

APPENDIX A: PHILOSOPHY'S DIRTY SECRET: WHAT PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE AND VIRTUE EPISTEMOLOGY NEED TO LEARN ABOUT HUMAN IRRATIONALITY

In this appendix I want to expand on some themes about open-mindedness that were briefly explored in Chap. 4. As we enlarge the area of our concern, we will also delve deeper into the psychology of open-mindedness in relation to general human nature. The result will be for many of us (philosophers) a most unwelcome negative picture of our psychology as knowers, but I believe the arguments to be given here point univocally and powerfully in that direction. We may have to learn to live with the negativity and pessimism—even while trying to do the best we can in the articles and books we write and publish.

I want to begin by letting you in on a dirty secret of our profession—and by our profession here, I mean in the first instance professional philosophy. But the secret also applies to science considered as a profession and to academic life generally, and the secret has to do with open-mindedness. Scientists, philosophers, and other academics are not particularly open-minded; in fact, we are on the whole quite closed-minded. That presumed fact or assumption has significant implications for how we understand the language of science and of philosophy. It also has important implications for virtue epistemology. Virtue epistemologists (like myself) have been too sanguine about human epistemic rationality in something like the way in which (situationists think that) virtue ethicists (like myself) are too sanguine or optimistic about the human capacity for virtue. But this won't undermine virtue epistemology—I shall argue that it should simply leave us sadder and wiser. We shall have to proceed by stages with these different developments.

1

Let me begin by describing some views in the philosophy of science concerning the meaning of scientific terms. P. K. Feyerabend and Thomas Kuhn have famously argued (roughly) that as science grows, develops, and/or changes, new theories are accepted that are incommensurable with those they replace. (It will not be important for our purposes here for me to try to distinguish their views.) An older theory may use the same term or terms as a newer one, but the terms will in fact refer to different phenomena, even to different “worlds,” and terms like “electricity” and “force” that have one meaning within a given set of scientific/theoretical assumptions no longer have that specific meaning when some new, replacement theory is adopted that still makes use of the terms in question.¹ In this connection, Kuhn emphasizes how difficult, if not impossible, it is for the advocates of a new theory to get the long-time adherents of some older view to change their minds and adopt the new theory. And the idea that the older and young scientists live in different scientific worlds might be thought to account for this. Such scientists are not likely to be philosophers of science, and as a result (one might think, but Kuhn and Feyerabend never explicitly say this) both the older and the younger scientists may not recognize the shift of meaning and reference that occurs or has occurred when a new theory keeps using some of the same terms as an older theory; and this may explain the confusion and failure to communicate, much less come to agreement, that characterizes the relationship between different theories and/or their adherents. (The problem would presumably be even worse if one were speaking of the adherents of some ancient theory, like Ptolemy’s, in relation to much later theories like Einstein’s.)

Now this way of viewing the history of science has not gone unopposed, far from it. Hilary Putnam has perhaps mounted the most serious and sustained critique of incommensurability views, and his arguments, which I am not going to repeat here, seem to me to have a great deal of force.² Putnam goes into some detail explaining how (he thinks) a term like “electricity” can keep its reference even when there are large shifts in

¹ See P. K. Feyerabend, *Against Method*, London: Verso, 1975/88; and Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962/1970. These ideas occur in many others of Kuhn’s and Feyerabend’s writings.

² See Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, esp. p. 114f.; also his “Explanation and Reference,” in G. Pearce and P. Maynard, eds., *Conceptual Change*, Dordrecht: Reidel, 1973, pp. 199–221.

how scientists theorize and think about electricity. But there is one problem Putnam never addresses, and it is, in effect, the core problem, the core historical insight, that animates Kuhn's philosophy and also Feyerabend's: the fact of persisting disagreement among adherents of different scientific schools or traditions (of theorizing). If adherents of a new theory, a theory that eventually wins the day among scientists as an older generation dies out, are referring to the same phenomena as the older scientists were, if they weren't inhabiting different scientific worlds, and if, despite common terminology, they weren't making use of concepts that fail to fit one another, why should the young scientists have had such a hard or impossible time convincing the older scientists?

You can say (and there is some tendency at least in both Feyerabend and Kuhn to say) that newer scientific theories aren't more accurate, aren't closer to the truth, than the older theories, and that might explain why the older scientists aren't ever convinced, but then one wouldn't have explained why the newer scientists found it necessary to go in a new direction while the older ones did not. (Scientific anomaly and crisis would present themselves to both groups, surely.) Despite Kuhn and Feyerabend's skepticism about the idea of new scientific theories coming closer to the truth than earlier ones, this is not an idea that most of us nowadays are willing to relinquish. But if we are right not to relinquish it, then Putnam's views about the persistence of meaning and reference through changes of scientific perspective do in fact leave open the large question I raised above, the question of why older scientists so typically refuse to go along with what, we can (I hope) assume, are new scientific insights and real scientific progress.

I would like to offer my own answer to this question here. It is an answer that I believe has a great deal going for it intellectually, but, as you will see, it also raises problems for scientists, philosophers, academics and researchers generally, that ought to bother and perplex us. The problems will be more ethical or personal than purely theoretical, but they nonetheless, or perhaps for that very reason, will give us a good deal, as philosophers, to think about. I think the refusal of older scientists to go along with eventually-accepted new theories (and here, not being a historian of science myself, I am relying on what others have said about the history of scientific theories) can be attributed to a lack of open-mindedness, and I also think, and will say more about this below, that the same problem exists for philosophers or within philosophy as well. There is reason to treat open-mindedness as an epistemic virtue (with certain ethical and/or

personal implications), and so I am going to speculate that scientists, philosophers, and others are generally more closed-minded and epistemically irrational than we have ever imagined or admitted to ourselves. This will have implications for the debate between Putnam and those he criticizes.

2

I want to begin the discussion by talking about open-mindedness, by which I shall mean a certain openness to ideas that disagree with one's own and to ideas that are entirely new to one. This presumptive epistemic/cognitive virtue wasn't much spoken of by epistemologists till fairly recently. For all his talk of theoretical virtue and virtues, Aristotle didn't highlight open-mindedness and didn't himself show much theoretical open-mindedness in his writings. (Aristotle spoke of educated minds in the *Metaphysics*, but that is a somewhat different matter.) As I mentioned in Chap. 4 of this book, Aristotle's virtuous individual would always know they were right and didn't need to worry about or remain open and receptive to the ethical ideas or values of those who might disagree with them. And I think Aristotle himself was less respectful toward hedonism and atomism than he probably should have been.

During the modern period, epistemology was dominated by foundationalism and coherentism, but neither of these traditions emphasizes open-mindedness the way the newest large approach to epistemology does. That new approach is virtue epistemology, and (as I have already mentioned earlier in this book) virtue epistemology till now has come in two main flavors: responsibilism and reliabilism. The reliabilists conceive epistemic justification and knowledge as resulting from truth-reliable cognitive mechanisms, and they haven't emphasized open-mindedness nearly as much as responsibilists have. Responsibilists conceive epistemic virtue as related to and explicable in terms of moral or ethical virtue, and given the seeming connection between open-mindedness as a desirable cognitive trait and open-mindedness as a desirable ethical trait of individuals (we all get along better if we are open-minded about others' opinions and attitudes), you can see why they treat open-mindedness as an epistemic virtue.³

³Open-mindedness is especially emphasized in the work of the responsibilist Linda Zagzebski. See her *Virtues of the Mind: An Enquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, Part II.

However, despite the frequent mention of and emphasis on open-mindedness within much of the recent literature of virtue epistemology, one point seems to have been missed. No one has pointed out that open-mindedness toward those who disagree with one ideally involves a willingness and ability to see things from their point of view.⁴ Since seeing things from the point of view of another is a form of empathy, we can also say that being completely open-minded calls on our capacities for and dispositions toward empathy. Now when I empathically take in the beliefs of others (as with my parents' political opinions when I was a child), that empathy has led me to believe something. But when we empathize with another person's point of view, we don't necessarily have to actually believe what they believe. An open-minded person can take in someone's opinion or point of view in a more tentative or experimental way than occurs when we, for example, find ourselves (as a result of a process that needn't be conscious) simply believing what our parents believe about politics or religion. What we next have to consider are the factors that make for more or less empathy and open-mindedness.

3

To believe something is to epistemically favor it for inclusion and use (e.g., deductively, inductively, or abductively) in one's theorizing about the nature of the world and also for practical purposes outside the theoretical, as when knowledge about the world gets us to take certain means to our ends, to the fulfillment of our desires. (All this was argued for in Chap. 2.) But just because we favor something epistemically doesn't mean we have to always continue doing so. Evidence that comes in can lead us in a new direction and can upend our earlier beliefs in favor (sic) of new ones, just as things can occur to change our attitudes toward friends or acquaintances. But even if an open-minded person is open to changing their beliefs, they aren't willing or even able to change them at the drop of a hat: if someone abruptly denies what we believe, we are likely to be annoyed or upset with the denier. (Surprise is also relevant here, but there is no need to go into the details.) By contrast, if someone approaches a given issue in a gingerly, respectful way, we may pay respectful and open-

⁴Or I should perhaps say that no one other than myself has pointed this out, but this occurred very recently. See my *A Sentimentalist Theory of the Mind*, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014, esp. pp. 14ff.

minded attention to what they say, even if they are arguing against something we believe. But this will depend on whether we are really open-minded (in a given area), and that will often, even most of the time, not be the case. Why so?

I think there are emotions that work against epistemic open-mindedness and that can help us explain why people are so typically closed-minded about all sort of matters. But it will be easier to make the case for this if we first talk a bit about moral emotion. It is a commonplace of folk psychology (borne out in the psychological literature on empathy) that anger and fear tend to interfere with empathy for the plight or needs of other people. I see a blind man hesitating to cross a busy street and my heart goes out to him. I empathize with his fearfulness and perhaps too with his evident desire to cross that street. But at that very moment a madman approaches me with knife raised in a threatening gesture toward me and I forget all about the blind man. His fear as empathically registered *in* myself is replaced by fear *for* myself and my life. Such fear can drive out or terminate/sharply diminish empathy with the plight of another, and anger can have a similar effect. If I empathize with the distress felt by another person I don't recognize, but then later do recognize the person as someone who has done great harm to my family or to me, the subsequent recognition will tend to undercut any empathically-based sympathy I initially have for the person in question. Anger makes empathy more difficult or less likely with the person one is angry with (and even more generally); and it thereby tends to interfere with or undercut the concern one has for some other person. So emotions (the same points would hold for disgust) make a difference to the kind of empathic concern for others we think of as *morally* good or praiseworthy, and I want now to show you that emotions can also make a difference to empathy as it relates to our epistemic capacity for open-mindedness.

Here, I am not just talking about cases, exactly parallel to those just mentioned, where fear or anger might interfere with the exercise of open-mindedness. If someone attacks me with a knife, I won't be able to concentrate on some just-raised intellectual issue that calls for open-minded consideration; if someone has harmed my family, I may simply be unwilling to listen to what they have to say. But in neither of these instances do we think that the person who feels the fear that leads to self-defense or the anger that makes them unwilling to listen to an enemy of the family has given signs of being closed-minded. In such circumstances it is perfectly consistent with open-mindedness that one should pay no empathic atten-

tion to what someone has claimed in contradiction to one's own views. But in other cases, emotion can show that one is lacking in intellectual empathy and that one is not really or fully open-minded (in a certain area of belief).

Consider first a non-epistemic case. A rumor is being spread about me and I want to prevent it from spreading further. The rumor may attribute to me some unsavory past action that I don't want people to think I have done, and I will have some fear that the rumor may spread further (and will feel dismay that it has already spread at all). But if something we desire is very important to us, we will tend to feel fear to the extent it is uncertain or unlikely that we will get what we want. (Of course, that fear will probably be mixed with hope, but let's concentrate on fear.)

