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Virtue-Driven Leadership: Powering Excellence in Organizations

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Virtue-Driven Leadership: Powering Excellence in Organizations
by
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A thesis presented to
Washington University in St. Louis
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Liberal Arts

December, 2023
St. Louis, Missouri

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<u>Acknowledgments</u>

For Diná, meu bem.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Professor Harriet Stone, Chair

In this thesis, I seek to answer the question "What makes a good leader?" I

approach this question systematically, starting in Chapter 1 by asking "What is

Leadership?" In attempting to formulate a response, I find that the concept is

slipperier than it first appears and difficult to pin down. All the same, I

construct a thematic, contextually pertinent definition that provides reasonable

precision for the purposes of this study. In Chapter 2, I present a

representative survey of the social-scientific academic literature in order to

establish the prospect that a philosophy of virtuous leadership can be

empirically validated in practice. Chapters 3 and 4 explore key original sources

of philosophical thinking on what constitutes the good life for humans and

comprise the bulk of this study. In Chapter 3, I seek to demonstrate that

eudaimonia is the principle underlying virtuous leadership by investigating the

thinking of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Thomas Aquinas, and more the recent

philosophers Elizabeth Anscombe, Rosalind Hursthouse, Phillippa Foot, and

Julia Annas. I proceed along the same investigative lines in Chapter 4, with the

focus shifting to virtue. I conclude by synthesizing and leveraging the content of the preceding discussions of eudaimonic virtue ethics in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 to formulate a theory of virtue-driven leadership. For the purposes of my overall project, this theory constitutes the starting point for further empirical and literary investigation of the efficacy of this type of leadership for leaders of all stripes.

<u>Introduction</u>

Leaders impact organizations in outsized ways, not least because of the power and authority that define the role. Their incompetence can generate tragic consequences, as can their moral failures. The effects of wrongdoing by leaders are magnified within and outside organizations because their decisions and actions are far-reaching and have high stakes. Accountability for an organization's mission and performance outcomes and responsibility to the people who belong to it imbue leadership with high standards for effectiveness and, equally if not more importantly, a moral significance over and above that expected of others.

When it comes to organizational leadership, moral character founded on virtue (stable dispositions toward doing well, living well, and being successful in accordance with the good) is consistent with what Plato presents as the fundamental question of politics in the *Republic*, namely, who rules. Plato argues that the rulers, or guardians, should be the very best citizens with proven virtue. In this study, I ask the analogous question, "What makes a good leader?" To be sure, this question has been answered in many ways, especially since the emergence of leadership as a formal area of study following World War II.

Only recently, in part in response to epic leadership failures,[1] have researchers taken on the examination of virtue ethics as an urgently needed alternative to deontological (duty and rules-based) and utilitarian (outcome-based) ethics. Because leadership is ubiquitous, arising in all manner of group endeavors and embedded in the dynamics of all human enterprises, it affects the lives of multitudes for better or for worse. Thus, the question of character—which can be defined as a fully realized, stable disposition for acting ethically—emerges as a fundamental consideration for those aspiring to leadership, those in leadership positions, and those seeking to hire, select, and develop leaders.

In the search for leaders of character, optimally, the cultivation of leadership begins in childhood and undergoes progressive development into adulthood.[2] Once they have joined the workforce, leaders can continue to develop their character, perhaps with the support of the numerous leadership development programs available on the market or offered by organizations. The continuous stream of examples of moral failure by those in high leadership positions suggests that these approaches do not reliably produce leaders of character.

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[1] Hardly a day passes in the news cycle without some story of political or corporate malfeasance. Enron, Theranos, and FTX are prime examples.

[2] According to Aristotle, "It is therefore not of small moment whether we are trained from childhood in one set of habits or another; on the contrary it is of very great, or rather of supreme, importance." Aristotle and H. Rachman. Aristotle: *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Volume 19. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934, 1103b. Throughout this study, I rely on H. Rackham's 1934 translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*.

In particular, most leadership development programs are based on a positivist paradigm or do not address ethics at all. Often, they borrow concepts from behavioral and therapeutic psychology, such as mindfulness and emotional intelligence, and instruct leaders in "soft skills." This form of training is fine as far as it goes, but, even when it includes ethics, there is a tendency to adopt a least-common-denominator stance, reducing leadership to rule-following. Such an approach further entrenches deontological and consequentialist frames of reference. Overall, the field of leadership development exhibits a proclivity for instrumental thinking and pop-psychology platitudes.

This reductive approach to leadership, by failing to account for the complex social ecosystems in which leaders operate and the need for upright and prudent practitioners, involves a reflexive emphasis on results-oriented pragmatism. To be sure, leaders must be effective as well as virtuous, but this overemphasis on results obscures the need for leaders to move beyond this narrow paradigm. Becoming a fully realized leader who combines exquisite expertise with deep virtue requires years of commitment and development. Good leaders comprehend the rich, intricate relationships that characterize any organization, the meaning that work provides for those who engage in it, the importance of character in modeling behavior, and the need to build and sustain a culture that prizes striving for excellence. Usually, however, leaders undergo a series of trials by fire that shape their character. Such a random, unstructured process is suboptimal when the stakes are so high.

I submit that there is a need to bridge the ethical gap with a theory of leadership as a practice grounded in a philosophy that promotes living well, doing well, and achieving success. By "philosophy," I do not mean watered-down statements of beliefs and practices. Rather, I use the word in its weightier, axiological sense that involves such questions as "What makes a good leader?" Accordingly, I turn to a millennia-long tradition of thought that originated with the ancient Greeks, who pondered such matters deeply, and some of their successors. I make the case that they have much to offer when it comes to providing a firm and efficacious philosophical foundation for leadership and further empirical validation.

In ancient Greek thought, virtue, which can be defined as a set of habits focused on the appropriate actions, is a product of a stable disposition, or character, that enables a person to achieve happiness, or *eudaimonia* as the Greeks called it. According to the Aristotle, one of the most influential Greek philosophers, virtue

> is a settled disposition of the mind determining the choice of actions and emotions, consisting essentially in the observance of the mean relative to us, this being determined by principle, that is, as the prudent man would determine it.[3]

From this perspective, virtue helps individuals live well, do well, and achieve success through the performance of good actions and enjoyment of *eudaimonia.*

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[3] NE 1106b36–1107a2.

Good leadership flows from within a virtuous person, which is to say, someone who employs refined and unwavering virtue in all facets of life. Thus, the outline of what makes a good leader can be expressed as:

Virtuous disposition → Good action → *Eudaimonia*

By inculcating virtuous habits that lead, in turn, to good actions, leaders contribute to their own success as well as that of their group or organization and its members in terms of realizing *eudaimonia*. In this respect, virtue can serve as a kind of antidote to deleterious decisions, outcomes, and consequences.

Virtue ethics, as articulated by philosophers from Plato, Aristotle, and Thomas Aquinas to G. E. M. Anscombe, Philippa Foot, Rosalind Hursthouse, and Julia Annas, deserves careful consideration as a legitimate and, indeed, necessary philosophical basis for leadership. I argue that a good leader aspires constantly to *eudaimonia* and shows a stable disposition in and toward virtue. The effects of virtue-driven leaders' deliberations, decisions, and actions extend through and beyond their organizations, powering them to excellence in service to the good and influencing the members of their organizations to act similarly. An enduring orientation toward *eudaimonia* underpins these activities, furnishing leaders with a focal aim and animating purpose.

To support these assertions, I begin by answering the question, "What makes a good leader?" To answer it, I devote the bulk of this study to consideration of the virtue ethics tradition. I choose this approach for several

reasons. First, to the best of my knowledge, no adequate and complete survey of the key exponents of virtue and virtue ethics is available. My efforts are certainly far from comprehensive in this regard, but my reading and distillation of the primary sources deepen the understanding of the tradition as a whole and provide insight into the philosophy of virtue. The virtue ethics tradition functions as a counterweight to the superficial discussion of virtue found in much of the leadership ethics literature, particularly work that approaches the topic from a positivist perspective, as popular treatments of the subject tend to do. Further, if *eudaimonic* virtue is a valid form of ethics—which, I suspect, most deontologists and consequentialists would agree, if grudgingly—the wide-ranging examination of the field presented here provides a basis for the study of virtue for leadership in the context of a perennially valid ethical tradition and the construction of a durable virtue-driven leadership ethics.

I also note at the outset the difference between leaders and tyrants in achieving goals, generating performance, and so on. In Aristotelian terms, a tyrant is inclined to vice, even brutishness, the extreme form of viciousness. Conversely, truly good leaders are inclined to virtue. Clearly, few individuals are perfectly virtuous, so this kind of perfection cannot be expected in leaders. However, they should be expected to strive for virtue continually. From the perspective that virtue is normative, as the philosophers discussed in this study hold, figures such as Hitler are merely brutes in leadership positions.

In the course of this examination of virtue and virtue ethics, I touch on many open issues in the field, such as the unity of virtues, whether virtuous individuals need rules to guide their decision-making, and the number of virtues. Regarding the number of virtues, most lists begin with the cardinal (fundamental, hinge) virtues of prudence, justice, courage, and temperance. The list compiled by the Catholic theologian and philosopher Thomas Aquinas nearly eight hundred years ago synthesizes Platonic, Aristotelian, Neo-Platonic, Islamic, and Jewish viewpoints, thus combining millennia of thinking on virtue. His taxonomy of virtue integrates sixty-five moral virtues and seventy-nine corresponding vices that have been identified and expounded upon by various exponents within the tradition and is, by far, the most complete and coherent framework of this kind that I have found. Unfortunately, it seems that it has all been lost in contemporary culture. To recover Aquinas's work on virtue, I present his virtue framework in a way that facilitates appreciating, understanding, and teaching it, especially to leaders.

Lastly, leveraging insights from my survey of virtue ethics tradition, I derive a theory of virtue-driven leadership that helps clarify what makes a good leader. The theory of virtue-driven leadership derives from the nutrient-dense roots of the virtue ethics enterprise and is, thus, inseparable from it. In like manner as the cardinal virtues flow into one another, the currents of the virtue tradition flow into and through the practice of leadership.

This study represents the first phase of an extended project to construct a theory of virtuous leadership that integrates philosophical, empirical, and literary forms of knowledge and, thus, provides a robust account of what makes a good leader. Working systematically, I begin in Chapter 1 by asking "What is leadership?" In formulating a response, I show that the concept is slippery and then construct a thematic, contextually pertinent definition that is sufficiently precise for the purposes of this study. In Chapter 2, I present a survey of the relevant social-scientific academic literature to establish that it is possible to validate a philosophy of virtuous leadership empirically in practice. In Chapter 3, I argue that *eudaimonia* is the key principle for virtuous leadership, and, in Chapter 4, I focus on virtue. I conclude with the formulation of a theory of virtue-driven leadership that constitutes the starting point for further empirical and literary investigation. Also, to illustrate the potential of literature to contribute to virtue-driven leadership and a future research direction, I provide a short case study of Shakespeare's *Henry V*.

Chapter 1: What is Leadership?

I begin making the case for virtue-driven leadership by establishing a contextually appropriate definition of leadership. This task is harder than it appears, requiring more than simply consulting the Oxford English Dictionary. Thus, a cursory investigation quickly reveals that there are many definitions of the term. In part, this situation reflects the diversity of thinking about leadership as the concept matures. Among the more comprehensive definitions, that of leadership researchers Bruce Winston and Kathleen Patterson, based on a review of 160 articles and books, runs to two pages.[1] However, such a

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[1] Winston, Bruce E., Patterson, Kathleen. An Integrative Definition of Leadership. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 1.2 2006, pp. 64–66: "A leader is one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives. The leader achieves this influence by humbly conveying a prophetic vision of the future in clear terms that resonates with the follower(s) beliefs and values in such a way that the follower(s) can understand and interpret the future into present-time action steps. In this process, the leader presents the prophetic vision in contrast to the present status of the organization and through the use of critical thinking skills, insight, intuition, and the use of both persuasive rhetoric and interpersonal communication including both active listening and positive discourse, facilitates and draws forth the opinions and beliefs of the followers such that the followers move through ambiguity toward clarity of understanding and shared insight that results in influencing the follower(s) to see and accept the future state of the organization as a desirable condition worth committing personal and corporate resources toward its achievement. The leader achieves this using ethical means and seeks the greater good of the follower(s) in the process of action steps such that the follower(s) is/are better off (including the personal development of the follower as well as emotional and physical healing of the follower) as a result of the interaction with the leader. The leader achieves this same state for his/her own self as a leader, as he/she seeks personal growth, renewal, regeneration, and increased stamina–mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual–through the leader-follower interactions. The leader recognizes the diversity of the follower(s) and achieves unity of common values and directions without destroying the uniqueness of the person. The leader accomplishes this through innovative flexible means of education, training, support, and protection that provide each follower with what the follower needs within the reason and scope of the organization's resources and accommodations relative to the value of accomplishing the organization's objectives and the growth of the follower. The leader, in this process of leading, enables the follower(s) to be innovative as well as self-directed within the scope of individual-follower assignments and allows the follower(s) to learn from his/her/their own, as well as others' successes, mistakes, and failures along the process of completing the organization's objectives. The leader accomplishes this by building credibility

description is unwieldy. Despite the difficulty of pinning down a definition of leadership, people seem to have no problem talking about it as if they know what it is or recognizing leadership when they see it. So, while no formulation can be considered definitive, I have produced a working definition of leadership based on an investigation of the history of the word "leadership" and a survey of the relevant literature that suits the purposes of this study.

From a linguistic perspective, the word developed from Old English *lǽdan*, meaning "cause to go with," "lead," "guide," "conduct," and "carry" as well as "sprout," "bring forth" and "pass one's life."[2] This verb, then, signified an activity that involved conducting an individual or a group from one place to another. The individuals involved in such activities would tend to have specialized expertise (the captain of a ship, for example) or an office or formal authority (e.g., a king, bishop, or mayor). The noun form "leader," describing

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and trust with the followers through interaction and feedback to and with the followers that shapes the followers' values, attitudes, and behaviors towards risk, failure, and success. In doing this, the leader builds the followers' sense of self-worth and self-efficacy such that both the leader and followers are willing and ready to take calculated risks in making decisions to meet the organization's goals/objectives and through repeated process steps of risk taking and decision-making the leader and followers together change the organization to best accomplish the organization's objectives. The leader recognizes the impact and importance of audiences outside of the organization's system and presents the organization to outside audiences in such a manner that the audiences have a clear impression of the organization's purpose and goals and can clearly see the purpose and goals lived out in the life of the leader. In so doing, the leader examines the fit of the organization relative to the outside environment and shapes both the organization and the environment to the extent of the leader's capability to insure the best fit between the organization and the outside environment. The leader throughout each leader-follower-audience interaction demonstrates his/her commitment to the values of (a) humility, (b) concern for others, (c) controlled discipline, (d) seeking what is right and good for the organization, (e) showing mercy in beliefs and actions with all people, (f) focusing on the purpose of the organization and on the well-being of the followers, and (g) creating and sustaining peace in the organization–not a lack of conflict but a place where peace grows. These values are the seven Beatitudes found in Matthew 5."

[2] I collected this information from https://www.etymonline.com/word/laden on August 31, 2023.

someone who performs the actions of leading and who holds the commensurate rank or status, is documented for the first time in written English in the 1300s.

The term *leadership* first came into common use in the early 1800s, as modern democracy, capitalism, and the Industrial Revolution were advancing in the West. Leadership began to be recognized as a general capability needed in a wide variety of enterprises, endeavors, and positions even as societal roles once considered fixed or hereditary were becoming increasingly fluid. Crucially, the emergence of large commercial organizations required people with the education and expertise to manage large groups and complex operations. Throughout this process, the need for leadership and leaders grew commensurately.

The modern understanding of leadership traces back to the "great man" theory that British historian and philosopher Thomas Carlyle articulated in a series of lectures.[3] In his first lecture, Carlyle described leaders and leadership in decidedly Hegelian terms:

> For, as I take it, Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modelers, patterns, and[,] in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realization and embodiment, of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the

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[3] Carlyle, Thomas. *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013.

world: the soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these.[4]

Carlyle casts leaders as heroes who, like demigods, drive the great engine of history. Carlyle's theory has close affinity with heroic epics such as *Gilgamesh*, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, and *Beowulf*. Even today, this archetypal image of the leader as a figure indispensable for any endeavor of consequence seems to remain a fundamental aspect of leadership. The French term *grand hommes* carries a similar connotation, referring to individuals who have made significant contributions to society, culture, politics, science, medicine, and similar. Thus, the Panthéon monument in Paris inters a diverse range of French men and women from all walks of life who have left a lasting impact on French or world history.

My perspective is distinct from Carlyle's in three main ways. First, my view of leadership is egalitarian in that I do not consider leaders to be necessarily great or *grand*. Second, I consider leadership a skill that anyone willing to take on the mantle of leader can acquire and, thus, not to be the sole province of men, as Carlyle (like Aristotle) assumed. Third, though I do not address this topic directly in this study, I am convinced that leaders are not born—or brought onto the world stage as if by a demiurge—but, rather, made, which is to say, developed.

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[4] Carlyle, Thomas. "Lecture 1: The Hero as Divinity. Odin. Paganism: Scandinavian Mythology." https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.12987/9780300148626-003/html?lang=en, accessed 8-24-23.

Carlyle's theory remained influential in the West, especially in the United States, until World War II, which created the need to mobilize large numbers of combat leaders. After the war, leadership as a field of academic study emerged with the Ohio State Leadership Studies, which involved observing and documenting the behaviors of leaders.[5] As an academic subject, the early study of leadership focused on running large institutions and organizations. This research went beyond Carlyle's theory by identifying the personality traits, characteristics, and behaviors of effective leaders.

In the 1960s, situational theories were developed that focused less on traits and behaviors and more on the contexts in which leaders operate.[6] From this perspective, a leader assesses the particular set of circumstances in an organizational setting and chooses the optimal leadership style, so leadership traits or behaviors are not set but depend on the context. Similarly, according to contingency theory, optimal leadership results from the optimal combination of the leader's behavior, personality, and influence in a given situation.[7]

In the 1970s, the transactional approach was developed, with a focus on the structure of the organizational environments within which leaders operate. Transactional theories thus stress roles, responsibilities, rules, regulations,

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[5] Stogdill, Ralph and Coons Alvin E. *Leader Behavior: Its Description and Measurement.* Columbus, OH: Bureau of Business Research, College of Commerce and Administration, Ohio State University, 1957, pp. 1–168.
[6] For example, Hersey, Paul and Blanchard, Ken H. *Management of Organizational Behavior – Utilizing Human Resources.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1969.
[7] A seminal description of contingency theory is Fiedler, Fred E. "The Contingency Model—New Directions for Leadership Utilization." *Journal of Contemporary Business*, 3.4, 1978, pp. 65–80.

results, measurement, and rewards and penalties[8] and describe interactions with subordinates in contractual terms ("You/I do this and I/you receive something in return"). A transactional leader emphasizes compliance and outputs, in some sense playing the role of the controller or governor of their organizations.

Organizational culture emerged as the dominant leadership paradigm in the 1980s.[9] The emphasis shifted from leading subordinates directly to creating a clear picture of the way things are done in an organization so that the members lead themselves, with a healthy culture giving rise to emergent leadership at all levels. Both transactional and culture-based theories emphasize externals and downplay the importance of leaders themselves in the organization.

The so-called "new leadership" approaches that emerged in the 1990s and 2000s returned the focus to the leader as the key figure in organizational outcomes. From this perspective, transformational leaders communicate a compelling vision and exert their influence to generate enthusiasm and commitment to achieve shared goals.[10] Such leaders build a culture of high expectations, ensure task accomplishment, maintain strategic focus, work to

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[8] Historian James MacGregor Burns first described transactional leadership in his classic book, *Leadership.* Burns, James MacGregor. *Leadership.* New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1998.
[9] Edgar Schein first described organizational culture theory. Schein, Edgar H. "Organizational Culture." *American Psychologist*, 45.2, 1990, pp. 109–119.
[10] Sociologist James Downton introduced the term "transformational leadership." In addition to describing it, James MacGregor Burns started the conversation on transformational leadership in earnest with his book, *Leadership.* Bass, Bernard M. "A New Paradigm of Leadership: An Inquiry into Transformational Leadership." Alexandria, VA: US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1996.

maintain group cohesion and morale, and are concerned about employee development and welfare.

In the 2010s, evolutionary leadership theory was developed, according to which a genetic basis exists for leadership.[11] The idea is that, through the extended process of natural selection, humans evolved specialized psychological mechanisms for solving coordination problems and existential challenges to survival and reproduction in small groups. Proponents of this theory assert that these mechanisms remain operative in human psychology and drive human interactions (including leadership) in organizations and societies that are becoming increasingly large and socially complex. This intriguing and potentially fruitful approach could lead to a hard science-based approach to leadership theory.

As alluded to in the introduction, very little of this work has included a moral or ethical perspective.[12] In the mid-2000s, however, spurred by a seemingly endless stream of corporate and government wrongdoing, both popular authors and academics began to focus on ethics in leadership. Four perspectives gained particular traction, which can be described as authentic, ethical, servant, and virtue-based leadership.

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[11] See Vugt, Mark & Ronay, Richard. "The Evolutionary Psychology of Leadership: Theory, Review, and Roadmap." *Organizational Psychology Review*, 4.1, pp. 74–95, 2013.
[12] In this study, I use "moral" and "ethical" interchangeably to describe the distinction between good and bad or right and wrong.

Authentic leadership focuses on the psychological attributes of leaders that convince others that they are real or genuine people without masks or obfuscation. Authentic leadership characteristics include (1) awareness of and trust in one's thoughts, feelings, motives, and values, (2) being realistic about and accepting one's positive and negative attributes, (3) acting consistently in accordance with one's preferences, values, and needs rather than acting to please others, secure rewards, or avoid punishment, and (4) a relational orientation based on truthfulness and openness in relationships.[13] According to leadership researchers Bruce Avolio, Fred Luthans, and Fred Walumbwa, authentic leaders are:

> individuals who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others values, moral perspective, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and high on moral character.[14]

Authentic leadership draws on the virtue ethics tradition in prioritizing personal mastery, a moral character, and an orientation toward well-being (*eudaimonia*) for oneself and for others, as discussed presently.

Researchers Michael Brown, Linda Treviño, and David Harrison, stressing social learning as the source of an ethical leader's effectiveness, propose the concept of ethical leadership, which involves

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[13] Milorad Novicevic et al. provide an overview of the development of authentic leadership in "Authentic leadership: A Historical Perspective." *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 13.1, 2006, pp. 64–76.
[14] Avolio, Bruce J., Luthans, Fred, and Walumbwa, Fred. A*uthentic leadership: Theory Building for Veritable Sustained Performance*. University of Nebraska: NE, 2004.

the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through
personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the
promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way
communication, reinforcement, and decision-making.[15]

Ethical leaders engage in normatively appropriate behavior in discharging their

responsibilities, especially toward their employees, by modeling and

emphasizing moral behavior, ethical leaders encourage their followers to

behave morally.[16] In other words, they prioritize and follow ethical standards

and use their authority to motivate and reward ethical conduct and punish

unethical conduct.

Robert K. Greenleaf, a retired business executive, introduced the notion

of servant leadership in a set of foundational essays, the most famous of which,

"The Servant as Leader,"[17] describes a servant leader as

servant first. [Beginning] with the natural feeling one wants to
serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to
lead. That person is sharply different from one who is a leader first.
… The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-
leader first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs
are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is this:
Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served,
become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely
themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least
privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further
deprived?[18]

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[15] Brown, Michael & Treviño, Linda and Harrison, David. "Ethical Leadership: A Social
Learning Perspective for Construct Development and Testing." *Organizational Behavior and
Human Decision Processes.* 97, 2004, pp. 117–134.
[16] Brown et al. do not define what normatively appropriate conduct might consist of, leaving it
vague given differences in organizations, industries, nations, and cultures. There is much room
to explore these relationships in order to assess the fungibility of virtue ethics in these settings.
[17] Greenleaf, Robert K. *Servant Leadership.* New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1977.
[18] Ibid., p. 7.

The desire and motivation to serve defines servant leaders. Such leaders place the growth of individual employees, the vitality of their organizations, and their responsibility to their communities before themselves.

Virtuous leadership, the focus of this study, emerged around the turn of the century as leadership researchers began to rediscover the teachings of the ancient Greeks and other wisdom traditions, such as Buddhism and Confucianism, on virtue, as discussed in the next chapter. The four theories of good leadership discussed above presuppose that good leaders are ethical, focusing on the effect of character (or lack thereof) on the other members of their organizations as well as the organization as a whole. From all of these perspectives, effective leadership is the product of an internal disposition that prioritizes right action and solicitude for others.

Distinct from but closely associated with leadership are the concepts of power and management. Power plays a significant role in leadership and can amplify the moral import and impact of a leader's actions. According to a classic definition of power by sociologist Amiati Etzioni and social psychologists John French and Bertram Raven, leaders come to power in a variety of ways.[19] They may exercise referent power, convincing their followers to identify with them; they may demonstrate expertise, the ability to reward or punish performance; and they may exercise the legitimate formal power associated

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[19] Etzioni, Amitai. *Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations.* Revised Edition, Simon & Schuster: NY, 1975. French, John, R. P. and Raven, Bertram H. "The Bases of Social Power". In Cartwright, D. (Editor). *Studies in Social Power.* Ann Arbor, MI: Research Center for Group Dynamics, Institute for Social Research, 1959, pp. 150–167.

with their based roles. In short, the ability to lead others requires exercising power and, according to virtue ethicists, doing so wisely. Management, on the other hand, is a form of organizationally oriented expertise that tends to involve the oversight, coordination, and administration of processes, tasks, and resources to achieve goals. This is not to say that leaders do not manage—they do—but leadership operates at the level of vision, change, influence, and inspiration for performance within and service to organizations.

This brief review of the evolution of the concept of leadership and prominent leadership theories clearly shows that the understanding of both has expanded and deepened over time, and this process is likely to continue. Each of the theories mentioned, including even Carlyle's, has something to offer the aspiring leader who is willing to learn. Until recently, though, most work has been geared toward what I call the *technê* of leadership, that is, practical expertise or effectiveness, which includes the traits, qualities, and behaviors a leader should exhibit to be effective. The missing piece has been the ethical component of leadership, which makes all the difference in identifying good leaders. Hence, I consider the grounding of leadership in the context of a credible ethics that pertains to the person of the leader and the community in which the leader operates to be crucial. In my view, any credible approach to leadership must include virtue ethics.

This brief review has identified several enduring themes and connotations of leadership, specifically, (1) guiding a group to a goal, (2) the

exercise of power, (3) the exercise of influence, (4) the importance of relationships, and (5) the importance of context. In addition, leadership may be genetically encoded. Lastly, but most importantly for the present study, the moral character of leaders is a key determinant of their effectiveness.

Accordingly, I offer the following working definition of leadership for the purposes of this study:

> Leadership is an influencing process involving the just exercise of power that induces followers to achieve an organizationally significant outcome. Grounded in virtue and expertise, leadership results from the interaction of leaders' character and actions, their followers' perceptions of and relationships with them, and the context in which the influencing process occurs.

Again, from this perspective, virtue is a fundamental part of leadership, and a leader's character grounds decision-making, influences relationships, and drives goal-oriented actions that accrue to the good of their organizations, the people who populate them, the stakeholders associated with them, and more broadly, the societies in which they live.

Chapter 2: Theoretical and Empirical Support for the Efficacy of Virtue for Leadership

In the late twentieth century, the character of leaders attracted the interest of scholars seeking to understand good leadership. Importantly for the present study, some of these scholars emphasized virtue, investigating this topic from individual and organizational perspectives as well as proposing theories and conducting comparative analyses (e.g., comparing virtue ethics with deontological leadership). The resulting body of theory and empirical evidence suggests that leadership grounded in virtue contributes to organizational success. Thus, virtue ethics is a worthwhile approach to leadership, as the following representative survey makes clear.

The work of Joan Cuilla, a pioneer in leadership ethics, has laid much of the groundwork for ongoing study. In her 1995 article "Leadership Ethics: Mapping the Territory," she described a research agenda for identifying the components of good leadership through efforts that[1]

> explore the ethical issues of current leadership research, serve as a critical study of the field, analyze and expand normative theories of leadership, and develop new theories, research questions and ways of thinking about leadership.[2]

Central to Cuilla's conception of good leadership is that the notion of "good" encompasses both ethics and competence and that "ethics is located in the

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[1] Cuilla, Joanne B. "Leadership Ethics: Mapping the Territory." *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 5.1, 1995, pp. 5–28.
[2] Ibid., 5.

heart of leadership studies and not in an appendage."[3] However, she contends, most leadership research ignores or only indirectly addresses the ethical dimension. This state of affairs is unsurprising given the endemic positivist paradigm in social scientific research. Cuilla is not a total proponent of virtue ethics, but she argues for its incorporation into the field of social science since "progress in leadership ethics requires serious interdisciplinary research and collaborative research between philosophers and other humanities scholars and psychologists and social scientists."[4]

John Whetstone, a professor of business ethics, describes virtue ethics as a "fully equal complement to moral reasoning according to deontological or consequentialist teleological formulations."[5] He argues that this approach extends ethical decision-making beyond deontological duties and consequentialist utility to include a virtuous agent perspective that:

> is personal; focuses on the motivations of the actor and the sources of action, bringing a dynamic to ethical understanding; is contextual, highlighting the importance of understanding the environment as it affects both [an] actor and his or her acts; and complements other disciplines addressing human behavior.[6]

Whetstone further contends that managers who bring virtue ethics to bear in their roles make more ethically nuanced decisions than those who do not. In a

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[3] Ibid., 6.
[4] Ciulla, Joanne B., and Donelson R. Forsyth. "Leadership ethics." *The SAGE Handbook of Leadership.* London: UK, 2013, p. 239.
[5] Whetstone, John T. "How Virtue Fits Within Business Ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 33(2), 2001, pp. 101–114, p. 101.
[6] Ibid., 104.

follow-on study to develop an empirical basis for virtue ethics as commensurate with deontological and consequentialist decision-making, Whetstone interviewed thirty-seven business leaders, asking them to describe excellent managers.[7] He found that interviewees demonstrated fluency in ethical and virtue-referent language and that such language was key to defining managerial excellence and concludes that organizations can leverage this intuitive, general knowledge of virtue to promote and promulgate excellence throughout their enterprises.

In an article titled "In Search of Virtue: Leadership Ethics and Ethical Decision Making," leadership researchers Mary Crossan, Gerard Seijts, and Daina Mazutis present a model of ethical decision-making that integrates values, virtues, and character strengths. Their framework incorporates Aristotle's conception of the mean of virtue, situational pressures, a decision process, and a virtues-based orientation in ways that, they hypothesize, drive ethical decision-making. This model fills a void in the leadership decision-making space as an alternative to consequentialist and deontological approaches and an avenue for further empirical research in this area.

In their article "What is virtue? Advancing the Conceptualization of Virtue to Inform Positive Organizational Inquiry,"[8] management lecturers Toby

[7] Whetstone, John T. "The Language of Managerial Excellence: Virtues as Understood and Applied." *Journal of Business Ethics*, 44(4), pp. 343–357, 2003.

[8] Newstead, Toby, Macklin, Rob, Dawkins, Sarah, and Martin, Angela. "What is Virtue? Advancing the Conceptualization of Virtue to Inform Positive Organizational Inquiry." Academy of Management Perspectives, 32.4, 2018, pp. 443–457.

Newstead, Rob Macklin, Sarah Dawkins, and Angela Martin draw on an Aristotelian understanding of virtue to establish a definition of the concept and a framework for investigating it in organizations. Their deep ontology of virtue and factors for determining what is virtuous in various contexts is applicable to a wide variety of organizational settings. In a longitudinal, interview-based follow-up pilot study of The Virtues Project[9] as a leadership development program[10] using an interview-based research approach, they found that the program improved the understanding of virtues and the ability to recognize virtues in one's own and others' behavior.[11]

Management scholars Craig Pearce and David Walman and psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi have developed a theoretical model of the virtuous behavior of a leader. They argue that such behavior is the product of an ethic of responsibility and environmental cues, such as reward systems and leader development, resulting in broader, organization-wide displays of virtuous leadership.[12] They also hypothesize a connection between individual and collective virtuous leadership and organizational learning and recommend a longitudinal, multi-level (individual, group, organization) approach to assessing

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[9] The Virtues Project is a non–profit organization that offers programs for teaching virtues to children worldwide.

