a deontological perspective on moral identity. The aspirational self is that to which we aspire – the "best" self whom we hope to become.

<sup>xi</sup> Occasionally I use the word 'stage' to refer to a person's recognition of the type of value that virtue has. Though I believe there is a natural and likely progression through recognition of types of value on the way from ordinary to Aristotelian virtue, I do not mean anything very formal by my use of this term, and certainly do not mean to imply anything like Kohlbergian stages of moral development.

<sup>xii</sup> A number of interesting psychological states are possible in the case of someone who doesn't really want to be virtuous. E.g., she might want to appear to be virtuous without really wanting to be virtuous, or she might believe she really wants to be virtuous, but is deceiving herself in having this belief. In the latter case, maybe she can't own up to the fact that her character is so damaged that she does not (or worse, cannot) sincerely want to be virtuous.

<sup>xiii</sup> I am grateful to Michael Spezio for making the point about Sam's possible self-regarding as opposed to other-regarding motivation at this stage.