Now reputation is in fact very important to us, and we are likely to feel considerable fear or anxiety if our reputation is threatened in a serious way. It has even been held that the esteem of other people is one of the most basic desires people have. As I mentioned earlier in this book, Abraham Maslow in his influential *Motivation and Personality* argued that the desire to be liked or loved and the desire to be esteemed are important to just about every human life, and this idea makes a lot of sense.⁵ So I shall make use of it in what follows, and we can immediately see that it applies to the issue of academic/scientific closed-mindedness.

The fact that we tend to react with anger or upset when someone, out of the blue, attacks what we believe shows that we have, automatically have, something like an emotional investment in what we believe. (Presumably, the stronger the belief, the stronger such investment will be.) But scientists who cling to an older theory despite its problems, and who continue to do so even when some new theory emerges that solves those problems, show themselves to be even more deeply invested in the older theory than sheer belief, belief all on its own, necessitates. And the further emotional investment consists, I think, in their (concern for their) reputation. If the older view they contributed to has to be acknowledged to be mistaken, then the solidity and/or insightfulness of their contribution will be less than they and others initially thought it to be, and their reputation will suffer accordingly. No one wants this to happen and the fear that it may happen can lead someone to try to think up reasons why it won't or can't happen. So the belief that some new theory is or has to be mistaken represents or can represent a kind of wishful thinking that palliates

⁵ NY: Harper and Row, 1954.

the fear/anxiety that one may indeed have theorized incorrectly. To admit one has been mistaken is to face up to the fact that one's reputation will suffer, and no one wants to face up to such a fact. One fears its truth because one very much wants one's scientific or academic reputation to be preserved intact, a desire ultimately traceable, I believe, to the desire for the esteem of others that Maslow regarded as basic to human life and human psychology.⁶ (I won't go into the relationship between self-esteem and the esteem of others. We don't need to do that for present purposes.)

So I think a certain kind of academic or intellectual *vanity* lies behind the strong reluctance of older scientists to accept some new theory, and because nothing remotely similar can be said about younger scientists, we can see why those working on a new theory are more ready to accept it than the older generation is. If anything, it is the idea of helping to bring about a major shift in scientific theorizing, rather than any desire to preserve what has previously been done, that will appeal to the vanity of younger scientists. And I mention vanity, a quality we don't think well of, because unlike the cases of self-defense and family resentment mentioned earlier, what scientists do, when they cling to some older theory despite evidence and arguments that favor some new one, seems cognitively undesirable and criticizable. It shows them, rather, as lacking open-mindedness for certain reasons of vanity. (We could perhaps say that these are instances of *false* pride.)

But we are all vain in this way. The lack of open-mindedness scientists show once their reputations are invested in a certain theory or approach can also be found in philosophy and in other academic fields (and outside academia, certainly, too). Typically and as I mentioned in Chap. 4, philosophers adopt some theory or approach early in their careers and spend the rest of their careers bolstering or expatiating on it.

Take Kantians (and no Don Rickles jokes about this!). Over the past few decades Kantian ethicists have shown a certain open-mindedness toward recently revived Aristotelian virtue ethics. They have recognized that such ethics has more in common with their Kantianism than, say, utilitarianism does, and this recognition has given neo-Aristotelian ethics a certain "lift" in comparison with what has recently been happening in philosophical discussions of utilitarianism. But all that hasn't led to any

⁶ My argument here has benefited from Seisuke Hayakawa's "The Virtue of Receptivity and Practical Rationality" in C. Mi, M. Slote, and E. Sosa, eds., *Moral and Intellectual Virtues in Western and Chinese Philosophy*, NY: Routledge, 2016.

Kantian giving up their Kantian approach to ethics in favor of the neo-Aristotelianism; and if I am wrong about this, if in some rare instance or instances such a switch or change has occurred, the very fact that it is (isn't it?) hard to name names here helps make my case. Can anyone think of or name someone who has made the transition I have just been talking about? And what staunch anti-Kantian has ever been converted? Do you know of anyone? I don't.

The situation is no better, I think, in other areas or with respect to other theories in philosophy. Has any committed Libertarian ever eventually become convinced of free-will Compatibilism (of the compatibility of free will and determinism)? I can't think of anyone and this is an area I have worked in over several decades (since the 1960s in fact). And the reverse change of direction is also something I have never seen.

What is happening here? Shouldn't we as philosophers be embarrassed by the inflexibility we show with respect to our opinions. Philosophers are supposed to be less prejudiced, less strait-jacketed in their thinking than ordinary people and even fellow academics. We are the ones who more than anyone else emphasize the importance of rationality to human life (man is a rational animal), and with respect to issue after issue (e.g., God's existence or the moral permissibility of homosexuality) many of us consider ourselves to be more cogent and rational than other people. But at the heart of our profession, with respect to our philosophical beliefs and theorizing, I think we show ourselves to be less than epistemically or cognitively rational through our closed-mindedness vis-à-vis the differing opinions or research programs of others in our field. This is a dirty secret of our philosophical profession, and for all the reasons just mentioned the secret bespeaks a much greater irony and a much greater source of potential embarrassment than anything that relates to what happens in science. And, of course, we philosophers have all the reasons for refusing to admit our irrationality that I spoke of in connection with the vanity and defensiveness of scientists. To admit that we are as irrational as I am saying would be to admit that we are not as rationally special or excellent as we have long and typically imagined, and so there are reasons of vanity (or false pride) not to make an admission like the one I am arguing for that would risk and more than risk our reputation in the world at large. We philosophers are no more open-minded than the scientists, and if—as most of us philosophers, ironically, think—open-mindedness is an intellectual/cognitive/epistemic virtue, then as philosophers we have some-

thing to be more than a bit ashamed about.⁷ (I know all this sounds a bit like the Hebrew prophets.)⁸

Now I earlier mentioned Putnam's view that meaning and reference are preserved through many scientific revolutions or changes of doctrine. Philosophers such as Kuhn but including many many others often claim, to the contrary, that changes in scientific belief involve changes in the meaning of terms used before and after the change or changes occur. But the other side of this is that deep synchronous philosophical disagreements also involve differences in meaning, and such a view is in fact contrary to what ethicists at least believe about disagreements in their own field. Ethicists almost all agree that when the Kantian and utilitarian disagree about the normative criteria of right action, there is no linguistic ambiguity underlying that disagreement. They may have different conceptions of rightness, but they rely on the same concept of rightness, the same meaning of the term "right," in their theorizing and in their (rather rare) debates with one another.⁹

So it is a bit odd that philosophers on the whole are frequently willing to attribute ambiguity to scientific terms but typically *not* to terms used in ethical theory. (Like the terms of ethical theory, the terms science uses, terms like "electricity," "energy" and "force," are also used in daily life.) The fact that we are so sure there is no rampant ambiguity in ethical terminology is an argument in favor of seeing scientific change as not based in ambiguity or meaning change, but rather, as I have been urging, in the epistemic irrationality, the epistemic vices, of scientists. And when we posit

⁷In his *Caractères*, the seventeenth-century French moralist Jean de la Bruyère tells us that "The pleasure we feel in criticizing robs us of being moved by very beautiful things." This quotation speaks of closed-mindedness in its own distinctive way, and it applies as much to academic disciplines, literature, and music as it does to art narrowly conceived.

⁸Otávio Bueno has pointed out to me that Bertrand Russell and Hilary Putnam himself seem to be exceptions to what I have been saying about the inability or unwillingness of philosophers to give up one basic philosophical approach in favor of another. They have held radically different positions over time. But do these philosophers demonstrate open-mindedness or are they examples, rather, of a certain intellectual flightiness. (Among British philosophers the saying used to be: *si Russell savait, si Moore pouvait* [if Russell only knew, if Moore only could].) Even allowing that this intellectual flightiness may be or seem exaggerated in the light of other philosophers' tendency toward closed-mindedness, there does seem to be something like a too-quick willingness to throw everything over in favor of something new. This is very rare in philosophy, but the fact of it does somewhat complicate—though it is far from undercutting—the picture I have been painting.

⁹John Rawls in *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971) makes much of this distinction, but it is commonplace in the present literature of ethics.

the pervasive occurrence of the vice of closed-mindedness in science, we help explain how and why older scientists are unwilling to admit their errors and adopt some totally new theory in a way Putnam's sheer insistence on univocity does not. Our exposing, our exposé, of the irrational closed-mindedness of scientists helps secure Putnam's thesis about univocity by explaining the one fact that Putnam's arguments ignored and Kuhn (especially) relied on, the difficulty of persuading scientists, older scientists, of the merit of views that turn out to replace and (we think) rightfully replace older theories. The argument against Kuhn and Feyerabend needs to take the highly uncomfortable fact of scientists' irrational closed-mindedness into account if it is really to be successful, and I have sought to add this element to that argument in this appendix. The cost, of course, is a blow to our egos, but *that is not an epistemic or theoretical or philosophical cost*. So in theoretical or philosophical terms I hope we now have more reason to doubt Kuhn and Feyerabend than we had before.¹⁰ Rather than hold, with Kuhn, that the resistance to new theories that occurs within science is a function of different linguistic meanings, of linguistic ambiguity, I have claimed that the resistance is due to fear of the loss of reputation or esteem. The explanation is not to be made in terms of language but in terms of the psychology of ordinary human emotion(s).

4

But now we need to consider a possible objection to the argument given above, and to do that we have to back up just a bit. In a way, open-mindedness is the philosophical creature of the ever-more-influential vir-

¹⁰ Interestingly, Kuhn at certain points in *Structure* hints at some of the points I have been making here. He speaks (p. 64) of the rigidity of attitude that accompanies the professionalization of a given scientific paradigm, and he also refers (p. 67f.) to the "pronounced professional insecurity" that can set in when a given paradigm accumulates problems. These statements suggest or more than suggest that scientists aren't entirely open-minded and are fearful in the face of certain theoretical results (his use of the term "crisis" also has such implications); but Kuhn never sees these ideas as furnishing materials for an *alternative* to his own way of explaining or understanding the history of science, an alternative like the one offered here that avoids positing meaning change and "different worlds" and that does its explaining entirely in terms of concepts like fear and reputation and closed-mindedness.

tue epistemology movement. As I suggested earlier, other approaches to epistemology have had little or nothing to say about or in favor of open-mindedness, and even Aristotle, who has as in various ways provided inspiration for what current virtue epistemologists have been saying, doesn't highlight open-mindedness in his own arguably virtue-epistemological approach to issues of cognition/knowledge. No, it is the contemporary virtue epistemologists who have emphasized open-mindedness more than anyone else ever has in the theory of knowledge, and then there is the further point that virtue epistemology has to a considerable extent modeled itself on virtue ethics.

Virtue ethics, moribund since the seventeenth century, started reviving with the 1958 publication of Elizabeth Anscombe's "Modern Moral Philosophy," and virtue epistemology, which had also been moribund since the seventeenth century, started reviving in 1980 with the publication of Ernest Sosa's "The Raft and the Pyramid: Coherence vs. Foundations in the Theory of Knowledge."¹¹ (Here I assume that Aristotle was a virtue epistemologist and that the centuries-long period of "modern philosophy" in which the Cartesian "subjective turn" dominated epistemological [and philosophical] discussion didn't offer much room for what we think of today as virtue epistemology. Particular intellectual virtues were often discussed, but that doesn't entail that people were doing virtue epistemology.) And from the very start, for example, in Sosa's essay, the comparison with reviving virtue ethics was explicit and was used to provide some intellectual support for the newer contemporary enterprise of virtue epistemology.