[10] Newstead, T., Dawkins, S., Macklin, R., & Martin, A. "Evaluating the Virtues Project as a Leadership Development Programme," *Leadership*, 16.6, 2020, pp. 633–660.

[11] Ibid., 665.

[12] Pearce, Craig L., Waldman, David A., & Csikszentmihaly, Mihaly. "Virtuous Leadership: A Theoretical Model and Research Agenda." *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion*, 3.1, 2006, pp. 60–77.

the efficacy of their model, its empirical veracity, and its limitations in explaining the operation of virtuous leadership within organizations.

In an effort to provide empirical support for the notion of virtuous leadership, leadership scholars Robert Riggio, Weichan Zhu, Chris Reina, and James Maroosis have developed the Leadership Virtues Questionnaire (LVQ), one of the first survey instruments for measuring the virtues of leaders in an organizational setting.[13] Based on the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, courage, and temperance, the LVQ consists of nineteen survey items that measure followers' perceptions of the virtues of their managers and supervisors and has demonstrated strong internal consistency, convergent validity with other measures of ethical leadership, discriminant validity (i.e., the concepts do not overlap), and predictive validity. The LVQ indicates that employees who perceive their managers to be virtuous experience a strong sense of personal moral identity, feel empowered by their leaders, and demonstrate strong organizational identification (i.e., affective commitment to their organizations).[14] These researchers' work provides preliminary empirical evidence of the positive impact virtuous leaders have on their employees.

In a 2011 article, management professor Kim Cameron equates responsible leadership with virtuousness (the state of being virtuous), arguing that

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[13] Riggio, Ronald E., Zhu, Weichan, Reina, Chris, and Maroosis, James A. "Virtue-Based Measurement of Ethical Leadership: The Leadership Virtues Questionnaire." *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 62.4, 2010, pp. 235–250.
[14] Ibid., 243.

responsible leadership refers to the most ennobling behaviors and outcomes, the excellence and essence of humankind, the best of the human condition, and the highest aspirations of humanity. That is, virtuousness in leadership is less a means to another more desirable outcome than an ultimate good itself. [15]

From this perspective, responsible leaders are willing to be held accountable in light of the expectations placed upon them. In a longitudinal study of sixteen industries, he and two colleagues identify positive correlations between virtuousness and performance outcomes such as profitability, productivity, quality, customer retention, and employee retention.[16] In a multi-year, longitudinal study of forty financial service companies and thirty healthcare organizations, Cameron and his team find that organizations that score higher on virtuousness show higher financial performance, lower employee turnover, and better organizational climates and that the virtuousness of organizations correlates with their outcomes, providing more empirical evidence of the positive influence of virtuous actors on organizations.[17]

Organizational psychologist Rick Hackett and management professor Gordon Wang have developed a conceptual framework based on Aristotelian and Confucian virtues for distinguishing virtuous leadership conceptually and empirically.[18] The framework includes the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice,

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[15] Cameron, Kim. "Responsible Leadership as Virtuous Leadership," *Journal of Business Ethics*, 98(1), 2011, p. 28.
[16] Cameron, Kim., Bright, D., & Caza, A. "Exploring the Relationships Between Organizational Virtuousness and Performance." *American Behavioral Scientist*, 4, 2004, pp. 766–790.
[17] Cameron, K. S., Mora, C., Leutscher, T., & Calarco, M. (2011). "Effects of Positive Practices on Organizational Effectiveness." *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 20, 2011, pp. 1–43.
[18] Hackett Rick D. and Wang, Gordon. "Virtues and Leadership. An Integrating Conceptual Framework Founded in Aristotelian and Confucian Perspectives on Virtues. *Management Decision*, 50.5, pp. 868–99.

courage, and temperance and the Confucian virtues of humanity and truthfulness and provides the basis for the eighteen-item Virtuous Leaders Questionnaire (VLQ), a survey instrument for assessing followers' ratings of their leaders' virtues.[19] Their results show the VLQ to be well-constructed in terms of cofactor analysis and convergent, discriminant, criterion, and incremental validity. The results of the VLQ also correlate with "a range of desirable leader and follower outcomes including ethical conduct, job performance, and self-reported happiness and life satisfaction."[20] Hackett and Wang are the first researchers to develop a statistical assessment to evaluate virtuous leadership.

Several researchers have sought to establish connections among virtue, leadership, and organizations from an organizational perspective. In this context, philosopher Robert Solomon is among those who have brought an Aristotelian approach to business ethics, developing a framework consisting of community, excellence, role identity, holism, integrity, and judgment.[21] He proposes that a variety of virtues relevant to business be operationalized for the benefit of organizations and the communities that comprise them, arguing that employees should not

> divorce themselves from their work and pretend what they "do" is not indicative of their true selves [because] the truth is that most adults spend literally half of their waking adult life on the job, in

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[19] Wang, Gordon and Hackett, Rick D. "Conceptualization and Measurement of Virtuous Leadership: Doing Well by Doing Good." *Journal of Business Ethics*, 28.2, 2015, pp. 321–345.
[20] Ibid., 337.
[21] Solomon, Robert C. "Corporate Roles, Personal Virtues: An Aristotelean Approach to Business Ethics." *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 2.3, 1992, pp. 317–339, 326.

the office, in the role or position that defines them as a citizen of the corporation.[22]

Solomon posits the existence of a reciprocal relationship between the virtuousness of organizations and the people who populate them that is articulated by leaders through policies and culture. As I demonstrate later, this connection traces back to the ancient Greeks, particularly Socrates and Plato. Solomon expands on these themes in books such as *Ethics and Excellence: Cooperation and Integrity in Business*,[23] *Above the Bottom Line: A Better Way to Think About Business*,[24] and *A Better Way to Think About Business: How Personal Integrity Leads to Corporate Success*.[25] His work is more theoretical than empirical, but he, along with Alejo Sison, has done much to establish the terms for the ongoing discussion of the organizational implications for virtue ethics.

Similarly, business ethicist Geoff Moore adapts philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre's notions of practice—defined as a coherent, complex form of socially established cooperative human activity—and institutions—defined as structured communities organized to regulate and distribute power and resources—when making the case for virtue ethics in business. Moore

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[22] Ibid., 338.
[23] Solomon, Robert C. *Ethics and Excellence: Cooperation and Integrity in Business*. New York: Oxford University Press: UK, 1992, a book-length treatment of Solomon's theses described in the article "Corporate Roles, Personal Virtues: An Aristotelean Approach to Business Ethics."
[24] Solomon, Robert. *Above the Bottom Line: An Introduction to Business Ethics*. New York: Harcourt, 1994. In this textbook, Solomon uses case studies and vignettes from history, literature, and anthropology to explicate issues relating to individual ethics in the business environment.
[25] Solomon, Robert C. *A Better Way to Think About Business: How Personal Integrity Leads to Corporate Success*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

repurposes MacIntyre's practice-institution distinction to argue for a business-as-practice approach, with employees and leaders especially prizing character and the exercise of virtues so that, in achieving their goal (ancient Greek *telos*), both they and their organizations benefit. Through this intent and action, leaders humanize companies from within. Moore advocates a rediscovery of craftsmanship—in essence, the pursuit of excellence in one's field according to a set of standards and values—grounded in the practice of virtues as an antidote to the corrupting influence of institutions and the concept of corporate character, which is:

> the seat of the virtues necessary for a corporation to engage in practices with excellence, focusing on those internal goods thereby obtainable, while warding off threats from its own inordinate pursuit of external goods and from the corrupting power of other institutions with which it engages.[26]

He provides a series of case studies of the operationalization of virtue in challenging ethical scenarios[27] showing that organizations with character encourage and sustain virtues and the pursuit of excellence and focus on external goods only to the extent required to maintain and develop a craftsmanship orientation to the various practices that organizations perform. Such provisioning of corporate character enables institutions to resist corrupting forces such as avarice.

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[26] Moore, Geoff. "Corporate Character: Modern Virtue Ethics and the Virtuous Corporation." *Business Ethics Quarterly*, Volume 15, Number 4, 2005, pp. 659–85, p. 661.
[27] Ibid., 670–675.

The aforementioned business ethicist Alejo Sison has written extensively about leadership and virtues, including arguing for the reintroduction of Aristotelian and Thomist understandings of virtue for business leaders.[28] Most of this work concerns the incorporation of virtue ethics into ethical structures and the culture required for organizations to contribute to the common good. Sison advances a common good theory of the firm that moves beyond the utility-maximizing profit paradigm characteristic of neoclassical economics, contending, for instance, on the topic of corporate governance that

> The possession of the virtues of mind and character, notably, of prudence, is crucial not only for the proper interpretation and implementation of rules, but also for the correct identification and production or performance of the goods that a corporation and its governors should seek, both personally and as a body.[29]

Rules and regulations serve an indispensable function in the running of an organization but ought not be the automatic default guide for ethical behavior. Sison argues that leaders with deep character arising from their virtues need to vet, implement, and endorse such guidelines to ensure that they promote the common good in a just manner.

Summing up his more than four decades in the field, business ethicist Edwin Hartman maintains that businesses that nurture virtues are more likely to flourish than those that do not. His several books on organizational ethics

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[28] To date, Sison has published six books, several book chapters, and dozens of journal articles, most focused on the intersection of virtue ethics and corporations.

[29] Sison, Alejo José G. "Aristotelian Corporate Governance." *Corporate Governance and Business Ethics.* Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2011, pp. 179–201.

are grounded in Aristotle's philosophical system, with concepts such as

substance, reasoning, friendliness, virtue, and what constitutes a good life

informing the conception of an organization.[30] Hartman views organizations as

commons[31] in which people relate through transactional expedients as well as

common purposes and the social bonds of friendship. He asserts that a

corporate culture that promotes and preserves the commons has particular

influence on the success of the organization since a healthy commons appeals

to such values and aspirations as the pride experienced from doing well. Thus:

> A great polis, or an organization with the right sort of culture,
> cultivates not simply virtuous behavior, as of the scribes and
> Pharisees, but actual virtue. Its citizens behave virtuously not
> because they are rewarded for so doing and punished if they do
> not, but because they value so doing and have second-order
> desires accordingly.[32]

The inculcation and practice of virtue serve as the ferment from which

the commons is constructed and maintained. To develop virtues in future

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[30] These books include *Organizational Ethics and the Good Life* (1996), *Virtue in Business: Conversations with Aristotle* (2015), and *Arriving Where We Started, Aristotle and Business Ethics* (2020).

[31] Hartman, Edwin M. "The Commons and the Moral Organization." *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 4.3, 1994, pp. 253–69. He defines a commons as "An organization is in effect a commons under these conditions, which are necessary and jointly sufficient: (1) employees and management, whatever their distinct interests, share an interest in the organization's prosperity, with the result that (2) organizational effectiveness that is, for present purposes, long-term stability, growth, and profitability serves employees' and managers' interests, and (3) organizational effectiveness is a function of employees' and managers' cooperative effort, and (4) it is possible to get a free ride by contributing less than one's share of the fruits of (others') cooperative toil" (p. 254). To preserve the commons, Hartman asserts, "organizations must sustain a culture that values more than mere utilitarian (e.g. profit-oriented) outcomes, which is best done through the virtues."

[32] Ibid., 258.

leaders, he advocates the case study approach that he found effective as a university professor.[33]

Psychologists Balliet Thun and Kevin Kelloway have developed a model of character-based leadership and used it to find positive correlations between leaders' wisdom and employees' affective commitment, between leaders' humanity and employees' wellbeing, among employees' organizational citizenship behaviors, cognitive trust, and trust, and between leaders' temperance and employees' trust. From a virtue standpoint, leaders' humanity predicts employees' psychological wellbeing, organizational citizenship behaviors, and affective trust, leaders' wisdom predicts affective commitment, and leaders' temperance predicts cognitive trust.[34] An organization's climate, in turn, determines employees' job satisfaction and loyalty. These researchers also find a relationship between interactional justice, that is, the dignity with which the people affected by leadership decisions are treated in relation to the organizational climate, and the quality of which correlates with employees' perceptions of interactional justice.[35] This positive empirical link between the influence of virtuous (or vicious) leaders and employees' perceptions of an

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[33] Harman outlines his method and reasoning behind it in Hartman, Edwin M. "Socratic Questions and Aristotelian Answers: A Virtue-Based Approach to Business Ethics." *Journal of Business Ethics*, Volume 78, Number 3, 2008, pp. 313–328. He describes the business ethics case study as a time-tested pedagogical method that facilitates ethical development and protects the values and beliefs of young professionals in challenging organizational environments.

[34] Thun, B., & Kelloway, E. Kevin. "Virtuous Leaders: Assessing Character Strengths in the Workplace." *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 28.3, pp. 270–283.

[35] Neubert, Mitchell, Carlson, Dawn, Kacmar, K. Michele, Roberts, James, and Chonko, Lawrence. "The Virtuous Influence of Ethical Leadership Behavior: Evidence from the Field." *Journal of Business Ethics*, 90, 2009, pp. 157–170.

organization's ethical climate provides additional evidence for the efficacy of virtuous leadership.

Mitchell Neubert and his colleagues use social learning theory, attachment theory, and virtue ethics to describe how managers can serve as role models to promote virtue. According to social learning theory, developed by psychologist Albert Bandura, individuals observe role models—individuals considered credible in the eyes of others—to learn what constitutes appropriate behavior, and Neubert and his colleagues show that power and status can enhance credibility by conveying behavioral norms and expectations. Also, drawing on psychologist John Bowlby's attachment theory, they posit that the emotional bonds formed by meeting the needs of others also result in the trust (or mistrust if the needs remain unmet) generated from trustworthy aspects of ethical leadership behavior. Thus, when managers promote virtue, they model ethical leadership behavior and generate trustworthiness, and, when they promote vice, they generate untrustworthiness. Using a set of well-validated survey instruments, Neubert and his colleagues survey 250 full-time employees and find that managers perceived to be virtuous positively influence employees' perceptions of an organization's ethical climate as well as their job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

To distinguish more clearly the approaches that underpin ethical, authentic, and servant leadership, organizational behaviorists James Lemoine, Chad Hartnell, and Hannes Leroy conducted an extensive review of the

literature and comparative analysis.[36] They reveal considerable overlap among the three theories of leadership, at one point questioning whether the differences are meaningful. However, their examination of the ethical approaches underpinning the theories reveals that deontology aligns more closely with ethical leadership, consequentialism with servant leadership, and virtue ethics with authentic leadership. They argue that this disjunction in ethical approaches has significant practical and research implications regarding

- whether leaders hold multiple ethical stances simultaneously,
- the interactions and effects among these ethical approaches,
- whether these moral philosophies are complementary or opposed, and
- the points of consonance and dissonance.[37]

Accordingly, these researchers call for further investigation into these issues and to ascertain the effects on organizations.

This study represents a response to their call to action, though I consider their assessment of the ethical approaches to the three leadership theories to be lacking in nuance. When it comes to virtue ethics, I contend, the ethical, situational, and servant leadership theories are eminently amenable to virtue ethics since all leaders can be agents of virtue; whether they are, and to what extent, are different matters.

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[36] Lemoine, James G., Hartnell, Chad A., Leroy, Hannes. "Taking Stock of Moral Approaches to Leadership: An Integrative Review of Ethical, Authentic, and Servant Leadership." *Academy of Management Annals*, 13.1, 2019, pp. 148–187.
[37] Ibid., 174.

This review of the scholarship highlights the theoretical and empirical developments in leadership ethics over the past three decades and the ways in which researchers have studied the relationship between virtue and leadership. Definitive proof may remain elusive, but the results of the research conducted so far, in aggregate, indicate that the inculcation and practice of virtue are beneficial in terms of producing effective leaders who energize their employees to do good work. Also, virtuous leadership is beneficial to organizations and the people who populate them. These results provide an empirically-based warrant for virtue ethics and merit further exploration.

On the other hand, despite the growing body of social-scientific research such as that described above, conceptual clarity regarding virtue is lacking. Experts also disagree regarding the virtues that are essential for leadership. Thus, Riggio and colleagues list prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice in their virtue-based measure of ethical leadership, Thun and Kelloway list wisdom, humanity, and temperance, Neubert and colleagues list prudence, love, faith, courage, justice, temperance, and hope, and Wang and Hackett list courage, temperance, justice, prudence, humanity, and truthfulness. So, despite a measure of conceptual consonance among these researchers, disagreement remains regarding the virtues essential for good leadership. In part, this disagreement is the product of varying notions of virtue. Moreover, aside from Cuilla, Sison, Solomon, Moore, and a few others, little of the work on leadership in the social sciences tackles virtue ethics in a deep, philosophically informed way. Instead, many studies rely on generalizations or

aggregations about virtue ethics or references to other commentators of virtue, or commentators of commentators.

A much larger issue is the disconnect between philosophers and social scientists on topics pertaining to virtue ethics and other issues of interest to both communities. Despite platitudes regarding the benefits of and need for greater interdisciplinarity and efforts by university administrators to encourage interdisciplinary work, this sort of intellectual balkanization is endemic in academia. I suggest that a closer and continuing interchange between philosophy and social science has the potential to yield significant insights into virtue ethics, refine core concepts, develop theories and models that are more robust, and assess the practical impact and efficacy of leaders' everyday practice of virtue on their followers and organizations and society generally.

Accordingly, I conducted the deep and wide review of key original sources in virtue ethics presented in the next two chapters. My aim is to anchor leadership soundly in the virtue ethics tradition by assessing and discussing what these philosophers said and meant. In the process, I construct a theory of virtue-driven leadership derived from the tradition itself that can serve as the starting point for a grounded empirical research agenda.

Chapter 3: *Eudaimonia*: The Core Philosophical Principle of Leadership

Eudaimonia as a moral philosophy enjoys a pedigree that reaches back to the ancient Greeks. This Greek term is commonly translated as "happiness," but the concept is much broader in scope. For the Greeks, it described a way of living geared toward activity in accordance with virtue that is exercised over a lifetime in order to fulfill rational human nature in pursuit of the highest good in the most excellent ways.[1] With the aim of describing various approaches to *eudaimonia* more fully and to identify common themes among them, I explore the thinking of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Thomas Aquinas, and more recent exponents, namely Elizabeth Anscombe, Rosalind Hursthouse, Phillippa Foot, and Julia Annas. I synthesize these findings to establish a framework for effective leadership in which *eudaimonia* is the animating principle. I begin by contrasting *happiness* with *eudaimonia*.

Transient versus Enduring Happiness

According to the prevailing modern understanding of it, happiness corresponds more closely to transient, pleasurable emotions or a mood wherein individuals determine whether they are happy and what makes them happy. In the contemporary sense happiness comes to mean merely subjective

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[1] Carlotta Capuccino analyzes Aristotle's definition of *eudaimonia* in the context of his metaphysical and logical thinking. Capuccino, Carlotta. "Happiness and Aristotle's Definition of *Eudaimonia*." *Philosophical Topics*, 41.1, 2013, pp. 1–26.

contentment: if you feel happy, you are happy. *Happiness* in this sense is an inherently psychological, transient, and subjective individual experience. In contrast, *eudaimonia*, "a sort of living well and doing well" as Aristotle defines it[2] or a "good flow of life" as Zeno of Citium (the founder of Stoicism) defines it, has a more durable connotation. For the Greeks *eudaimonia* depends on an ultimate principle or source of goodness. For Plato, this principle or source is the form of the good, for Aristotle, an unmoved mover, for the Stoics, nature, and, for Aquinas, God. Thus the etymology of *eudaimonia* combines *eu*, "true, well, favorable," and *daimon*, "divinity," to convey the notion of being favored by a divinity. Notably, for ancient and medieval philosophers, happiness is inseparable from virtue (which I discuss presently) and encompasses an individual's entire life. Nevertheless, in the context of this paper, I use happiness and *eudaimonia* interchangeably. With the stage thus set, I now examine the thought of the aforementioned exponents of *eudaimonia* in more depth and draw out connections to leadership.

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[2] NE 1098b22.

Where It All Begins: Plato on Eudaimonia and Leadership

For Plato, happiness equates to living well (*eu zēn*), doing well (*eu prattein*), or being successful (*eudaimonein*), and he uses these terms interchangeably throughout his writings. He does not articulate a systematic theory of happiness (*eudaimonia*) as, for example, Aristotle or Aquinas do, so it is necessary to piece together his thought on the subject. This task is especially challenging because his thinking about this and many other subjects seems to have evolved, and his dialogues treat the same topics in various ways. The dialogues also appear to show that Plato consistently represented happiness as a self-evident end and the product of virtue developed and sustained over a lifetime—or, at least, Socrates, the central character in most of his dialogues, encourages his interlocutors to associate virtue with *eudaimonia*.

For Plato, the task of producing happiness involves ordering the soul according to the pattern of the forms of ideas, which represent the unchanging, independent, and infinite reality beyond sense perception. Plato's tripartite division of the soul includes the desires that arise from the rational part (*logistikon*), the spirited part (*thumoeides*), and the appetitive part (*epithumetikon*). In a fully integrated soul, these parts are in harmony. The rational part performs this integration, and

> having harmonized these three principles, the notes or intervals of
> three terms quite literally the lowest, the highest, and the mean,
> and all others there may be between them, and having linked and

bound all three together and made of himself a unit, one man instead of many.[3]

In a well-ordered soul, then, the rational part governs the other parts, and each part performs its function well in a mutually supporting manner. In so doing, one "[attains] self-mastery and beautiful order within himself."[4] The ongoing result of this integrative process, which necessarily involves the acquisition of and use of virtue, is the manifestation of *eudaimonia*. This notion of internal order and self-mastery has remained a fundamental principle of virtue ethics.

Plato views happiness as an object of universal desire and a fact so obvious that to question it would be silly. Thus, Socrates says in the

Euthydemus

> Does every one of us wish to do well [be happy]? Or is this question one of those that will provoke the laughter I was afraid of a moment ago? Yes, it is surely ridiculous even to ask such questions, for what man is there who does not wish to do well [be happy]?
>
> There is no one who doesn't want that, said Cleinias.[5]

Here Socrates argues that happiness amounts to a self-evident goal of a good life, a point to which his interlocutors readily agree. In fact, nowhere in Plato's works (and almost never in those of other ancient Greek philosophers) is this assertion contested.

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[3] Plato, *Republic* 443d. For Plato's dialogues, I use the English translations in *Plato in Twelve Volumes* published by the Harvard University Press.
[4] Ibid., 443d3–7.
[5] Plato, *Euthydemus* 278e–279a.

In the *Philebus,* Socrates attempts to "prove clearly that [there] is a condition and disposition of the soul which can make life happy for all human beings."[6] Both Socrates and his interlocutor Protarchus, a hedonist, agree that everyone seeks this benefit and that it is perfect and sufficient for happiness. If that in which happiness consists is complete, then nothing need be added to it to make an individual good—and, therefore, happy. For Protarchus, this good is a life of pure pleasure; for Socrates, it is "more akin to wisdom."[7] Thus, Socrates concludes that a final aim must be complete in itself and must not require anything more, and pleasure cannot be this aim because it is not all-encompassing and enduring. Aristotle, the Stoics, and Aquinas adopt this view as well.

Regarding the achievement of happiness, in the *Meno,* Socrates argues for the efficacy of wisdom. After an extended discussion of the profitability of virtue, Socrates asks, "And in brief, all the undertakings and endurances of the soul, when guided by wisdom, end in happiness, but when folly guides, in the opposite?"[8] A passage from the *Euthydemus* further highlights this point:

> Since we are all eager to be happy, and since it turns out that we
> become like this through using things, and using them correctly,
> and since knowledge provides the correctness and good fortune;
> then every man should, it seems, contrive by every possible means,
> to become as wise as possible
>
> Yes, he replied.[9]

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[6] Plato, *Philebus* 11a.
[7] Ibid., 12a.
[8] Plato, *Meno* 88c.
[9] Plato, *Euthydemus* 282a.

Arising out of the rational part of the soul, the virtue of practical wisdom

(*phronesis*) presides over both the production and preservation of harmony,

"naming the just and honorable action to be that which preserves and helps

produce this condition of soul, and wisdom the science that presides over such

conduct."[10] Plato references wisdom frequently throughout his writings

because, in his view, there can be no lasting happiness without this cardinal

virtue.

In the *Republic*, Plato approaches happiness differently, in the context of

governance and justice, thereby identifying a communal dimension of

happiness that emerges from the actions of the well-ordered souls of the rulers

of the ideal city-state and its citizens. Through virtuous actions proceeding

from their well-ordered souls, they create and sustain the organization of the

city-state and enact laws to provide for the happiness of the city in general and

its citizens individually.

Structure and function figure prominently in the happiness of the ideal

city. Regarding the former, Socrates prioritizes the happiness of the city over

that of any particular group in Book V of the *Republic*

> I think we'll discover what to say if we follow the same path as
> before. We'll say that it wouldn't be surprising if these people were
> happiest just as they are, but that, in establishing our city, we
> aren't aiming to make any one group outstandingly happy but to
> make the whole city so, as far as possible. We thought that we'd
> find justice most easily in such a city and injustice, by contrast, in
> the one that is governed worst and that, by observing both cities,

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[10] Plato, *Republic* 443e.

we'd be able to judge the question we've been inquiring into for so long. We take ourselves, then, to be fashioning the happy city, not picking out a few happy people and putting them in it but making the whole city happy.[11]

A just city requires just governance and laws (i.e., the structure) necessary for meaningful happiness. At the same time, Socrates emphasizes the importance of the citizens' contribution through the optimal performance of their specific roles in the city (their functions) rather than maximizing opulence and pleasure:

> Similarly, you mustn't force us to give our guardians the kind of happiness that would make them something other than guardians. We know how to clothe the farmers in purple robes, festoon them with gold jewelry, and tell them to work the land whenever they please. We know how to settle our potters on couches by the fire, feasting and passing the wine around, with their wheel beside them for whenever they want to make pots. And we can make all the others happy in the same way, so that the whole city is happy. Don't urge us to do this, however, for if we do, a farmer wouldn't be a farmer, nor a potter a potter, and none of the others would keep to the patterns of work that give rise to a city.[12]

Socrates argues that a fundamental component of happiness is the excellence with which individuals perform their function or ply their trade and that happiness does not consist of hedonistic pursuits. In fact, the single-minded pursuit of pleasure on the part of a city's residents *diminishes* its happiness, as might be expected since a well-ordered soul exhibits harmony and unity guided by practical wisdom while a disordered one exhibits the opposite. Such ordered souls understand

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[11] Ibid., 420b3–c4.
[12] Ibid., 420d5–421a2.

that happiness trumps pleasure, though Socrates would presumably

agree that one can and should enjoy the pleasure resulting from a good

action.

Later in Book V, Socrates again emphasizes the rulers' role in facilitating

the happiness of a city through laws and social norms that channel the talents

of the citizens for their mutual benefit and happiness:

> You are forgetting again that it isn't the law's concern to make any
> one class in the city outstandingly happy but to contrive to spread
> happiness throughout the city by bringing the citizens into
> harmony with each other through persuasion or compulsion and
> by making them share with each other the benefits that each class
> can confer on the community. The law produces such people in the
> city, not to allow them to turn in whatever direction they want, but
> to make use of them to bind the city together.[13]

The guardians' primary role, then, is to implement a structure of governance

and laws designed to promote the greatest possible well-being for the city-state.

The citizens contribute to the happiness of the city-state by performing the

roles that best fit their talents and skills; thus, Socrates says "everyone must

practice one of the occupations in the city for which he is naturally best

suited."[14] The essence of just governance lies in the structure of the city, when

all functions work together harmoniously as the parts of the well-ordered soul

do. Because of their responsibilities, the rulers' souls must be exceptionally

well-ordered if their city is to be happy. Generalizing this principle to leaders

and organizations, I posit a direct connection to the state of a leader's soul and

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[13] Ibid., 519c8–520a4.
[14] Ibid., 433a.

the *eudaimonia* that pervades an organization and that effective leaders exhibit a high level of virtue.

The preceding analysis provides the basis for an overview of Plato's thinking on *eudaimonia*. First, *eudaimonia* has individual and communal elements, and a well-ruled city is a happy one. Thus, its rulers possess well-ordered souls, are habituated to virtue, and are intrinsically motivated to manifest the form of the good. Such rulers live *eudaimonic* lives. It follows that the happiness of a city's rulers diffuses into the social fabric of the city, helping to provide the basis for happiness within and among its citizens.

Further, a well-ruled city is structured and governed according to justice, with all of its citizens having the scope to become as happy as possible commensurate with their abilities. The ruler-citizen relationship is symbiotic, being mediated by the harmonious order of the city, which corresponds to the harmonious order of the souls therein. Within such a socio-political system, the contributions of all citizens, but especially those of the rulers, to the common good take on the character of a moral imperative, one motivated by *eudaimonia*. By analogy, the contributions of leaders and employees, particularly those whose internal intellective and affective powers are well-ordered, form the moral ferment for an organization to operate harmoniously, instantiate *eudaimonia*, and establish the space for the citizens attain it.

Aristotle on What it Takes to Lead the *Polis*

Aristotle, a student of Plato, systematized and extended his thinking on happiness. Taken together, Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* lay out a theory of *eudaimonia* and what it takes to achieve it. Like Plato, Aristotle equates *eudaimonia* with living well and doing well

> As far as its name goes, most people virtually agree, since both the many and the cultivated call it happiness and suppose that living well and doing well are the same as being happy.[15]

Aristotle's theory of happiness emphasizes choice-driven action (*praxis*) aimed at achieving what is good:

> Every art and every investigation, and likewise every practical pursuit or undertaking, seems to aim at some good: hence it has been well said that the Good is that at which all things aim.[16]

Further, echoing Plato, Aristotle stresses that, regarding *eudaimonia*, "The complete good seems to be self-sufficient. We regard something as self-sufficient when all by itself it makes a life choice-worthy and lacking nothing; and that is what we think happiness does."[17] He agrees with Plato that benefits that are complete in themselves are better than those that are intermediate and lead to other, greater goods. He goes on to describe an ultimate end that is worthy of individuals' best efforts to attain:

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[15] NE 1095a1.
[16] Ibid., 1094a1.
[17] Ibid., 1097b9.

If therefore among the ends at which our actions aim there be one which we will for its own sake, while we will the others only for the sake of this [aim], and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (which would obviously result in a process ad infinitum, so that all desire would be futile and vain), it is clear that this one ultimate End must be the Good, and indeed the Supreme good.[18]

For Aristotle, then, *eudaimonia* is the highest good and the ultimate end of human action, "something personal and difficult to lose,"[19] pursued for its own sake,[20] and self-sufficient.[21]

Aristotle then ruminates on what the *ergon* of human beings consists in, or that thing that only we as humans can do or that we can do better than any other thing. *Ergon* is that which we do that most exemplifies our nature, and by performing actions that align with the best of our nature, we achieve our good (*eudaimonia*). Aristotle affirms this when he says:

> if we declare that the function of man is a certain form of life, and define that form of life as the exercise of the soul's faculties and activities in association with rational principle, and say that the function of a good man is to perform these activities well and rightly, and if a function is well performed when it is performed in accordance with its own proper excellence—from these premises it follows that the good of man is the active exercise of his soul's faculties in conformity with excellence or virtue, or if there be several human excellences or virtues, in conformity with the best and most perfect among them.[22]

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[18] Ibid., 1094a2.
[19] Ibid., 1095b25–26.
[20] Ibid., 1095b25–26.
[21] Ibid., 1097b6.
[22] Ibid., 1098a14–15.

The fulfillment of an individual's *ergon* (human nature) results from the pursuit and attainment of *eudaimonia* through the means of virtuous action. Moreover, this pursuit and attainment takes place

> not for some random period of time but over a complete life…. Moreover, to be happy takes a complete lifetime; for one swallow does not make spring, nor does one fine day; and similarly, one day or a brief period of happiness.[23]

Again, happiness is not an attitude or temporary state but, rather, is based on consistent action focused on the good over a lifetime.

Aristotle goes on to say "Everyone thinks that the happy life is a pleasant one, and incorporates pleasure in happiness."[24] However, rather than equating pleasure with happiness, he distinguishes the role of pleasure in happiness: "Pleasure completes the activities, and so the life, that [people] desire. It makes sense, then, that they seek pleasure; for it adds completeness to living."[25] Pleasure is not the end, as many characters argue in the Socratic dialogues, but an integral byproduct of the actual end, which is happiness.

