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THE VIRTUOUS JOURNALIST, an Updated View

A Study in the Ethics of Journalism

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With the main title of this study I pay homage to Stephen Klaidman and Tom L. Beauchamp and particularly to their classic, *The Virtuous Journalist*, which inspired me to study further the way in which professional and moral excellence could enrich each other and co-exist in the practice of journalism.

Pori, March 09th, 2012 *Kari Heino*

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This study concerns the ethics of journalism and virtue. I will argue that to carry out informative, insightful, and relevant journalism requires journalists, who could, along with other qualities, be described as being virtuous.

To be sure, there already exists a considerable amount of work on the ethics of professions in general and on the ethics of journalism in particular, with virtue ethical foundations or aspects. However, because the otherwise remarkable work done so far lacks, annoyingly, a plausible theory of virtue, the issue should still be insisted upon. In case one argues for the superiority of her approach[1] on grounds of its drawing on virtue theory and particularly on the concept of virtue, one should at least explicate what one considers virtue to be. This task, nonetheless, more often than not remains unaddressed in any instructive or comprehensive way. At the same time what is not infrequently lacking is also an explication of the theoretical background from which the virtue concept(s) used have been drawn. ”Virtue ethics” refers to such an extensive and diverse body of work, both traditional and modern, as to make it too vague a concept to allow without specifications for necessary distinctions and comprehension.[2] Applied ethics, too, calls for clarity of concepts and for theoretical connectedness.

Accordingly, I shall argue below for a virtue conception, which is both intuitively and theoretically defensible and in addition able to face the challenges issuing from within modern social and evolutional psychology. The virtue conception argued for is chosen and developed in intimate connection with the wide and many-faceted corpus of virtue-based theory-building and the normative work based upon it, yet with clear emphasis on some contemporary developments which I consider both plausible in general and compatible with, or conducive to, the particular virtue conception which I shall defend.

[1] I use ‘her’ as a shorthand for ‘her or his’ whenever the latter might be called for.

[2] Alasdair MacIntyre gives in his classic work *After Virtue* (1981) an instructive treatment on how difficult it is to find a decisive core for the concept of virtue. While making comparisons between the ”virtue lists” of Homer, Aristotle, New Testament, Jane Austen, and Benjamin Franklin MacIntyre e.g. asserts that”..(I)ts not just that each of these five writers lists different and differing kinds of items; it is also that each of these lists embodies, is the expression of a different *theory about what a virtue is*” (MacIntyre 1981, 171; *italics added*). The abundance of competing virtue conceptions and lists, however, is not the only challenge to the theoretical and practical plausibility and potentiality of (the idea of) virtue, as will be discussed e.g. in section 2.4. of this study: situationist social psychology radically argues for the non-existence of human character and subsequently of the very virtues.

In sum, the main task of the study is to show how the other approaches with a virtue ethical foundation may be found wanting on grounds either of the thinness or of the non-existence of their theory or conception of virtue.[3] I argue that the virtue approach, and particularly the virtue conception of Robert M. Adams (Adams 1999; 2006), which I shall defend, allows for more nuanced and more detailed deliberation and distinction in moral and ethical[4] judgment than do its virtue ethical rivals; and that it also applies particularly well in the ethics of professions. Accordingly, I endeavor to show that the virtue (ethical) conception which appears in the following discussion is both helpful in making visible the ethical problems and subtleties distinctive to journalism, and also advisory to practicing journalists who wish to take care of and to maintain both their professional integrity and the moral coherence between their professional character and other everyday roles.[5]

More schematically, the aims of the study are: (1) to show how a plausible and well-defined conception of virtue gives credibility to the view that a virtue approach can also give good action guidance in the ethics of professions; (2) to argue that the virtue conception developed by Robert M. Adams carries the requisite characteristics; (3) to exemplify how earlier work on journalism ethics in general, and virtue-flavored or virtue-based work in particular, would have been more accurate and more nuanced with the help of Adams' insights; (4) to test in a preliminary fashion how virtue thinking in general and the virtue conception of Adams in particular succeed in journalistic online environments.
One can also find below a rather comprehensive – considering the length of the study – summary of the recent developments both in virtue theory and normative virtue ethics. I consider the section in question (*Part two*) necessary for describing how virtue thinking in general – and not merely the virtue conception of Adams – is gaining in credibility and productivity.
However, lying beyond the scopes and aims of this study are on the one hand the wholesale defense of virtue ethics against i.e. deontological or consequentialist