I mention all this because, just as virtue epistemology has benefited in a certain way from the revival of virtue ethics, it may also inherit problems, criticisms, that have been directed at virtue ethics, though I don't think this point or what I am about to say about a particular potential criticism of virtue epistemology has been discussed previously in the literature of or surrounding that field. The criticism of virtue ethics I have in mind, the criticism that I believe can also be deployed against virtue epistemology, comes from a present-day group of philosophers called "situationists." Neo-Aristotelian virtue ethicists say or imply that we should look at the moral life via our understanding of the moral or ethical virtues as traits of character that involve both cognitive and motivational excellence. Such

¹¹ Anscombe's article appeared in *Philosophy* 33, 1958, pp. 1–19; Sosa's piece was published in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 5, 1980, pp. 3–25. Both articles have been reprinted elsewhere.

virtue ethics typically tells us how (the) different individual virtues are or should be integrated in an overall virtuous human life, but there is also a great deal of emphasis on the individual virtues themselves: on how they are inculcated or develop and on how they operate once they have been inculcated or have developed. In the neo-Aristotelian literature, the individual virtues are, more particularly, viewed as hardy/stable and as broadly effective traits of character. It is assumed that it is not easy for someone to lose a particular virtue once they possess it and that the full possession of any virtue involves a disposition to act in accordance with it across a broad spectrum of cases that call for that virtue, cases in which it is appropriate for the virtuous individual to exemplify a given virtue.

However, the situationists are skeptical about all of this.¹² Typically citing various empirical studies, they argue that situational circumstances make more of a difference to how we act than facts about inner character. For example, and this is just one example, the supposedly hardy and broadly effective trait of benevolence is very much influenced by seemingly irrelevant factors of the situation the supposedly benevolent person is in: if one has just found a small amount of money in a phone booth, one is more likely to be generous to others than if one hasn't found any money. Numerous other cases are also cited, with documentation, to show that, for reasons having to do with seemingly extraneous situational factors, individual traits like honesty or benevolence often aren't exemplified in situations in which they are called for or relevant. Acting honestly or benevolently will then seem to depend much more on an individual's circumstances than on anything inside the individual, and, according to the situationists, this means that virtue ethics gives an unrealistic and distorted picture of what the moral life is like for us humans. Normal and ordinary people just don't manifest virtue or particular virtues in the broadly trans-situational way in which virtue ethicists have said virtues as such need to be and are manifested.

It seems to me that, at least partly in the light of what I have said above about the closed-mindedness of scientists and philosophers, a somewhat similar criticism or set of criticisms could be mounted against virtue epistemology *and its reliance on the rational desirability and requiredness of individual cognitive traits like open-mindedness*. Open-mindedness is pre-

¹²For prominent examples of situationism, see, e.g., G. Harman's "Moral Philosophy Meets Moral Psychology: Virtue Ethics and the Fundamental Attribution Error," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* XCIX, Part 3, 1999; and John Doris's *Lack of Character*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

sumably a condition or trait of full epistemic rationality across a wide spectrum of situations and intellectual challenges. And perhaps most people are open-minded with respect to issues they don't have any personal stake in—e.g., for most of us, about who won the World Series in 1954. Someone who doesn't follow the history of baseball very intently might think that the Dodgers won or that the Cleveland Indians won, but if they are not fans of the Dodgers or the Indians, they might easily be open to persuasion that it was in fact the New York Giants who won the World Series that year. (Perhaps one also has to assume they don't hate the San Francisco Giants.) And there are lots and lots of other mistaken beliefs that the people who have them can treat in an open-minded fashion, readily accepting correction from those better acquainted with the facts and able to make a good case for such correction. To be sure, none of us, or almost none of us, likes having been mistaken about some fact and being called out or corrected on our error. But if it is a minor fact, something not important to our lives, then we will typically be open to admitting error. However, the very fact that this willingness to change one's belief occurs in a context where the exact truth isn't of much importance to one shows that *it doesn't require all that much open-mindedness*. A genuinely open-minded person (as we typically conceive the matter) has to be open-minded about issues and in situations where there is some temptation or tendency *not* to be open-minded, just as one doesn't count as a compassionate or generous person if one is only willing to give things to others when the cost to oneself is very small. Going further, I think we might even say that a truly open-minded person will be *grateful* rather than resistant and resentful when someone shows them to have been mistaken in one of their beliefs.

The fact that almost all of us will change our minds when no major issue of pride or vanity is at stake (even though, in general, we don't very much like being wrong and being corrected) doesn't justify us in claiming that most people are open-minded or even *somewhat* open-minded. And in the case of philosophers and scientists and the beliefs or theories they subscribe to, the reaction to counter-evidence or alternative possibilities is mainly and typically resistance and denial. So in matters that greatly concern them, philosophers and scientists are generally not open-minded, and the same holds true in other research/academic areas and in ordinary human life more generally. Ronald Reagan in his mature years changed from being a Democrat and liberal to being a conservative Republican (under the influence of his wife Nancy); and (the subsequent) Cardinal

Newman eventually decided that the Roman Church had a more valid claim to his allegiance than the Anglican Church in which he had been raised and educated. But this sort of thing is very, very rare. A younger person may rebel against the religion or political views they were brought up in, but older people just don't change their views in these areas to any radical or considerable extent. That is the way people are in their lives, and it is very much like what we have been saying goes on in philosophy and science in particular. Closed-mindedness seems to be a besetting sin or fault of almost all human beings. (I say "almost" because I don't think that there exists any persuasive proof that *all* human beings are or have to be closed-minded.)

Now virtue ethics is supposed to recommend itself by giving us a more realistic picture than Kantian or utilitarian ethics does of our human moral life, and if virtue epistemologists want to say something similar about their approach in relation to coherentism and foundationalism, then one may be able to make the same kind of criticisms of virtue epistemology that situationists have made against virtue ethics. The situationist argues that traits like generosity and honesty are more subject to the negative or undermining influence of situational factors than the Aristotelian virtue ethicists have realized. (Though such criticisms haven't been launched against sentimentalist/Humean forms of virtue ethics, I believe they could be reconfigured so as to apply to the latter.) And can't one also say that traits like open-mindedness are less well or fully exemplified in ordinary human or academic lives than any virtue epistemologist has acknowledged? If open-mindedness is supposed to be so important, how come there is so little of it in almost all our lives almost all of the time? (Remember that being open-minded where one has little or no personal-reputational stake in an issue shows only a tiny amount of open-mindedness.)

But, of course, it might be replied on behalf of the virtue epistemologist (and here I am mainly speaking of responsibilists rather than of reliabilists) that open-mindedness is just one, single trait of character. What holds for one trait may not apply to most epistemic/cognitive traits, and in that case the analogy with what the situationist says about virtue ethics may not hold for virtue epistemology. The situationist speaks about all or almost all the individual traits that Aristotelian virtue ethics thinks highly of, and it is argued that all of those traits are subject to the interruption or interference of situational factors in a way not accounted for or treated as acceptable by standard virtue ethics. So if what we have been saying here applies only to open-mindedness, there is no parallel to the situationist

critique of virtue ethics that can be directed at virtue epistemology. This would leave my earlier criticisms of scientists and philosophers largely intact. They might not exemplify open-mindedness, and that fact might better account for the history of scientific change than any hypothesis about the ambiguity of scientific terms. But since the other epistemic virtues emphasized by virtue epistemologists would not have been shown to lack exemplification in science and philosophy or elsewhere, what I have said would not be subject to criticisms as (presumably) strong as those the situationist directs against Aristotelian virtue ethics.

But is open-mindedness unrelated to other epistemic traits/virtues and are the other epistemic virtues, or most of them, reliably ensconced in scientific and philosophical practices in a way that I have argued open-mindedness is not? I don't think the answer to either of these questions will be in the affirmative. First of all, the epistemic/cognitive virtues that virtue epistemologists most frequently mention include, in addition to open-mindedness, intellectual courage, intellectual humility, and intellectual thoroughness/carefulness, and all three of the latter traits are deeply connected with or involved in open-mindedness. Courage is a matter of mastering fear, and I mentioned the connection between fear and closed-mindedness above. If one is or refuses to be open-minded on a certain issue, that is typically due to fears about one's reputation, and surely it shows intellectual courage if, despite the fears one has about one's reputation as a scientist or philosopher, one open-mindedly considers the facts relevant to the truth or falsity of some (important) opinion one holds. But then, and by the same token, one shows a lack of courage, of intellectual courage, if one *isn't* willing to consider the possibility of one's being mistaken in an open-minded way.

Similarly, for intellectual humility. To be humble is to not raise oneself over others, and if one is closed-minded vis-à-vis the opinions of those one initially disagrees with, one precisely *is* raising oneself, in intellectual terms, above one's intellectual colleagues or peers. And is one being careful and thorough in one's intellectual pursuits if one doesn't give full and attentive consideration to the arguments and ideas of those who disagree with one? Again, I think not, and so open-mindedness has conceptual connections with all the traits we have just been discussing and with others it doesn't seem necessary, at this point, to mention. If scientists and philosophers aren't open-minded, then they aren't as intellectually courageous, thorough, or humble as virtue epistemology tells us we in all rationality should be. In that case, the fact that open-mindedness is so seemingly central to

epistemic virtue, so multiply connected with the other intellectual virtues, tells us that we cannot evade a critique of virtue epistemology analogous to that which the situationist directs at virtue ethics, by treating open-mindedness as an isolated instance of epistemic vice or irrationality within scientific or philosophical practices.¹³ And in propria persona I want to say that human scientists and philosophers are quite irrational in some sense overall, and despite their tendency to believe that they themselves are quite rational and that human beings, and most especially philosophically-minded human beings, are on the whole intellectually rational creatures. (Those who hold humans to be practically irrational because of the various ways we give in to anger and desire against our better judgment don't usually make a similar claim about human *cognitive* irrationality. But here and elsewhere, I am prescinding from the work of Kahneman and Tversky.)

The question that remains before us, then, is whether the situationist critique of virtue ethics can provide us with a model or template for criticizing what I have said about the very general cognitive/epistemic irrationality of scientists, philosophers, and others. The situationist thinks that the way our ordinary lives demonstrate a lack or absence of the virtues Aristotelians talk about (and as they talk about them) shows that we shouldn't think of human morality in Aristotelian virtue-ethical terms, and assuming that intellectual vice or irrationality is as deep and widespread as I have claimed it is, why can't one say that the ideas about intellectual virtue I relied on in speaking about open-mindedness as a virtue, ideas

¹³ Let me also say something here about the relationship between the epistemic virtue of open-mindedness and the epistemically virtuous trait of thinking for oneself rather than relying on one sole source of opinions like one's parents or the Church. The person who relies heavily on others isn't receptive to the full range of evidential facts that come or could come their way and to that extent displays a kind of closed-mindedness vis-à-vis their general knowledge of the world, but this closed-mindedness seems to be more a matter of how they *come to* opinions than of their willingness or ability to *change* their opinions. (I am indebted here to discussion with Fu Changzhen.) We often describe the person who thinks for themselves as capable of thinking (and deciding things) autonomously, and the connection between such autonomy and what philosophers call respect for autonomy seems to me to depend on the fact that a child is more likely to become capable of autonomous thinking if their parents have shown some respect for their independently arrived at opinions when they were young, which means a kind of respect for the child's autonomy as a thinking being. Thus children whose parents deride or dismiss their doubts about religion (saying things like "you can't really be so wicked a child as to doubt/deny all the things that God, or Allah, has done for you") are less likely to think for themselves as an adult: either becoming totally submissive to the religious doctrines and sources of doctrines they have been exposed to or else becoming rebellious knee-jerk deniers of everything they have been told.

that by my own acknowledgment or admission are taken to a large extent from present-day virtue epistemology, are mistaken or likely to be mistaken? Such a conclusion would undermine what I have said against the hypothesis that scientific change involves changes in linguistic meaning, what I have said in support, rather, of Hilary Putnam's views. But do I in fact have to make all these concessions? This will be necessary only if there is reason to accept the situationist critique of virtue ethics, and I believe that that critique is in fact seriously flawed.