Another important aspect of Aristotle's theory of happiness is his threefold distinction among bodily goods, external benefits, and the benefits of soul:

> Indeed, given that the goods have been divided in three ways—into those called external, those of soul, and those of body—we claim that the goods of soul are good in the strictest sense and are the

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[23] Ibid., 1098a17, 1101a15–6.
[24] Ibid., 1152b8, 1153b14–17.
[25] Ibid., 1175a16–17, 20.

most good, and we reckon the actions and activities of soul to belong to these, so that our argument would be finely made in accord with this old opinion agreed upon by the philosophers.[26]

Bodily goods include health and vigor; external goods include food, shelter, clothing, and wealth; and goods of the soul include knowledge, aesthetic enjoyment, skill, friendship, honor, and love. Interestingly, Aristotle states that external goods, which, in this context, include bodily goods, while not essential to happiness, support and facilitate it by helping individuals to act virtuously

> All the same, [the soul] apparently needs external goods to be added, as we said, since it is impossible or not easy to do noble actions without supplies. For just as we perform many actions by means of instruments, we perform many by means of friends, wealth, and political power. Then again there are some whose deprivation disfigures blessedness, such as good breeding, good children, and noble looks. For we scarcely have the stamp of happiness if we are extremely ugly in appearance, ill-bred, living a solitary life, or childless, and have it even less, presumably, if our children or friends are totally bad or were good but have died. Just as we said, then, happiness does seem to need this sort of prosperity to be added.[27]

External goods are not complete and self-sufficient, as *eudaimonia* is, but Aristotle acknowledges their essential role in the pursuit and achievement of happiness. He also refers to a state of blessedness enjoyed by those who have aristocratic refinement, physical attractiveness, and well-adjusted children and affirms that those lacking at least some measure of these blessings cannot experience *eudaimonia.*

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[26] Ibid., 1098b12–18.
[27] Ibid., 1099a31–b7.

As intermediate means, external goods help the virtuous enjoy more fully the good that comes from their actions. For instance, an individual who possesses a good reputation, decent looks, a reasonable amount of wealth, close friends, a loving family, and social influence may have greater power to do good than, say, one who is more virtuous but is much less endowed with such goods. Aristotle seems to say that the former, while not necessarily happier than the latter per se, lives a more blessed life because of a greater capacity to perform virtuous acts. Further, these goods are needed so that virtuous action is not obstructed, and "That is why the happy person needs in addition the goods of the body and external goods or goods of fortune, so that these activities will not be impeded."[28] The key here is that external goods should be viewed as means rather than ends and employed instrumentally, in service to virtue.

Aristotle's approach to ethics is directly connected to his political philosophy. For him, politics, particularly in the city-state, is a fundamental condition of human affairs and the pursuit of happiness:

> Every state is as we see a sort of partnership, and every partnership is formed with a view to some good (since all the actions of all mankind are done with a view to what they think to be good). It is therefore evident that, while all partnerships aim at some good[,] the partnership that is the most supreme of all and includes all the others does so most of all, [and] aims at the most supreme of all goods; and this is the partnership entitled the state, the political association.[29]

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[28] Ibid., 1153b17–19.
[29] Aristotle, *Politics* 1.1252a.

It follows from Aristotle's stance on politics that the purpose of the state is to achieve the most supreme good, which is the *eudaimonia* achieved in the context of political association, through lives lived in a network of relationships. He follows Plato in conceiving of the *polis* as the social center in which happiness is enacted and achieved.

This distillation of Aristotle's theory of happiness establishes that, from his perspective, first, the ultimate goal (*telos*) is a supreme good, complete and self-sufficient in itself. Further, *eudaimonia* involves living well and achieving success through virtue-based reason and action. The pursuit and attainment of *eudaimonia* corresponds to the realization of human nature. Lastly, *eudaimonia* is not episodic but is accomplished over the course of a life enhanced by the support of external goods and within the social context of the *polis*. Since a city-state is a type of organization, Aristotle's ideas transfer readily to the contemporary world of work and leadership.

The Universalizing Impact of the Stoics

The Stoics follow Plato and Aristotle in holding that happiness is the highest good and perfection. However, whereas Aristotle argues that *eudaimonia* requires external goods, the Stoics argue more simply that happiness involves only acting virtuously by living according to nature.[30] In

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[30] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* VII.88.

other words, happiness is the highest state of human existence, and those who are happy lack nothing. Thus, according to the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus,

> The virtue of the happy man and a well-running life consist in this: that all actions are based on the principle of harmony between his own spirit and the will and director of the universe.[31]

Living according to nature—which is understood as the totality of the universe (Greek *kosmos*)—means living in harmony with the will of god, which the Stoics understood as "the creative craftsman of all things in the extent of matter."[32] Nature orders the universe; everything of value derives from it; and everything depends on it. God and the universe are ultimately one, in that god is in everything, and everything is in God. Given that human beings are part of nature, they enjoy *eudaimonia* when they embody its structure, order, and harmony.

Like Aristotle, the Stoics view hold that God and humanity meet through reason, which is the specific, unique trait that distinguishes humans from other animals, plants, and inanimate matter. Through the perfection of reason, or acting in harmony with God, they achieve their *telos*. Thus, the Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca reasons

> What quality is best in man? It is reason; by virtue of reason, he surpasses the animals, and is surpassed only by the Gods. Perfect reason is therefore the good peculiar to man; all other qualities he shares in some degree with animals and plants.... Hence, if everything is praiseworthy and has arrived at the end intended by its nature, when it has brought its peculiar good to perfection, and

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[31] Ibid., VII.88.
[32] Ibid., VII.134.

if man's peculiar good is reason, then if a man has brought his reason to perfection, he is praiseworthy and has reached the end suited to his nature. This perfect reason is called virtue and is likewise that which is honorable.[33]

Since a rational nature differentiates humans from the rest of creation, the pursuit and development of reason results in a life aligned with nature, which, in turn, manifests true virtue.

The Stoics do not think that external goods make individuals eudaimonic since they consider them the result of luck or forces that they do not control, whereas the pursuit of virtue, and thus happiness, is fully within an individual's grasp. Thus, the Stoic philosopher Epictetus asserts that

Some things are up to us, while others are not up to us. Up to us are conception, choice, desire, aversion and, in a word, everything that is our own doing; not up to us are our body, our property, reputation, office and, in a word, everything that is not our own doing. Furthermore, the things up to us are by nature free, unhindered, and unimpeded; while the things not up to us are weak, servile, subject to hindrance and not our own.[34]

From this perspective, no matter their circumstances or state in life, individuals can aspire to, pursue, and attain happiness provided that they consistently prioritize virtue. In essence, then, the Stoics universalize happiness. For someone of virtue, Stoic pantheistic materialism results in an outlook wherein the structure, order, and harmony of nature become internalized. This internalization translates into solicitude for individuals

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[33] Seneca, *Epistles* 76.9–10.
[34] Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 1.1–2.

because such care is built into the workings of nature and for others because friends, family, and community, being themselves extensions of nature, deserve the same consideration.

For the Stoics, then, the eudaimonic life, lived in harmony with nature, *is* the virtuous life. Everything else, including Aristotle's external goods, is neutral or indifferent to such a life. Virtue is both necessary and sufficient for *eudaimonia.* Anyone can attain happiness by satisfying the sole condition for it, which is a life of virtue.[35] Further, happiness has a cosmic dimension that universalizes the quest for it. The Stoics prioritize order, structure, and harmony with nature and with others—indeed, all of humankind. Importantly for my larger argument, the Stoics validate the efficacy of *eudaimonia* through the achievement of harmony between an individual and nature. This notion of moral alignment in service to a greater good serves as a powerful moral organizing principle for leaders seeking to harness and promulgate excellence.

Thomas Aquinas: The Great Synthesizer

A thousand or more years after the ancient Greeks discussed thus far, Thomas Aquinas masterfully integrated their thinking into Christian theology. Aquinas was foremost a theologian, but his careful fusion of the thinking of the ancient Greek philosophers and the major thinkers who followed them resulted in a thoroughly articulated philosophical theory of happiness. In his theology,

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[35] *Laertius* VII.89.

Aquinas considers happiness the foundation of a moral life. Indeed, he begins

the *Pars Prima Secundae* of his *Summa Theologiae* (henceforth abbreviated ST)

with a discussion of happiness, asserting that a true understanding of it is

necessary in order to undertake "the means by which a person can advance to

this end [i.e. happiness] or stray from it, for it is necessary to take the

character of those things ordered to the end from the end."[36] For Aquinas, true

happiness begins and ends with God—all else fails to satisfy completely:

> It is impossible for any created good to constitute man's happiness.
> For happiness is that perfect good which entirely satisfies one's
> desire; otherwise, it would not be the ultimate end, if something
> yet remained to be desired. Now the object of the will, i.e., of man's
> desire, is what is universally good; just as the object of the intellect
> is what is universally true. Hence it is evident that nothing can
> satisfy man's will, except what is universally good. This is to be
> found, not in any creature, but in God alone, because every
> creature has only participated in goodness. Therefore, God alone
> can satisfy the will of man, according to the words of the Psalms
> [102:5]: "Who alone satisfies your desire with good things."
> Therefore, God alone constitutes man's happiness.[37]

Aquinas follows Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics in arguing that the ultimate

good must be worthy of pursuit in its own right and completely satisfy the

desire for it. For him, perfect happiness arises only from knowing and enjoying

God in God's essence through contemplation, and that alone satisfies fully and

completely.[38] Like the Greeks, Aquinas asserts that ultimate happiness

consists of the contemplation of truth, in this case, the Christian

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[36] ST I–II Q4.3. For the *ST*, I use the 1920 translation from the Fathers of the English
Dominican Province, Second Edition.
[37] ST II–I Q1.8.
[38] ST I–II Q3.8.

understanding of God as truth.[39] In an important innovation, however, Aquinas distinguishes perfect happiness, which he calls *beatitudo*, from imperfect happiness, *felicitas*.

With regard to beatitude (*beatitudo*), Aquinas's transcendent perspective provides an extended frame of reference inclusive of the temporal and the eternal within which to understand happiness. It is possible to approach beatitude in this life through the contemplation of God, but it can only be fully realized after death, when virtuous souls achieve full communion with God. The pursuit of beatitude not only prepares individuals for its full realization in the next life but also provides the best path for temporal happiness, which is living well and doing well through virtue. Before death, it is possible to achieve only imperfect happiness

> A certain participation of happiness can be had in this life, but perfect and true happiness cannot be had in this life.... For this present life is subject to many unavoidable evils; to ignorance on the part of the intellect; to inordinate affection on the part of the appetite, and to many penalties on the part of the body.... [Nonetheless,] there is some kind of happiness to be had in this life, on account of a certain likeness to true happiness [i.e., through union with God after death]. And thus, they do not fail altogether in their estimate.[40]

With this notion of *felicitas*, Aquinas's thought connects most directly with that of the ancient Greeks, for they likewise assert that true happiness for the

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[39] ST I–II Q5.1.
[40] ST I–II Q3.5.

living depends on the actualization of the intellect through the contemplation of truth.

Similarly, Plato seems to suggest that one ought to live as much like gods as possible and that human beings do not succeed perfectly before death, but, through preparation for it with sufficient virtue, divinity is obtainable in the afterlife. In this respect, both Plato and Aquinas submit that the kind of *eudaimonia* available before death falls short of the kind of well-being that is available in a possible everlasting future. Earthly happiness fails to reach the heavenly but shares the same underlying structure, being based on engagement in and enjoyment of genuinely good activities that fulfill human nature.

Aquinas means that, as long as people are alive on Earth, they ought to seek to go beyond the present to a future perfection that they do not yet possess. It is an essential part of human nature (*ergon*) that people, as creatures in space and time, are incomplete and look beyond. To be human is to lack the fullness of being that could be attained. People become themselves fully by seeking the ultimate end (God), which is also the ultimate happiness.

Clearly, though, some people are more eudaimonic than others. For Aquinas, the level of happiness depends on the good manifested through actions, for "An action is not good unless it is good in every way."[41] By "every way," Aquinas means that an action is only genuinely good if 1) it is done for a

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[41] ST I–II Q18.4.

good end or ends, 2) it is done in fitting circumstances, 3) it is believed to be good by the actor, and 4) it has a good aim. Here we have a clear articulation of Aquinas' requirements for and process of achieving happiness. Thus, some activities are better than others (e.g., contemplation is better than playing a game. A wide variety of professions or roles could contribute to happiness— such as, in modern terms, serving as a hotel clerk, neuroscientist, spouse, parent, elected official, or other type of leader—that, when practiced with virtue, contribute to the common good, help to make a person good, and are enjoyable.

Like Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, Aquinas describes carefully the things in which complete happiness, including the external goods of wealth, honor, fame (glory), power, pleasure, created goods, and the internal goods of bodily health.[42] Wealth cannot provide happiness because money is not an end in and of itself but is used to obtain other goods, though some of its uses are perceived as good, such as philanthropy. Honor, because it is bestowed as "a sign and attestation of the excellence that is in the person honored [and] it is impossible for happiness to consist [of] honor."[43] Likewise, fame entails being well-known and praised and is bestowed by others.[44] It can be genuine when it refers to something good about a person but is often false, unstable, and fleeting and, therefore, not a source of happiness. Power, which inheres in

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[42] ST II–I Q2.
[43] ST II–I Q2.2.
[44] ST II–I Q2.3.

leadership, "[relates] to good and evil: whereas happiness is man's proper and perfect good"[45] and, as such, cannot contain or admit evil and does not derive from power.

Internal goods are no more likely to result in happiness. Thus, regarding bodily health, Aquinas states that, first, since individuals are ordained to God as their last end, their last end cannot reside in the preservation of the body, which is subject to natural decline and ultimately death. Second, since being consists of a soul and a body that depends on it, the "goods of the body are ordained to the good of the soul, as to their end."[46] Thus, health is desirable, especially for pursuing a more lasting happiness vigorously and without distraction, but not a supreme good.

The ancient Greek philosophers, as discussed, were familiar with the argument that the pursuit of pleasure is the key to happiness and generally hostile to it, and Aquinas likewise asserts that "every delight is a proper accident (ancillary outcome) resulting from happiness, or from some part of happiness…[and] is quite a trifle as compared with the good of the soul."[47] He distinguishes between happiness as a fitting good (the perfect good being the most fitting) and the pleasure (delight, enjoyment) that results from attaining that good. However, Aquinas finds fault with the Stoics for, he says, holding "that all bodily pleasures should be reckoned as bad, and thus as man, being

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[45] ST II–I Q2.4.
[46] ST II–I Q2.5.
[47] ST II–I Q2.6.

prone to immoderate pleasures, arrives at the mean of virtue by abstaining

from pleasure…but they were wrong in holding this opinion."[48] Further, "none

can live without some sensible and bodily pleasure," though, to be sure, "some

pleasures are good, and some are evil [and] the temperate man does not shun

all pleasures, but those that are immoderate, and contrary to reason."[49] In

short, pleasure should be an outcome of virtuous acts and enjoyed.

Further, the will never rests completely "save in the last end [beatitude]:

for as long as something is waited for, the movement of the will remains in

suspense, although it has reached something."[50] Temporal goods can bring

only passing satisfaction and pleasure; having attained what they desire,

people desire more:

> Human beings naturally desire the good, which they have, to be
> permanent. Now the goods of the present life pass away, since life
> itself passes away, which we naturally desire, and would wish to
> endure unceasingly, for we naturally shrink from death. Wherefore
> it is impossible to have true happiness in this life.[51]

This seemingly gloomy perspective belies the impeccable logic that

temporal goods are both insufficient and transient and, thus, incapable

of providing the lasting happiness that all people seek.

In Aquinas's twofold theory, then, happiness is either perfect and

heavenly (*beatitudo*) or imperfect and worldly (*felicitas*). The former cannot be

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[48] ST I–II Q34.1.
[49] ST I–II Q34.11.
[50] ST I–II Q5.3.
[51] ST I–II Q5.3.

attained independently or in this life but only elusively and on God's initiative, as if peering through a veil. It also serves as the end of contemplation, the highest activity of an intellect, which is centered on the pursuit of the truth associated with God, who should be the object of activities that are facilitated by virtuous living. God brings people to beatitude, doing anything that must be done beyond nature. This combination of sincere efforts to know God through contemplation and upright living along with God's activity in human life results in an inexorable development in and toward *beatitudo*.

On the other hand, an active life centered on securing various goods for oneself, others, and one's community is conducive to *felicitas*. Aquinas affirms that "the imperfect happiness which can be had in this life can be acquired by a human being through [one's] natural powers (*per sua naturalia*)."[52] *Felicitas* consists "first and principally" of "contemplation, but secondarily is an activity of the practical intellect in directing human actions and passions."[53] Aquinas agrees with Aristotle that "The person devoted to the contemplation of truth is the happiest of all; but happy in a secondary manner is the person who lives in accordance with the other virtue, namely, wisdom, which is the guide of all the moral virtues."[54] He commends contemplation as most efficacious in achieving an episodically (i.e., imperfectly) happy life while also recognizing that an active life can provide some level of happiness. Again following Aristotle, he asserts

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[52] ST I–II Q5.5.
[53] ST I–II Q3.5.
[54] NE 2111.

that happiness involves activity,[55] that is, taking action to achieve it despite the fact that, in this life, it remains fragmented and episodic. Even contemplation must be interrupted by sleep, bodily needs, and work.

Aquinas and Aristotle also agree that imperfect happiness requires both friends and sufficient resources:

> If we speak of the happiness of this life, the happy man needs friends, as the Philosopher [i.e., Aristotle] says [Ethics 10, 9], not, indeed, to make use of them, since he suffices himself; nor to delight in them, since he possesses perfect delight in the operation of virtue; but for the purpose of a good operation, [that is] that he may do good to them; that he may delight in seeing them do good; and again that he may be helped by them in his good work. For in order that man may do well, whether in the works of the active life, or in those of the contemplative life, he needs the fellowship of friends.[56]

The more elevated pursuit of *beatitudo* notwithstanding, according to Aquinas, the happiest, albeit still imperfectly happy, person engages in the contemplation of truth, does good, derives pleasure from these activities, is reasonably healthy, has sufficient external goods to live and work, and enjoys the company of friends. Again, *felicitas* is episodic because humans are temporal beings and the vagaries of life, luck, and the intrusion of (or regression into) evil make this kind of happiness impossible to maintain. Thus, the *eudaimonia* attained in this life is *felicitas*, and it is on this point that Aquinas's reasoning corresponds most closely with that of his Greek predecessors.

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[55] ST I–II Q2.3.
[56] ST I–II Q4.8.

From a leadership standpoint, Aquinas endorses the views of his predecessors and goes beyond them in distinguishing happiness in this world from happiness in the next world. Though those who work within organizations tend to have a less lofty perspective than Aquinas, his notion of *felicitas* is generally applicable to professional life and the workplace. I approach leadership in organizations as part of an active life, in which context Aquinas's ideas are directly relevant to work in all fields, from government and business to education, the military, and medicine.

Eudaimonia for us Moderns

With the breakdown of the medieval philosophical consensus and the introduction of Kantian deontology and British utilitarianism, virtue ethics came to be disregarded by all but a few academic researchers. Then, in 1958, British philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe published an article titled "Modern Moral Philosophy" that rekindled interest in virtue ethics.[57] In it, she argued that advocates of deontology and utilitarianism present these systems as objective, rejecting the need for a supreme lawgiver (i.e. God) and that, absent an appeal to a divine authority, the notions such as obligation and correctness on which these systems rely are relative and lack an ultimate foundation. On this basis, she argues, in what is probably an intentional exaggeration, that all modern moral philosophy should be abandoned. According to philosopher Julia Driver, Anscombe more likely "intended to establish the superiority of a

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[57] Anscombe, G.E. "Modern Moral Philosophy." *Philosophy*, 33.124, 1958, pp. 1–19.

religious based ethics…and that the only suitable and really viable alternative is the religiously based moral theory that keeps the legalistic framework and the associated concepts of 'obligation.'"[58] Anscombe calls for a return to Aristotle, apparently, given her Roman Catholic faith, as understood by Aquinas.

Eudaimonic Naturalism: Happiness for All

Anscombe's eudaimonic turn, so to speak, led other philosophers to take up the challenge. Among the first was Philippa Foot, who assumes a naturalist stance regarding human goodness. Her "grammar of goodness" or "schema of natural normativity" grounds her philosophy in biology,[59] and she contends that it is possible to assess the intrinsic goodness of plants and animals based on whether they possess the traits necessary to fulfill their organic natures, that is, when they are not defective but, rather, possess the typical features and functions that contribute to the development, sustainment, and propagation of an organism or the community to which it belongs.[60] People share these criteria with plants and animals. Following Aristotle, however, Foot argues that reason separates humans from plants and animals, thereby adding a uniquely human dimension to goodness.

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[58] Julia Driver, Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Archive*, 2018. https://plato.stanford.edu/archIves/sum2020/entries/anscombe/. Accessed 12/22/22.
[59] Philippa Foot, *Natural Goodness*, p. 82.
[60] Ibid., 33.

For Foot, human goodness arises from reflection on the most fitting aim, from which she develops the four elements of her grammar of goodness, which are 1) the good of, 2) the good as, and 3) the good for an organism and 4) goods and good things. The "good of" an organism is its characteristic way of living and provides the standard for judging excellence and defect.[61] Next, "good as" behaviors and actions make an organism excellent and help it to flourish.[62] "Good for" signifies the range of factors that contribute to a flourishing life.[63] Lastly, "good and good things" are the specific factors that contain desirability or choice worthiness.[64] When it comes to human beings,

> Given that goodness in respect of bodily health, of faculties such as intelligence and memory, and so on is precisely that which fits a living thing for the instantiation of the life form of the species, and that this counts as the good of a living thing, then in so far as this instantiation in human beings can also be identified with having a good life, the question that concerns…is the relation between virtue and a good life and the connection of that with the happiness of the one whose life has it.[65]

For Foot, "the instantiation of the human life form lies in happiness," or, in other words, happiness is what is most fitting:

> Humanity's good can be thought of as happiness…. In my own terminology happiness is here understood as the enjoyment of good things, meaning enjoyment in attaining, and in pursuing, right ends.[66]

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[61] Ibid., 41–42.
[62] Ibid., 43.
[63] Ibid., 44.
[64] Ibid., 44.
[65] Ibid., 92.
[66] Ibid., 97–98.

In Foot's view then, virtues make a person "good as" a human being, and virtuous activity brings *eudaimonia.* A life that tends toward *eudaimonia* through the employment of natural capacities (e.g., practical wisdom) and undertakes virtuous activities is the "good of" a human being. That which is "good for" people fosters, sustains, or furthers their characteristic way of living, that is, virtuously. The distinctive good for a person is the pursuit and attainment of *eudaimonia.* It can be seen that Foot's philosophy owes much to Aristotle.

Fitting for Us: Rosalind Hursthouse's Self-Evident Eudaimonic Virtue Ethics

In *On Virtue Ethics,* Rosalind Hursthouse argues for the universal applicability of virtue ethics. In support of this premise, she describes human nature in terms of virtues that suit human beings. Further, in an interesting move, she posits that virtue ethics appeals to facts that are not objective in the empirical sense. That is, a reasonable account of virtues that coheres within the ethical outlook of virtue ethics itself is more than sufficient to claim objectivity.

Underpinning Hursthouse's argument for the objectivity of virtue ethics is the fitness of human nature for virtue. In other words, virtues and the practice of virtue suit the species. For instance, she argues that no right-thinking person would raise a child to practice evil or deny the embedded social cooperation that exists among the members of the human race that law and

common-sense morality, according to which parents raise their children to be good and do good, keep in place.

For Hursthouse, the fundamental issue is ensuring that a viable ethical system such as virtue ethics be applicable in daily life. Such a system should 1) make those who practice it good, 2) help them survive, 3) keep them free from pain, 4) help to continue the species, and 5) facilitate the functioning of society.[67] If these criteria are internally consistent with virtue ethics as an ethical system, the system is objective and applicable to all human beings. Hursthouse thus takes the naturalist position that human nature sets the standard for virtue. This standard provides the normative (and objective) character of virtue ethics from which it stands as a *bona fide* ethical system.

With regard to happiness, according to Hursthouse, "a virtue is a character trait [that] a human being needs for *eudaimonia*, to flourish or live well." Her notion of *eudaimonia* is that of "true (or real) happiness," or "the sort of happiness worth having"[68] that parents want for their children. This *eudaimonia* is an expression of a form of naturalism and thus not reliant on a transcendent source for its rationale. Virtues are character traits that make a person a good person, and people need virtues to live a good, characteristically human life:

> Ethical evaluations of human beings as good or bad are taken to
> be analogous to evaluations of other living things as good or bad
> specimens of their kind. The analogy is instructive, because it

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[67] Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*, 10.
[68] Ibid., 167–8, 198.

reveals that several features of ethical evaluation thought to be peculiar to it, and inimical to its objectivity, are present in the quasi-scientific evaluation even of plants.[69]

Thus, an account of human nature serves as a normative basis for an ethics founded on virtue.

Excellence as Lifestyle: Julia Annas

The perspective of virtue ethicist Julia Annas is consistent with classical ethical theories that emphasize happiness, for she argues that

> Each of us has a final good…in that when we stand back a bit from our ongoing projects and ask why we are doing what we are doing, we do not find a satisfactory halt until we get to the final end which makes sense of our life as a whole.[70]

Building on the notion of *eudaimonia* as the ultimate goal, like Aristotle, she views happiness as a philosophy of action, the pursuit and achievement of which derives from actions that are aligned with virtue; "therefore happiness is activity (*energeia*) in accordance with virtue in actions that are preferred, as one would wish them."[71] Her view of happiness is classical, but she emphasizes being precise about it, especially since contemporary notions of happiness differ so much from the ancient view:

> It has often been pointed out that we use "happy" to describe temporary and even very short-lived states or feelings of a person. Moreover, we apply the word on the basis of the way the agent feels: if he says that he is or feels happy, we tend to say that he is right; there may be more to say about the basis of his claim, but if

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[69] Ibid., 21.
[70] Annas, Julia. *The Morality of Happiness.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
[71] Ibid., 45.

he says honestly that he is happy, then he is. Happiness can for us be short-lived and subjective.[72]

Annas seeks to revise the classical view of happiness and demonstrate its resonance in contrast with the subjective understanding of it that has arisen in modern times, for

> there are good reasons to develop the ideas that happiness applies to the agent's life as a whole, that it requires activity and that it is different in kind from the other goods that we aim at—even when these developments threaten the positive suggestions that the word happiness tends to have.[73]

She agrees with the Peripatetics in advocating deeper reflection on the good life leading to the realization that individuals have a *telos* that is not found in wealth, power, honor, fame, or pleasure but, rather, complete and sufficient happiness. A reflective person can come to understand that

> her various aims and values do hang together in a pattern in her life, and that her life is given a definite direction by whatever it is that she takes to be her overarching value or view of what matters. Ancient ethics begins from this viewpoint.[74]

Annas holds that happiness is directly connected to virtue, the enactment of which is up to individuals and includes "accommodation…to the interests of others."[75] She also follows Aristotle in asserting that happiness requires

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[72] Ibid., 45.
[73] Ibid., 46.
[74] Ibid., 440.
[75] Ibid., 426.

external goods, for "it seems absurd to talk of happiness when someone meets great misfortunes and is virtuous, but dying on the wheel."[76]

Regarding contemporary virtue ethics, Annas observes that some thinkers disconnect virtue from *eudaimonia*, leaving it without the mooring of a comprehensive, teleologically oriented ethical framework. In addition, she asserts that, while few believe that virtue alone can carry the weight of a comprehensive ethical theory, many are reluctant to embrace the teleology inherent in ancient and medieval theories of virtue.[77] She is convinced that studying, integrating, and revising these theories can be of great benefit, and she suggests that the common modern paradigm of happiness based on satisfying desires overshadows the complete, sufficient, and ultimate end for living life well that *eudaimonia* provides. Echoing Aquinas, she argues that the intellect can lead to this realization through a process of reflection on and refinement of the idea of happiness and a more objective understanding of it.

Moreover, Annas seeks to articulate the ancient notion of *eudaimonia* so that it can serve as a basis for contemporary virtue ethics. In this regard, she argues that the Aristotelian notion of the provision of external goods is consistent with the modern conception of happiness though it might not seem to be at first glance. Her view that external goods possess inherent value as intrinsic goods clears a path for the creation of a list of such goods consistent

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[76] Ibid., 431.
[77] Ibid., 36.

with modern notions of happiness, such as fulfilling work, autonomy, self-development, and contribution to society.

Annas also underscores the importance of individuals' intellect, psychology, and disposition and their reasoning, actions, feelings, and choices in previous situations for the formation of character. Character develops over time and extends to how individuals live, including whether they enjoy *eudaimonia*. She makes clear that external and bodily goods do not deliver happiness:

> Given that so much in contemporary work on happiness searches for happiness in the circumstances of our lives, it bears repeating that money, health, beauty, even relationships don't make us happy; our happiness comes at least in part from the way we do or don't actively live our lives, doing something with them or acting in relation to them.... If we fully take this on board, putting the feel-good accounts of happiness on one side, it becomes clearer why what makes us happy couldn't just be stuff sitting there in our lives, or passive states of feeling or satisfaction.[78]

Such statements reformulate the position of Aristotle and the Stoics in contemporary language, thus identifying Annas as a member of the virtue ethics tradition.

According to the ancient, medieval, and contemporary understandings of *eudaimonia* examined in this chapter, it is the highest good available to human beings. The persistence of this philosophical tradition for thousands of years is striking evidence of its universal relevance and efficacy as a way of life.

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[78] Ibid., 152.

Eudaimonia, sincerely sought, progressively flowers in a life lived virtuously, as I discuss further presently. Adding depth to character, encouraging virtue, and benefiting others and the larger community, it serves as the ultimate goal of a life well-lived.

Eudaimonic virtue ethics received little attention for several centuries and then experienced a revival starting with Elizabeth Anscombe that has continued apace to the present day. Many contemporary ethicists have built on the foundations of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and Aquinas to re-establish virtue ethics as a viable approach to principled living. Some, such as Rosalind Hursthouse, Philippa Foot, and Julia Annas, have taken a naturalist approach, seeking to ground *eudaimonia* in the material world and make it accessible to those who do not necessarily subscribe to their predecessor's religious commitments.

Virtue ethicists share the conviction that *eudaimonia* is fitting for human beings and its pursuit and attainment should be prioritized. Further, they affirm that *eudaimonia* is achieved through the development and exercise of virtues. So, while approaches vary, as was the case in antiquity, the continuity between ancient and contemporary notions of virtue ethics is unmistakable and remarkable. Again, this continuity speaks to the deep wisdom contained in this ethical tradition and its universal relevance to living well, doing well, and being successful.

All this said, the classical understanding of happiness is problematic in the context of the modern preoccupation with subjective and transient emotional states. The *eudaimonia* of the ancient Greeks and Aquinas has a profound meaning rooted in the pursuit and attainment of the good for oneself and others as the means to fulfill human nature in the deepest sense. Such fulfillment occurs over the course of a lifetime as the result of consistent actions oriented toward virtue that result in a gradual internal transformation that makes the doer good through the habitual manifestation of good in the world.

The contemporary and subjective notion of happiness is associated with the pleasure that actions conducive to *eudaimona* create. Accordingly, for the purposes of this study, I offer a revised definition of *eudaimonia* as the progressive inner fulfillment of human nature that occurs over the course of a lifetime as a result of the practice of virtue through actions that most befit individuals and that make them good. In the context of leadership, *eudaimonia* can serve as an enduring principle, a focal point for a good leader's deliberation, decisions, and actions.

In the next chapter, the discussion shifts to the means through which *eudaimonia* is realized by acting well, which is to say, virtuously. A leader, by becoming and being eudaimonic, becomes and is a good leader.

Chapter 4: Virtue: The Path to *Eudaimonia*

In this chapter, I address several issues related to the virtues involved in the pursuit and attainment of *eudaimonia*, including their structure, efficacy for living well, doing well, and being successful, and unity, the characteristics of virtuous acts and acts that are not virtuous, and the deliberative process required to discern and choose virtue. I also discuss vices. The development and use of virtue over a lifetime makes possible the attainment of *eudaimonia*. An individual who is mature in virtue exhibits virtues in their inter-relational fullness. Good deliberation involves the virtue of prudence informed by the moral virtues of justice, courage, and temperance.