5

Defenders of virtue ethics have made a number of different replies to the situationists, but one particular kind of reply has been especially prominent, and even perhaps predominant. The defenders of virtue ethics have been to a considerable extent willing to grant that Aristotelian approaches have overestimated normal human tendencies or dispositions toward virtuous actions.¹⁴ Situational factors can distract us or tempt us from doing the virtuous thing, the action called for by a particular virtue, in ways that virtue ethics as originally formulated failed to take into account. According to this typical or frequent reply to the situationists, what virtue ethics says about the hardiness and broadness of virtuous traits of character doesn't apply to many or most actual people, and to that extent, yes, virtue ethics hasn't been all that realistic, has assumed more virtue in more people than there actually is. But the assumption that people are more virtuous than they turn out to be isn't essential, the argument goes, to virtue ethics as a theory of good character and of right and wrong. Even if more people act wrongly and show a lack of good character (traits) than we have supposed, we can still understand the wrongness of their actions and the fact that they to some extent lack good character in terms of the ideas about the connection between rightness, virtue, and motivation that virtue ethics subscribes to and that are not to be found in normative approaches like Kantian ethics and consequentialism.

¹⁴For two examples of the kind of reply to situationism I am exploring and advocating here, see Nafsika Athanassoulis's "A Response to Harman: Virtue Ethics and Character Traits," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 100, 2000, pp. 215–221; and Micah Lott's "Situationism, Skill, and the Rarity of Virtue," *Journal of Value Inquiry* 48, 2014, pp. 387–401. But several others have made the same sort of reply.

I agree with this critique of the situationist critique of Aristotelian virtue ethics (though for other reasons, I prefer sentimentalist neo-Humean virtue ethics to neo-Aristotelian virtue-ethical rationalism). The rarity of virtue or of particular moral virtues is no argument against virtue ethics and neither, then, is the rarity of open-mindedness and of epistemic traits closely connected with it any sort of argument against the kind of virtue epistemology that lies in the background of the arguments I have made in this appendix. So I think our conclusions here are pretty safe.¹⁵ There is reason to think of philosophical disagreement and of the typical path of scientific change (there are dominant theories in science, but this hasn't happened for a long time in philosophy) as due to closed-mindedness and a lack of intellectual humility, and so on, that are powered by fear for one's reputation (or the fear of losing the esteem of others), rather than as due to linguistic ambiguity. This is a dispiriting, a disheartening result, but I

¹⁵ But how safe are they if the very factors that make us closed-minded about our ideas in science and philosophy will tend to make readers resist the idea that we in fact *are* closed-minded in these and other areas? Doesn't the typical reader of a philosophy chapter or appendix have reputation to lose if they admit that they have been closed-minded in doing science or philosophy? Well, it all depends. There may be safety in numbers here, and if the admission of one's own irrecusable closed-mindedness allows one to direct a *tu quoque* toward everyone else, perhaps the individual admission won't have to be so daunting, distasteful, or demeaning. I don't know. Still, no one likes to think they are closed-minded (or foolish or weak), so there is likely to be resistance to what I have been saying here. But that resistance is no *argument* against what I have said, and the conclusions drawn here may therefore be (rationally?) safe in the sense intended in the main text. (By the way, the resistance, among scientists and philosophers, to what I have been saying about closed-mindedness may turn out to be stronger or fiercer than the resistance ethicists feel or express against situationism, because we academics and researchers seem somehow to pride ourselves more on our intellectual powers than on our moral character.) One further point. Felipe Moreira has suggested that open-mindedness resembles compassion or concern for others inasmuch as both involve empathy for the point of view or aspirations of the other. If, as he suggests, we assume further that left-wing political views involve greater empathy with the worst-off in society than right-wing views do, then the contrast between open-minded and closed-minded pursuit of some academic discipline is analogous to the contrast between left-wing and right-wing politics. So academic open-mindedness is or would be in some sense a left-leaning academic orientation and academic closed-mindedness can then be seen, by analogy and somewhat metaphorically, as a right-wing phenomenon. Moreira takes these ideas further in his University of Miami doctoral dissertation; but from the standpoint of this appendix the question then naturally arises as to why there is so much left-wing politics in the academy but so little left-wing academic thinking and research. Are human beings more caring than they are cognitively rational? I won't pursue this question further here.

think all of us should try to muster the intellectual courage and, yes, the open-mindedness to admit it may possibly be true.¹⁶

Finally, I think virtue epistemologists should be more aware than they have been of how rare certain epistemic virtues and overall epistemic virtue are.¹⁷ That is not a reason to give up on virtue epistemology any more,

¹⁶ But, someone may object, how can anyone really do science or philosophy in a forward-looking or creative way without being committed to the value and validity of what they are doing? Surely, it might be said, this is part of *what it is* to pursue work in these fields, and what typically happens in them cannot, therefore, be a matter of being closed-minded. Now in response I am not going to tell you that philosophers and scientists should pursue theories and in some sense accept them without actually believing them to be true. That is the view some philosophers take about these matters, but it is a minority view and not one that I care to rest my case on. (Here I am indebted to discussion with Otávio Bueno.) Rather, my response to what has just been suggested is to point out again what I have said earlier in this appendix: that belief in something may involve a certain amount of emotional/intellectual investment but doesn't require one to be closed-minded about what one believes. One can be open (consider the word) to certain possibilities even while pursuing and believing in a particular different possibility. When Kantians or care ethicists pursue some idea in their respective areas, they can believe in what they are doing and in the results they arrive at. But this doesn't mean that they can't pay attention to the most important results that are coming out of other schools of thought. Yet we find that the care ethicists don't pay genuine attention to work in Kantian ethics and vice versa, and surely an open-minded philosopher/thinker would pay serious and thoughtful attention—really *listen*—to views that contradict their own: if only to figure out whether or how they can answer them. But we find that this doesn't happen, and that is a strong sign of closed-mindedness. You can believe in your own view and pursue attempts to defend or elaborate it *while being alive to other views and to the possibility that one may be moving in the wrong direction*. Belief is compatible with a sincere admission of possibly being deeply mistaken and with efforts to understand things from the standpoint of those who disagree with one, but I don't think philosophical practitioners have much of a sense of this. Lip-service may be paid to fallibilism, but no one takes it seriously enough in practical terms to pay attention to possible sources of error on one's own part as revealed in the possible insights or arguments of another tradition. I maintain that all of this bespeaks a great deal of closed-mindedness.

¹⁷ Let me suggest another dimension to the issues we have been discussing that there is no space here to dissect at any great length. The expression "it takes one to know one" is often used in derogatory fashion to tell someone they are as guilty of a certain fault as the person they are accusing of that fault. However, it contains or suggests an epistemological truth that goes beyond what we have been saying here about open-mindedness, but also applies to open-mindedness as one instance. I think it is easier to see one's way toward accusing someone of closed-mindedness than to understand how open-minded someone is. Closed-minded people can see closed-mindedness in others more easily than in themselves (as with Jesus's point about how readily one sees the mote in another's eye but fails to recognize the beam in one's own). But there is absolutely no reason why an open-minded person couldn't see, *accurately* see, closed-mindedness in others. By contrast, it seems difficult to imagine that anyone but an open-minded person could ever recognize open-mindedness in others. With regard to that property, it seemingly takes or would take one to know one, and there are

as I have argued, than the fact of the rareness of moral virtue(s) renders virtue ethics unsatisfactory as an overall approach to ethics. But it may mean that as virtue epistemologists we should go forward a little more soberly and humbly than we have previously. Our blithe virtue-epistemological talk about open-mindedness as an intellectual virtue masks the unpleasant reality that we who talk that way lack that very virtue. We haven't ever admitted that, but it is high time now for us to do so; and if philosophers can see that point before those in other professions or academic areas do, then in this one instance at least philosophy will have justified its long-standing claim to be uniquely rational and wise.¹⁸

other instances of the same thing that relate to the doing of philosophy. In Chap. 4 I spoke of psychological sensitivity, but left it unsaid that it takes psychological sensitivity to recognize it in others. This creates a problem for the doing of philosophy because if, as Chap. 4 argued, good work, say, in ethics requires psychological sensitivity, only those who are themselves sensitive in that way will likely be able to recognize that good quality in others. So the idea that we can learn to do philosophy better by recognizing psychological sensitivity in certain philosophers (Bernard Williams, Michael Stocker) may not be as helpful as one might like. Further, the appendix of my *The Impossibility of Perfection* argues that some people have better intuitions (and to that extent better philosophical *judgment*) than others. But it takes good intuitions (or judgment) to recognize that capacity or talent or intellectual virtue in others, and those lacking this quality won't be able to recognize their own lack of it or be able somehow (and one can be skeptical about this possibility in something like the way Chap. 3 offered reasons to be skeptical about the effort to improve oneself morally) to do something about it. (As la Rochefoucauld tells us, everyone complains about their memory, but no one complains about their [lack of] judgment.) These points work against the optimism expressed in the conclusion of this book about how (younger?) philosophers can and should try to bring together the best of Chinese and Western philosophy in the future. Yes, that is a good idea, but whatever we do to bridge East and West as philosophers of the future will have to come up against the reality of most philosophers' deficiency in certain philosophy-helpful intellectual traits and their/our lack of self-knowledge about that deficiency.

¹⁸The resemblance of what I am saying to (standard understandings of) Socrates's *docta ignorantia* should be fairly obvious at this point. In addition, the view defended here seems the antithesis of certain theses of post-modernism. Many post-modernists deny there is such a thing as truth or reason, whereas the present account of open-mindedness (tacitly) assumes there are such things as truth and reason, but argues that most of us are simply, or not so simply, *irrational about finding the truth*. What I have been saying here also bears important relations to "therapeutic positivism" and the "new mysterianism," but I won't discuss these further comparisons here. Finally, I should mention that closed-mindedness blends with partiality and bias in many different areas. Our love for our child can make us not only reluctant to believe bad things about them but closed-minded to the point of being unwilling (or unable) to believe such things. Our prejudice against an ethnic group can likewise make us unwilling to acknowledge, and thus closed-minded with regard to, the group's good traits or accomplishments.

APPENDIX B: CARE ETHICS, EMPATHY, AND LIBERALISM

1

If care ethics is to represent a systematic alternative to rationalist/traditionalist approaches to morality, it has to speak and speak persuasively about political issues. Yet in that area it seems to have a marked disadvantage vis-à-vis liberal Kantian or Rawlsian views about rights (and justice to the extent it involves the honoring of rights), because of the way or ways we typically think and speak about political or human rights. Not just rationalist/liberal philosophers but ordinary Americans too think we have a fundamental and/or self-evident right to various civil liberties: for example, to freedom of speech and freedom of religious worship. And because this intuitive or at least familiar way of conceiving political morality seems far from anything care ethics would want or be able to say, care ethics has a problem. One way out of the problem would be and in effect has been simply to grant that liberalism is right and says all the right things about political/legal issues, thus treating care ethics as mainly an approach to the ethics of personal or private relationships. That has—with certain important qualifications—been the approach taken by Virginia Held and certain other care ethicists (Held 2006).¹ But this way of pursuing care ethics is problematic on a number of theoretical grounds.

¹ Held holds that even if valid (liberal) political morality is in important ways independent of caring, it has to be situated within a larger context that embodies the values of caring. But

First, it concedes that the original impulse or motivation behind care ethics—the idea of connection with and caring about others as ethically basic—can’t adequately deal with political issues, and since Kantian ethics and various other forms of rationalism can and do claim to cover the whole of ethics, both private and political morality, care ethics will seem less comprehensive and less adequate if it has to borrow from other views to fill out what it says otherwise about morality or ethics. Care ethics will then be a kind of hybrid, and it will be understandable in ordinary philosophical terms if more uniform and systematic approaches like Kantianism and consequentialism are preferred to what is merely partial and in need of supplementation *by one of those other approaches*.

But there is another problem too with the proposal to limit the ethics of care to the private sphere. Even if we grant the personal isn’t *entirely* the political, it is obvious nowadays that these two spheres or aspects of morality intersect and interact in very important ways. So how can care ethics keep its approach to individual/personal morality clear of implications for political morality, rights, and justice? And there is more to be said. I have argued in my *The Ethics of Care and Empathy* (Slote 2007) that the basic philosophical/moral ideas behind care ethics are actually inconsistent with liberal political/legal views (that was my main purpose in writing this book). Care ethics from its inception in the 1980s has put great stress on connection with others, and the kind of liberalism we are focusing on here emphasizes autonomy (rights) in a way that insists on the moral separateness of individuals. It is difficult to believe that this difference, this *opposition*, wouldn’t lead to different moral judgments about specific ranges of political/legal cases, and that is just what we in effect do find. In what follows, I shall mention some important areas where there is a normative conflict between what liberalism says and what care ethics, if at all true to its founding theoretical/moral motivations, will want to say, and I think two things follow. First, that we had better not try to harness care ethics to or with political liberalism because that leads to forms of inconsistency we should surely wish to avoid. But, second, it follows that if care ethics wants to speak about political issues, it needs to speak with its own distinctive voice and thus to cover the full range of issues and cases—both personal and political or mixed between them—that Kantianism, and so on,

that doesn’t, I think, affect the points I am making in the main text. Also, I hope it is clear that the political liberalism I am speaking of here is the Kantian/Rawlsian variety of liberalism, not Millian (or more generally utilitarian) liberalism.

seek to deal with. And this, as I mentioned above, creates problems for care ethics because it deals with political questions in terms of empathy, caring, and connection rather than speaking of basic and independently intuited political rights in the way that comes so naturally or easily to thoughtful Americans and American political thinkers.

So the question then arises whether there is any way for the care ethicist to persuade people that we shouldn't think of political rights and justice in the traditional terms, but should reformulate or reconceptualize our thinking about rights in the less familiar coinage of empathic concern and sensitivity. I think there is, and the present essay is going to be my attempt to make a persuasive or strong case for making the change-over, for reconceiving our political ideals along care-ethical lines. Certain other care ethicists have already made efforts to theorize about political values in basically care-ethical terms, but they haven't, I believe, taken on the task I shall be undertaking here. Even if they have been critical of liberalism, they haven't reckoned with how easy it is for Americans to conceive political morality along liberal philosophical lines. They have not tried to show that the familiarity and naturalness, at least for Americans, of thinking of political rights as having a rational and/or intuitive status that doesn't intersect with or depend on empathy, emotion, and caring—they have not specifically attempted to show how and why this familiar and traditional approach is normatively inadequate and simply cannot work.² And that is what I will be seeking to do here.

I am going to begin by focusing on issues from political life where care ethics and liberalism needn't disagree. However, in order to see how and why this can be so, it will be helpful to clarify some terms or concepts that care ethics needs to rely on not only in dealing with political examples but in its "home territory" of personal moral issues. And then we will proceed to the types of cases where care ethics and liberalism disagree, again making use of concepts that care ethics distinctively needs, but now attempting to show how and why this allows care ethics to frame political issues in ways that are superior to anything liberalism can provide. And the most important concept for us to start talking about is empathy.

The word "empathy" didn't exist till the twentieth century, and in fact Hume used the term "sympathy" to refer both to what we would now call sympathy and to what we nowadays think of as empathy. And just to make

²Here I am most specifically thinking about what Nel Noddings says about and against liberalism in her *Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy* (Noddings 2002).

sure we are all on the same page, let me say, briefly, that the difference between empathy and sympathy is approximately the difference between Bill Clinton's feeling someone's pain and someone's feeling bad that someone else is in pain and wanting to help them or see them helped. "Empathy" has a broader use than this suggests—e.g., one can take in or absorb another's attitudes or opinions via a kind of empathic osmosis that Hume talks a great deal about. But in any event empathy is important for our purposes here because it is natural to suppose and there is a lot of psychological evidence in favor of the view that caring about others depends on the development of empathy in individuals. (There is some controversy about this idea, too, but I propose to put the controversy to one side for purposes of this appendix.)³

Now it is true that we tend to feel more empathy for suffering we witness than for suffering we merely know about at a distance and more empathy for the suffering of those we know and care about than for the suffering of strangers or people we know less well. And these facts of partiality can make us wonder how or whether we can derive plausible views about rights and justice from considerations concerning empathy and empathic concern for others. However, as the literature on empathy and moral development makes fairly clear, it is possible for mature individuals and even adolescents to feel substantial empathy with and concern for large groups of individuals they don't know personally, and this gives care ethics an entry point for talking about issues of social (or international) justice in terms of empathy and without having to bring in rationalist/liberal notions (or utilitarian or libertarian views) to supplement what it has to say about individual moral obligations and actions. Moreover, even if empathy is inevitably and irrecusably partial, empathy can be cultivated and widened via processes of moral education that the literature on moral development has described in some detail. So let's not too quickly assume that empathy and caring based in empathy are incapable of the task I am setting for them and that, if I am correct, care ethics itself sets for them.

But can a care ethics grounded in empathy really deal plausibly with all the different aspects of social or international or legal justice? Some have argued that it cannot and have mentioned the issue of tolerance as a good example of why we need something other than sheer feeling and motiva-

³ See, e.g., C. D. Batson's *Altruism in Humans* (Batson 2011). Chapter 2 above argues in effect that the doubts that have been raised recently about the role of empathy in producing or sustaining altruism are largely misconceived.

tion based in feeling in order to deal with people's rights to religious freedom. It is often held, for example, that religious liberties need to be rationally grounded in autonomy rights because sheer feeling will sometimes lead people not to tolerate religious practices that they find abhorrent or disgusting. And a typical liberal conclusion, then, is that we should fully respect the emotion-independent rights of free worship of those whose religion we strongly dislike and that we show such respect if we tolerate views and practices we dislike out of a conviction or intuition that people have a basic right to have those views and participate in those practices.

But this whole picture is morally distorted. Someone who allows others to worship freely even though they have nothing but disdain for those others or their views *doesn't* show full, genuine respect toward or for those others. It would be much more respectful if one tried, in an open-minded fashion, to see things from their perspective, if one could muster some empathy for that perspective, and didn't allow oneself simply to hate or condemn what the others think or do. (This needn't lead one to ultimately agree with those one initially disagrees with.) Liberals and ethical rationalists believe that justice and rights are tied to respect, but as we have just seen, that assumption, far from supporting rationalism and liberalism, actually works against their political ideals/vision and in favor of the care-ethical emphasis on empathy and emotion. A care ethics that stresses empathy will say that there is something wrong with or limited about the liberal/rationalist notion of respect because what the liberal conceives as full respect isn't the fullest kind of respect: liberalism doesn't recognize the importance of trying to empathize with those one disagrees with as a basis for the fullest kind of respect.

I am not, however, saying that everyone has a moral obligation to try to empathize, in open-minded fashion, with those they disagree with. That seems over-demanding. But it isn't too demanding to morally require that one not persecute people for their religious beliefs and not force them to give up their rituals and observances if one hasn't made a genuine effort to see things from their perspective. And this is precisely what historically hasn't happened. All the persecutions that have occurred throughout history appear to have occurred in the absence of any attempt to see things from the point of view of those being persecuted. However somewhat apart from the issue of empathy, there is also the issue of sheer caring. Could persecution and torture in the name of one's religion count as a form of caring and thus pass the moral muster of any plausible care ethics?

Consider the Spanish Inquisition, for example. Apologists for the Inquisition both then and since have sometimes said that heretics and non-believers were tortured out of a (caring) concern for the welfare of those being tortured (the good of their immortal souls). But as John Locke wisely and wittily pointed out in his *Second Treatise of Government* (Locke 1960), the “dry eyes” of those who tortured heretics give the lie to the claim that the inquisitors were concerned with the welfare of those they tortured. But then, you say, couldn’t someone with tearful eyes be genuinely seeking the well-being or happiness of those to whom they were denying religious freedom and possibly even torturing. Dan Engster has suggested to me that St. Augustine might have been such a person, someone who would have been genuinely upset about the use force on unbelievers, but who would have counted as genuinely caring in doing what he did or advocated doing. But I am not so sure.

Someone doesn’t demonstrate caring motivation in a given instance if they say they want to help a given person, but don’t do the relevant homework about how best to help that person. One has to want to learn how to help someone if one is to count as genuinely caring about them. But then consider Augustine. He was no doubt a great mind, a great philosopher, but (though we don’t often say this) he was also a fanatic. He favored persecuting or excommunicating the Pelagians (whose supposed doctrinal sin was that they thought human beings could become morally better through their own unaided efforts), and more generally he wasn’t open-minded vis-à-vis those who religiously disagreed with him. But if you are genuinely trying to help someone, you have to be open-minded about issues that are relevant to the question of how to help that person. And, by contrast, St. Augustine was in effect saying to those who disagreed with him: I know the truth and you don’t and so I know what is best for you without having to consult with you about what would in fact be good for you. If this is supposed to justify forcing people to worship differently for the sake of their immortal souls, such a justification simply doesn’t work in care-ethical terms. St. Augustine’s lack of open-mindedness, his unwillingness to see things from the point of view of those he disagreed with and was willing to use force on, counts as a form of egotism; and to pursue another’s well-being in an egotistical closed-minded manner is to be less than full concerned about their welfare.

Indeed, Augustine’s lack of religious toleration in fact greatly resembles what we deplore about many stage mothers or fathers. The stage mother who, for example, tells their child they have to practice ballet six hours a

day and who, despite all the protests of their child, tells the child that they are forcing them to do this for the child's own good is closed-minded and egotistical vis-à-vis their child, and neither such a parent nor Augustine in his mode of intolerance and persecution can really constitute a good instance of caring. So just as carelessness or laziness about obtaining relevant information can undercut someone's claim to have acted in a caring manner, so too does acting at the behest of egotistical (non-open-minded) fanaticism count as less than fully or genuinely caring; and I believe, therefore, that an ethics of care can tell us why religious intolerance/persecution is unjustified in moral terms. But liberalism can tell its own story of why these things aren't allowed, so my main point here is that (perhaps surprisingly) an ethics of care that emphasizes empathy (and empathic open-mindedness) can rule out religious intolerance and persecution just as definitively as liberalism can. But then one should also add that (as I mentioned earlier) there are aspects of (the fullest) respect for other people's religious or other views that care ethics can capture through the idea of empathy and that liberalism has totally ignored. However, as we shall see, this isn't the strongest argument care ethics can mount against liberalism, and before we get to the stronger or strongest case against liberalism, I think it would help the case of political care ethics if I pointed out some other areas where it can account for our received or intuitive moral/political opinions just as easily as liberalism can.

Consider, for example, issues of justice and rights that concern the welfare or wealth of members of society. Liberalism assumes (as libertarianism does not) that justice needs to be connected with some degree of welfarist equality or at least with improving the lot of those who are worst-off in society. But care ethics has similar things to say about this issue because of the emphasis it places on empathy. I mentioned earlier that empathy is partial to what is perceived as opposed to what is merely known about, but empathy is also partial to sheer badness. Someone's awful lot in life engages our empathy much more strongly than someone's being in a fairly good or mediocre position that allows for substantial improvement. And this is another way of saying that empathy favors *compassion* over *sheer benevolence*. So a care ethics of justice can say that justice requires greater help or aid for those whose welfare condition is bad than for (groups of) those whose condition is simply not wonderful, and this leveling implication sits well with what liberals say and most of us feel about social (and international) justice.

Finally, care ethics also favors democracy over other forms of government for reasons having to do with empathy and the kind of full respect that requires a willingness and ability to empathize with others. Rulers/leaders in the Far East often say that there is no reason for their states/societies to be governed democratically. Westerners may place a great value on democracy and self-government, but, they say, there are different “Asian values” that actuate people in their own countries. There is, they claim, a natural Asian deference to authority that makes democracy much less relevant in the East than it is thought to be by those Westerners who seek to impose their values throughout the world (see Bell 2000).