Discussions of virtue include the topic of vice in order to provide a full picture of human character. More practically, an understanding of vice provides those striving to become virtuous insight into what to avoid, the obstacles and challenges that can hinder moral growth, and recognizing vice in oneself and others. In the following discussion, I consider how each of the philosophers highlighted in this study approaches virtue, including where virtues are applicable and the virtues that are essential. Throughout this discussion, I connect the insights offered by these philosophers with the practice of leadership.

Order and Harmony: Plato Ponders the Cardinal Virtues

Plato's views about virtue, like those about *eudaimonia*, seem to have evolved over time. Again, I draw attention to the core of Plato's perspective on virtue, which is the proposition that everyone desires the good. For instance, in the *Meno*, Socrates posits that no one willingly commits evil because everyone inherently wants to be good, for those

> who don't recognize evils for what they are, don't desire evil but what they think to be good, though in fact it is evil; those who through ignorance mistake bad things for good obviously desire the good.[1]

From this perspective, the choice of what is vicious—meaning, for the purposes of this study, "characterized by vice"—results from the mistaken belief that it is something good. Socrates says similarly in the *Protagoras* that

> no one willingly does evil, or what he thinks to be evil. To make for what one believes to be bad, instead of making for the good, is not, it seems, in human nature, and when faced with the choice of two evils no one will choose the greater when he might choose the less.[2]

From this reasoning follows another of Socrates's core propositions, that the main difference between the virtuous and the vicious arises is the knowledge of the good or lack of it, respectively. In other words, Socrates asserts essentially that virtue equates to knowledge of the good.

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[1] Plato, *Meno* 78b.
[2] Plato, *Protagoras* 358c.

In the *Republic,* written in Plato's middle period, the proposition that virtue is knowledge of the good remains evident. As discussed, Plato argues that the soul consists of reason, spirit, and appetite. In a virtuous soul, reason comes to rule the spirit and appetite and maintain the proper relationship with and between them.[3] This balance comes about as the soul comes to understand the form of the good. In Book 4 of the *Republic,* Socrates describes health as a kind of order in the body to make a similar point about the balance and order of the soul:

> Socrates: "But to produce health is to establish the elements in a body in the natural relation of dominating and being dominated by one another, while to cause disease is to bring it about that one rules or is ruled by the other contrary to nature."

> Thrasymachus: "Yes, that is so."

> Socrates: "And is it not likewise the production of justice in the soul to establish its principles in the natural relation of controlling and being controlled by one another, while injustice is to cause the one to rule or be ruled by the other contrary to nature?"

> Socrates: "Exactly so," he said. "Virtue, then, as it seems, would be a kind of health and beauty and good condition of the soul, and vice would be disease, ugliness, and weakness."

> Thrasymachus: "It is so."

> Socrates: "Then is it not also true that beautiful and honorable pursuits tend to the winning of virtue and the ugly to vice?"

> Thrasymachus: "Of necessity."[4]

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[3] Socrates asks "Does it not belong to the rational part to rule, being wise and exercising forethought on behalf of the entire soul, and to the principle of high spirit to be subject to this and its ally?" (*Republic* 441e) before making the case that the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul must be ruled by the rational part (442a–d).

[4] *Ibid.* 444e.

A soul in such a balanced state is able to determine what is good and do it consistently, thereby, in Socrates' view, displaying virtue:

> Socrates: "Will the soul ever accomplish its own work well if deprived of its own virtue, or is this impossible?"
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> Thrasymachus: "It is impossible."
>
> Socrates: "Of necessity, then, a bad soul will govern and manage things badly while the good soul will in all these things do well."
>
> Thrasymachus: "Of necessity."
>
> Socrates: "And did we not agree that the excellence or virtue of soul is justice and its defect injustice?"
>
> Thrasymachus: "Yes, we did."
>
> Socrates: "The just soul and the just man then will live well and the unjust ill?"
>
> Thrasymachus: "So it appears," he said, "by your reasoning."[5]

Here, Socrates establishes clearly the relationship between a virtue, in this case, justice, and *eudaimonia*, which, again, involves doing well, living well, and being successful.

Another fundamental feature of Plato's view of virtues is that they form a unity, in that, as discussed, he appears to argue that the possession of a single virtue means possession of all of them. At the same time, he emphasizes the priority of *phronesis* or practical wisdom among virtues, as Socrates argues in the *Laches*:

> Socrates: "Now do you think, my excellent friend, there could be anything wanting to the virtue of a man who knew all good things,

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[5] Ibid. 353e.

and all about their production in the present, the future, and the past, and all about evil things likewise? Do you suppose that such a man could be lacking in temperance, or justice, and holiness, when he alone has the gift of taking due precaution, in his dealings with gods and men, as regards what is to be dreaded and what is not, and of procuring good things, owing to his knowledge of the right behavior towards them?"

Nicias: "I think, Socrates, there is something in what you say."

Socrates: "Hence what you now describe, Nicias, will be not a part but the whole of virtue."

Nicias: "Apparently."[6]

Socrates makes the case that, without *phronesis* (practical wisdom)—that is, knowledge of the good—other virtues remain latent, awaiting knowledge to activate them.

Plato develops this notion of unity further in the *Protagoras*, where Socrates asks whether the virtues of wisdom, temperance, courage, justice, and piety refer to the same thing or are parts of a whole:

> Are the five names of wisdom, temperance, courage, justice, and piety attached to one thing, or underlying each of these names is there a distinct essence and a distinct thing that has its own particular capacity[,] each being different from the others[?][7]

The notion of a distinct capacity for the knowledge of good and evil is central to the argument here. Further, since each virtue is a type of knowledge of the good, virtues share the same essence, and, because *phronesis* is the presiding virtue, a soul in possession of it or, in fact, any

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of the cardinal virtues, must possess the other virtues as well.[8] This theme of the unity of virtues carries through the *Republic.[9]*

Plato's dialogues address the virtues of *phronesis*, justice, courage, and temperance in various contexts. For instance, in the *Laws*, a later work, he ranks *phronesis* the most important virtue, temperance second, justice third, and courage fourth.[10] As with *eudaimonia*, consistent definitions of the various virtues are lacking, but it is possible to glean generally how Plato conceives of them.

Beginning with the foremost virtue, *phronesis*[11] facilitates knowledge of the good, choosing what is good, and doing good. In the *Republic*, virtue is presented as knowledge of the good, and *phronesis* is described, as discussed, as the virtue that guides and balances the others.[12] Thus, *phronesis* enables rulers to rule well, in particular, to enact laws that benefit the *polis*. In his later writings, Plato seems to add a divine dimension to his conception of *phronesis*, arguing

> Wrong, arrogance, and folly are our undoing; righteousness,
> temperance, and wisdom, our salvation, and these have their home

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[8] Philosopher Daniel Devereaux in "The Unity of the Virtues in the *Protagoras* and the *Laches*" argues convincingly that "the reciprocal links between the other virtues are mediated by wisdom…all just, courageous, temperate, etc. actions will be wise insofar as they are based on knowledge of good and evil. So there are at least two ways in which wisdom might be said to "contain" the other virtues: (i) it contains in the sense that if one has it one has the other virtues as well, and (ii) it contains in that it is exemplified in all virtuous actions" (778).

[9] See the section on *eudaimonia* above.

[10] Plato, *Laws* 31c5–d7.

[11] For example, in the *Protagoras* (330a): "Are these also parts of virtue? Said I. Wisdom, I mean and courage? Most emphatically. Wisdom indeed in the greatest of the parts."

[12] "naming the just and honorable action to be that which preserves and helps produce this condition of soul, and wisdom the science that presides over such conduct" (*Republic* 443e).

in the living might of the gods, though some faint trace of them is also plainly to be seen dwelling here within ourselves.[13]

Indeed, in the *Phaedo*, Plato goes further, affirming that true wisdom is not realized until after death:

> Will a true lover of wisdom who has firmly grasped this same conviction—that he will never attain to wisdom worthy of the name elsewhere than in the next world—will he be grieved at dying? Will he not be glad to make that journey? We must suppose so, my dear boy, that is, if he is a real philosopher, because then he will be of the firm belief that he will never find wisdom in all its purity in any other place.[14]

In addition to this otherworldly slant on *phronesis*, Plato's thinking on it also evolves in the *Laws* where *phronesis* is said to encompass a philosopher-ruler's deep knowledge of the "whole of virtue" needed to live a virtuous life and to impart virtue to citizens through legislation.[15] Citizens develop virtue within a political context when rulers ably explain the underlying rationale of the laws that are enacted.[16] When the rationale is understood and accepted, according to Plato, harmony develops between the rulers and the citizens.

Though he never defines the concept, these perspectives together yield a comprehensive view of Plato's conception of *phronesis* as the ability to know, discern, and implement the knowledge of the good in life, particularly for rulers and society. Further, *phronesis* grounds individuals' essential humanity

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[13] Plato, *Laws* 906b.
[14] Plato, *Phaedo* 68b.
[15] *Laws* 688bl–2.
[16] Ibid., 718b.

through the practical exercise of the intellect in knowing, recognizing, and doing good. Moreover, through *phronesis*, individuals echo the divine.

The cardinal virtue of courage features prominently in the *Protagoras*, *Laches*, and *Republic*. In the *Protagoras*, Socrates engages in a lengthy discussion of the nature of courage, ultimately connecting it to the knowledge of what is and is not to be feared:

> Cowardice is ignorance of what is and is not to be feared...courage is the opposite of cowardice... So then, wisdom about what is and is not to be feared is the opposite of this ignorance.... So the wisdom about what is and is not to be feared is courage and is the opposite of ignorance.[17]

This initial definition of courage ties it closely to wisdom as the correct evaluation of and response to perilous situations. The interlocutors ultimately leave its meaning unresolved, but the connection between *phronesis* and courage carries forward to the *Laches* and the *Republic*.

In the *Laches*, which is sometimes referred to as *On Courage*, two Athenian generals, Laches and Nicias, fresh from fighting in the Peloponnesian War, offer three definitions of courage:

(1) Laches: "If a man is prepared to stand in the ranks, face up to the enemy and not run away, you can be sure that he's brave."[18]

(2) Laches: "I take it [courage], in that case, to be a certain endurance of the soul, if I have to mention the element essentially present in all cases."[19]

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[17] Plato, *Protagoras* 360c–d.
[18] Plato, *Laches* 191a–b.
[19] *Ibid.* 192b.

(3) Nicias: "I've often heard you saying that we're each good in so far as we're clever, but in so far as we're ignorant, we're bad…So if a brave man is a good man, it's obvious that he's clever. This is the knowledge I mean, Laches[,] knowledge of what is fearful and what is encouraging, both in wartime and in all other situations."[20]

Laches, then, asserts that the courageous show steadfastness in the face of danger while Nicias argues that the courageous possess wisdom to the point that they have complete knowledge of good and evil. Socrates, in turn, employs his distinctive method of inquiry, leading each man to question his initial position. As in the *Protagoras*, the meaning of courage is not explained, but the discussion of it expands its scope beyond steadfastness in the face of death.

In the *Republic*, a courageous person is said to possess, as mentioned, knowledge of what is to be feared and what is not:

> This power in the soul, then, this unfailing conservation of right and lawful belief about things to be and not to be feared[,] is what I call and would assume to be courage, unless you have something different to say. (*Republic* 430b)

After thus characterizing courage as a power in the soul, Socrates later in the *Republic* emphasizes the relationship between the rational and spirited parts of the soul, with the former controlling the latter, as mentioned:

> And it is because of the spirited part [of the soul], I suppose, that we call a single individual courageous, namely, when it preserves through pains and pleasures what is announced by rational accounts about what is to be feared and what isn't. (*Republic* 442b–c)

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[20] *Ibid.* 194d–195a.

Once the rational part of the soul identifies what is to be feared, the spirited part perseveres in the follow-through of the choice. The notion of perseverance incorporates Laches's sense of courage within the overall schema of the tripartite soul ruled by practical wisdom.

Notably, the context for this explanation of courage is the *polis*, the rulers of which are responsible for its safety and defense. In this respect, the communal dimension is essential to Plato's account of courage, which includes knowledge of what should be feared, acting accordingly, and enduring any pain and privation that may occur for the greater good, especially pertaining to the city-state. Further, courage has a eudaimonic purpose.

Plato refers to the virtue of temperance variously as "some kind of concord or harmony," "a kind of orderliness," and "a control of certain appetites."[21] Temperance is the theme of the *Charmides*, which, while offering no concrete definition of it—Socrates describes the effort to do so as a "complete failure"[22]—provides some key insights into this virtue. Kenney lists the various definitions of temperance in the *Charmides* as

    1) doing everything in an orderly and quiet way

    2) modesty, which makes people ashamed of indecorous behavior

    3) doing one's own business and good actions

    4) derivations of knowing oneself

        4a) knowledge of oneself

        4b) knowledge of various types, knowledge of knowledge

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[21] Plato, *Republic* 430e.
[22] Plato, *Charmides* 175b2–3.

4c) knowledge of what one does and does not know

4d) knowledge that one does and does not know

5) knowledge of good and evil[23]

The first two definitions refer to behavior and motivation, and the others refer to a type of knowledge. Though all of these definitions are ultimately rejected in the *Charmides*, they indicate that temperance is involved in self-control and self-knowledge, especially knowing one's tendencies and the ability to limit and restrain oneself. Practical wisdom also comes into play, especially as it pertains to the possession of a broad-based knowledge of good and evil.

In the *Gorgias*, Socrates provides a more comprehensive definition of temperance as "Each individual ruling himself...being self-controlled and master of oneself, ruling the pleasures and appetites within oneself."[24] This self-control and mastery make it possible to act suitably when pursuing pleasures and desires:

> a person who wants to be happy must evidently pursue and practice temperance.... He should not allow his appetites to be undisciplined or to undertake to fill them up: that's interminably bad.... Such a man could not be dear to another man or to a god.... And so you've failed to notice that what is proportional has great power among gods and men.[25]

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[23] Kenny, *A Historical Analysis, Critical Interpretation, and Contemporary Application of the Virtue of Temperance*, 2016, p. 51.
[24] Plato, *Gorgias* 491.
[25] Ibid., 507d–508a.

Temperance also generates order within the soul,[26] that is, the internal balance

needed to choose, pursue, and attain goods in the right proportion. Absent this

balance, Socrates implies, it is impossible for individuals to relate well to others

or the gods. Thus, temperance has an internal as well as an external locus.

These themes recur in the *Republic*, where Plato links temperance to the

self-control that results from a well-ordered soul:

> More than the preceding virtues, temperance suggests the idea of
> harmony. Some light is thrown upon the nature of this virtue by
> the popular description of a man as "master of himself[,]" which
> has an absurd sound, because the master is also the servant. The
> expression really means that the better principle in a man masters
> the worse [principle].[27]

The ruler's temperance helps yoke appetitive desires instead of allowing them

to run amok. Again, temperance also stabilizes and brings order and harmony

to the entire soul:

> He puts himself in order, is his own friend, and harmonizes the
> three parts of himself like three limiting notes on a musical scale –
> high, low, and middle. He binds together those parts and any
> others there may be in between, and from having been many
> things he becomes entirely one, moderate and harmonious.[28]

Thus, the ruler can focus on the interests of the *polis* rather than succumbing

to disordered appetites and pursuing lesser goods. This association of

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[26] Ibid., 503d–504d.
[27] Plato, *Republic* 430e.
[28] Ibid., 443d.

temperance with leadership is central for Plato, and he describes temperance

as agreement between

> [the] naturally worse and the naturally better as to which of the two is to rule both in the city and in each other.... We call this individual temperate when the ruler and the two subjects are agreed that the rational must rule and there is no rebellion against him.[29]

Temperance, then, extends the harmony of the ruler's soul into the *polis*,

where laws that facilitate temperance help generate communal harmony.

Thanks to their temperance and practical wisdom, rulers attend to and

calibrate the multifarious appetites of the multitude appropriately through the

laws that they enact.[30] This sweeping view of temperance highlights the

essential connection between the rulers (individual leaders) and the *polis* (the

organization) in Plato's thought.

In the *Laws*, Plato reiterates the themes of self-mastery, "the first and

best of victories,"[31] and characteristic, reasoned self-restraint, that is, "the

habitual self-control of a soul that uses reason."[32] Plato extends the reach of

temperance further by giving it a transcendent dimension, "Blessed is the life of

this man of moderation, and blessed they who listen to the words that fall from

his lips,"[33] for

> In our view it is God who is preeminently the "measure of all things," much more so than any "man," as they say. So if you want

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[29] Ibid., 432a.
[30] Ibid., 431c–d.
[31] Plato, *Laws* 626e2–3.
[32] Ibid., 631c5–7.
[33] Ibid., 711d–712a.

to recommend yourself to someone of this character, you must do your level best to make your own character reflects his, and, on this principle the moderate man is God's friend, being like him, whereas the immoderate and unjust man is not like him and is his enemy.[34]

Here, temperance extends well beyond its traditional definition involving restraint of the appetites such that its practice leads to blessedness through higher-order emulation of it, an exalted view indeed of this virtue.

Plato's comprehensive view of temperance thus has several elements. From his perspective, temperance requires the measured restraint of desires and, therefore, self-knowledge. In particular, temperance involves knowing when appetites are healthy, when they arise, accurately assessing their merit, and then pursuing them in a measured and proportionate manner. This self-knowledge-based self-control brings harmony to the entire soul, allowing good to be done in an ordered, fitting way. In its most lofty manifestation, temperance takes on a divine aspect as it comes to more closely resemble the perfect model of it as exemplified by Plato's notion of God. Lastly, temperance has a social function in paving the way for rulers who exhibit it to extend harmony and justice to the *polis*. In so doing, temperance steadies the soul (manifested as, e.g., restraint, orderliness, fittingness, and harmony) and infuses social structures, such as the *polis* or an organization.

The fourth cardinal virtue, justice, is the broader focus of the *Republic*. Justice comes about when each part of the soul interacts harmoniously in

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[34] Plato, *Laws* 716c–d.

response to reason and in pursuit of the good. From self-mastery and internal harmony comes the capacity to be just and act justly. Thus, in the *Republic*, Socrates asserts that

> justice is indeed something of this kind [i.e., characterized by harmony that gives rise to the capacity to be just and act justly], yet not in regard to the doing of one's own business externally, but with regard to that which is within and in the true sense concerns one's self, and the things of one's self—it means that a man must not suffer the principles in his soul to do each the work of some other and interfere and meddle with one another, but that he should dispose well of what in the true sense of the word is properly his own, and, having first attained to self-mastery and beautiful order within himself, and having harmonized these three principles, the notes or intervals of three terms quite literally the lowest, the highest, and the mean, and all others there may be between them, and having linked and bound all three together and made of himself a unit, one man instead of many, self-controlled and in unison, he should then and then only turn to practice if he find[s] [nothing] to do either in the getting of wealth or the tendance of the body or it may be in political action or private business, in all such doings believing and naming the just and honorable action to be that which preserves and helps to produce this condition of soul, and wisdom the science that presides over such conduct; and believing and naming the unjust action to be that whichever tends to overthrow this spiritual constitution, and brutish ignorance, to be the opinion that in turn presides over this.[35]

In a just individual, the three parts of the soul function harmoniously to inspire actions that preserve and sustain the soul's harmony. Philosopher Gregory Vlastos calls this condition "psychic harmony."[36] Plato compares a soul in such a state to a healthy body, arguing that

> to produce health is to establish the elements in a body in the natural relation of dominating and being dominated by one

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[35] Plato, *Republic* 443c–444a.
[36] Gregory Vlastos. "Justice and Happiness in the Republic." *Platonic Studies*, 1971, pp. 67–8.

another, while to cause disease is to bring it about that one rules or is ruled by the other contrary to nature.... And is it not likewise the production of justice in the soul to establish its principles in the natural relation of controlling and being controlled by one another, while injustice is to cause the one to rule or be ruled by the other contrary to nature? ...Virtue, then, as it seems, would be a kind of health and beauty and good condition of the soul, and vice would be disease, ugliness, and weakness.[37]

For Plato, justice originates internally rather than through the enforcement of external rules and regulations. Even without laws, just individuals are unlikely to embezzle, steal, betray, commit adultery, or neglect their parents or the gods.[38] Unjust acts upset the harmony of the soul. Like the tyrannical ruler described in Book IX of the *Republic* who allows the spirited part of the soul to rampage unfettered and feed its brutal appetites, unjust individuals cause chaos, misery, and oppression.

For a soul to be just, reason must rule its spirited and appetitive parts. Such a person will grasp the form of justice and be inclined to do what reason dictates, and these actions are just. The situation is similar to that of individuals whose souls are ruled by reason and live in ways that are conducive to *eudaimonia.* Thus, just acts are conducive to doing well and living well. Furthermore, doing just things creates, fosters, and maintains a just soul. Plato, then, holds that just individuals act so as to preserve and produce harmony in the soul.

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[37] Plato, *Republic* 444c–444e.
[38] Ibid., 442d–443b.

From the standpoint of the cardinal virtues, an individual must be wise

so that reason rules the soul, courageous so that the spirit can support reason,

and temperate so that the appetite does not resist reason. The individual

components of the tripartite souls of such individuals "perform each their own

task."[39] Because of this internal harmony and their greater apprehension of the

form of the good, virtuous rulers seek to establish and maintain justice in the

polis. Like the soul, a *polis* is just when those who inhabit it perform their

optimal social functions as either rulers or producers,

> For what we laid down in the beginning as a universal requirement
> when we were founding our city, this I think, or some form of this,
> is justice. And what we did lay down, and often said, you recall,
> was that each one man must perform one social service in the
> state for which his nature is best adapted.... And again ... to do
> one's own business and not to be a busybody is justice ... is a
> saying that we have heard from many and have often repeated
> ourselves.... This, then, my friend, if taken in a certain sense[,]
> appears to be justice, this principle of doing one's own business.[40]

Justice flows from a harmonious soul that comprehends its form on a deep

level. As a result of this internal order, mirrored in Plato's ideal city-state,

individuals perform their optimal social function and receive what is due to

them, and this arrangement, in turn, generates societal harmony. Plato's

association of the individual with the collective is again apparent here.

For Plato, then, virtue arises from a well-ordered soul governed by

phronesis, or practical wisdom. In many of his dialogues, he appears to equate

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[39] Ibid., 441d–e.
[40] Ibid., 433a–b.

virtue with the knowledge of the good. In turn, this claim underlies the notion of the unity of virtues, the notion discussed above that the possession of a single virtue necessarily entails possession of all of the virtues. Initially, Plato seems to argue that only rulers can achieve the pinnacle of virtue, but his thinking seems to evolve such that, in his later writings, he argues that almost anyone can do so.

Further, Plato focuses on four cardinal virtues, asserting that *phronesis* directs the virtues, courage provides the impetus to achieve virtue, temperance tames the appetites and disposes the soul to virtuous acts, and justice reflects the harmony of the soul in the fulfillment of individuals' duty to the community. Ensuring this communal dimension of virtue is the responsibility of the rulers of the *polis*. The laws that they enact establish an environment that facilitates virtuous behavior and the pursuit of *eudaimonia*. In this ancient model of leadership, then, virtue is a key feature of being a good leader.

For the *Polis*: Aristotle's Principled Approach to Virtue

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle offers a more systematic account of virtue than Plato does in his writings. As discussed, for Aristotle, the virtue of something is that which makes it perform its essential function, or *ergon*. For example, the *ergon* of a baseball bat is to hit a ball, and that of a general is to fight and win wars. Aristotle argues that the *ergon* of a human being is living in

accordance with reason,[41] which requires a stable character conducive to virtuous behavior.[42] Those who live in this way possess virtue as a deep, constant, and refined disposition (*hexis*), choosing rationally in the same way as someone who is virtuous. The virtuous are able to discern and choose the best course of action for the right reasons and at the right time and either to feel pleasure in doing so or to accept the suffering associated with the sacrifice involved.[43]

Aristotle bases his ethics on a set of principles, the most well-known of which, the doctrine of the mean, I describe in depth presently.[44] Other of these principles include relativity, the notion that what counts as a virtuous action depends on the context, the virtue-is-the-measure principle, according to which the virtuous set the standard for that which is virtuous, the disjoint spheres principle, according to which each virtue applies to a distinct, non-overlapping behavioral domain, the parameter principle, according to which virtuous acts arise from a combination of emotions, internal motivation, and deliberation, the right rule standard principle, according to which that each virtue expresses a broad, non-prescriptive norm for virtuous action, and the motivation principle, according to which virtuous acts lead to the accomplishment of noble, fine, worthwhile, beautiful, and good things and endurance of the resulting sacrifice or, as the case may be, experience of the

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[41] NE 1097b22–1098a20.
[42] NE 1122b1.
[43] NE 1106b15–29.
[44] Here, I rely in part on Howard Curzer's articulation of these principles in *Aristotle and the Virtues*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012.

resulting pleasure. This set of principles illustrates the distinctive and completeness of Aristotle's view of ethics. Aristotle categorizes virtues as either intellectual or moral.[45] The intellectual virtues relate to the part of the soul that engages in reasoning and include theoretical reasoning or wisdom (*sophia*), understanding (*nous*), scientific knowledge (*episteme*), craftsmanship (*techne*), and practical reasoning (*phronesis*).[46] The moral virtues involve a habitual desire for what is good,[47] and those who possess them properly recognize and evaluate situations and, crucially, choose a goal that is *kalon*—that is, good, fine, noble, and/or beautiful—as befits a given situation.[48] Their *phronesis* guarantees the correctness of the reasoning employed to achieve their goals.[49] Thus, virtuous actions result from the union of practical wisdom and moral virtue.[50] Aristotle asserts that determining and choosing what is *kalon* is often difficult[51] and, thus, helps to account for the dearth of fully virtuous people.[52]

As just mentioned, a pivotal aspect of Aristotle's approach to virtue is his principle or doctrine of the mean. The idea is that the virtuous take a midway position between the vices of excess and deficiency that is also informed by the situation at hand, for

> In everything continuous or divisible we can take more, less, and
> equal and each of them either in the object itself or relative to us;

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[45] NE 1103a1–10.
[46] NE 1139a3–8.
[47] NE 1139a21.
[48] NE 1144a8, 1145a5.
[49] NE 1144a8–9, 1145a5–6.
[50] NE 1144a31–36.
[51] NE 1106b28–33, 1109a24–30.
[52] NE 1104b10–11.

and the equal is some intermediate between excess and deficiency. By the intermediate of the object I mean what is equidistant from each extremity; this is one and the same for all.[53]

Aristotle provides several examples:

> with respect to acting in the face of danger, courage is a mean between the excess of rashness and the deficiency of cowardice; with respect to the enjoyment of pleasures, temperance is a mean between the excess of intemperance and the deficiency of insensibility; with respect to spending money, generosity is a mean between the excess of wastefulness and the deficiency of stinginess; with respect to relations with strangers, being friendly is a mean between the excess of being ingratiating and the deficiency of being surly; and with respect to self-esteem, magnanimity is a mean between the excess of vanity and the deficiency of pusillanimity…. feel[ing] them at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way, is what is most intermediate and best, and this is characteristic of virtue…Similarly, with regard to actions, there is, defect, and the intermediate.[54]

Aristotle asserts that, to achieve the mean of a virtue, feelings and proposed actions must align with the circumstances, occur at the right times, be about the right things, be directed toward the right people and the right ends, and manifest in the right way. Thus, an individual determines the mean by considering the particulars of a situation involving a choice for virtue by arriving at a thorough understanding of the context.[55] Every situation that calls for virtue elicits varying degrees of feeling proportionate to the circumstances. The circumstances themselves as well as individuals' temperament, tendencies, and knowledge must also be taken into account. Being virtuous—which

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[53] NE 1106a.
[54] NE 1106 a–b.
[55] NE 1106a36–b7.

involves, again, the ability to choose, pursue, and achieve the right ends—requires the automatic and routine integration of all of these variables.

From this perspective, as Figure 1 shows, virtue is in the middle of a continuum between the vices of excess and deficiency.
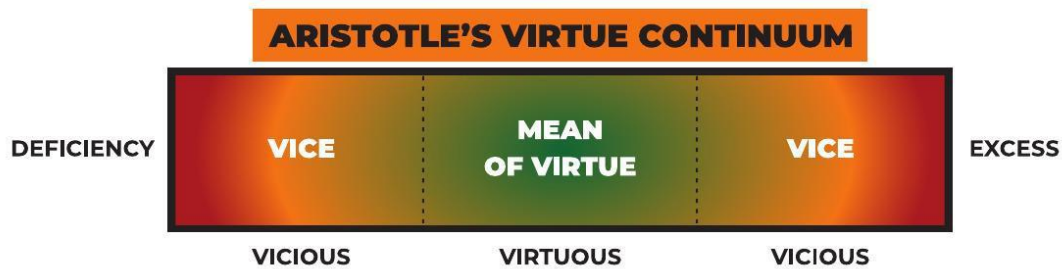
Figure 1. Aristotle's Virtue Continuum.

It may seem that Aristotle establishes a binary choice between virtuousness and viciousness, but, in fact, he identifies several categories of ethical actors ranging from the heroically virtuous, virtuous, and continent (*enkratês*) to incontinent (akratês), vicious, and brutish. As Figure 2 shows, the position on this spectrum reflects the extent to which an individual's passions and desires, reasons and reasoning, and choices and actions are harmonized in the pursuit of that which is judged to be good.

THE RANGE OF MORAL CHARACTER

STATES OF CHARACTER	PASSIONS AND DESIRES	REASONS AND REASONING	CHOICES AND ACTIONS
HEROIC VIRTUE	RIGHT	RIGHT	RIGHT
VIRTUE	RIGHT	RIGHT	RIGHT
CONTINENCE	WRONG	RIGHT	RIGHT
INCONTINENCE	WRONG	RIGHT	WRONG
VICE	WRONG	WRONG	WRONG
BRUTISHNESS	WRONG	WRONG	WRONG

Figure 2. Aristotle's List of Virtues and Vices (adapted from Curzer, *Aristotle and the Virtues*, p. 81).

The heroically virtuous possess passions and desires that are effortlessly and perfectly oriented to the right ends, and their reasons and reasoning about these ends consistently focus on the fine, the noble, the beautiful, and the excellent. As a result, their choices and actions always inform their impeccable pursuit and fulfillment of these ends. The merely virtuous exhibit similar characteristics to those of the heroically virtuous but less perfectly and excellently, so to speak. Continent actors incline toward virtue, but not habitually so,

> For the continent and the temperate person are both the sort to do nothing in conflict with reason because of bodily pleasures; but the continent person has base appetites, and the temperate person lacks them. The temperate person is the sort to find nothing pleasant that conflicts with reason; the continent is the sort to find such things pleasant but not to be led by them.[56]

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[56] NE 1151b35–1152a4.

Unlike the temperate, the incontinent, that is, those lacking self-control, experience an internal struggle when deliberating and choosing. They do not possess, at least not yet, complete mastery of their emotions and appetites or the full internal harmony of soul and the ease of choosing and doing virtue, for, regarding

> incontinence[,] one kind is impetuosity, another weakness. For some men after deliberating fail, owing to their emotion, to stand by the conclusions of their deliberation, [and] others [fail] because they have not deliberated [and] are led by their emotion.[57]

The incontinent, being unable to control their appetites and emotions, either yield to them or are steered by them despite the fact that they are capable of reasoning rightly about proper ends. The appetites and emotions of brutes (the *kakoi*) are disordered in the extreme, making them the opposite of the heroically virtuous. Some brutes are unaware that anything is wrong with them, some know the right thing to do but revel in doing otherwise, and some know the right thing to do but cannot overcome their entrenched wrong desires.[58]

Where one falls on this spectrum of virtue and vice depends on the development, or lack thereof, of an individual's deep-seated dispositions. This development, modulated by temperament and influenced by upbringing and experiences, yields stable habits—ideally, habits grounded in virtue—in

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[57] NE 1150b19–28.
[58] NE 1148b34–1149a4.

adulthood. The challenges involved in this process are abundantly clear since most fall short of virtue and very few achieve heroic virtue. Accordingly, laws, rules, and consequences are crucial for imposing social order externally so that large numbers of people can live together with a measure of harmony.

Regarding the types of virtues, Aristotle goes beyond Plato's four cardinal virtues to identify five intellectual virtues and twelve moral virtues. Of the intellectual virtues, *phronesis*, which can be defined as a "reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human goods,"[59] is most relevant to my analysis. Aristotle places great weight on *phronesis* because the possession of it ensures that "excellence in deliberation will be correctness in assessing what is conducive to the end, concerning which practical wisdom gives a true conviction."[60] *Phronesis* facilitates the correct assessment and determination of the proper end in a given situation.[61]

Therefore, without *phronesis*, it is impossible to practice the moral virtues with any kind of consistency, much less excellence. Aristotle follows Plato regarding the unity of the virtues, asserting that "at the same time as *phronesis* is present, all the virtues of character will all be present."[62] In Aristotle's view, then, *phronesis* is the intellectual virtue that enables the proper display of all of the moral virtues.

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[59] NE 1140a.
[60] NE 1142b.
[61] NE 1105a30–4.
[62] NE 1145a2.

Regarding these moral virtues, rather than taking a cardinal approach, as Plato, the Stoics, and Aquinas do, Aristotle delineates a set of virtues, each focused on a particular sphere of life. Thus, he provides greater specificity regarding the nature of a virtue, the situations that call for its deployment, and the kinds of actions that the virtuous perform, situating it as a mean between vicious excess and deficiency, as Figure 3 shows.

ARISTOTLE'S MORAL VIRTUES AND VICES

SPHERE OF ACTION OR FEELING	EXCESS	MEAN	DEFICIENCY
PHYSICAL RISK	RASHNESS	COURAGE	COWARDICE
SENSUAL PLEASURE/PAIN	GLUTTONY/LICENTIOUSNESS	TEMPERANCE	INDIFFERENCE/INSENSIBILITY
MONETARY GOODS	PRODIGALITY	LIBERALITY	ILLIBERALITY/MEANNESS
GREAT WEALTH	VULGARITY/TASTELESSNESS	MAGNIFICENCE	PETTINESS
HONOR	VANITY	MAGNANIMITY	PUSILLANIMITY
ACCOMPLISHMENT	UNBRIDLED AMBITION	PROPER AMBITION	UNAMBITIOUSNESS
ANGER	IRASCIBILITY	PATIENCE/GOOD TEMPER	LACK OF SPIRIT
SELF-EXPRESSION	BOASTFULNESS	TRUTHFULNESS	FALSE MODESTY
HUMOR	BUFFOONERY	WITTINESS	BOORISHNESS
SOCIAL CONDUCT	OBSEQUIOUSNESS	FRIENDLINESS	CANTANKEROUSNESS
INDIGNATION	ENVY	RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION	MALICIOUS ENJOYMENT/SPITEFULNESS

Figure 3. Aristotle's List of Virtues. (adapted from J.A.K. Thomson. *The Nicomachean Ethics*. London, UK: Penguin, 2004, p. 104).

In keeping with his political philosophy, Aristotle articulates a set of virtues that serve both citizens and the *polis* well. He takes care that the virtues do not overlap but apply to distinct domains. Nonetheless, the virtues form a reciprocal unity, for, in each situation in which a virtue is employed, all of the virtues interconnect to realize an unalloyed good in action.

So also in modern societies, the citizens' well-being links with the common good of the political community. Virtuous participation in the life of a political community, especially one that prizes virtue, supports the achievement of *eudaimonia*. The same reasoning applies to working for an organization as an intermediate constituent entity within the *polis*, the common good of which involves the production of goods and/or services. Well-constituted and governed organizations provide an environment for the development and exercise of virtues and the pursuit of excellence so that their members are able to display their best selves and the organizations best fulfill their goals.

The first of the virtues that Aristotle recommends, courage, relates to physical risk. He defines courage as perseverance in the face of adversity and "the things we fear, evils" and the mean between cowardice and recklessness.[63] Fear results from a desire to flee from danger and recklessness from a rash disregard for danger. The virtue of courage enables wise thinking in the face of danger, particularly physical danger. When the courageous experience fear, it

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[63] NE 1115a8–9.

motivates them to reduce the danger by remaining composed and
acknowledging fear but not letting it prevent the performance of courageous
acts. By contrast, the cowardly flee danger, and the reckless rush blindly
toward it.

Aristotle also emphasizes the importance of nobility in courageous acts.
Thus, mercenaries cannot be courageous because their primary motive for
fighting is pecuniary rather than patriotic and for the welfare of their fellow
citizens. Courageous acts, such as choosing to endure physical harm while
striving to avoid death, injuries, and physical pain, are intended to achieve
worthy objectives involving the pursuit of a higher good.[64]

Temperance refers to the control of "the pleasure that comes from touch,
whether in eating, drinking, or sexual activity."[65] Thus, for Aristotle, a
temperate person

> is moderately disposed towards pleasures. He does not enjoy the
> things which the profligate most enjoys; if anything[,] he detests
> them. In general, he neither enjoys things which he should not,
> nor enjoys too much anything of this sort. When such pleasures
> are absent[,] he feels neither pain nor appetite, except moderately,
> nor does he desire them more than he should, nor when he
> shouldn't, and so on.[66]

The temperate are able to regulate such desires without internal

resistance, being neither gluttonous nor licentious on the one hand nor

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[64] Curzer, 9.
[65] NE 1118a.
[66] NE 1119a.

indifferent nor insensible on the other. Notably, Aristotle's definition of temperance lacks the overt political emphasis that characterizes Plato's definition, applying instead principally to the ways in which virtue enhances individuals' *eudaimonia* through the harmonization of reason and sensory desire.

Two other of Aristotle's virtues, liberality and magnificence, concern helping others from a monetary and material perspective. Liberality involves the deployment of monetary and material resources for the benefit of others as well as accepting gifts from others with the appropriate gratitude. Its extremes are prodigality, the tendency to give recklessly and accept little in the way of gifts from others, and stinginess, the tendency to share too little with others and accept too much from them. Magnificence is "a fitting expenditure involving largeness of scale"[67] that is focused on civic initiatives. Its extremes are vulgarity, the squandering of large sums on showy projects, and pettiness, a grudging, miserly response to expenditures. Thus, it is

> the mark of the magnificent man, whatever kind of result he
> is producing, to produce it magnificently (because such a
> result is not easily surpassed), and to make it worth…what
> he spent on it.[68]

One who is magnificent allocates large expenditures to the right causes and recipients at the right time and with the right intent. As with all of

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[67] NE 1122a–23.
[68] NE 1123a.

the virtues, the object of magnificence matters; specifically, it must be directed to the good, the beautiful, the noble, and the fine.

Magnanimity, which Aristotle calls the "crown of the virtues,"[69] characterizes those who possess "greatness in every virtue."[70] That is, the magnanimous exhibit each virtue to its utmost, exemplifying excellence by ascertaining, choosing, and taking the proper action perfectly. The extremes of magnanimity or conceit or vanity on the one hand and pusillanimity or spinelessness in the pursuit of greatness on the other.[71] Operating at the mean, the magnanimous know that their exceptional virtue makes them capable of great things while maintaining an unpretentious disposition.[72] It seems, then, that they also exhibit heroic virtue or virtue of the most excellent kind.

While magnanimity is concerned with great honor, ambition is concerned with a more ordinary, day-to-day type of honor:

> There also seems to be a kind of virtue concerned with honor…which would seem to be related to magnanimity in the same way as generosity is related to magnificence. For both of these virtues are removed from what is great, but dispose us as we should towards middle-sized and small things; just as there is an intermediate state, and an excess and defect in taking and giving money, so also in desire for honor there is more and less than one should, and from where one should, and how one should. Honor may be desired more than is right, or less, or from the right sources and in the right way. We blame both the ambitious man as aiming at honor more than is right and from wrong sources, and

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[69] NE 1124a1.
[70] NE 1123b30.
[71] NE 1125a30.
[72] NE 1123b1–3.

the unambitious man as not willing to be honored even for noble reasons.[73]

The ambitious attain the mean by accepting and aiming at honor that is properly desired, achieved in a fitting way, and derived from worthy sources. The extremes of ambition are excessive love of and ambivalence toward honor.

The virtue of good temper governs situations in which anger is appropriate and moderates irascibility. Aristotle asserts that anger is appropriate "at the right things and toward the right person, and also in the right way, at the right time, and for the right length of time."[74] The extremes of temper are irascibility on the one hand and excessive tolerance or not becoming appropriately angry on the other. In situations in which anger is appropriate, neither irascible nor excessively tolerant people experience anger or act in a manner appropriate to the circumstances.

The virtue of truthfulness refers to self-presentation in dealing with others, specifically, the claims that one makes to others about oneself. The extremes of truthfulness are boastfulness and false modesty:

> Boastful people make exaggerated claims about themselves; falsely modest people make deflationary claims; and truthful people portray themselves accurately. The boastful man, then, is thought to be apt to claim the things that bring repute, when he has not got them, or to claim more of them than he has, and the mock-modest man on the other hand[, is apt to] to disclaim what he has or belittle it, while the man who observes the mean is one who calls a thing by its own name.[75]

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[73] NE 1125b1–8.
[74] NE 1125b30.
[75] NE 1127a20–3.

Truthfulness, from this perspective, involves portraying oneself accurately to others, especially in matters that concern honor or dishonor and respect or disgrace.

The virtue of wittiness involves balancing the desire to amuse others. Witty people display a situational attunement to conversations that enables them to joke and enjoy jokes as well as display tact when interacting with others regarding how and with whom one should engage in humor.[76] At one extreme of wittiness, buffoons joke and enjoy jokes without restraint; at the other, boors say "nothing laughable and are disgusted by those who do."[77]

Aristotle's virtue of friendliness involves moderation in the desire to please others and avoid causing others distress. One who is friendly responds fittingly to the words and deeds of others, especially in terms of acceptance and approval:

> In gatherings of men, in social life and the interchange of words and deeds, some men are thought to be obsequious, [that is,] those who, to give pleasure, praise everything and never oppose, but think they should give no pain to the people they meet; while those who, on the contrary, oppose everything and care not a whit about giving pain are called churlish and contentious…. [Friendliness] is that in virtue of which a man will put up with, and will resent, the right things and in the right way.[78]

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[76] NE 1128a1–2.
[77] NE 1128a4–9, 1128a33b1
[78] NE 1126b11–19.

The extremes of friendliness are obsequiousness and argumentativeness. In encounters with others, one who is friendly chooses the best course given the circumstances:

> While for its own sake [the friendly person] chooses to contribute pleasure, and avoids the giving of pain, he will be guided by the consequences, if these are greater, i.e. the noble and the expedient.[79]

In essence, Aristotle advises seeking to please others by accepting and complimenting their words and deeds except when doing so would be contemptible, disgraceful, or harmful to oneself or others.[80]

The virtue of righteous indignation moderates the inclination to envy the good fortune of others or feel pleasure at their bad fortune. It involves feelings of dismay when others experience unwarranted bad fortune and of pleasure when their bad fortune is deserved:

> righteous indignation is the observance of a mean between envy and malice, and these qualities are concerned with pain and pleasure felt at the fortunes of one's neighbors. The righteously indignant man is pained by undeserved good fortune; the jealous man exceeds him and is pained by all the good fortune of others; while the malicious man so far falls short of being pained that he actually feels pleasure.[81]

When it comes to righteous indignation, Aristotle insists, the virtuous feel distressed when others either suffer or prosper inordinately.

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[79] NE 1127a2–3, 1126b29–30.
[80] NE 1126b31–1127a6.
[81] NE 1108.

Aristotle's emphasis on the *polis*, wherein justice reigns and all citizens

receive their due, helps to clarify the significance of this virtue, for, in

this context, he considers justice the most complete virtue, both in its

possession and exercise. Thus,

> in justice is every virtue comprehended. And it is complete virtue
> in its fullest sense because it is the actual exercise of complete
> virtue. It is complete because he who possesses it can exercise his
> virtue not only in himself but towards his neighbor also…. For this
> reason justice, alone of the virtues, is thought to be another's good,
> because it is related to our neighbor; for it does what is
> advantageous to another.[82]

In Aristotle's conception of it as a virtue, like Plato's, justice arises from

individuals:

> All men mean by the term justice a moral state such that in
> consequence of it men have the capacity of doing what is just, and
> actually do it, and wish it.[83]

Aristotle emphasizes that justice concerns the well-being of others because of

its relational nature. As a virtue, it is a propensity to give or return to others

their due, whereas injustice allots them either more or less than their due.

Aristotle distinguishes three types of justice, distributive, reciprocal, and

contractual.[84] Distributive justice involves the equitable allotment of goods and

honors based on the principle that equal persons are entitled to equal shares

and unequal persons to unequal shares. Reciprocal justice involves the

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[82] NE 1129b.
[83] NE 1129a.
[84] NE 1129a–1132b, 1134a.

exchange of items of equal value when buying, selling, or trading, whereas overpaying and underpaying are unjust acts. Contractual justice is meted out in courts when contracts are rectified, the focus being on the equity of the associated gains or losses.

Aristotle's list of virtues is a product of his systematic approach to describing what it means to live well, do well, and be successful. Virtues best express the human *kalon,* the nature of individuals as rational actors, and form an interlocking unity governed by *phronesis.* To achieve virtue given the particular circumstances, it is necessary to identify a mean that results in the right action with the right intent and feeling, at the right time, in the right amount, and for the right duration. Further, those who exhibit virtues have developed them over time into stable habits that make them good and what they do good. They employ virtuous action with a certain ease and, as a result, experience the pleasure that comes with doing and achieving good.

Aristotle's comprehensive list of virtues provides a template for citizens to play their part well in both becoming eudaimonic and contributing to the *eudaimonia* of the *polis.* His system, grounded in sound reasoning and logic, remains valid after nearly 2,500 years. Certainly, the cultural setting from which his thinking emerged must be taken into account, including its objectionable features. Thus framed, his philosophy remains a seminal and monumental contribution to ethics and the understanding of what it means to be human in the very best sense. From a leadership standpoint, Aristotle offers

a viable approach to virtue and lays out a set of virtues that can serve as standards for leaders to evaluate and aspire to. In addition, his deliberative model provides a practical method for taking into account the circumstances surrounding a situation and formulating decisions aimed at achieving a realistic mean of virtue.

The Stoics on the Open, but (Very) Narrow Road to Happiness

For the Stoics, only the perfectly virtuous sage is like a god. Further, everyone is either virtuous or vicious, or, in other words, anyone who is not virtuous is vicious. The Stoics consider virtue to be the only good and sufficient for happiness. Like Aristotle, the Stoics take a systematic approach to the theory of virtue, basing it on the cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. According to the Roman philosopher and statesman Cicero,

> [There are] four [virtues] from which moral rectitude and moral duty flow. All that is morally right rises from one of four sources. It is concerned with: the full perception and intelligent development of the true [practical wisdom], or with the conservation of organized society, with rendering each person their due, and with the faithful discharge of obligations assumed [justice], or with the greatness and strength of a noble spirit [courage], or with the orderliness and moderation of everything that is done [temperance].[85]

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[85] Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.5.

The Stoics' account of the cardinal virtues goes far beyond Plato's as part of a more comprehensive program. The Stoic philosopher Arius Didymus clarifies this idea:

> Practical wisdom is the science[86] of what one ought to do and ought not to do and of what falls under neither heading. Temperance is the science of things to be chosen and things to be avoided and of what falls under neither heading. Justice is the science of distributing what is due to each. Courage is the science of what is terrible and not terrible and what falls under neither heading.
>
> Some of the virtues are primary; the others are subordinated to the primary. Primary are the following four: practical wisdom, temperance, courage, and justice. Practical wisdom is about appropriate actions; temperance is about the impulses of man; courage is about cases of endurance: justice is about distributions.
>
> From the class of virtues which are subordinated to these some are subordinated to practical wisdom, some to temperance, some to courage, and some to justice.
>
> Subordinated to practical wisdom are: good judgement, good practical overview, quick moral sense, discretion, shrewdness, inventiveness in difficulties; to temperance: good ordering, propriety, sense of honor, self-control; to courage; perseverance, confidence, magnanimity, mental stoutness, industry; to justice: piety, kindness, sociability, blameless companionship.
>
> Good judgement, the Stoics say, is the science of what we can do— and how we can act—advantageously. Good practical overview is the science which balances and sums up what is happening and what is performed. Quick moral sense is the science which finds the appropriate action at the moment. Discretion is the science of what is worse and better. Shrewdness is the science which is able to achieve the aim in every case. Inventiveness in difficulties is the science which is able to find a way out of difficulties.
>
> Good ordering is the science of when something should be done, and what after what, and in general about the order of actions. Propriety is [the science] of adequate and inadequate processes. Sense of honor is the science which is careful to avoid just blame.

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[86] Science here corresponds to knowledge.

> Self-control is the science of not transgressing the bounds of what appears to be correct according to right judgement. Perseverance is the science of processes.[87]

Through this elaborate delineation of the sub-virtues that comprise the cardinal virtues, the Stoics provide depth and detail to their system that increase its intelligibility and practical applicability.

Following both Plato and Aristotle, the Stoics subscribe to the unity of virtues. From a Stoic perspective, each virtue is focused on a particular sphere of ethical practice. At the same time, because the virtues share the same substance (some form of moral rectitude), they are also interrelated. As a result, virtue leads one to assess a situation and configure an action in the way that best addresses the circumstances and the good end(s) desired, and one possessing virtue can exercise it in a holistic, cohesive, flexible, and consistently excellent manner in any situation.[88]

For the Stoics, possessing the cardinal virtue of practical wisdom means having the knowledge of what is good, including what not to do, and the capacity to act accordingly. Comprising practical wisdom are the subordinate virtues of good judgment, good practical overview, quick moral sense, discretion, shrewdness, and inventiveness amid difficulties. Good judgment entails identifying the most advantageous course of action to achieve a eudaimonic end, especially one that conforms to nature. Good practical

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[87] Arius Didymus was an adviser to Augustus who served as procurator of Sicily; his opinions on these issues are preserved in Stobaeus, *Greek Anthology* 2.59.4–62.6
[88] Stobaeus, *Greek Anthology* II.5b–5b2.

overview means the ability to weigh the range of factors relevant to a situation and the clearest and arrive at a comprehensive assessment of the particulars. A quick moral sense enables expeditious decision-making, especially in situations that are not complex. Discretion is the ability to assess possible courses of action astutely. Shrewdness is the ability to formulate plans to achieve specific ends using knowledge of the ways and means at hand. Inventiveness is the ability to navigate difficult situations and recover from setbacks.

Unlike Aristotle's notion of temperance, which concerns only the physical sensations of touch and taste, the Stoic notion concerns the full range of sensory and emotional impulses. The sub-virtues associated with temperance— orderliness, organization, self-control, and propriety—contribute to the regulation of these impulses and to the choice of actions that are conducive to *eudaimonia*. Orderliness involves viewing clearly what should be done, thus affecting the manner and timing of actions and mirroring the orderliness of nature. Organization involves the deliberate and systematic conduct of affairs so as to maintain balance when pursuing *eudaimonia*. Self-control involves the regulation of sensory and emotional impulses. Propriety assists in dealing properly with situations that might result in remorse or shame.

Also unlike Aristotle, who limits the virtue of courage to the fear felt when facing death in war, the Stoics conceive of it more broadly as acting well in any situation that causes fear. In contemporary terms, such fear could arise

in the face of a job interview or surgery as well as battle, and all such situations require courage. The sub-virtues that comprise courage reflect its expansive nature. Perseverance involves persisting in a right course of action in the face of obstacles. Confidence is the knowledge that, ultimately, nothing catastrophic can befall the virtuous, and it arises from understanding that choosing, pursuing, and achieving virtue constitute the only good. Not even tragedy obviates the need to pursue virtue, which remains the sole source of happiness. Magnanimity involves not engaging with that which is irrelevant to moral conduct particularly external goods and situations beyond an individual's control. Unlike Aristotle's, the Stoics' notion of magnanimity does not concern great undertakings or honor on a large scale. Stoutheartedness makes an individual dauntless in virtue. Lastly, those who exhibit industry remain unperturbed by the effort, challenges, struggle, and pain required to take and sustain virtuous action.

For the Stoics, justice distributing to all their due and is the central virtue. According to Cicero, justice contributes to the public good through

> the interchange of acts of kindness, now giving, now receiving, and ever eager to employ our talents, industry, and resources in strengthening the bonds of human society.[89]

Justice focuses on other people and the wider society, particularly when both are understood as critical elements of nature writ large. As a component of justice, the sub-virtue of kindness extends to everyone. Sociability involves

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[89] Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.7.

striking the right tone when interacting with others. Blameless companionship involves interacting with others in social settings in ways that do not lead or contribute to bad conduct. The Stoics also subordinate piety to justice as a special case of rendering what is due to the gods.

Over all, for the Stoics, the capacity for virtue is innate, so everyone is capable of developing and cultivating it irrespective of social status and other personal circumstances. A eudaimonic life is lived in accordance with nature and virtue. The Stoics' view of virtue and vice is binary: individuals are either entirely virtuous or vicious. Thus, though anyone can achieve virtue, only a few do. The Stoics also advocate detachment from the emotions since they interfere with reason and virtue and can lead one to make poor decisions. Their cardinal virtues of wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance and their comprehensive list of sub-virtues provide a more expansive account of virtue than can be found in the writings of Plato and Aristotle on the subject.

The current resurgence of interest in Stoic thinking suggests that the Stoic conception of virtue remains relevant as a basis for those who aspire to virtue, including leaders, to learn and develop it with more precision and in greater depth. In addition, their elucidation of the meaning of virtuousness offers a time-tested framework for the development of virtues.

Aquinas's System: Virtue for the Sake of God and Neighbor

Aquinas's ethical system synthesizes the work of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Cicero, the patristic fathers of the Catholic Church, particularly Augustine, and prominent Jewish, Islamic, and Catholic scholars. The integrative, comprehensive result is a singular achievement in the annals of ethics. However, from the 17th century to the late 20th century, Aquinas's work was progressively sidelined in the academy, in large part because of its religious underpinnings. However, the efforts of contemporary thinkers such as Hursthouse have brought Aquinas back into the academic conversation, recognizing that his approach to virtue could profitably inform contemporary thinking on virtue and ethics.

To be sure, Aquinas's work is, fundamentally, Catholic Christian theology, presuming faith in a single transcendent God that is the beginning and end of everything. Within this context, though, he argues that morality can be understood, using practical reason, as a set of self-evident principles, or natural law, that serve to identify and characterize the right ends of action; thus, "the precepts of the natural law…are the first principles of human acts."[90] These precepts are that good is to be done and pursued and evil is to be avoided. Natural law provides an immutable basis for universal judgment, which Aquinas calls *synderesis*,

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[90] ST I–II Q94.1.

regarding the first principles of the goods to be pursued and the evils to be avoided.

Echoing Aristotle, Aquinas describes three kinds of goods for human beings in order of increasing importance: external goods, such as money and possessions, goods of the body, such as bodily health, and the good of the soul, which is virtue. Developing his notion of natural law, Aquinas describes the soul as consisting of the intellect, the will, and two sensory features and passions natural to them. Starting with the least rational part of the soul, the sensory elements consist of two parts. The first targets what is pleasant and what is conducive to survival and reproduction and shuns their opposites. Aquinas calls this part of the soul the concupiscible appetite. The corresponding virtue that perfects the concupiscible appetite is temperance. The second part of the sensory elements responds to threats to what is desirable and impels individuals to overcome difficulties. Aquinas calls this part of the soul the irascible appetite, which the virtue of courage sharpens. The next component, the will, is directly affected by the sensory appetites, for it involves the inclination to choose what reason understands to be good and prompts action.

The final component, the intellect, is the power of reason to discern, judge, and command the good. As mentioned, for Aquinas, the precepts of natural law provide the basis for a reasoned path to virtuous

action. Thus, practical reasoning starts from a correct conception of the

good informed by natural law. Aquinas emphasizes the challenges

involved in discerning the good given that human beings

> engage in many diverse activities…. [Their] good comes in
> many varieties, and what is good for human beings
> comprises many different things. Therefore, there could not
> be a natural appetite in human beings for a determinate
> good that suited all the conditions needed for something to
> be good for them.[91]

Virtue, as a deeply embedded habit, actualizes and serves to secure the good

that reason identifies in a particular situation.

Like his predecessors, Aquinas argues for the unity of virtues, asserting

that all virtuous acts require the central quality that characterizes each

cardinal virtue. Thus, prudence supplies discretion in any action or matter.

Rectitude of the mind, which ensures that individuals do what is appropriate

for themselves and others, falls under the purview of justice. Courage is

characterized by firmness in following through on a chosen course of action in

the face of fear or difficulty. Lastly, temperance is characterized by the

moderation of passions and actions. The following passage from the ST on the

unity of the virtues merits quotation in this context:

> For this [the connection of the virtues], a twofold reason is
> assigned, in accordance with the diverse ways in which the
> cardinal virtues are distinguished. For as has been said, some
> distinguish them according to certain general conditions of the
> virtues, insofar as discretion pertains to prudence, rectitude to
> justice, moderation to temperance, firmness of the soul to courage,

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[91] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* 6.

in whatever matter these things may be considered. And according to this, the rationale for the connection [of the virtues] is clearly seen, for firmness does not have the praise of virtue if it be without moderation, or rectitude, or discretion, and the same rationale applies to the other [virtues].

Others, however, distinguish the aforesaid virtues in accordance with their matter. And according to this, the rationale for their connection is given by Aristotle in the sixth book of the *Ethics*. For as has been said above, no moral virtue can be had without prudence, in that it is proper to moral virtue to make a right choice, since it is an elective habit. However, for a right choice [to be made], an inclination towards a due end, which is directly [given] through the habit of moral virtue, does not alone suffice, but one must also directly choose those things which are directed towards the end, which is done through prudence…. Likewise also, prudence cannot be possessed unless the moral virtues are also possessed, since prudence is right reason concerning things that can be done, towards which one is rightly related through the moral virtues. Hence, just as speculative science cannot be had without the understanding of principles, so prudence cannot be had without the moral virtues. From which it manifestly follows that the moral virtues are connected.[92]

For Aquinas, a synergistic relationship exists between practical wisdom and the moral virtues and vice versa. Each virtue depends integrally on the other as a general requirement for all virtuous action. Further, all true virtues incorporate the content of the others. Because virtues serve as normative ideals in distinct domains of action, any virtuous action contains all of the cardinal virtues calibrated so as to meet the demands of the situation at hand. Aquinas agrees with Aristotle that this calibration falls along a spectrum extending from excess to deficiency.

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[92] ST I–II Q61.5.

Notable in Aquinas's system is the relationship between maturity in virtue and the unity of the virtues. Thus, he distinguishes the virtues in terms of their perfections:

> We can speak about the virtues in two ways: (i) about the virtues as imperfect; (ii) about them as perfect. The perfect virtues are interconnected, but the imperfect virtues are not necessarily interconnected.[93]

He goes on to differentiate 1) false virtue, 2) altogether imperfect virtue, 3) true but imperfect acquired virtue, 4) perfect acquired virtue, and 5) infused virtue.

In this categorization, false virtue refers to acts that appear good but are in fact directed toward wrong ends.[94] Imperfect virtue arises from an individual's natural disposition, such as an inclination toward courage or temperance. These dispositions, then, do not depend on prudence and, thus, are not rational, but must be formed and trained over time in order to become stable.

True but imperfect virtue is characteristic of individuals who fall short of the full integration of the virtues[95] because of a weak connection between their moral virtues and prudence. Further, these virtues lack the stability of a habit. For example, a normally temperate individual might abandon sobriety to satisfy an inordinate desire to become intoxicated. Thus, an individual who possesses true but imperfect acquired virtue may follow through to achieve good ends

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[93] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* 5.2.
[94] ST II–II Q23.7.
[95] ST I–II Q49.2.

(perhaps after an internal struggle) on some occasions and on other occasions choose bad ends or fall short in deliberation regarding the command and implementation of virtue. Perfect acquired virtue, by contrast, describes virtues that are connected by the interdependence of prudence with the moral virtues.[96] Such virtues are fully developed and integrated, and prudence consistently guides the actions of those who possess them, with the right intentions and ends always being the aim.

The fifth category, infused or unqualifiedly perfect virtue, is brought about through the action of God's grace on the soul. Charity, or divine love, is the chief infused virtue, providing the form and conditions for the other infused virtues.

> It is clear that the act of all the other virtues is ordered to the proper end of charity, which is its object, [that is], the highest good. This is certainly clear regarding the moral virtues, for virtues of this kind are concerned with certain created goods which are ordered to the uncreated good as to their final end.[97]

In other words, through its connection to the ultimate end, charity directs the acquired virtues by directing the acts of those who possess the virtues toward the goal of union with God.

The infused virtues also relate to the ultimate end of *beatitudo* and are directed by charity. The acquired virtues, led by prudence, apply to individuals'

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[96] ST I–II Q65.1.
[97] ST II–II 23.8.

earthly lives and the pursuit of *felicitas*. Aquinas explains the distinction

between the infused and acquired virtues by asserting that the

> unqualifiedly perfect [virtues] are connected because of charity, because no virtue can be of this sort without charity, and once you possess charity you possess all the virtues. However, if we take the virtues as perfect at the second level, with reference to the human good, they are connected through practical wisdom, because no moral virtue can exist without practical wisdom and we cannot possess practical wisdom if any of the moral virtues are lacking.[98]

The combination of the infused and perfect acquired virtues results in a life

oriented toward the greatest good (*summum bonum*, i.e., God) and motivated by

charity. Such a life also facilitates *felicitas* and paves the way for *beatitudo*.

However, Aquinas's ethical system is not one-dimensional in the sense of

virtue being solely the self-centered pursuit of *eudaimonia*. Thus, the system

also incorporates ethical rules to guide decision-making and behavior in a way

that is simultaneously internally oriented and beneficial for the individual and

externally oriented and beneficial for others and society. This deontological

aspect of Aquinas's philosophy differentiates it from that of his predecessors,

who emphasize virtue as the primary pathway to *eudaimonia*.[99] Aquinas adds a

set of ethical tenets based on natural law and religion to inform practical

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[98] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues 5.2*.

[99] In "Virtue, Rule-Following, and Absolute Prohibitions," philosopher Jeremy Reid makes a strong case for incorporating rule-following and absolute prohibitions into virtue ethics, which I wholeheartedly support. Reid points to the central role that rules play in the development of virtue and the ways in which virtuous agents follow moral rules and laws as part of the contextual aspect of deliberating about the proper action to take.

reasoning in the myriad particular situations that call for virtue throughout a lifetime.

In his treatment of law in the ST, Aquinas conceives of natural law as grounded in the rational order of the universe and, therefore, accessible through reason, a conception that harkens back to the Stoics. Further, from Aquinas's perspective, there is no conflict between natural law and God's law as revealed in the eternal law reflected in the laws that govern the functioning of the universe in which all things participate, Mosaic law, and the law of the Christian Gospels summed up in the admonition to love God above all and one's neighbor as oneself.[100] This perspective is, of course, unsurprising for a Catholic priest.

Natural law in this context extends to the preservation of life, the propagation of the species through the raising of children and family life, just relations with others in society, and knowledge of the truth, especially about God.[101] Within the context of the central injunction of natural law regarding pursuit of good, avoidance of evil, and love of one's neighbor as oneself, these foundational ethical principles guide virtuous action. Because natural law is universal in character, it provides a secure ethical framework for the practice of virtue.

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[100] ST I–II Q90–108.
[101] ST I–II 90.3.