Doesn't this remind you of what used to be said about women? It used to be said that women are naturally deferent to men and that that is why it is inappropriate to give them the vote. And this kind of argument works no better for or with Asians than it does for or with women. It is true that after being beaten down by patriarchal/sexist social mores or their own parents over a period of years (“you don't really want to be a doctor, dear, or to go to university; you'd be much happier as a nurse or full-time homemaker”), a girl or woman may end up not thinking for herself and mainly deferring to others. But if their aspirations and ideas are actually listened to, little girls don't become the deferential “angels in the house” that some of them were praised for being during the Victorian era. And there really is no reason to think things are or would be any different with East Asians. (Think about what has been happening in recent years in rural Thailand.) Once again, empathic respect for what the other wants is the key to justice and if people know about the possibility of democracy and aren't browbeaten into denying or devaluing their own desires and aspirations, they will want democracy. And a full empathic concern for them will seek to gratify or fulfill that very understandable human desire. So here, as with various other areas of justice and political thinking, a care-ethical approach is or can easily be consistent with what liberals think and what most of us antecedently believe about what is required by justice and/or our rights as human beings.

But of course in the United States at least, issues of justice are typically framed in terms of rights in a way that seems to have no reference to empathy or caring and that seems to reach out for some kind of rationalistic justification. The American “Declaration of Independence” declares that various truths about human rights are self-evident, and this is or is normally seen as an appeal to sheer rational intuition. (Can anything be self-evident to empathy?) So a care-ethical approach to justice has to say

that this normal (American) understanding of justice gets things wrong, puts things on the wrong basis. It has to say that the real source of what is just or unjust (and of corresponding rights) lies in a relation to human empathy. It has to say that such empathy picks out what is appealing about justice in more humane terms than any understanding of rights and justice that relies on (abstract considerations of) reason and is entirely independent of all feeling can allow.

Part of the argument for this conclusion we have already given: we have seen that ideal or complete respect, far from being a matter of honoring abstract rights independently of how we feel, depends on our genuinely empathizing with how others see and feel about things. But there is another reason too for thinking that justice cannot be as ethical rationalists/liberals conceive it. If the rationalists and liberals actually come to mistaken views about particular ranges of practical cases, then the considerations on which they base what they say about those cases cannot be the basic foundational considerations that underlie properly-conceived justice (or rights). And I shall now argue, therefore, that care ethics gives us a better practical/normative answer than liberalism does to certain important political issues and, for that reason, a better account of the foundations of justice, as well.

2

Most liberals who have recently spoken of the right of free speech have invoked the roughly Kantian notion of autonomy (e.g., autonomous self-expression) as the basis of that right. And for most cases this seems plausible enough. But liberals use the same notion of autonomy to defend hate speech as a form of free speech, and this leads to controversial results. An example that often comes up in the literature concerns the march and subsequent speech-making that neo-Nazis sought permission for in the 1970s in the town of Skokie, Illinois. Important academic liberals like Ronald Dworkin, Thomas Nagel, and T. M. Scanlon have argued that the autonomy rights that underlie and justify freedom of speech also justify allowing the neo-Nazis to march and speechify in Skokie (something they never in fact did).⁴ But the neo-Nazis chose Skokie for a reason: it was a town with a large population of Jewish Holocaust survivors, and empathy

⁴For references to the work of Dworkin et al. and a much more extensive discussion of this case, see my *The Ethics of Care and Empathy* (Slote 2007: Chap. 5).

with those survivors might make us hesitate and more than hesitate to allow the neo-Nazis to march, demonstrate, speechify, and so on, in such close and immediate proximity to the survivors.

But the academic liberals, knowing about the Holocaust survivors, nonetheless favored allowing the march, and so on, on grounds of (the importance of) rational autonomy. However, these same liberals also tended to see the situation in Skokie in a way that downplays or ignores the effects of the march, and so on, on the survivors. Many of us—including care ethicists—would defend free speech that is merely offensive or frustrating to those who hear it; but what the neo-Nazis were proposing to do was likely to do more than offend and frustrate. The sheer knowledge that something like this was going on at such close quarters in their country of supposed refuge from the Holocaust (and the survivors were likely not just to know about the near-by march but to hear some of what was going on with their own ears) would very probably have had a (re)traumatizing effect on some or many of the Holocaust survivors, and this amounts to psychological damage, not mere frustration and offended feelings. But the liberals never mentioned this possibility, and I think this showed a certain lack of empathic sensitivity in their intellectual position. Sure, if the effects would just be offense and frustration, then autonomy considerations would have sufficient force to justify allowing the march. But when actual harm is at issue—and it is important to realize that not all harm is physical—then the weight of empathic and humane considerations seems to me—and has seemed to many feminists and care ethicists—to favor a refusal to let the neo-Nazis march in Skokie rather than somewhere else.⁵ The frustration of the neo-Nazis is nothing as compared with the

⁵ But couldn't a homophobic claim they were injured by having a gay rights parade go near their house, and couldn't a racist make a similar claim about civil rights activism occurring near their home? Well, they could make such claims, but we have to judge for ourselves whether such claims are plausible, and I think most of the readers of this appendix would agree that the claims are rationalizations and pretexts rather than reality-based. Of course, a racist judge might buy such claims and it is sometimes difficult to know when psychological irritation ends and genuine psychological damage begins. So there are certainly slippery slope issues that arise in principle (and without anyone being prejudiced and rationalizing their prejudice), and this certainly bears practically on how courts can and should function regarding these kinds of cases. But the main point here is that it in fact would be just not to allow the neo-Nazis to march and speechify in circumstances like those that obtained in Skokie, something that care ethics argues for but liberalism does not. Finally, even if a racist is psychologically damaged by the accumulation of the events of black progress, that damage, supposing it really to exist, reflects their immoral (in both liberal and care-ethical terms)

retraumatization of Holocaust survivors. And in that case the liberal/rationalist “autonomy defense” of free hate speech in the Skokie case seems misguided.

Moreover, the wrong answer about the Skokie case seems to come from putting too much emphasis on rational autonomy and not enough on (sensitivity to) human feeling, its causes and effects. So this case (and it really is a range of cases) suggests that justice is better grounded in such feeling than in purely rationalist considerations. And let me now mention another case (or range of cases) that points toward the same conclusion.

In the past and in many jurisdictions even today, judges are reluctant (and the law doesn’t readily allow them) to issue restraining orders against husbands or boyfriends who their wives or girlfriends say have threatened them with violence or have already done violent things to them. Often further judicial/legal process is or has been required, and this has often meant that women are (further) injured or even killed before the further process has taken its course. But why has there been so much reluctance to issue the restraining orders (or have the women guarded through additional police patrols, etc.)? In large part it is out of a sense of the importance of autonomy rights of freedom of movement (and assembly). But this means that until very recently (and only in certain jurisdictions at that), the legal/judicial emphasis has been on autonomy rights rather than the welfare (rights) of women, and I think most of us nowadays—and not just feminists and women—would say that the law has erred in placing so much emphasis on autonomy rights and so little on dangers to women (and children).

But the liberal has precious little room to renavigate these waters. To do so is to place more emphasis on welfare than on civil liberties and the committed liberal (e.g., Rawls, as we shall see in just a moment) is likely to be very uncomfortable with doing so. However, if one thinks the basis of morality and justice doesn’t lie in abstractly, rationally considered or intuited rights like autonomy and sees these things, rather, in relation to our own human empathic sensitivities to issues and realities of human welfare, one will once again favor welfare over autonomy. And this is what we nowadays feel is appropriate. We feel that restraining orders and police patrols or bodyguards can be justified much earlier or much more broadly

moral beliefs and dispositions, and the damage that would have been sustained by the Holocaust survivors doesn’t reflect any immorality on their part (only on Hitler’s). That is also morally relevant to distinguishing these cases.

than traditional political thinking allows, and in the light of its ability to deliver a morally more plausible view of what is called for in cases of threatened or actual abuse, the care-ethical way of grounding its view of such cases and all others is further supported.⁶ So even if most Americans think in terms of rationalistic bases for their own intuitions about justice and rights, a care-ethical account of what is foundationally involved in justice and rights delivers more plausible and acceptable normative judgments about various ranges of practical legal cases. I know of no comparable advantages of the rationalistic approach over the care-ethical in regard to other cases, and all this, therefore, constitutes a reason to accept a generalized empathy-emphasizing care-ethical theory of rights and justice—and to abandon the traditional liberal way of conceiving these matters.

And let's be clear about the difference here. Rawls's liberal theory of justice, as applied to developed societies, gives basic civil liberties a lexical priority in relation to (what can be seen as proxies for) considerations of welfare, and on any plausible reading of what he says, this means that the neo-Nazis should have been allowed to march and give speeches even if that would have brought a cost of human welfare to the Holocaust survivors in Skokie. It also means that the law and the courts should hesitate or more than hesitate to interfere with the autonomy rights of free movement of accused husbands who have not yet been allowed or subjected to any legal proceeding or trial.⁷ Liberalism in some important contemporary

⁶But what if the wife is lying about her husband's having abused or even threatened her? Won't it then be unfair to the husband if the restraining order is issued on her say-so? In that particular instance an injustice will, I agree, have been done, but the issue is one of just administrative or judicial *policy*, and if the lying wife has no previous record of lying to or misleading officials, then the just policy—for reasons having to do with generally ensuring women's safety—will dictate taking her at her word and issuing the (temporary) restraining order. In certain jurisdictions the law allows dogs "one free bite": even if they bark and growl menacingly, they can't be legally sent to the pound, etc., until and unless they have actually bitten someone. And surely we can and should accord this much scope or leeway to complaining women: one free lie, as it were. In the kinds of cases I am talking about, the interests at stake for wives are more serious than those at risk for husbands, and the care-ethical approach would therefore argue that in all fairness they should trump the (full exercise of the) liberty rights of husbands. The possibility that a wife may be lying for the first time in a judicial proceeding doesn't alter that basic non-equation. However, I am also assuming that any temporary restraining order against the husband won't go on his permanent public record. To make the point I want to make, our case has to be one in which the well-being of the woman is just pitted against the husband's temporary freedom of movement.

⁷On the lexical priority of liberty, see *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls 1971: Sects. 11, 26, 39, and 82). Rawls never dealt with the Skokie case directly or, as far as I know, with issues of spousal abuse. But what he says about freedom of speech in *Political Liberalism* (Rawls 1993: 295f.) supports the present interpretation of his views.

instances really does seem to yield the wrong answers to the sorts of questions we have been discussing, and that in itself gives us reason to question its rationalistic emphasis on autonomy (as traditionally conceived) and its whole way of seeing political issues of morality. Our whole country may buy into that way of seeing things, but if that yields normatively unacceptable results, we have to start theorizing about things differently, and I am

Note too that although American liberals (unlike libertarians) typically favor strict or stricter gun control, it seems difficult to reconcile such a view with belief in the priority of the basic liberties (in what Rawls [*Political Liberalism*: 297] calls “reasonably favorable conditions”). If liberals are inconsistent on this point and could come to recognize this, then perhaps the sheer moral weight of what favors gun control could lead them away from liberalism and in the care-ethical direction I have been arguing for here. And I might add that the issue of liberalism’s possible internal inconsistency also arises out of issues concerning free speech. Slander is forbidden free speech, and so too are false advertising and yelling “fire!” in a crowded theater. Can liberalism consistently defend its view of the rights of the neo-Nazis in Skokie and of husbands accused of threatening violence and at the same time accept, as it seems to, the limits on free speech just mentioned? I am inclined to wonder about this because it seems to me, for example, that any argument against “freedom of slander (or libel)” invokes considerations of (non-physical) damage or harm that the liberals downplay in regard to Skokie and spousal abuse.

It is better, rather, to place empathy with harm or damage more centrally in our understanding of human rights. Yes, we have a right to speak freely, but that right can be derived from the fact that it shows a lack of empathic concern for people and what they want in life if one denies them the right to speak freely in most circumstances. And limitations on that right, as with Skokie, can once again be derived from the sensitivity of empathy to what would likely result if the neo-Nazis were allowed to march and speechify there. As with justice, I think our most morally adequate and deep understanding of how we think and feel about (autonomy) rights conforms to care-ethical sentimental ideas and not to liberalism or ethical rationalism more generally.