Aquinas, then, views virtues as deeply rooted habits through the practice of which specific goods can be achieved consistently and effectively. As an operative (i.e., action-oriented) habit that produces good works, "Virtue is a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use."[102] By "habit," Aquinas means that virtues shape the powers of the soul so that individuals who possess them can routinely accomplish what they reason and will, in contrast with the contemporary understanding of a habit in terms of unthinking reflexivity. Virtues, from this perspective, are deep-seated dispositions that are difficult to change and that perfect rational powers of agency and direct toward *eudaimonia.*[103]

Aquinas accepts Aristotle's notion that every moral virtue is a mean between excess and deficiency. However, he goes beyond Aristotle by incorporating precepts—this being the deontological aspect of his ethical approach—that, in combination with reason and in the context of a given situation, identify the mean. As discussed, natural law establishes the goals of virtues.[104] The mean of a virtue is equivalent to the norms that reason establishes with respect to the exigencies of a situation.[105] Achieving the mean results from the use of reason—with the help of memory, imagination, and knowledge, including knowledge of the relevant rules—to deliberate and come to a conclusion about what constitutes a virtuous act. Achieving the mean of

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[102] ST I–II Q55.4.
[103] Austin, Nicholas. "Virtue as a Habit." *Aquinas on Virtue: A Causal Reading,* Georgetown University Press, 2017, pp. 23–36.
[104] ST II–II Q47.6.
[105] ST I–II Q64.2.

virtue is also a matter of doing the right thing, with the right intention, in the right circumstances, for the right motive, at the right time, in the right proportion, for the right person or people, and in the right way.[106]

Aquinas highlights the importance of circumstances in deliberating about a virtuous act, including the time in which an action takes place, the place where it occurs, the manner in which it is performed, its effect, the reason for it, what it concerns, who performs it, and the means by which it is performed. All of these circumstances must be considered in determining what is virtuous. Again, a virtuous act corresponds with the mean determined by reason to fit the circumstances:

> Acts of virtue ought not be done anyhow, but by observing the due circumstances that are required for an act to be virtuous. And since the disposition of whatever is directed to the end depends on the formal aspect of the end, the chief of these circumstances of a virtuous act is this aspect of the end, which in this case is the good of virtue. If therefore such a circumstance be omitted from a virtuous act, as entirely takes away the good of virtue, such an act is contrary to a precept. If, however, the circumstance omitted from a virtuous act be such as not to destroy the virtue altogether, though it does not perfectly attain the good of virtue, it is not against a precept. Hence the Philosopher [i.e., Aristotle, *Ethics* ii, 9] says that if we depart but little from the mean, it is not contrary to the virtue, whereas if we depart much from the mean virtue is destroyed in its act.[107]

For example, in discussing the virtue of magnanimity, which involves aspiring to great achievement, Aquinas describes it as a mean because "virtues of this kind tend to this [object] according to the rule of reason, that is, where it is

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[106] ST I–II Q64.1.
[107] ST II.II 33.2.

fitting, when it is fitting, and for [what] reason it is fitting."[108] The good that is the aim of a virtue

> can be enacted in many different ways, and not in the same way in all situations; whence the judgement of prudence is required [so] that the right mode [will] be established.[109]

In other words, the mean of an action is suitable to the circumstances according to reason.

Aquinas identifies three parts of a cardinal virtue that are best described as its species of the genus. For instance, the virtue of prudence can apply to narrow domains such as a household, the military, or a business. What Aquinas calls the secondary parts of a virtue share something in common with it but do not satisfy its formal definition. Using prudence again as an example, the secondary parts are good counsel (*euboulia*) and good judgment in matters that conform to ordinary rules (*synesis*) as well as more complex matters that call for exceptions to ordinary rules (*gnome*), each of which is an aspect of prudence but neither captures its fullness and nor possesses its entire capacity. In distinguishing the three elements, Aquinas provides considerable scope and nuance for understanding and implementing them.

As mentioned, Aquinas like Plato and the Stoics identifies prudence, justice, courage, and temperance as the four cardinal virtues. He adds to this list the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity, which,

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[108] ST I.II 64.1.
[109] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* 1.6.

being a Catholic theologian, he asserts open individuals to God's grace and *beatitudo.* These divine virtues are either inchoate in or entirely absent from the thinking about virtue in Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. While recognizing that the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity are indispensable to and inseparable from Aquinas's system, for the purposes of this study of virtue-driven leadership, I focus on his exposition of the cardinal virtues.

Aquinas defines prudence or *phronesis* (Figure 4) as "wisdom concerning human affairs"[110] or "right reason with respect to action."[111] From this perspective, prudence engenders the aptitude to render judgments that accord with natural law and the proper end for people, which is God.[112] As a practical matter, however, Aquinas acknowledges the role of prudence in illuminating the appropriate virtuous courses of action for various roles and situations, which of course includes leadership.[113] In addition, prudence plays the central role in determining the mean of virtue.[114] It is an inherently social virtue, but, more specifically, it relates to directing and being directed by others. As Aquinas states in the ST, the true exercise of prudence always ends in a command, that is, an internal direction to the will to act.[115]

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[110] ST II–II 47.2.
[111] ST II–II 47.4.
[112] ST I–II 57.5.
[113] ST II–II 47.3.
[114] ST II–II 47.7.
[115] ST II–II.47.8.

Aquinas lists eight integral parts of prudence: memory, insight, docility, shrewdness, reasoning, foresight, circumspection, and caution (see Figure 4).[116] The first five, four of which have to do with inquiry and one with judgment, belong to prudence as a cognitive virtue. Thus, memory draws on relevant past situations to assist in deliberation and judgment. Insight involves the application of first principles to a particular situation in order to arrive at the right judgment about how to proceed. Docility refers to openness to the knowledge and counsel of others. Shrewdness is the ability to assess a situation correctly and rapidly. Lastly, reasoning supports inquiry, the synthesis of information and knowledge, and judgment. The other three elements of prudence involve commanding cognition to action. Foresight facilitates envisioning the outcome(s) of an action. Circumspection is the ability to consider the circumstances surrounding a situation and assess whether a particular course of action is suitable in light of them. Caution ensures that no undue hindrance or risk is incurred in doing good. Given the roles of deliberation, decision-making, and direction in good leadership, the applicability of these elements of the virtue of prudence to the leadership of organizations is self-evident. In delineating the integral parts of prudence, as well as the subjective and secondary parts described below, Aquinas's comprehensive model of virtue goes far beyond that of his predecessors. Its logical structure makes it useful for anyone, including leaders, seeking to develop virtues.

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[116] ST II–II 48.1, 49.1–8.

In the case of the subjective parts of prudence, these include prudence with respect to oneself and with respect to a multitude.[117] The latter is further subdivided into domestic prudence, which applies to the family, military prudence, which is needed for efficacy in armed conflict, the prudence required for governing countries, cities, and, by my argument, organized enterprises such as companies, businesses, hospitals, and non-profits, and political prudence, which inheres in citizens and political leaders and is oriented toward harmonious societal relations. In the intermediate enterprises, that is, those operating on a level between the domestic and political contexts, leaders encounter a wide range of situations in which such virtues are applicable.

Aquinas describes four potential or secondary parts of prudence.[118] After considering deliberate action and envisioning the end of an action, the doer takes counsel (through deliberation or consulting others) about how that end can be realized and made concrete in the present situation. The virtue of good deliberation is *euboulia.* After deliberation, it is possible to make a good decision. Individuals with practical wisdom exercise *synesis* in ordinary cases and *gnome* in exceptional cases. Finally, once a decision has been made, the appropriate action is taken. The virtue by which leaders command well is prudence, strictly speaking.[119] As character excellences, each of these virtues

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[117] ST II–II 48.1.
[118] ST I–II Q57.6.
[119] ST II–II Q48.1.

is directly applicable to the practice of leadership, especially in terms of refining

them highly and exercising them with consistent excellence.

THE VIRTUE OF

PRUDENCE

SOLICITIOUS AND DILIGENT APPLICATION OF RIGHT REASON THAT LEADS TO A GOOD ACTION

INTEGRAL VIRTUES

RESIDENT KNOWLEDGE

MEMORY
KNOWLEDGE OF PAST THINGS

INSIGHT
RIGHT ESTIMATE OF A PARTICULAR END

KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION

DOCILITY
WILLINGNESS TO ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE FROM OUTSIDE PARTIES

SHREWDNESS
ABILITY TO DISCOVER/UNCOVER KNOWLEDGE

APPLYING KNOWLEDGE TO PROPOSED ACTION

REASONING
PROCEEDING FROM THINGS KNOWN TO NEW KNOWLEDGE OF JUDGMENT OF OTHER THINGS

COMMANDING ACTION

FORESIGHT
RIGHT ORDERING OF MEANS TO ACCOMPLISH AN INTENDED END

CIRCUMSPECTION
DUE CONSIDERATION OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES ASSOCIATED WITH AN END

CAUTION
UNDERSTANDING AND ASSESSING RISK IN LIGHT OF AN END

SUBJECTIVE VIRTUES

PRUDENCE WITH RESPECT TO ONESELF

PRUDENCE WITH RESPECT TO A MULTITUDE
FAMILY
MILITARY
POLITICS

PRUDENCE WITH RESPECT TO SPECULATIVE KNOWLEDGE AS IT INFORMS DELIBERATION

SECONDARY VIRTUES

EUBOULIA
DELIBERATING WELL

SYNESIS
GOOD JUDGMENT IN ORDINARY MATTERS

GNOME
GOOD JUDGMENT IN EXCEPTIONAL MATTERS

COMMAND
DIRECTING GOOD ACTION

THE PROCESS OF PRUDENCE

DELIBERATION (COUNSEL) → (OPTIONS) → **JUDGMENT (DECISION)** → (CHOICE) → **COMMAND**

DELIBERATION (COUNSEL)	JUDGMENT (DECISION)	COMMAND
MEMORY INSIGHT DOCILITY SHREWDNESS REASONING FORESIGHT CIRCUMSPECTION CAUTION	FORESIGHT REASONING	FORESIGHT CIRCUMSPECTION CAUTION

SUPPORTED BY:

EUBOULIA

SUPPORTED BY:

SYNESIS GNOME

SUPPORTED BY:

COMMAND

Figure 4: The Virtue of Prudence.

Aquinas also lists vices that undermine the proper exercise of practical wisdom (Figure 5). Hastiness is the failure to deliberate, that is, to think about a situation in its unique totality. Thoughtlessness is the failure to take into account the circumstances surrounding a situation. Improvidence relates to drawing incorrect conclusions. Inconstancy is the lack of follow-through in command, that is, the failure to act after a decision about what to do has been made. Related to inconstancy are the vices of incontinence, the inability to rule one's passions, and negligence, sluggishness in initiating or laziness in executing an action. All of these are vices of deficiency. Vices of excess include misdirected prudence and craftiness. Misdirected prudence involves superfluous worry about temporal (created) goods or the future. Craftiness means manipulating others using words (the vice of guile) or deeds (the vice of fraud) to achieve an end.

Because a virtue of a thing "consists in its being well disposed in a manner befitting its nature...the vice of anything consists in its being disposed in a manner not befitting its nature."[120] The outcome of virtue is good acts performed to make an individual good according to reason. Similarly, vice is contrary to reason and involves habits that are contrary to human nature.[121] From this perspective, the vices opposed to prudence—and, in fact, all vices—

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[120] ST I–II Q71.1.
[121] ST I–II Q71.2.

occlude the rational faculties (e.g., "I'm so mad I can't think straight") and lead away from a reasoned good. From vice arises distortions in deliberation, judgment, and command that can be debilitating and even disastrous for the leader and an organization.

Turning to the virtue of justice, Aquinas defines it as "a constant and perpetual will to render to each that which is his right."[122] He echoes Aristotle regarding the relational nature of justice, asserting that "what is particular to justice among other virtues is that it orders a human being in those affairs which concern another" according to a universally recognizable standard of fairness.[123] This standard, grounded in natural law, emphasizes the necessity of living with others in a community and a society.

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[122] ST II–II Q58.1.
[123] ST II–II Q57.1.

Figure 5. Vices Opposed to Prudence.
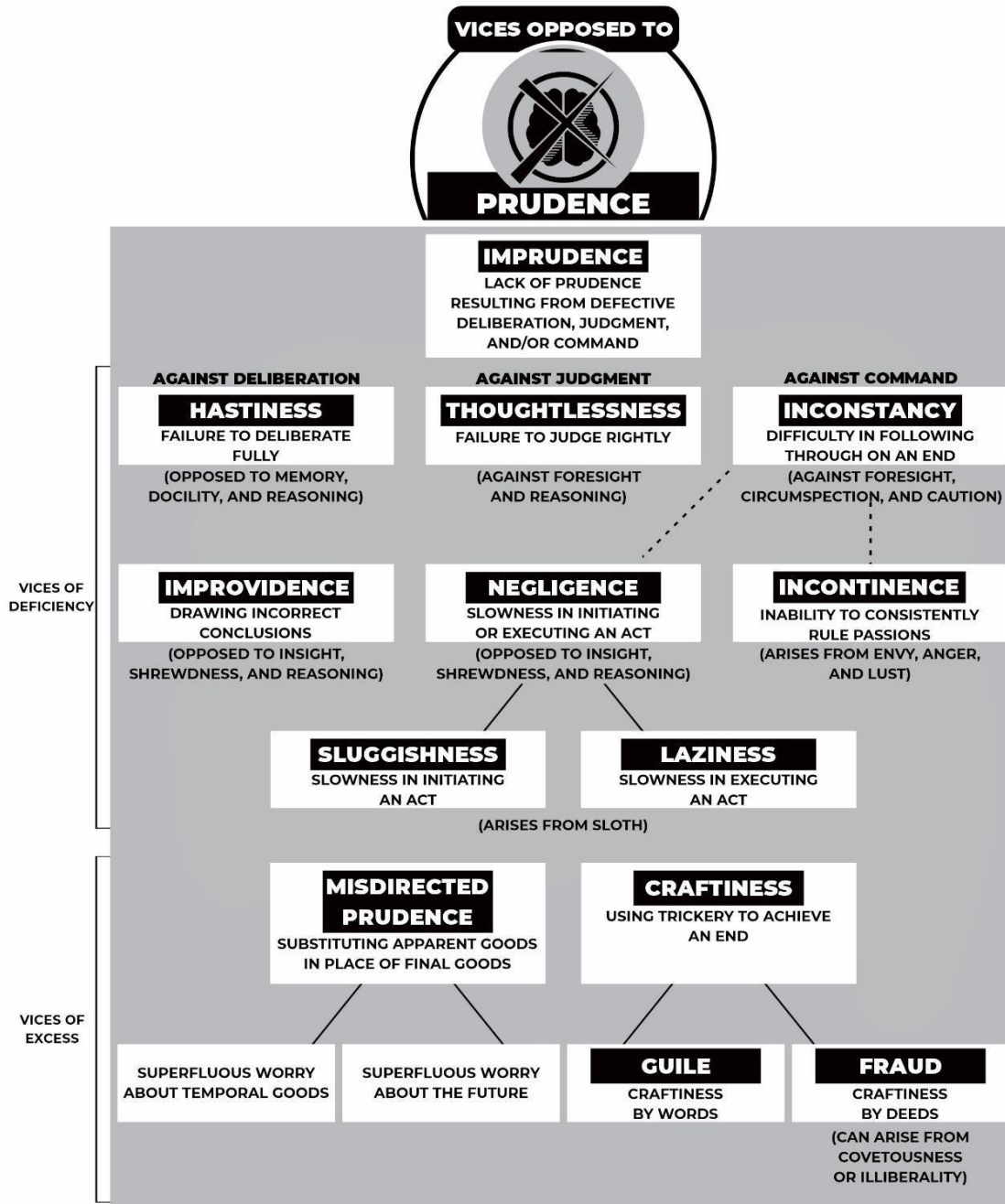
Aquinas singles out justice as the preeminent moral virtue because it perfects the will in choosing to perform acts for the good of others (Figure 6).[124] Through justice, individuals render to others that which is their right or due.[125] Residing in the will, justice follows the direction provided by prudence and guides temperance and courage toward proper ends, whether for the common good, an individual, or oneself.[126] With justice, the mean is adjudicated precisely to the circumstances, resulting in the rendering or receipt of what is due in the manner of an equality. Anything beyond this formulation results in an injustice of excess or deficiency depending on who is rendering or receiving.

Aquinas views justice from three distinct perspectives: that of the part to the whole (a person to society)—which, following Aristotle and Plato (specifically, the *Republic*), he calls general or legal justice—that of the whole to the parts, or distributive justice, and that of a part to another part, or commutative justice. Distributive and commutative justice is subjective, falling under the umbrella of general justice (discussed presently) and pertaining to distinct contexts. The integral parts of justice are doing good and declining to do evil, which are at the heart of natural law and the practice of virtue.[127] He then goes on to distinguish the following nine secondary parts of justice.

General or legal justice stipulates an end, the common good, that makes one a fit member of the community, that is, a good citizen. Following Aristotle

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[124] ST II–II Q58.11.
[125] ST II–II Q58.11–12.
[126] ST II–II Q58.5–6.
[127] ST II–II Q79.1.

and also harkening back to Plato's *Republic*, Aquinas calls this legal justice,

since it inclines one to observe laws which are in place ostensibly to facilitate

virtuous behavior on the part of individuals for the benefit of the community.

Legal justice orients one's virtuous acts to the common good, under the

direction of the law. Aquinas's notion of general justice extends beyond legal

regimes to include natural and eternal law, encompassing all of these

dimensions, and, when it is practiced pristinely, it encourages observation of

the laws that are in place to facilitate virtuous behavior on the part of

individuals for the benefit of the community and the common good.[128] Again,

Aquinas's explicit connection between the virtue of justice and a just social

order echoes Plato's conception of justice in the *Republic*. For both, the idea of

justice encompasses the interconnected web of individual and communal

relations.

The notion of integral justice is related to equality. Equal justice is

established by, again, rendering what is due to another—that is, doing good for

someone—and by declining to do evil.[129] Otherwise, there can be no justice,

and it is in this sense that both of these dispositions—to render what is due

and to avoid evil—are "integral" to this virtue. As a distinct type of general

justice, the integral virtue of distributive justice encompasses the relationship

between individuals and society. Distributive justice ensures that the goods

that are common to everyone are distributed equitably within a society. These

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[128] ST II–II Q104.1.
[129] ST II–II Q79.1.

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goods are allocated based on such criteria as virtue, wealth, power, expertise, and need. Drawing on Aristotle, Aquinas argues by analogy that the mean of distributive virtue has geometrical proportions in that individuals need not be treated in exactly the same way. For instance, those with a greater need may receive more of a certain kind of goods than others when such a distribution ultimately contributes to the well-being of the community as a whole.[130]

Also under the umbrella of general justice is commutative or particular justice, which restores equity between individuals, that is, when one returns to another what has been received or taken or replaces it with something that is of proportionate value. In so doing, the relationships between individuals remain equitable such that all receive what is due to them.[131] Aquinas describes various types of commutative justice, but the key point in this context is that cases of commutative justice involve an obligation to provide restitution after legal rights have been transgressed or a legitimate contract or covenant has been violated.

Aquinas identifies nine secondary parts of justice that have in common with justice the notion of rendering what is due to another but fall short of its fullness as a cardinal virtue.[132] Religion involves properly honoring God through both interior and external acts. Piety describes respect for one's parents and country. Respectfulness describes the requisite regard for and

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[130] ST II–II Q61.1–2.
[131] ST II–II Q62.
[132] ST II–II Q80–120.

obedience to those in positions of authority. Gratitude involves honoring

benefactors. Vindication refers to lawful restitution for harm suffered.

Truthfulness refers to the correspondence between outward expressions of

thought and thought as conceived by the speaker. Friendliness refers to

behaving toward others in an affable manner. Liberality refers to the

willingness to use monetary and material surplus for the benefit of others.

Reasonableness is the employment of common sense in the application of the

law, particularly when following the letter of the law would result in injustice.

     The importance of justice for societal harmony and, by extension,

leadership in organizations can hardly be overstated. As authority figures,

leaders have large roles in the provision and upholding of justice within their

organizations. Plato devoted the *Republic* to the relationship between

leadership and justice, and Aristotle addressed justice frequently, including in

the *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aquinas devoted sixty-seven articles to

justice in the ST, more than to any other topic. Many influential thinkers since

have been similarly concerned with justice.[133] Likewise, contemporary research

in organizational justice theory focuses on justice pertaining to employees'

perceptions of the fairness of the actions taken by organizations.[134]

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[133] For instance, John Locke, the founding fathers of the United States, Karl Marx, and John Rawls.

[134] Organizational justice theory integrates social exchange theory and equity theory, which are derived from social psychology. Various approaches to the theory focus on distributive justice, that is, the fairness of decision outcomes; procedural justice, that is, the fairness of decision-making processes; and interactive justice, that is, the empathetic treatment during the decision-making process. See, for example, Greenberg, Jerald. "Taxonomy of Organizational Justice Theories." *The Academy of Management Review*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1987; Colquitt, Jason A., Jerald Greenberg, and Cindy P. Zapata-Phelan. "What is Organizational Justice? A Historical Overview." *Handbook of organizational justice.* Psychology Press, 2013.

Clearly, much of the disorder and turmoil that arises in organizations stems from the poor or inadequate provision of justice, whether among employees, by organizations to employees, or by employees to organizations. The degree to which justice prevails is determined in large part by the layers of laws, policies, regulations, and rules that make up what Aquinas calls "positive law" and individuals' adherence to them. This state of affairs represents the necessary, minimum, and external criterion for justice, taking into account the fact that the members of organizations vary in their virtuousness. At the deeper level that Plato and Aquinas address, the virtuous manifest justice as a matter of course owing to their character, enacting justice even without the encouragement of positive law. Good leaders can be expected to behave in exactly this way because of their refined and virtuous sense of justice.
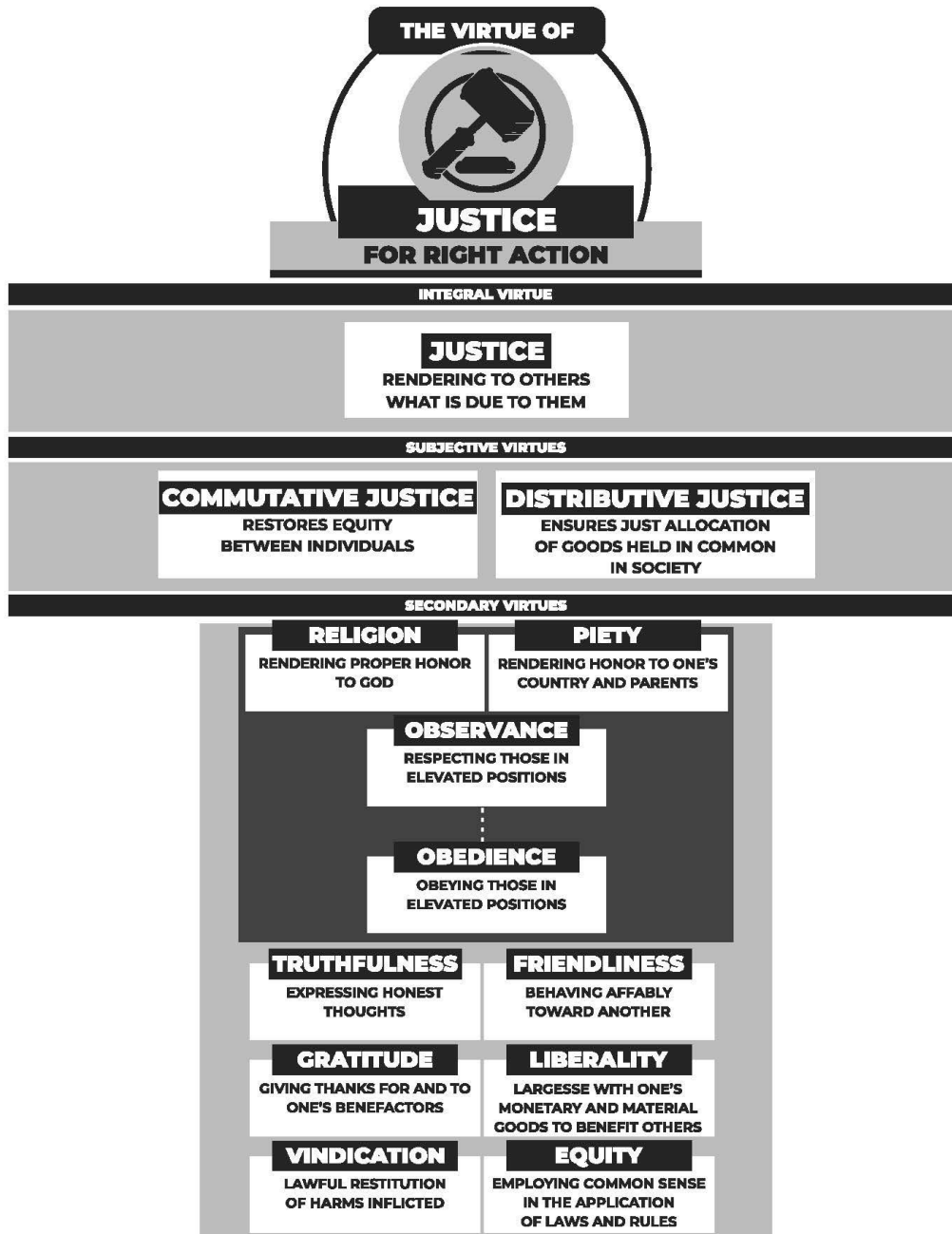
Figure 6. The Virtue of Justice.

Aquinas lists forty vices that are opposed to the virtue of justice (Figures 7–8), thus highlighting the fact that injustice takes many forms and plays a

large role in human relations and in societies generally.[135] That he catalogs such a large number of vices is unsurprising, for the core of justice is, again, the injunction to do good and avoid evil, which is also central to natural law and his entire edifice of virtue.

The vices opposed to integral justice include transgression and omission. Transgression involves the failure to heed a negative precept, for example, the biblical injunction against murder. Omission is the non-fulfillment of a good that is obligatory, such as breach of contract. Favoritism involves rendering something to others because of their social status, prestige, kinship, and the like rather than merit and a just cause and is thus opposed to distributive justice. Four categories of vices are opposed to commutative justice, coming about through 1) deeds (e.g., murder and other injuries committed against a person, theft, and robbery), 2) words used in court by judges, defendants, witnesses, and attorneys, 3) extrajudicial verbal injuries, specifically contumely (maliciously insults), derision (contemptuous insults), detraction (belittling), malediction (cursing), and talebearing (gossip), or 4) fraud and usurious loans.

Aquinas lists nine vices opposed to religion, beginning with superstition, a vice of excess that involves improper worship, including idolatry (worship of someone or something other than God), divination (fortunetelling), observances (occult practices), and superficiality (insincere worship). The vice of irreligion, being opposed to justice by way of deficiency, is the lack of belief in God and

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[135] ST II–II Q63–120.

includes presumption (putting God to the test), perjury (lying under oath), sacrilege (irreverence toward the sacred), and simony (the buying and selling of spiritual things). The vices opposed to piety and observance are disrespectfulness (the failure to honor or obey one's country, parents, or those who hold legitimate authority), ingratitude (the failure to recognize or repay favors received) is the vice opposed to gratitude, and cruelty (unjust punishment for a harm or debt) is the vice opposed to vindication.

Among the vices opposed to truth are boasting, self-deprecation, and lying, whether through dissimulation (an outward show of truth) or hypocrisy (pretending to be just). Flattery (insincere praise of another), quarreling, and deliberately disagreeable contradiction are vices opposed to friendliness. Prodigality (the inordinate desire to dispense riches and favors) and covetousness are the vices opposed to liberality.

Viewed holistically, the vices opposed to justice reflect the unwillingness to act so as to render good due to others. The failure to act justly signals a lack of both self-possession and the capacity to reason effectively. From an organizational perspective, unjust actors degrade the common good, whether openly or incrementally and imperceptibly, especially those in leadership positions who, by acting unjustly, damage an organization and its members.

VICES OPPOSED TO

JUSTICE

INTEGRAL, DISTRIBUTIVE, COMMUTATIVE VICES

INTEGRAL VICES

TRANSGRESSION
COMMITTING AN UNJUST OR EVIL DEED IN VIOLATION OF A PRECEPT

OMISSION
NON-FULFILLMENT OF A GOOD THAT IS DUE TO A PERSON OR PERSONS

DISTRIBUTIVE VICE

FAVORISTIM
UNDUE OR UNFAIR PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF A PERSON OR PERSONS

COMMUTATIVE VICES

INJUSTICE THROUGH DEEDS

MURDER
UNLAWFUL KILLING OF A HUMAN BEING

OTHER INJURIES
UNLAWFULLY INFLICTING BODILY AND MENTAL HARM

THEFT
UNLAWFUL TAKING OF ANOTHER'S PROPERTY SECRETLY

ROBBERY
VIOLENT OR COERCIVE TAKING OF ANOTHER'S PROPERTY

INJUSTICE THROUGH COMMERCE

FRAUD
CHEATING IN BUYING AND SELLING

USURY
CHARGING AN EXORBITANT RATE OF INTEREST ON A LOAN

INJUSTICE THROUGH WORDS USED IN COURT

INJUSTICE ON THE PART OF A JUDGE

UNJUST ACCUSATION

INJUSTICE ON THE PART OF A DEFENDANT

INJUSTICE ON THE PART OF A WITNESS

INJUSTICE ON THE PART OF A LAWYER

INJUSTICE THROUGH WORDS USED OUTSIDE OF COURT

CONTUMELY
MALICIOUS INSULT

DERISION
CONTEMPTUOUS RIDICULE

DETRACTION
BELITTLING OF ANOTHER

MALEDICTION
CURSING ANOTHER

TALEBEARING
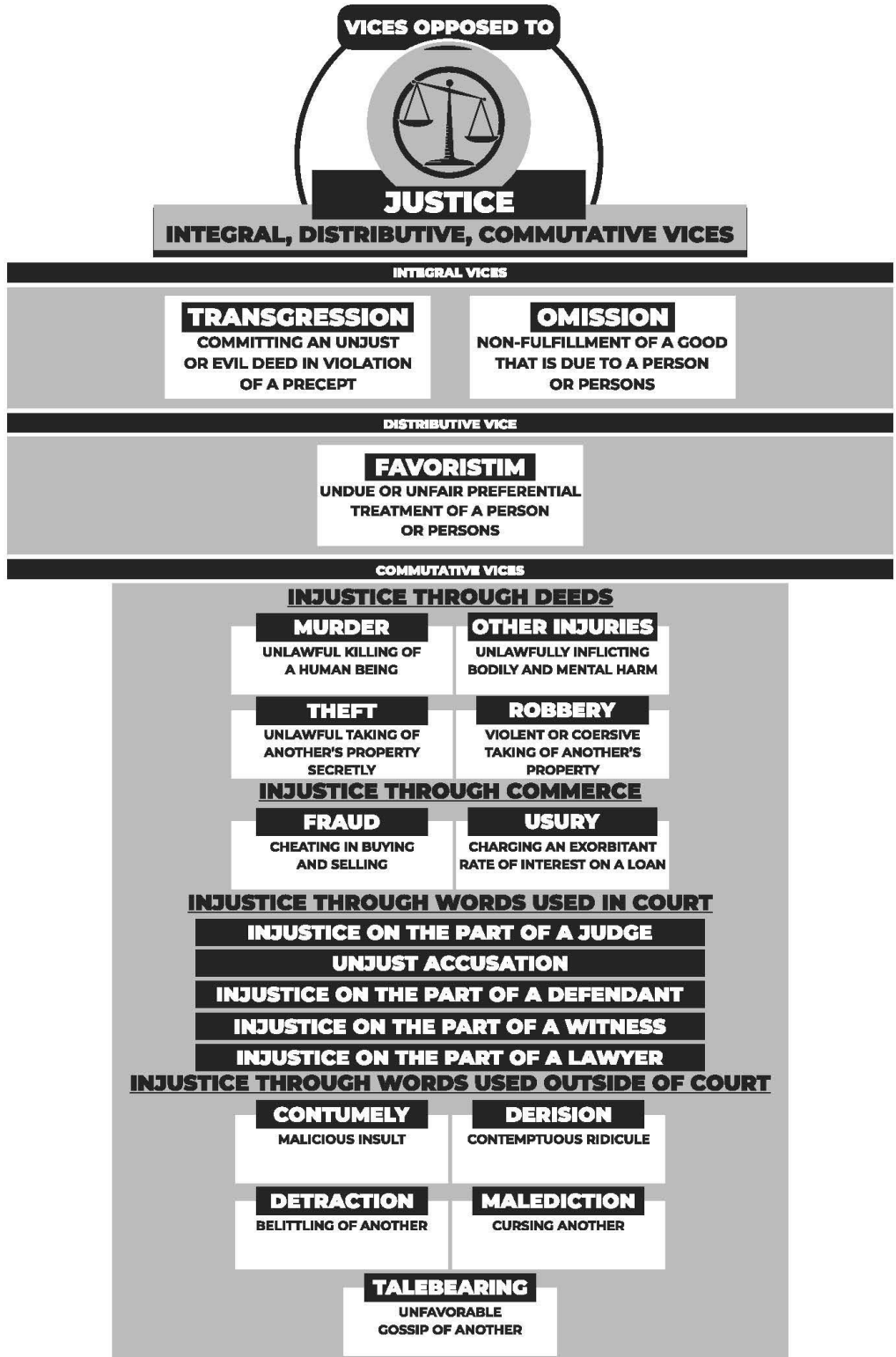UNFAVORABLE GOSSIP OF ANOTHER

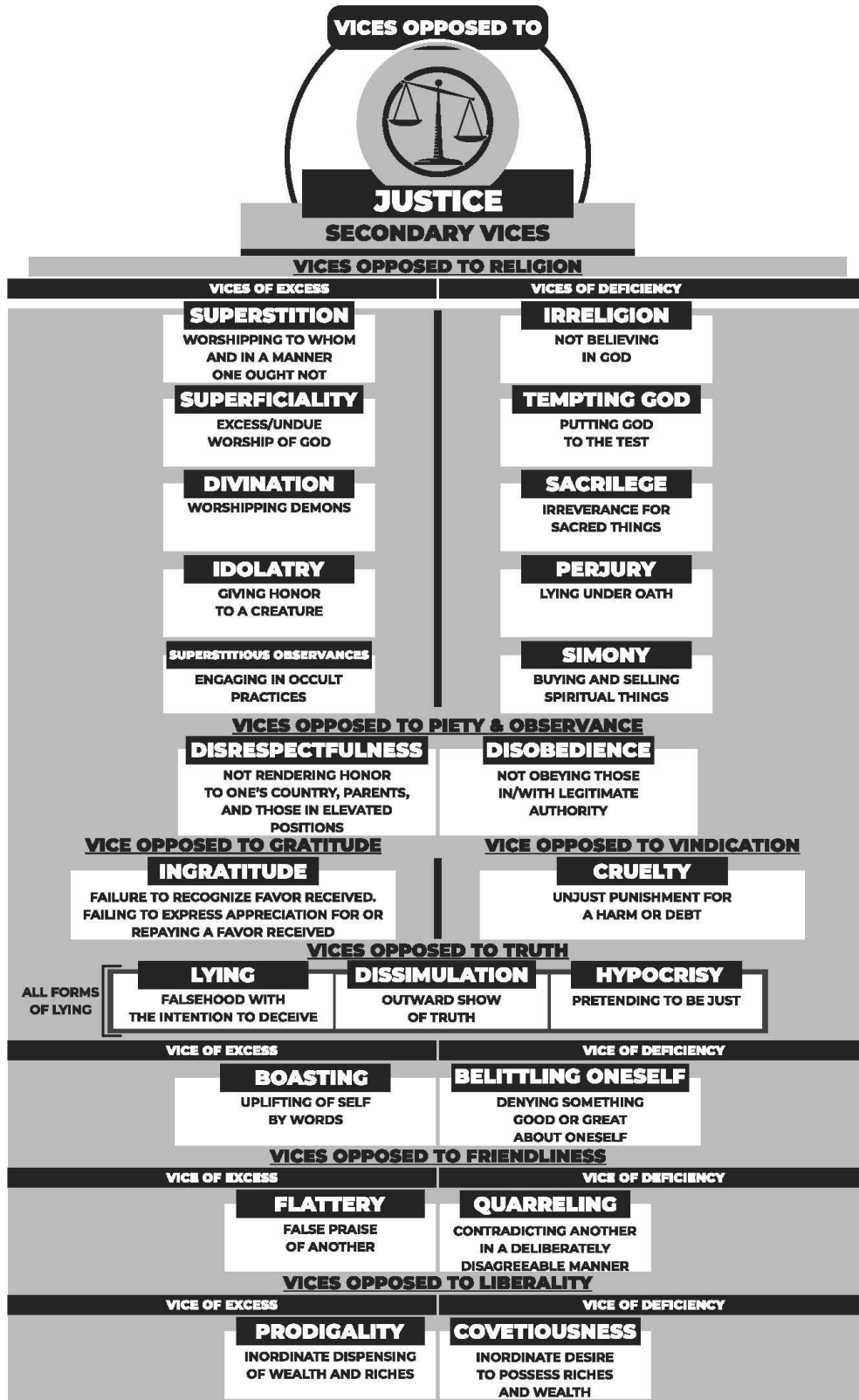Figure 7. Vices Opposed to Justice: Integral, Distributive, and Commutative.

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Figure 8. Secondary Vices Opposed to Justice.

Aquinas, then, synthesizes more than a millennium of thinking on the virtue of justice and brings it into clear relief from the standpoint of virtue. General justice concerns transgressions and omissions such that another, a multitude, or oneself does not receive what is due—that is, doing good to others and oneself (and not doing evil) to help achieve the common good. Distributive justice encompasses the relations of society toward individuals and is the means by which goods that are common to everyone are distributed within a society. Commutative justice restores equity between individuals such that what has been received is matched by the provision of something of proportionate value. Commutative justice usually involves legal proceedings but extends to verbal interactions. The secondary parts of justice, while falling short of the complete virtue of justice, contribute significantly to rendering others their proper due and include relationships between that which deserves honor (e.g., God, country, parents, employers) and qualities in dealing with others (e.g., gratitude, friendliness, and truthfulness). Aquinas accompanies these parts of virtue with an extensive list of corresponding vices that degrade or annul the provision of justice in some manner.

For Aquinas, justice derives from creation in the image and likeness of God, which affords individuals natural rights. Justice puts individuals in a position to express the good as it pertains to others and to act to render them their natural rights and uphold their dignity. This type of justice is rendered in the context of the network of relationships connecting individuals with others, society with others, and individuals with society. Injustice ensues from an

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unwillingness to render what is due as a result of a lack of internal harmony among the virtues, particularly courage and temperance, which order the passions. From the perspective of virtue, the provision of justice in an organization is constitutive of good leadership.

The cardinal virtues of courage and temperance relate to sensory appetites, that is, to the powers of the soul that tend to move individuals toward the good. Aquinas agrees with his predecessors on the importance of moderating the appetites so that they are subordinated harmoniously to reason and the will. These sensory-based virtues, then, order the passions, which are the innate psycho-physiological sensations that arise when individuals perceive a good or an evil.[136]

The concupiscible passions include love (a good as such) and hatred (an evil as such), joy (a present good) and sadness (a present evil), and desire (an absent good) and aversion (an absent evil). They incline toward a sensible good or away from a sensible evil.[137] The irascible passions include anger (a present evil), hope (an absent but attainable good), courage (a threatening but surmountable evil), despair (an absent and unattainable good), and fear (a threatening and insurmountable evil). The object of these passions is good or evil taken as difficult or arduous.[138] The irascible passions "rise from the passions of the concupiscible appetite and terminate in them; for instance,

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[136] ST I–II Q22.1.
[137] ST I–II Q23.4.
[138] ST I–II Q23.4.

anger rises from sadness, and[,] having wrought vengeance, terminates in joy."[139] Joy and sadness, along with hope and fear, are the principal passions, meaning either that the other passions have their fulfillment and end in them, as in the case of joy and sadness, or that they complete them in terms of moving the appetite toward something, as in the case of hope and fear.[140] The passions reside in the lower faculties of the soul, but they are integral to living a eudaimonic life. As a source of excellence or as capacities for perfection, the virtues of courage and temperance serve to condition the passions that arise naturally so that, in accordance with reason, they habitually impel the courageous and temperate to pursue good and avoid evil.

The virtue of courage (Figure 9) addresses "the revulsion of the will from the end suggested by reason, because of some opposing difficulty" so as to assist in removing "the hindrance which holds back the will from following reason."[141] Aquinas describes courage as "a disposition whereby the soul is strengthened for that which is in accord with reason, against any assaults of the emotions, or the toil involved [in] any operations." Those who possess the virtue of courage "can stand firm in things that are most difficult to bear [and] in consequence…resist those which are less difficult," for it "binds the will firmly to the good of reason in the face of the greatest evil."[142]

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139 ST I–II Q81.2.
140 ST I–II Q25.4.
141 ST II–II Q123.1.
142 ST II–II Q123.2.

In Aquinas's terms, courage serves to perfect the irascible appetite, this being the sense faculty that is stirred to resist an impending danger, in the pursuit of an end that reason identifies as good in the face of difficulty. He follows Aristotle regarding the roles that fear and confidence play in courage but treats them as interrelated facets of it:

> Retreat from a difficult situation is characteristic of fear, for fear connotes withdrawal before a formidable evil.… Accordingly courage is chiefly concerned with fears of difficulties likely to cause the will to retreat from following the lead of reason. But courage ought not only to endure unflinchingly…it ought to make a calculated attack. Such action…belong[s] to daring. Therefore courage is concerned with fear and acts of daring, restraining the first and measuring the second.[143]

Acts of courage consist of taking the initiative, which Aquinas calls aggression, and endurance, which involves perseverance even in the face of death. Regarding aggression, Aquinas identifies the integral virtues of the confidence needed to fortify the mind for the achievement of a difficult act and the magnificence (or magnanimity) needed to accomplish "great and lofty undertakings, with certain broad and noble purpose of mind"[144] and view the "great honors [that come with such undertakings] as a thing of which he is worthy."[145] Magnanimity also includes the virtue of confidence that arises from the hope of the great deed being accomplished:

> Magnanimity is chiefly about the hope of something difficult. Wherefore, since confidence denotes a certain strength of hope arising from some observation which gives one a strong opinion

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[143] ST II–II 123.3.
[144] ST II–II Q128.1.
[145] ST II–II Q129.2.

that one will obtain a certain good, it follows that confidence belongs to magnanimity.[146]

Aquinas recognizes two integral virtues relating to endurance. One, patience, which can be defined as the prolonged bearing of hardships, is voluntary and includes the virtue of longanimity, that is, steadfastness in awaiting a good outcome.[147] Perseverance is resolute persistence in pursuit of an end until its accomplishment, especially in the face of delay. Closely related to perseverance is the virtue of constancy, that is, forging on despite external obstacles.[148]

Notably, Aquinas broadens the scope of courage beyond Aristotle's narrow conception of it relating to the fear of death. While acknowledging that courage refers to situations involving death and hardship, particularly death in battle, he extends it to include any virtuous action performed under the direct threat of death.[149] In such cases, he argues, the integral virtues mentioned above come together to constitute courage. Aquinas also recognizes that life involves all manner of difficulties and suffering and, accordingly, that courage is involved in a wide array of acts that entail struggle and hardship but not mortal danger. In these cases, the integral virtues are secondary, "distinct from courage but annexed thereto as secondary virtues to principal,"[150] and courage

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[146] ST II–II Q129.6.
[147] ST II–II Q136.5.
[148] ST II–II Q137.3.
[149] ST II–II Q123.5.
[150] ST II–II Q128.1.

helps individuals, including leaders, face all of the difficulties that they confront over a lifetime.[151]
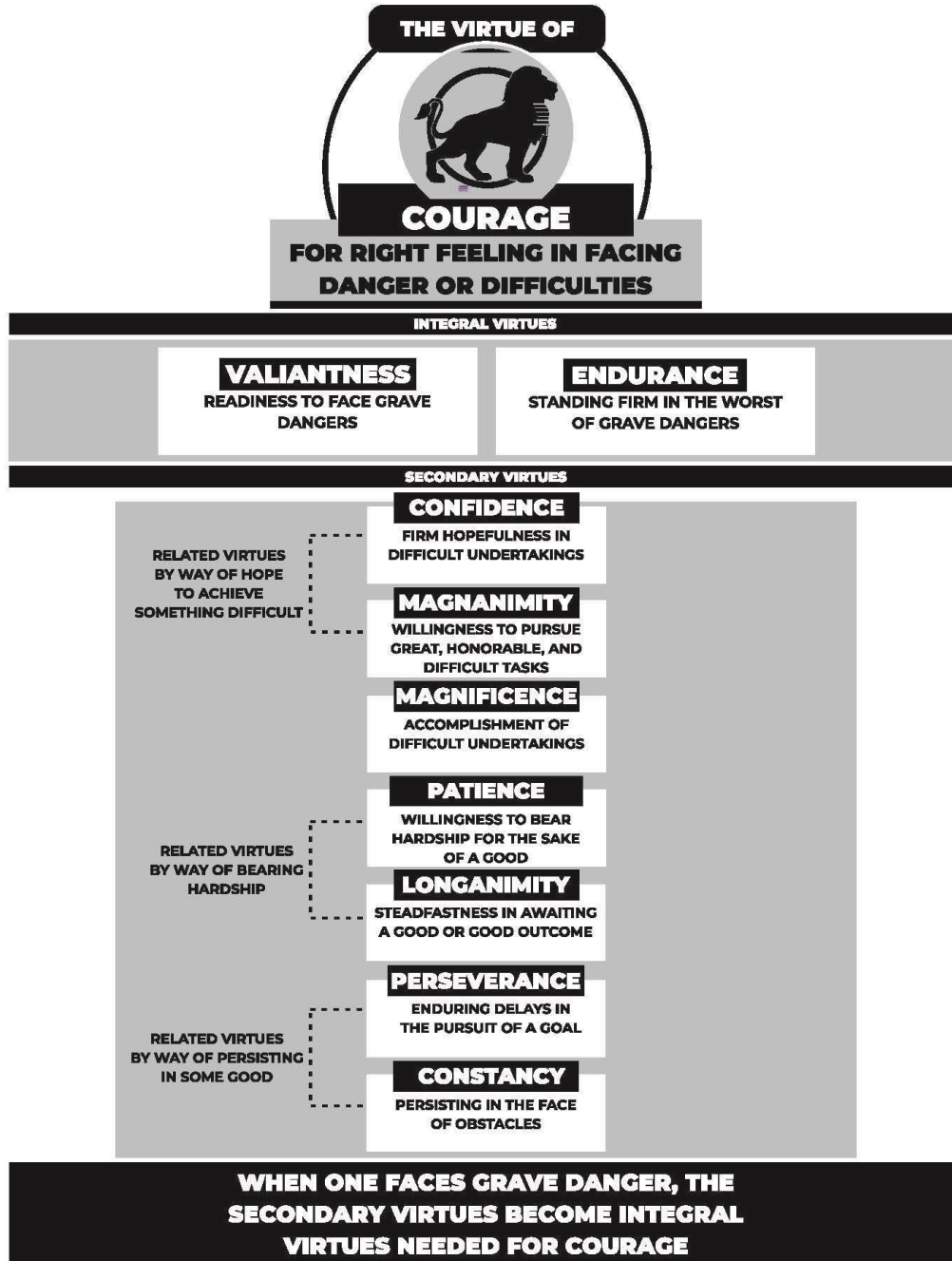
Figure 9. The Virtue of Courage.

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151 ST II–II Q123.5.

Aquinas associates three primary vices with courage. Cowardice is an excessive fear of hardship and death that impedes the undertaking of courageous acts. On the other extreme is fearlessness, deficiency in acknowledging danger. Recklessness is the excessive disregard for danger. Among the vices opposed to the secondary parts of courage (Figure 10),[152] four oppose magnanimity: presumption, the over-estimation of one's abilities; ambition, the excessive desire for honor; vainglory, inordinate satisfaction with oneself and one's achievements; and pusillanimity, shirking from that which is in one's power to accomplish. Pusillanimity is a vice of deficiency, and the others are vices of excess. Opposed to the virtue of magnificence are the vices of profligacy, an inclination to unreasonable expenditure and thus a vice of excess, and stinginess, a resistance to incurring great expenses even when necessary and thus a vice of deficiency. Opposed to patience are the vices of impatience, which is a want of endurance in the pursuit of an end and thus a vice of deficiency, and insensibility, which is a lack of empathy for one's own or others' struggles and can lead to excessive endurance or single-mindedness in the pursuit of an end. Opposed to perseverance are softness, forsaking the good because the end seems too difficult to reach and thus a vice of deficiency, and pertinacity, the hardheaded and ultimately unreasonable pursuit of something and thus a vice of excess.

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[152] ST II–II Q130–132, 135–136, 138.
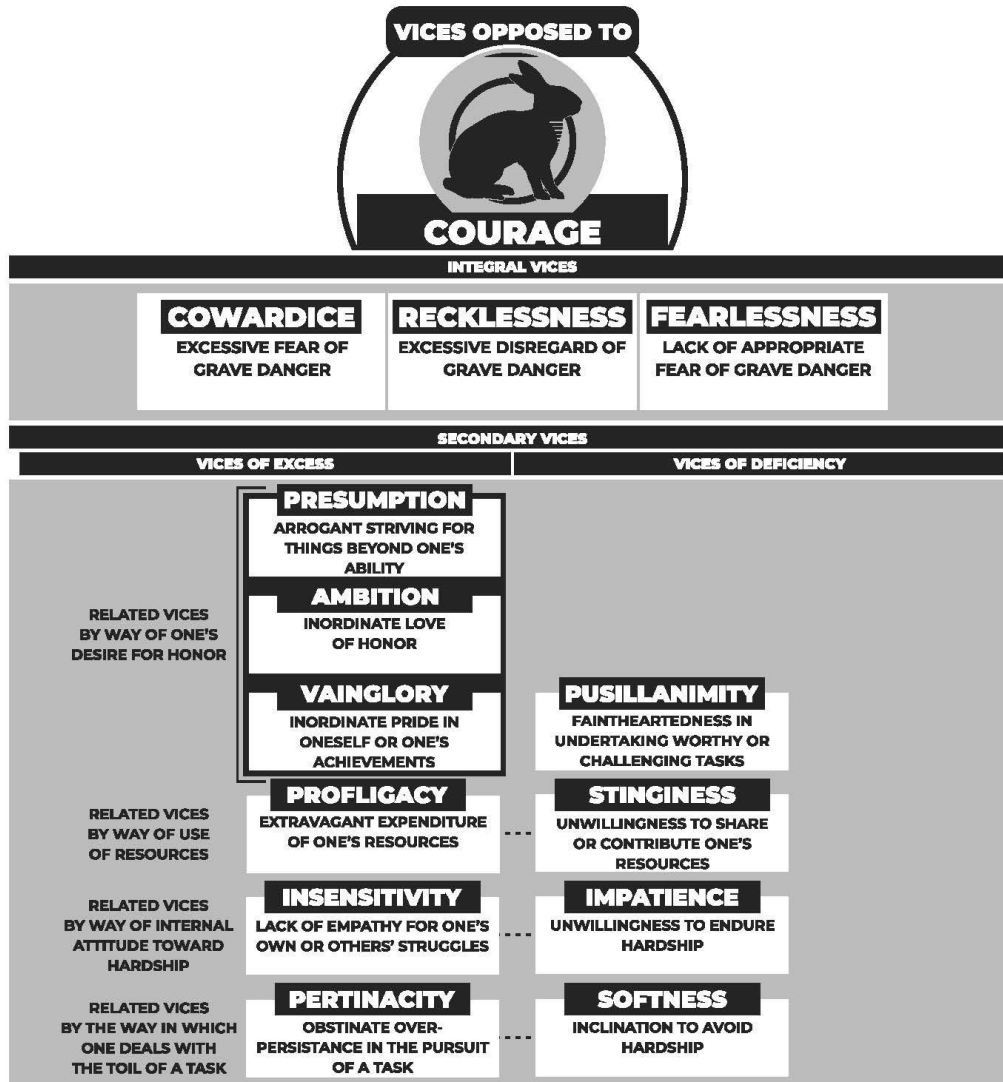
Figure 10. Vices Opposed to Courage.

Moving on to temperance (Figure 11), Aquinas defines this cardinal virtue as "a certain disposition of the soul that imposes the limit on any passions or operations, lest they be carried beyond what is due [proper]."[153] Thus, desires related to food, drink, and sex, when not moderated, tend toward excess. However, he advocates, not the elimination of concupiscible passions or

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[153] ST I–II Q61.4.

seeking to overcome them as the Stoics recommend, but, rather, their

appropriate ordering through temperate restraint that informs and properly

and rationally arranges them.[154] In this way, all aspects of human nature can

be oriented toward and harnessed in the service of excellence. Like Plato,

Aquinas emphasizes the role of temperance in regulating and channeling

efforts along a mean toward a greater good. As a cardinal virtue, temperance "is

not restricted to any narrow domain but is required in every morally virtuous

act."[155] Thus, it applies not only in the context of strong appetites that have the

potential to distort reason and distract from or undermine the pursuit of virtue

but universally, to all acts of virtue.

The proximate target of temperance is physical well-being, but Aquinas

argues more broadly that

> temperance pays attention to need as regards what is fitting for
> life. This is understood not only according to what is fitting for the
> body, but also according to what is fitting with regard to exterior
> things, for example, riches and duties; and even more according to
> what fits with decorousness (*honestas*).[156]

Thus, temperance involves not only what is necessary for bodily health but also

status and authority (like that of a leader) and what is necessary to live a

morally good life.

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[154] ST I–II Q155.4.
[155] ST I–II Q61.3.
[156] ST II–II Q141.6.

Aquinas draws on Plato's notion of disordered pleasures that "dim the light of reason from which all the clarity and beauty of virtue arise: wherefore these pleasures are described as being most slavish."[157] The Thomist philosopher Joseph Pieper summarizes well Aquinas's view here:

> The purpose and goal of temperance is man's inner order, from which alone serenity of spirit can flow forth. Temperance signifies the realizing of this order within oneself.[158]

Aquinas follows Aristotle in arguing that temperance perfects the concupiscible appetite, which draws individuals toward pleasant things and away from painful things. Temperance primarily concerns the calibration of the tactile pleasures of eating, drinking, and sexual activity and pleasurable sensations such as taste, smell, and visual appearance, all of which are powerful motivators of behavior.[159]

Fundamentally, temperance enables the enjoyment of pleasant things in a reasoned-directed way that contributes to the health of the body and to the propagation of the human species.[160] Moreover, temperance provides for the enjoyment of things that are fitting for human beings, for it concerns

> need as regards what is fitting for life. This is understood not only according to what is fitting for the body, but also according to what is fitting with regard to exterior things, for example, riches and

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157 ST II–II Q143.1.
158 Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance* 147
159 ST II–II Q141.5.
160 ST II–II Q141.1, Q141.6.

duties; and even more according to what fits with honesty [modesty].[161]

Temperance thus extends to relationships among individuals and contributes to harmonious social order, a conception with a clear connection to Plato.

Aquinas asserts that individuals who are fully formed in temperance barely feel concupiscible desires.[162] Efforts to cultivate temperance, which at first depend entirely on willpower, eventually restructure the appetites so that desire is limited to that which reason judges to be appropriate to virtue. When harmonized with reason, temperance tames the unreflective, impulsive, and distorted attractions to sensory pleasures characteristic of the concupiscible appetite.

The inventory of the integral, subjective, and secondary virtues of temperance includes shamefacedness, the disposition to be repulsed at and avoid that which is debauched or base, and decorousness, the consistent inclination to do what is respectable for its own sake. The subjective parts of temperance include abstinence, which involves eating neither too much nor too little, sobriety, which involves restraint in imbibing intoxicating beverages and, more generally, the understanding that anything carried to excess warps reason,[163] and chastity, the

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[161] ST II–II Q141.6.
[162] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* 5.10.
[163] ST II–II Q149.1.

ordering of the sexual drive in accordance with reason. As the means of controlling the most powerful concupiscible appetite—one with a role in the preservation of the species as well as interpersonal relationships and even societal tranquility—chastity reflects Aquinas's insistence on the need to work in concert with reason, which is, again, required to see and do good. Further, for Aquinas, chastity and fidelity go hand in hand, particularly in the context of both marriage and religious vows, in that chastity involves using (or not using) the human reproductive capacity in a manner that befits the exclusivity demanded by certain religious relationships. Hence fidelity, understood as being faithful in a sexual context to another in a vowed relationship, can be said to be an essential matter for Aquinas's definition of chastity. To chastity Aquinas adds the virtue of virginity (voluntary abstention from sexual pleasure and acts) as a virtue for those who undertake a life as a vowed religious.

Aquinas lists continence, clemency, meekness, and modesty as the secondary parts of temperance. For Aristotle, continence is "a virtue of the appetite, by which men, through thought, control the appetite that induces to evil pleasures,"[164] and the mean of temperance is achieved by continent individuals through an extraordinary exertion of the will to align it with what reason identifies as the most worthy choice.

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[164] Aristotle, NE 1250a.

Continence falls short of being a virtue in itself because of the internal

struggle involved in choosing and pursuing the good.

Unlike Aristotle, however, Aquinas ultimately argues that

continence is a virtue

> in so far, to wit, as the reason stands firm in opposition to the
> passions, lest it be led astray by them: yet it [continence] does not
> attain to the perfect nature of a moral virtue, by which even the
> sensitive appetite is subject to reason so that vehement passions
> contrary to reason do not arise in the sensitive appetite. Hence
> [Aristotle] says that continence is not a virtue but a mixture,
> inasmuch as it has something of virtue, and somewhat falls short
> of virtue. If, however, we take virtue in a broad sense, for any
> principle of commendable actions, we may say that continence is a
> virtue.[165]

This broad understanding of continence goes beyond that of Aquinas's

predecessors. Whereas Aristotle closely coupled continence to the sensory

appetites, and the Stoics considered continence irrelevant, Aquinas views

continence as a developmental stage in a journey of progress and regression as

individuals learn what it means and what is required to be virtuous.

Regarding clemency, Aquinas cites Seneca, describing this

secondary part of temperance as "leniency of a superior toward an

inferior" that involves "a certain smoothness of the soul,"[166] that is, calm

and gentleness when dealing with the failings of others, particularly

those under one's authority. Closely associated with clemency is

meekness, which restrains anger, ensuring that it is consistent with the

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[165] ST II–II Q156.1.
[166] ST II–II Q147.3.

occasion and the dictates of reason and persists for the appropriate amount of time.[167] Clemency and meekness support the virtue of justice, ensuring that an individual is settled internally, especially when determining and rendering what is due to others.

Notably, modesty includes several virtues that Aquinas associates with temperance. For him, modesty restrains the sensitive appetites differently than temperance but shares with temperance the function of helping "moderate other lesser matters where moderation is not so difficult."[168] On this basis, Aquinas subsumes modesty under temperance and subsumes under modesty humility, studiousness, refinement, pleasantness, and unostentatiousness.

As a characteristic of modesty, humility restrains the concupiscible appetites from pursuing irrational ends.[169] The humble recognize the limits of their capabilities in any given situation and in light of the chosen end. By facilitating the accurate estimation of one's greatness, humility also supports the pursuit of great things (magnanimity), ensuring that individuals remain grounded and do not engage in self-aggrandizement.

The virtue of studiousness disposes those who possess it to apply their minds with focus and determination to the acquisition of

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[167] ST II–II Q157.1.
[168] ST II–II Q160.1.
[169] ST II–II Q161.1.

knowledge.[170] Beyond cultivating diligence in completing schoolwork,

studiousness also serves to restrain the inclination toward intellectual

gluttony and to determine the appropriate amount of time and energy to

devote to matters based on their importance in the pursuit of a good.

Further, studious individuals avoid an overly narrow focus when seeking

knowledge, keeping the big picture in view as well as the relationships of

the parts to each other and to the whole.

Aquinas goes into some detail on refinement in speech and

movement, arguing that, in like manner as humility involves inner

modesty, decorum in these respects is the external reflection of inner

coherence.[171] He quotes the Catholic theologian and bishop Ambrose,

according to whom "Beauty of conduct consists in becoming behavior

toward others" and "the habit of mind is seen in the gesture of the

body…the body's movement is an index of the soul."[172] Those who

possess refinement are aware that their words and movements have the

potential to characterize them as excessive or defective and calibrate

them in a manner appropriate to the situation.

Aquinas concurs with Aristotle in saying that words and

movements should support the affability or friendliness that is essential

to the provision of interpersonal justice. As such, he identifies the virtue

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[170] ST II–II 166.1.
[171] ST II–II Q168.1.
[172] ST II–II Q168.1; Ambrose *De Officiis Ministrorum*, Book I, 18.

of *eutrapelia*, Aristotle's notion of wittiness, as part of refinement. A good sense of humor derives from "having a happy turn of mind, whereby [one] gives [one's] words and deeds a cheerful turn"[173] Going beyond Aristotle, Aquinas defines *eutrapelia* or playfulness as "well-earned relaxation after a prolonged effort and the fulfillment of a weighty duty"[174] that one does not interfere with what is reasonable regarding duties or work. Over all, those who possess *eutrapelia* 1) are at ease in the company of others because they have an affable demeanor and sense of humor and 2) are able to escape the stress and strain of work and relax occasionally, such as through play and games. In contemporary terms, those who hold *eutrapelia* seek a sound work-life balance.

Closely related to refinement in word and movement are the virtues of simplicity, which involves the moderated use of material goods, neither opting for too little nor for too much luxury and modesty in outward appearance, especially with respect to attire. The preference is for simplicity in dress, and Aquinas warns against desiring admiration for one's clothing, excessive pampering of oneself, and excessive attention to and time and resources expended on apparel.[175] Rather, dress should be unaffected, inexpensive, not ostentatious, and consistent with societal norms and customs as well as one's position, age, associates, and

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[173] ST II–II Q168.1.
[174] ST II–II Q168.2.
[175] ST II–II Q169.1.

circumstances. Further, care should be taken to avoid scandal, vanity, self-aggrandizement, and selfishness, especially regarding matters of consequence for achieving *eudaimonia.*

THE VIRTUE OF

TEMPERANCE
FOR RIGHT FEELING IN PLEASURABLE THINGS

INTEGRAL VIRTUES

SHAMEFACEDNESS
DISPOSITION TO BE REPULSED AT AND TO AVOID WHAT IS BASE OR DEBAUCHED

INTEGRITY
CONSISTENT INCLINATION TO DO WHAT IS RESPECTABLE

SUBJECTIVE VIRTUES

ABSTINENCE
REGULATING THE INTAKE OF FOOD

SOBRIETY
RESTRAINT IN IMBIBING INTOXICATING BEVERAGES

CHASTITY
RIGHT ORDERING OF SEXUAL IMPULSES

PURITY
RIGHT ORDERING OF TOUCHES

VIRGINITY
ABSTAINING FROM SEXUAL PLEASURE

SECONDARY VIRTUES

CONTINENCE
WHEREWITHAL TO CURB ONE'S PASSIONS

CLEMENCY
LENIENCY OF A SUPERIOR TOWARD OTHERS

MEEKNESS
RIGHTLY ORDERED RESTRAINT OF ANGER

MODESTY
RESTRAINT OF PASSIONS IN LESSER MATTERS

HUMILITY
RECOGNITION OF ONE'S LIMITS AND CAPABILITIES

SIMPLICITY
MODERATION OF MATERIAL GOODS, NEITHER TOO MUCH NOR TOO LUXURIOUS

STUDIOUSNESS
RIGHT FOCUS ON THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE

PLEASANTNESS
PLEASANTNESS IN CONVERSATION

PLAYFULNESS
APPROPRIATE ENJOYMENT OF LEISURE

REFINEMENT
DECORUM IN HOW ONE TALKS AND MOVES

UNOSTENTATIOUSNESS
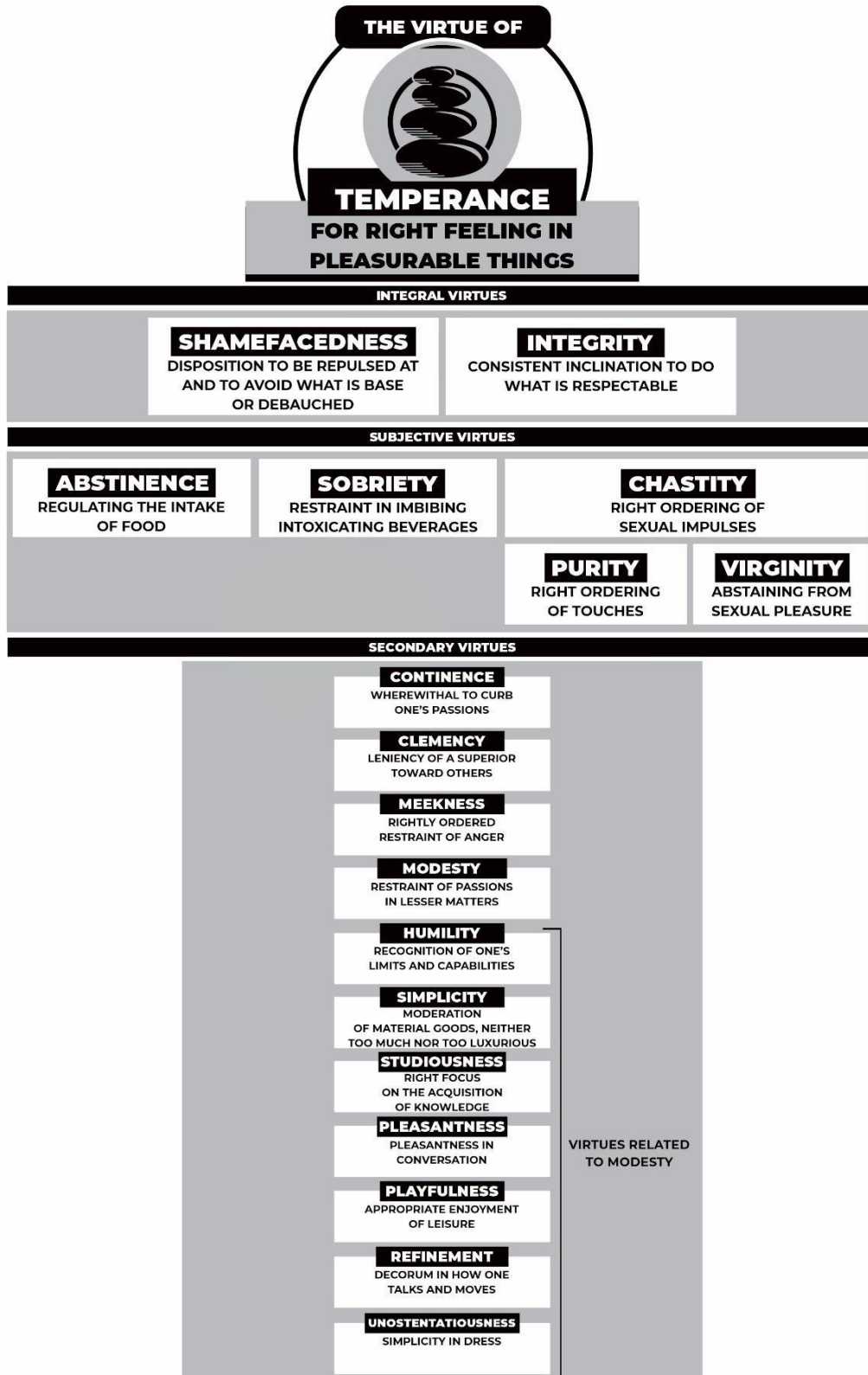SIMPLICITY IN DRESS

VIRTUES RELATED TO MODESTY

Figure 11. The Virtue of Temperance.