Finally, let me mention Jonathan Haidt’s 2012 book *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*. This book became quite well known among the educated public when it first appeared, though it aroused less interest among academic moral philosophers. Its assertion that ethical thinking is divided into separate modules in our minds, so that thinking about justice and rights is pretty much isolated from thinking about compassion and benevolence and from thinking about ritual purity and sacredness contradicts almost all philosophers’ views of these matters, for utilitarians, Kantians, Aristotelians, care ethicists, intuitionists, and sentimental virtue ethicists all agree that morality has a single source and simply disagree about what that source is. The fact that we so naturally qualify the right to free speech in the light of the human damage it would do if someone yelled “fire” in a crowded theater or publicly slandered an enemy shows how far Haidt’s view is from the non-modular way people actually think about ethical issues; and in fact Haidt himself demonstrates a curious inconsistency when the title of his book uses “good people” in a non-modular general ethical way despite the clear modularity of his official view of ethics.

arguing that care ethics gives us a way of doing so that yields the right normative answers across a wide range of political issues.⁸

Of course, the defender of liberalism might at this point try to find cases that care ethics can't handle and that liberalism can. But that is something I myself have been unable to do, and if the liberal can't do any better, then they should at the very least start worrying about their own views and pay some serious attention to what care ethics can and does say about political morality. And there is another, possibly deeper reason why rationalist/Kantian liberals should worry about their own views, a reason based on what Carol Gilligan (Gilligan 1982), following psychoanalyst Nancy Chodorow (Chodorow 1978), has said about the differing childhood experiences of girls and boys.

Both girls and boys have traditionally been raised by their mothers much more than by their fathers, and this has an asymmetric impact on their development. To meet social or family expectations, boys have had to distance themselves from their mothers in a way that girls traditionally have not, and boys have therefore typically ended up emphasizing and valuing autonomy and separateness and systems of rules of the kind that exist outside the home much more or much more frequently than girls have. But liberalism à la Rawls and Scanlon places its main emphasis on autonomy and systems of rules or principles, and to that extent it reflects or at least corresponds to a typical male, rather than a typical female, upbringing.

This ought to give the Kantian/rationalist liberal pause, but never has. There is no sign in the literature of ethics and political philosophy that liberal philosophers like Rawls and Scanlon (or ethicists like Derek Parfit who

⁸If we Americans think of our political morality as based in rationally-intuited rights of autonomy that trump other ethical considerations, but at the same time are moving or have moved to normative views about hate speech and violence against women that are inconsistent with such a basis for morality, that shows us not to understand or to have understood ourselves very well. What we have taken to be paramount (for us) turns out not to be morally paramount (for us) in ways that can only by and large be quite surprising. So the implications of care ethics are eye-opening, but that is only because we have misapprehended, misunderstood what morality, our own morality, is all about. And, if I may say, I think this ignorance is partly of our own doing. Emotion and thinking about emotion makes many or most of us uneasy and even anxious, so the idea that morality is based in an empathy-rooted emotion like caring is a deeply unsettling and uncomfortable one. But it is time, I think, for us to face these realities, and all the recent focus both on empathy and on caring in our culture and our society (HMOs advertise themselves as, e.g., "the caring folks.") makes it somewhat more likely that we will do so.

also place great emphasis on public systems of rules) have taken notice of what Gilligan and Chodorow say about the difference between typical male and typical female upbringings, and if they did, the fact that their philosophical views correspond so closely to what happens in typical male (but not female) development should make them wonder (but would it?) whether their views are more determined by their upbringing(s) as males than by cogent arguments.⁹ Of course, even after wondering about this, they might still try to offer good philosophical arguments for liberalism and against care ethics and other normative views. But to proceed, as these philosophers have, as if the issue of the influence of upbringing (raised by Chodorow and Gilligan) didn't exist seems to me to be wrongheaded or else oblivious in a way that one might well describe as academically/intellectually negligent and perhaps even as academically/intellectually arrogant. (Remember our relevant discussion of such issues in Chap. 4.) Alternatively, and using Gilligan's terminology, one could describe this lack of reaction from liberal philosophers as a rather new and distinctively academic instance of men *not listening to the voice of women*. Now care ethicists may face a similar problem, given what Chodorow and Gilligan say about the relation of care thinking (and its refusal to make rule systems fundamental to ethical thought and action) to typical traditional female upbringing. But the care ethicists have all at least read Gilligan, and so they know about the statistical relation between different kinds of upbringing and different moral orientations; whereas the male philosophers I have just mentioned haven't even got that far with the perplexing issue of how upbringing affects or should affect theoretical moral views.¹⁰ So as I see it, and primarily on the basis of the arguments I offered earlier, there is reason to favor care ethics over liberalism as an approach to political issues of morality.

Now and finally let me remind the reader where this appendix is supposed to fit in this book. In the first place, it nails down what was said in Chap. 4 about the failure of rationalist male philosophers to really listen to

⁹ See, e.g., John Rawls (1971); T. M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (1998); and Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (1984) and *On What Matters* (2011). All these philosophers (even Parfit in *On What Matters*) are influenced by Kant, but it is worth noting that recent female neo-Kantians—e.g., Onora O'Neill, Barbara Herman, Marcia Baron, and Christine Korsgaard—don't place the same emphasis on systems of rules that male neo-Kantians do. Again, this is something that seems fairly predictable, so I think we all should pay more attention to and worry about issues of psychological origin.

¹⁰ The idea that a view's origins can be relevant to assessing our reasons for believing it is a familiar theme in the work of Bernard Williams and has also been advocated by Alison Jaggar, by me, and by other feminists.

(or show respect for) what the proponents of care ethics have had to say. The only place I know of where care ethics is at any length critically engaged by an ethical rationalist is in *Sex and Social Justice* (OUP, 2000, ch. 2); and the author, Martha Nussbaum is, of course, a woman. (I think Nussbaum's criticisms of Noddings are sometimes wildly unfair to Noddings's actual views as expressed in her writings.) However, the philosophically more important purpose of this appendix has been to deliver on a promissory note issued in Chap. 8 about the overall justificatory structure of the work I have been doing in recent years. Chapter 2 tells us how an empathy-emphasizing ethics of care can be grounded in yin-yang, but apart from the present appendix nothing in the present book indicates how ideas about political and legal justice can be understood plausibly in terms of empathy and thus, ultimately, in yin-yang terms. Given the argument in PYY for the fundamental value of yin and yang and yin-yang as an indissoluble unity and given the arguments in MS (not repeated here, though referred to in Chap. 5) about how respect, autonomy, deontology, and moral semantics can be understood in empathic sentimentalist terms, the foundational project is completed via the present appendix. Remember too, however, and as Chap. 2 indicated, that this extremely ambitious project is actually part of an even larger project that takes on epistemology, aesthetics, and metaphysics in yin-yang terms. This is the subject of my forthcoming book *A Larger Yin-Yang Philosophy: From Mind to Cosmic Harmony* (now being translated and eventually to be published with side-by-side English and Chinese texts). If I am right, then yin-yang can be basic to large swaths of philosophy even if it takes analytic philosophizing to make good on that philosophical conclusion.

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APPENDIX C: YIN-YANG, ADULT IDENTITY, AND THE GOOD LIFE

Earlier in this book I have offered some reasons for thinking that virtue is best understood in terms of somewhat purified traditional notions of yin and yang. But I have never previously sought to show how yin-yang virtue relates to the having of a good life. Chinese thought tended to be optimistic about that relationship (as one sees explicitly brought out, for example, in the *Yizhuan*), but I don't believe that anyone in China ever sought to spell out the overall condition or conditions of human well-being in the way that is so familiar from Western philosophy. Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and the Epicureans all theorized in general philosophical terms about the nature of the good life, and in modern times there has been much speculation and argumentation in the West about what a good life overall involves, but all this thinking hasn't yet led to any agreed-on basic conclusions about the good life, and I think it is time for Chinese thought to make its contribution to what the West has been so preoccupied with for all this time.

In this appendix I shall draw on such thought making especial use of yin and yang, but I shall also draw on some of the West's psychological theorizing about the nature of adult living. This will lead to a conception of the or a good life that has much more in common with Ruism/Confucianism than with Daoism, but that, more significantly, brings together Western academic psychology with Chinese ideas about yin and yang that can ground our thinking about human virtue. The West has long struggled with the question of how human virtue is related to good human living

(this was the main focus of Plato's *Republic*), but I shall try to bring these notions together here in a new way, one that, as I have just indicated, draws both on developmental psychology in the West and on yin-yang. But in order to get started here I want to first remind you of how yin and yang are supposed to be understood for our present purposes. Next I shall briefly recall Chap. 8's discussion of what the West has had to say about developing and having an adult identity, and we shall see how Ruism fits in with such ideas much better than Daoism does. Then the final argument will show how Ruism-friendly yin-yang thinking about human virtue leads to and fits snugly with a Ruism-friendly yin-yang conception of the good life as involving a certain kind of developed adult identity.

1

The traditions of Chinese thought involve two somewhat distinct emphases in thinking philosophically about yin and yang, one based on the supposed alternating opposition of yin and yang, the other based on yin and yang as mutually peaceable and necessarily complementary. In this book I have been making use of the latter conception of yin-yang, and we have in particular understood yin as receptivity and yang as directed purpose or impulse. We have also seen how yin and yang thus understood necessitate each other, as with the example described in Chap. 2 of inextricably connected yin empathy and yang motivation to help. I shall continue to use yin and yang along these lines in order to offer you a picture of what a good life can or must involve. But for present purposes I think the best way to connect yin and yang to having a good life is via the idea of adult living and adult identities. To do this I shall have to draw on the work of Erik Erikson in a somewhat fuller way than I did in Chap. 8.

In his famous book *Childhood and Society* (Norton, 1950), Erikson argued that children develop toward adulthood via various psycho-social stages. One such stage, for example, is toilet training, and Erikson held that the task of being or becoming toilet trained is an important part of a child's development toward adulthood. In fact, Erikson held that there are several stages to be passed through successfully on the way to living as an adult, but I don't think we need to dwell here on what those stages are and how Erikson theorized what counts as success or as failure with respect to them. More relevantly, we ought to concentrate on his views about what it is to be an adult and, more particularly, what he took to be essential to developing an adult "identity."

According to Erikson's original thinking, an adult identity is forged, after a period of uncertainty Erikson dubbed "identity crisis," by the choice of a career. When Erikson was reminded that women traditionally don't have careers, he said that a woman's identity is forged through her forming an intimate and ongoing relationship with some man who has a career. Well, you can imagine what feminists made of such a distinction. Today we think women and men can both have careers or occupations outside the home, and we also think they are both capable of forming and sustaining long-term relationships. It makes more sense, therefore, to see both men's and women's adult identities as involving some sort of choice or commitment re both relationships and career occupations. I have elsewhere defended this non-sexist feminism-friendly view of adult identity formation, but the fullest realization of such a view also requires us to see that not every (educated) adult seeks to balance or "juggle" career and family; some put most of their adult emphasis on career-building and some put it on relationship-building, so the best formula for understanding adult identity, one that applies equally to (heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and transgendered) men and women, would involve saying that a choice of adult identity involves a choice or commitment about *how much* emphasis to put on family or other relationships and *how much* emphasis to put on career self-fulfillment in one's life.

Having said this, we are now in a position to see how yin and yang can help us understand adult living, i.e., living based on one or another choice of adult identity. For whichever way one chooses to live or is committed to living as an adult, yin and yang will help define what it is to be fully adult in that given way. On the surface, for example, someone who has and has chosen a career seems to exemplify yang directed purpose much much more than yin receptivity, but when you think about it, you can see that this is mistaken. If one is really serious and "adult" about taking on and having a career, one has to be very receptive to the traditions of one's chosen field and to what others in the same field or profession are thinking and doing. Not to do this is to be half-hearted and even, one can say, immature in the way one is going about the career. One is not doing things in a full adult way, and similar points apply to those, male or female, who choose to be stay-at-home parents and homemakers rather than pursue a career.