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There are numerous vices opposed to temperance and its parts (Figure 12).[176] Since temperance involves the restraint of the sensitive appetite, these vices are more of excess than deficiency in terms of deviating from the mean of virtue. In general, they can be categorized as forms of intemperance, which involves indulgence of the sensitive appetites and is thus a vice of excess, or insensibility, which involves indifference to reasonable pleasure and is thus a vice of deficiency. Opposing the substantive virtues of abstinence, sobriety, and chastity are, respectively, gluttony, which involves excessive eating, drunkenness, which involves overindulgence in alcohol (but can extend to anything addictive, such as drugs or cellphone use), and lust, which involves indulgence in the pleasures of touch, especially sex.

Opposed to the secondary virtues of temperance are incontinence, cruelty, anger, and immodesty. Those who are incontinent cannot restrain their passions. Those who are cruel mete out excessive punishment. Anger, which is opposed to meekness, involves a fierce, unchecked desire for revenge. Immodesty pertains to the failure to restrain the passions on matters less important than the integral or subjective virtues. The parts of immodesty includes pride, that is, excessive regard for one's excellence (or perceived excellence), unrefinement, that is, a lack of decorum or a certain roughness or

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[176] ST II–II Q148, 150, 153, 156, 158, 159, 162, 167–169.

inappropriateness in speech or movement, buffoonery, that is, unseemly or puerile speech, lavishness, that is, excess in material luxury, extreme austerity, willful disproportionate material poverty (a vice of deficiency), prudishness, that is, excessive and judgmental propriety in speech, ostentatiousness, that is, overly elaborate dress, unsportsmanship, that is, verbal and physical unrestraint in play, and mirthlessness, that is, lack of enjoyment in play (a vice of deficiency).

Moderation of the appetites in accordance with reason, on the other hand, yields harmony among the parts of the soul and sets the stage for virtuous acts. From a leadership standpoint, this harmony provides the clarity necessary to assess reality, deliberate, make decisions, and act in a way that is consistent with the good. A lack of courage and temperance ultimately manifests in bad decisions, organizational turmoil, and various forms of injustice and corruption. The connection between inner disharmony and deleterious external actions is often unclear because the vices of intemperance often remain hidden. To be sure, the display of such vices is not uncommon, and they tend to be met with disappointment and a sense of outrage.

VICES OPPOSED TO

TEMPERANCE

INTEGRAL VICES

INSENSIBILITY
WRONGLY ORDERED REJECTION OF THAT WHICH IS NECESSARY TO SUSTAIN AND PRESERVE LIFE

INTEMPERANCE
UNCHECKED INDULGENCE IN SENSORY AND BODILY PLEASURE

SUBJECTIVE VICES

GLUTTONY
INORDINATE DESIRE FOR EATING

DRUNKENNESS
INORDINATE DESIRE FOR ALCOHOL

LUST
UNRESTRAINED DESIRE FOR SEX

SECONDARY VICES *

INCONTINENCE
INABILITY TO CURB ONE'S PASSIONS

IMMODESTY
UNRESTRAINT OF PASSIONS IN LESSER MATTERS

CRUELTY
EXCESS IN RENDERING PUNISHMENT

PRIDE
EXCESSIVE DESIRE OF ONE'S OWN EXCELLENCE

ANGER
FIERCE, UNCHECKED DESIRE FOR UNJUST REVENGE

CURIOSITY
UNTRAMMELED PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE

UNREFINEMENT
LACK OF DECORUM IN HOW ONE TALKS OR MOVES

BUFFOONERY
UNSEEMLY, SILLY SPEECH

VICES RELATED TO IMMODESTY

EXTREME AUSTERITY
WILLFUL DISPROPORTIONATE MATERIAL POVERTY

LAVISHNESS
DISPROPORTIONATE MATERIAL LUXURY

PRUDISHNESS
EXCESSIVE PROPERNESS IN SPEECH

OSTENTATIOUSNESS
OVERLY ELABORATE IN DRESS

MIRTHLESSNESS
LACK OF ENJOYMENT IN PLAY

UNSPORTSMANSHIP
VERBAL AND PHYSICAL UNRESTRAINT IN PLAY

* ALL SECONDARY VICES ARE VICES OF EXCESS EXCEPT EXTREME AUSTERITY AND MIRTHLESSNESS WHICH ARE VICES OF DEFICIENCY
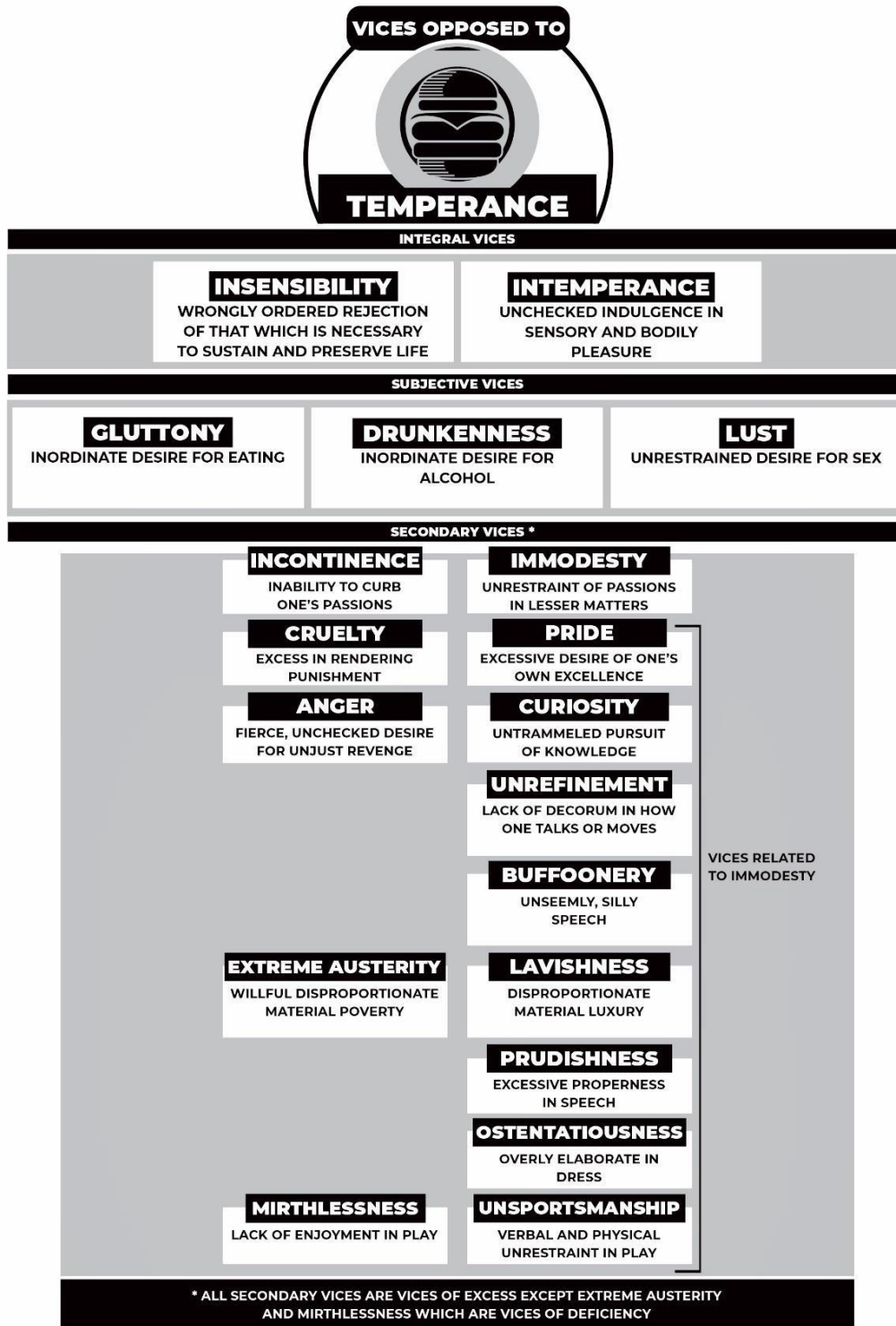
Figure 12. Vices Opposed to Temperance.

Aquinas's synthesis remains a monumental achievement. Centered on God and anchored in the virtue of charity, it lays out a rationale for becoming good through virtuous action. Virtuous action requires deliberation about what is to be done, choosing what to do, and then the command for it to be done (prudence). The virtuous choose to act in a manner that renders what is due to themselves and others (justice). They align their sensible passions toward the chosen end in a way that is fitting (temperance) and achieve it by acting resolutely (courage). As habits, virtues structure the powers of the soul to act in consonance with the good, perfecting the intellect (through prudence), the will (through justice), and the sensible appetite (through courage and temperance). When the virtues are exercised in a mature and harmonious manner, Aquinas argues, following Aristotle and the Stoics, they comprise a unity, though he intimates that a certain level of development is necessary for one to become truly virtuous.

Aquinas painstakingly details, catalogs, organizes, and explains sixty-five moral virtues and seventy-nine vices identified by his predecessors, especially Aristotle and Cicero, and supplements them with Judeo-Christian theological virtues. He groups each moral virtue under a particular cardinal virtue as either integral, subjective, or secondary. Thus configured and argued, his system can serve as the basis for a sound ethical approach well-suited to a eudaimonic life. It can also, I suggest, serve as a solid basis for a virtue-driven leadership ethics.

Deontological Virtue: Hursthouse's V-rules

Rosalind Hursthouse offers a set of "rules or principles which have pretty general application and the best blend of specificity and flexibility, but which nevertheless do not hold in every conceivable case."[177] These "V-rules" focus on virtues that offer reliable prescriptions for upright action. Thus, to begin with,

> (V1) An act is right if and only if it is what a virtuous agent would characteristically (i.e., acting in character) do in the circumstances.[178]

This statement highlights the agent-centered nature of her approach. Further, the virtuous exemplify what constitutes a right action:

> (V1a) A virtuous agent is one who has, and exercises, certain character traits, namely, the virtues.[179]

In addition to indicating what ought to be done, right action is also

> an act that merits praise rather than blame, an act that an agent can take pride in doing rather than feeling unhappy about, the sort of act that decent, virtuous agents do and seek out occasions for doing...a morally right or good act...leaves her with those circumstances requisite to happiness, namely inward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity, [and] a satisfactory review of [her] own conduct as Hume so nicely puts it.[180]

From V1 and V1athis rule, the second rule follows:

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177 Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* 58.
178 Ibid., 46.
179 Ibid., 46.
180 Ibid., 47.

(V2) A virtue is a character trait a human being needs for *eudaimonia*, to flourish or live well.[181]

These deeply seated traits guide actions in pursuit of the good in order to live well, do well, and be successful.

Rather than a wholesale reliance on external laws or prohibitions, Hursthouse states that the virtues themselves prescribe and prohibit. For instance, virtuous behavior means acting honestly, charitably, and justly. The vices, by contrast, can be viewed as prohibitions against acting dishonestly, uncharitably, and unjustly.[182] Using the virtue of temperance as another example, a rule can be readily derived based on the reasoning that undue attraction to food, drink, or sex can be moderated so as to accommodate human needs.

For Hursthouse, then, virtues provide guidance regarding how best to act, and virtuous behavior involves taking action that is conducive to survival, the propagation of the species, freedom from pain, the typical experience of pleasure, and the functioning of groups. Her approach is agent-centered in that the right action is what the virtuous do in a particular situation. In other words, the V-rules arise from the virtues and serve to guide right actions. With this naturalist theory of virtue ethics, she follows a long tradition originating with Aristotle but broadens it, especially for those unswayed by the religious arguments that

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[181] Ibid., 46.
[182] Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* 190.

underpin the reasoning of the ancient Greek and Roman thinkers and

Aquinas. In a sense, she makes this system more secular while retaining

the core notions of excellence, character, and a commitment to being

good, doing good, and living well.

Julia Annas: Virtues as Skills for Living Well

Julia Annas, another contemporary proponent of virtue ethics, also

endorses "Living virtuously and living happily" as a way of being good, doing

good, and living well, which for her involves "dealing with the materials I have

to hand, making the best of the life I have led up to now."[183] Like Aristotle's,

her understanding of virtuousness involves doing the right thing in a reliable

manner, with deliberation, and with a certain ease and delight,[184] and she

emphasizes the developmental aspect of virtue in that it

> is essentially dynamic, not a static condition of the person but an aspect of him or her that is always developing for the better or the worse. One is continuously moving toward virtue or away from it.[185]

Accordingly, when facing the wide range of situations encountered during a

lifetime,

> we should not expect…a single one-size-fits-all decision procedure, of any kind, which would tell everyone what to do, whatever their circumstances and stage of virtuous development.[186]

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[183] Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* 150.
[184] *Ibid.* 152–153.
[185] *Ibid.* 163–164.
[186] *Ibid.* 164.

From this perspective, virtue ethics, rather than prescribing the right action every time and in every situation, serves as a reliable framework for making decisions that are as virtuous as possible. Annas further emphasizes the life-long nature of a commitment to virtuous living and that "someone who fails to live virtuously is not happy, however much stuff she has and however many feelings of pleasure and satisfaction she has."[187] Such feelings must flow from not only self-control but also an internal harmony that facilitates the performance of virtue, making them pleasurable in themselves.[188]

A notable contribution by Annas to contemporary virtue ethics is her elucidation of Aristotle's notion of a virtue being analogous to a skill (*technē*). The acquisition of a skill requires time, training, and practice, with highly refined skills, such as playing the violin, requiring many years to achieve. Skills are learned and progressively developed until they become habitual through

> progress from the mechanical rule- or model-following of the
> learner to the greater understanding of the expert, whose
> responses are sensitive to the particularities of situations, as well
> as expressing learning and general reflection.[189]

The first step in acquiring virtue is to follow the rules and social conventions and look to role models such as parents and teachers. Over time, a facility develops that is unique to an individual's personality, disposition, and social and cultural context.

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[187] Ibid., 167.
[188] Ibid., 53–54.
[189] Annas, "Virtue Ethics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*, David Copp, Editor, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 518.

Annas contrasts such skills with virtues, which involve the choice of worthy ends integral to being and doing good and, therefore, cannot be separated from an agent as the things that produce skills can. In addition, skills can be performed "relatively independent of emotion and feeling, whereas the development of practical understanding goes along with a development in the virtuous person's affect and response."[190] The difference between a skill and a virtue, then, is in the outcome (i.e., an artifact rather than the provision of human good) and the lasting impact (transient satisfaction rather than becoming good).

Both Hursthouse and Annas draw on Aristotle and set contemporary virtue ethics on a naturalist footing, arguing that, through virtue, individuals achieve their full humanness over a lifetime. Hursthouse's V-rules, based on the parameters and content of virtues, provide ethical guidance through the myriad situations that individuals face. Annas emphasizes the life-long development of virtues in a manner analogous to the acquisition of skills. Her and Hursthouse's efforts and those of other contemporary philosophers have restored virtue ethics to the status of a major ethical system alongside deontology and utilitarianism. Also, these philosophers' arguments in contemporary terms that virtue is both an individual and communal endeavor focused on successful outcomes are readily applicable to the leadership domain.

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[190] Annas, "Virtue Ethics," p. 518.

The effectiveness of virtue as the basis for an ethical system is demonstrated by the fact that such systems have been a persistent feature of Western culture for more than two thousand years. To be sure, the influence of virtue ethics has waxed and waned, but a clear through line runs from the ancient philosophers to contemporary ones. As a practical matter, virtuous living means living a good life, which is to say, a life fitting for rational beings that is conducive to moral excellence. Such a way of life is efficacious in both making one good and manifesting the good in daily life, for good done usually amounts to good returned, thus opening the path to *eudaimonia*, the vital flourishing that resembles blessedness.

Unlike duty-driven or utilitarian ethics, virtue ethics cultivates individuals' highest good and the achievement of the life-long happiness described as *eudamonia*. Since virtue ethics is agent-centered, the virtuous habitually take measured actions tailored to fit the particular circumstances. Their consistent efforts over time result in the development of an ingrained disposition toward the good. In turn, they direct their virtues toward good actions whereas those who are not so constituted struggle to do so. Virtuous actions make individuals good through the perfection of their rational intellect, will, and sensory appetites. Their virtues benefit the virtuous themselves as well as others and the societies in which they live. The practice of virtue is profoundly communal, emphasizing the reciprocity of justice between individuals and within society.

In this chapter, I have analyzed the approaches to virtue articulated by key thinkers from antiquity to the present. I have shown that eudaimonic virtue ethics is a tried-and-true philosophical practice. The empirical evidence supporting virtuous leadership strengthens the case for virtue ethics. I conclude with an argument in favor of its widespread adoption by leaders of all stripes.

<u>Conclusions</u>

Leaders arise naturally in every group-based human endeavor. Families, schools, churches, companies, and all manner of informal and formal social groups require and produce leaders. Leadership plays an indispensable role in human communities, especially organizations. Virtue is an essential component of leadership as a buffer against or antidote to vice and corruption. A ubiquitous phenomenon, leadership can determine whether an organization succeeds or fails.

The results of this study provide a clear indication of what makes a good leader: simply put, *a good leader is virtuous*. A theory of virtue-driven leadership is directed to the human *telos*, which is *eudaimonia*. The fulfillment of individuals' rational nature, *ergon*, undergirds the practice of virtue-driven leadership. Good leaders seek the common good. They are not possessed by untrammeled desires for power, wealth, glory, or pleasure. Rather, in upholding the virtues of justice, courage, and temperance, they guide themselves with prudence, channeling their passions in pursuit of the true, the fine, the noble, and the beautiful. At its heart, virtue-driven leadership is based on prudence, its aim being to produce goods conducive to *eudaimonia*.

Since virtues are forms of human excellence, virtue-driven leaders tend to be virtuous in all aspects of life, including work. Good leadership requires the development and consistent implementation of virtues, so good leaders strive to possess and perfect them, embracing the high standards involved and

acting virtuously in a consistently exemplary way. They employ virtues with facility and take pleasure in doing so.

In consistently acting according to virtue, leaders seek higher-order goods that lead to *eudaimonia*, thereby exhibiting and spreading good within and without the organizations that they serve. Good leaders are integral to the acquisition of objective goods, both directly through their actions and indirectly through the culture, structure, governance, processes, and members of their organizations. Good leaders model virtue and a *eudaimonic* life, demonstrating virtuous behavior for others to see, learn, and imitate and, thereby, promoting similarly positive behavior in others. By contrast, poor leaders exhibit vice and can distort, impair, inhibit, and frustrate the achievement of higher-order goods, leading others into vice and negatively influencing the culture and mission of their organizations.

To be sure, leaders must also be effective in terms of obtaining results. The best leaders of organizations display a combination of competence and refined virtuousness. Reaching this rarified level of excellence requires years of commitment and development as leaders habitually discern and achieve the mean of virtue in situations ranging from easy and straightforward to difficult and complex. As they mature in virtue and gain experience, they exhibit an increasing *Fingerspitzengeful* ("fingertip feel"), manifesting their virtue with alacrity.

Virtuous leaders, then, strive for personal and professional excellence, orient the practice of leadership toward the common good, and model virtue-based morality within their organizations. Their prudence facilitates good decision-making; their justice ensures that those in their charge receive their due; their courage affords them internal strength to act and persevere in the face of adversity; and their temperance keeps their bodily appetites in balance and establishes inner calm and harmony. As habits of feeling and reasoning that lead to action, their virtues predispose leaders to make choices that bring forth *eudaimonia* and the flourishing of the common good. Their virtuous choices and actions benefit the leaders themselves as well as their organizations and their members. As the empirical research in Chapter 2 shows, a range of positive effects for employees deriving from virtuous leadership, including a strong sense of personal moral identity, a feeling of empowerment, and strong identification with their organizations. Strong financial performance, low employee turnover, and a positive organizational climate are among the positive impacts for organizations.

Good leaders are needed now as in every age to sustain the common good, promote justice, facilitate the attainment of basic human goods, and point the way to excellence. Leaders can help create an organizational culture, structures, norms, expectations, and incentives that promote virtue. Good leaders serve as role models for those aspiring to virtue and communicate excellence in word and action.

In this thesis, I have presented the long history of theories of virtue as a basis for evaluating leadership today. I have established the fundamentals of a theory of virtue-driven leadership as a first, major step in my engagement with issues of leadership in contemporary society. Going forward, I intend to engage more deeply with other ethical systems, such as deontology and consequentialism, comparing them with virtue-driven leadership, especially in the context of organizational settings and deliberation by leaders. I also plan to develop further the categories of analysis described in this study through empirical testing in preparation for practical implementation and to investigate pedagogical methods and design a curriculum optimized for the teaching of virtue-driven leadership to working professionals.

Another fruitful path for increasing the robustness of the theory of virtue-driven leadership involves the incorporation of another longstanding field of human knowledge, namely, literature. Literature reflects the values, desires, frustrations, experiences, behaviors, and practices that define the human condition. As a way of engaging with reality, literature constitutes a distinct form of knowledge comparable to and, I maintain, compatible with philosophical and scientific knowledge. It offers a unique and timeless way to engage with the human condition and, in this case, to educate leaders regarding what eudaimonic virtue is and is not. In anticipation of my future research in this area and to demonstrate the capacity of literature to impart

lessons in virtue and vice, I offer the following brief analysis of Shakespeare's

Henry V.[1]

Feted by the chorus as "the mirror of Christian kings,"[2] Henry can be expected to exemplify the virtues articulated in the Bible and expounded by Aquinas in the ST, including the classic virtues of justice, fortitude, temperance, and prudence and the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Thus formed in his character, vice should find no purchase in him. A close reading of the play, however, reveals Henry's leadership to be conflicted, even brutish at times.

Near the beginning of the play, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely discuss, in the context of their contributions of men and money to support his campaign in France, how Henry overcame his profligate past:

Archbishop of Canterbury:

The course of his youth promised it not,
The breath no sooner left his father's body
But that his wildness, mortified in him,
Seemed to die too. Yea, at that very moment
Consideration like an angel came
And whipped th' offending Adam out of him,
Leaving his body as a paradise
T' envelop and contain celestial spirits.
Never was such a sudden scholar made,
Never came reformation in a flood
Which such a heady currance scouring faults,
Nor never Hydra-headed willfulness
So soon did lose his seat, all at once

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[1] Shakespeare, William. "Henry V." Folger Shakespeare Library, 2020, www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/henry-v/read/. Accessed 11-8-23.
[2] Ibid, Act II, Prologue, 6.

As in this king.[3]

The Archbishop of Canterbury reasons that Henry benefited from a miracle that instantly instilled virtue in him. Aristotle states in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that years of steady effort, starting from childhood, are required to develop virtue and make it habitual. The Bishop of Ely offers a slightly different explanation:

> The strawberry grows underneath the nettle,
> Any wholesome berries thrive and ripen best
> Neighbored by fruit of baser quality;
> And so the Prince obscured his contemplation
> Under the veil of wildness, which, no doubt,
> Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night,
> Unseen yet crescive in his faculty.

He suggests that, even as Henry engaged in vice, he was simultaneously and secretly developing virtue. Aristotle would reject this notion on the grounds that virtue cannot coexist with vice. Neither character's explanation satisfies, and, here at the beginning of the play, one's confidence in Henry as the mirror of Christian kings is brought into question.

Henry's actions during the siege of Harfleur further muddy the waters. On the one hand, he displays fortitude and courage, inspiring his men with a famous speech to continue the assault on the city:

> Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
> Or close the wall up with our English dead.
> In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
> As modest stillness and humility:

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[3] Ibid, Act I, Scene I, 26–39.

But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger;
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage;
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;
Let pry through the portage of the head
Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm it
As fearfully as doth a galled rock
O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,
Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.
Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,
Hold hard the breath and bend up every spirit
To his full height. On, on, you noblest English.
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof!
Fathers that, like so many Alexanders,
Have in these parts from morn till even fought
And sheathed their swords for lack of argument:
Dishonour not your mothers; now attest
That those whom you call'd fathers did beget you.
Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
And teach them how to war. And you, good yeoman,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture; let us swear
That you are worth your breeding; which I doubt not;
For there is none of you so mean and base,
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot:
Follow your spirit, and upon this charge
Cry "God for Harry, England, and Saint George!"[4]

Here, Henry is characterized as a courageous warrior who invokes God, country, and family to inspire his men. Rather than the "modest stillness and humility" needed during times of peace, "when the blast of war blows.... Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage." This paradox is perhaps necessary given the high stakes involved in war, including the loss or gain of territory, wealth, power, prestige, and life.

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[4] Ibid, Act III, Scene 1, 1–36.

In a dramatic contrast, Henry threatens the governor of Harfleur with

subjecting the town to utter destruction, including, wanton rape, infanticide,

and pillaging, if he does not surrender:

> How yet resolves the governor of the town?
> This is the latest parle we will admit;
> Therefore to our best mercy give yourselves;
> Or like to men proud of destruction
> Defy us to our worst: for, as I am a soldier,
> A name that in my thoughts becomes me best,
> If I begin the battery once again,
> I will not leave the half-achieved Harfleur
> Till in her ashes she lie buried.
> The gates of mercy shall be all shut up,
> And the flesh'd soldier, rough and hard of heart,
> In liberty of bloody hand shall range
> With conscience wide as hell, mowing like grass
> Your fresh-fair virgins and your flowering infants.
> What is it then to me, if impious war,
> Array'd in flames like to the prince of fiends,
> Do, with his smirch'd complexion, all fell feats
> Enlink'd to waste and desolation?
> What is't to me, when you yourselves are cause,
> If your pure maidens fall into the hand
> Of hot and forcing violation?
> What rein can hold licentious wickedness
> When down the hill he holds his fierce career?
> We may as bootless spend our vain command
> Upon the enraged soldiers in their spoil
> As send precepts to the leviathan
> To come ashore. Therefore, you men of Harfleur,
> Take pity of your town and of your people,
> Whiles yet my soldiers are in my command;
> Whiles yet the cool and temperate wind of grace
> O'erblows the filthy and contagious clouds
> Of heady murder, spoil and villany.
> If not, why, in a moment look to see
> The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand
> Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters;
> Your fathers taken by the silver beards,
> And their most reverend heads dash'd to the walls,
> Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,
> Whiles the mad mothers with their howls confused
> Do break the clouds, as did the wives of Jewry

At Herod's bloody-hunting slaughtermen.
What say you? will you yield, and this avoid,
Or, guilty in defence, be thus destroy'd.[5]

The contrast raises the question of how Henry, as the ideal of a Christian king and an icon of virtuous leadership, could be willing to commit such atrocities. These actions do not seem virtuous but rather the result of the application of cold-blooded Machiavellian realism in the face of the hard realities of war.

Henry's status as a model Christian king also seems difficult to reconcile with the merciless execution of French prisoners of war after his unexpected victory at Agincourt. His speech before the battle to his outnumbered men, who fear for the outcome and their lives, sheds light on the issue:

What's he that wishes so?
My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin:
If we are mark'd to die, we are now
To do our country loss; and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honour.
God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.
By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;
It yearns me not if men my garments wear;
Such outward things dwell not in my desires:
But if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive.
No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England:
God's peace! I would not lose so great an honour
As one man more, methinks, would share from me
For the best hope I have. O, do not wish one more!
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made
And crowns for convoy put into his purse:
We would not die in that man's company
That fears his fellowship to die with us.

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[5] Ibid, Act III, Scene 2, 1–43.

This day is called the feast of Crispian:
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when the day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian:'
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars.
And say 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'
Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day: then shall our names.
Familiar in his mouth as household words
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remember'd.
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remember'd;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.[6]

By simultaneously invoking a shared religious and national heritage, Henry's soaring rhetoric reinforces his image as a paragon of Christian leadership striving magnanimously to forge a new England. He motivates his soldiers to believe in the possibility of a great victory and bolsters the virtue of courage to enable its achievement despite the overwhelming odds.

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[6] Ibid., Act IV, Scene 3, 21–69.

This inspirational portrait, then, contrasts strikingly with Henry's order when he receives word that French reinforcements are arriving on the battlefield:

> Then every soldier kill his prisoners!
> Give the word through.[7]

From the steely-eyed perspective of combat, the slaughter could be justified on the basis of Henry's smaller numbers and the potential that the prisoners might stage a revolt and endanger the English victory. However, the foot soldier Fluellen recognizes the depravity of the order:

> Kill the poys and the luggage! 'Tis expressly against the law of arms. 'Tis an arrant a piece of knavery, mark you now, as can be offert, in your conscience now, is it now?[8]

Henry's conscience is apparently not burdened by a decision that a common man recognizes as unjust. He allows his anger at the French to overcome him, indicating that he is not perfect in the virtue of temperance. Undeterred, he repeats his command to "cut the throats of those we have, and not a man of them we shall take shall taste our mercy."[9]

Henry's heroic actions at Harfleur and Agincourt seem consistent with the virtuous image set forth at the beginning of the play but inconsistent with his threat to destroy Harfleur and wanton killing of French prisoners. Perhaps Shakespeare's point is that the realities of power, politics, and war demand

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[7] Ibid., Act IV, Scene 6, 37–38.
[8] Ibid., Act IV, Scene 7, 1–4.
[9] Ibid., Act IV, Scene 7, 64–66.

such extreme acts or that a monarch is capable of them. However, the outrage that they inspire in Fluellen raises doubt about the status of Henry as the "mirror of Christian kings." Shakespeare seems to invite the members of the play's audiences to revise their image of Henry as a virtuous leader as the action progresses. The resulting image of the title character is enigmatic and unsettling.

This short analysis suggests the potential for great storytelling to teach leaders about virtue, setting the stage, as it were, for a broader treatment of leadership informed by literature as well as philosophy and empirical research. Works such as *Henry V* provide depictions of complex characters that, when coupled with a compelling account of what virtue is, can foster the development of a sense of each type of virtue and the significance of its presence or absence. Literature provides leadership case studies relating to virtue that leaders can examine, compare, ponder, and discuss so as to develop, deepen, and apply virtue in their lives.

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