Again at first glance one might think that the stay-at-home male or female is primarily and predominantly yin and receptive in their orientation to their family and the world. A good mother or father has to be

empathic with their children if they are going to care properly for them and help them develop toward their own adulthood, and empathy, as we have said, is a form of receptivity. But too much emphasis on receptivity ignores what the good parent, the adult parent, has to *do* for their child or children. Yes, they have to be receptive to their child's needs and understand, for example, when their child need medical or even psychiatric attention. They have to be able, again receptively, to see where their child's talents lie if they are to be good and adult-like parents, but all of these things involve practical reactivity or responsiveness. The parent who sees a need in their child has to be or should be active in helping the child meet that specific need, and this is yang purposiveness at work in the family context. If the parent doesn't act, vigorously, on behalf of their child and his or her specific needs, they are slacking at the job of parenting, are, again, not acting like adults. A parent to be a good parent has to act in an adult or, we can say, parental way toward their children, and analogous points apply to home-making.

All in all, then, one needs a healthy dose of both yin and yang qualities in order to function as an adult, and these qualities work together and inextricably within adult lives. If someone who has chosen a career doesn't bother to find out what others are doing in their field, they are neither receptive nor purposeful in that career. Indeed, one can say that their half-heartedness shows them to have not really made the serious choice of career that is or can constitute the relevant kind of adult identity. Similar points apply to the relationship end of adult identity, and it is fair to say, therefore, that adult identity is constituted by virtuous yin receptivity and yang directedness as applied to how one lives overall rather than, say, how one treats some stranger who needs one's help.

2

This way of conceiving adulthood as falling under the concepts of yin and yang has implications for the long-standing disagreement or conflict between the Confucian tradition (Ruism) and Daoism. Adult living and adult identities involve commitments, involvements, habits, and virtues, and Daoism as standardly interpreted doesn't place much value on such things. The whole idea of adult identity and adult living as I have described it would be anathema to the Daoist, but most of what I have said will resonate well, I think, with Ruism. Of course, Ruism has never delved into childhood development in a psychologically oriented way. The main empha-

sis has been on moral development rather than on development or maturation more generally, so it is no wonder that the Ruists rarely if ever focus on what it is to be an adult rather than a child. The distinction, for example, between a *xiaoren* (mean-spirited individual) and a *shengren* (sage) or *junzi* (man of honor) is a moral distinction, not a generally developmental one, but the picture of adult human life that emerges from what I have said above seems particularly Confucian if one emphasizes and is mindful of the distinction *between* Ruism and Daoism. Daoism rejects the imprisonment of Confucian habits, duties, involvements, commitments, and virtues, but what I have said about adulthood subscribes in its own distinctive way to habits, duties, involvements, commitments, and virtues and to that extent clearly resembles Ruism and diverges starkly from Daoism.¹

But even Confucianism doesn't put the same kind of emphasis on yin and yang as I have been doing here. The earliest Confucians—Kongzi, Mengzi, and Xunzi—don't apply yin and yang to ethical issues, but the neo-Confucian Zhou Dunyi did do that even if neo-Confucians like Wang Yangming did not. But Zhou used an oppositional notion of yin and yang; yin was rest and yang motion, and he tried (literally) to bring these ideas down to earth by speaking of yin as softness and yang as hardness. Moral virtue was then supposed to involve some kind of oppositional blending or balancing of softness and hardness, but his discussion is more programmatic than it is specific. Ren or benevolence, for example, was said to be soft, but if softness is the earthly equivalent of heavenly restfulness, it is far from clear that benevolence constitutes a kind of rest or restfulness. The ren person, after all acts, and has to act in order to count as having that virtue. The non-oppositional complementarity yin-yang view of virtue seems to have a lot more to say and to say more specifically about virtue than Zhou's brief discussion encompasses or even suggests.² But still, and

¹I list both commitments and involvements here because they are not the same thing. Philosophers are always talking about commitments in regard to love and friendship, but unless one is talking about formal marriage, that term implies something more deliberate and self-conscious than is necessary to ordinary love and friendship. It in fact implies some kind of overt *act* of commitment. The notion of involvement doesn't have these connotations: one can be emotionally involved with or tied to someone without having performed some act of tying. The latter would indicate commitment, but in most cases involvement is the more accurate concept.

²There is a lack of fit between what Zhou says about cosmology and what he says about ethics that is arguably due to a lack of fit between traditional Chinese metaphysics (e.g., the *I Ching*) and early non-metaphysical Confucian ideas about moral virtue. I am indebted on this point to discussion with Yang Guorong.

this may be the most important point, neo-Confucianism saw value in both yin and yang, and this is something one doesn't find in Daoism.

Moreover, the idea of yin and yang as mutually inextricable sits much better with neo-Confucianism than with Daoism. Wang Yangming may not have relied explicitly on yin and yang in his discussions of virtue, but what he does explicitly say *lends itself* to being conceptualized in terms of mutually and inextricably complementary yin and yang. Wang famously argued that virtue is knowledge, which is to say that if one doesn't act virtuously, that can only be because one doesn't fully take in the realities of one's circumstances. In a way that can remind one of Socrates, Wang held that if one knows things as they really are, one inevitably will act virtuously, and put in my terms of yin and yang, one can say that this means that if one is epistemically yin receptive to the facts around one, one will yang be automatically motivated to act in the specific way that the situation calls for and that constitutes acting virtuously in that situation.

This sort of tight connection between receptivity and action would not, I think, be allowed for in the Daoist tradition. For the Daoist nothing makes one act; one acts naturally and goes with the flow, and the idea that if one sees a situation accurately, one has to act in a certain responsive way goes against the whole Daoist idea of spontaneous natural action or wu wei. So by deploying yin and yang in a way that sees them as mutually necessitating I move far away from Daoism and toward Wang Yangming. Even if Wang didn't understand the connection between understanding or knowledge and motivation to act in terms of yin and yang, the present conceptualization of yin and yang is not only compatible with what Wang said but also, and as I have argued elsewhere, helps give philosophical and ethical foundations to what he says about virtue and knowledge. We have seen how, in the case of ren or compassion/benevolence, the yin of empathic receptivity necessitates the yang of motivation to help, so in that case and a wide range of others, the tight connection between yin and yang can help explain and even justify Wang's and perhaps also Socrates's idea of a tight connection between knowledge and virtue. But now we have to see how all the philosophical ideas described here prepare us for a better understanding of what is involved in leading or having a good life.

3

Roughly, I want to argue that a good life is one that fulfills the goals or aspirations that are endemic to adult identities understood as involving yin and yang in inextricable (and virtuous) relationship. Whether one chooses to primarily emphasize (family) relationships or to primarily emphasize one's career or to try to balance the two, one has certain goals and aspirations. The person who chooses to be the primary caregiver in a family not only wants continuing pleasant and active relationships with their children, but wants their children to grow up and flourish as adults. The person who mainly emphasizes a chosen career wants or aspires to achieve certain goals, and of course the person who balances or juggles has both these sorts of goals.

But things don't always go well with regard to such goals or aspirations or desires. One can die young, one's career can be blocked or cut short in various ways, one's children can die or become addicted to drugs in ways that lead them to live miserable lives and to reject their relationship with you, the parent. Aristotle held that such unfortunate happenings cannot prevent us from living virtuously in the face of life's challenges, and he also held that if one lives long enough, one's virtuous response to life's challenges constitutes the having of a good (though not necessarily a blessed) life. Most of us, however, disagree with this picture, and what I have been saying above fits this common assumption or point of view. If enough of one's adult aspirations are not fulfilled, then one's life, however virtuously lived and however much such virtuous living can be understood in yin-yang terms, is not or has not been a good life. So my rather commonsensical idea is that living a good life means leading a yin and yang adult life that is fairly successful in terms of its yin and yang aspirations or goals.

This has some interesting implications. It implies that a life cannot be good if one doesn't get enough of what one wanted in and for one's life. It also implies that one can have a good life even if one is crippled with disease or paralysis as long as one's basic career or relationship goals are mainly being fulfilled. Of course, the idea of being mainly fulfilled is somewhat vague, but I think that at this point it is not a bad thing if one has to be somewhat vague about this matter. In *A Theory of Justice* (Harvard, 1971), John Rawls talks of various liberties and also talks about the moral imperative to equally maximize everyone's set or package of liberties. But this doesn't tell us how liberties are to be weighed against one another, and I think and Rawls seemingly believed that there was no harm in that

and that one could leave till later some kind of working out of what liberties are more important and what packages are in terms of liberty worth more than others. I say the same thing about the idea of having enough of one's aspirations being fulfilled or of having one's aspirations mainly or to a large extent fulfilled.

The conception of a good life briefly offered here has other interesting and arguably attractive features in relation to other views on the subject. There has been, for example, a division of opinion in the West over whether the good life has to involve action and activity. Hedonism about the good life holds that if one's life is mainly pleasurable, it will count as a good one, and having pleasure doesn't as such involve much of anything in the way of activity. But others and most notably Aristotle think of a good life as mainly a life of activity, virtuous activity, and my proffered theory or picture of the good life represents a kind of compromise or, perhaps better, a kind of balancing between active and non-active factors. An adult identity involves action, but whether it succeeds in terms of its goals or aspirations lies to a considerable extent beyond the actions of a given adult. Whether one will be killed or one's children will be killed by some unforeseeable accident is not a matter of how one acts but, rather, of what fate or the world dishes out to one in ways beyond one's control.

Moreover, the emphasis on adult goals accommodates another feature of our thinking, and Aristotle's thinking, about good lives. They cannot be cut short of adulthood and still be good lives. But then too, and as I have claimed contrary to Aristotle, they also have to achieve a goodly portion or proportion of one's adult goals or, perhaps more accurately, the goals one has as part of one's adult identity. An adult can like to watch baseball or old movies and can like vodka and mangos more than beer and broccoli, but these will presumably not constitute any part of the goals that flow from or determine their adult identities. This means that according to my conception, if a person is told by their doctor that their excitement at watching baseball or their consumption of vodka isn't good for their health and if they reluctantly swear off those things, their life can still be a good one if the basic goals of their adult identity are being met. Again, and taking things in a holistic way, I think such an implication makes sense. (What I have just said also implies that any totally spontaneous

person who fulfills the Daoist ideal doesn't count as leading a good overall life.)³

More, much more, needs to be said by way of completing and also justifying the picture of the good life I have just been sketching. But the theory I have offered does have some attractive features and in these last paragraphs I have described some of them. Also, it is good to have a yin and yang account of the good life that can go along with yin and yang thinking about human virtue and rationality. The way I have incorporated yin and yang into that account also relies on ideas about human development and adult identity that haven't featured in previous discussions East or West of the good life. This in effect opens up the discussion of the good life toward ideas in developmental psychology and makes our approach perhaps count as more psychologically realistic than what has been said previously by philosophers. Interestingly too, those like Erikson who have discussed adult identity and the human "life cycle" have never really or fully engaged with the philosophical/ethical task of describing what a good life consists in. But what Erikson does say pushes us, I think, in the general direction of the present view, and we can think of what has been presented here, therefore, as a way of integrating yin-yang and developmental psychology into a picture of human flourishing or good lives that goes well beyond what either of the subject areas thus integrated has to say on its own.

³There is also a major issue over whether this kind of total spontaneity is possible for any human being. If we all need love, then that already undermines the idea of a totally spontaneous wu wei "psychology." The Daoist might want to claim that we can overcome that need through a correct understanding of their philosophy, but I believe this is wishful thinking, and in any event one doesn't exemplify spontaneity or wu wei if one acts out of a desire to exemplify, or the conviction that one should try to exemplify, the Daoist ideal of wu wei. (Compare the final section of *Being and Nothingness* where Sartre points out that to value escaping bad faith is to exemplify bad faith.) Finally, I should mention that the kinds of malefactors described in Chap. 6 are so full of rage, fear and the desire for revenge that they have arguably become incapable of forging a truly adult identity and of having, according to the present view, good lives. Their miserable childhoods in effect swamp the rest of their lives and leave them without the capacity to form the kind of adult identity that involves leaving childhood decisively behind.

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