[3]If not otherwise indicated by the context or the very phrasing I use 'or' inclusively in what follows.
[4]From here on I use 'ethical' and 'moral' interchangeably. In case I use them both in the same sentence I purport to say that the issue under discussion concerns both concrete moral judgment or deliberation *and* ethical theorizing. By '...' I refer to the name of a word and by "..." to the respective concept.
[5]To be sure, although the virtue conception argued for in this study becomes applied in journalism, I do not see any decisive reasons why it would not be applicable in many other professions or occupations, too. Any such occupation, however, would have to qualify as a Macintyrean practice (MacIntyre 1981, 175; see also Interlude One, 2.).

approaches; or on the other hand the construction of a coherent and comprehensive virtue approach with the virtue conception of Adams as an element in it. In addition, I do not attempt to show that there is no room for consequentialism and particularly for deontology in the ethics of professions. I rather wish to argue for the view that in the ethics of professions we are worse off without the virtues and without a virtue conception that is unambiguous and has descriptive power.

I shall proceed as follows. First, in this *Introduction*, I give preliminary descriptions and my working definitions of journalism as well as of journalism ethics and virtue ethics. Then, I go on to discuss, briefly, some of the moral problems which journalists have to face as journalists today. The latter part of the *Introduction* also strives to show why the motive for sound ethical deliberation amongst the practicing journalists of today is a prerequisite for accountable and legitimate professionalism within the craft, and why the work on journalism ethics remains a relevant scholarly undertaking. In *Part two* of this study, entitled *Varieties of Virtue Ethics*, I analyze some of the directions in which contemporary virtue ethical thinking has developed recently. In the process, I shall defend the conception of virtue developed by Robert Merrihew Adams (Adams 1999; 2006), in order to show how excellence and virtue are highly sensitive and necessary concepts in case one wishes to analyze and see in a clear and instructive manner both what the role of a journalist calls for in accountable democratic systems affected extensively by market logic, and how well journalists morally manage in their task.

In *Part two*, I also summarize the skepticism that has been leveled against virtue ethics as an independent ethical theory or as a major way to deliberate on moral phenomena and, accordingly, put forth some reasons to consider that this many-faceted skepticism may be in many ways unwarranted. In this summary, the focus will be on two issues, which I find the most plausible candidates to undermine the standing of virtue ethics beside the two established traditions of moral theory, deontology and consequentialism. The first is the so-called situationist challenge as regards the very existence of human character and its traits. The second concerns the overall view to the effect that virtue ethics fails to be a moral theory at all, at least in any of the ways in which the concept is used in modern (deontological and consequentalist) ethical considerations and judgments. And, as stated above, my overall aim in this study is not to launch a full-length and comprehensive defense of virtue ethics against deontology and consequentialism, but to concentrate on

the issues which I see as central to the plausibility of the virtue conception which I profess, and which are often left unattended in standard texts that purport to defend virtue ethics.[6]

However, virtue and character became firmly introduced into the ethics of professions generally, and into the ethics of journalism particularly, in the 1980's, and in some tentative cases even earlier. Among the first writers to lean heavily on virtues and character in the field of journalism ethics were Klaidman and Beauchamp (1987)[7]. Since then, there has been an upsurge of work upon the ethics of professions, which finds its inspiration in virtue ethical considerations;[8] the ethics of journalism is no exception. To this tradition and literature I turn in *Part three*, *Virtue's Standing within the Craft*. The rationale of this section of the study is to find out in what way and how successfully virtue ethics has been embraced as a plausible constituent of sound and comprehensive journalism ethics.

The central characteristics of journalism which I begin to sketch in this *Introduction* are developed in *Part three* as well as in *Part four*, *The Practice and the Virtuous Journalist*. In third and fourth *Parts* I will also clarify in further detail how, in order to match the expectations which journalism faces as a constituent factor of democracies, journalists must be able both to work in a creative manner, and particularly to resist the growing pressures of the market-economy with its tendency to replace journalism's internal goods and excellences with its own. *Part four* is where I push further and defend my main challenges concerning some of the traditional tenets of the earlier work on journalism ethics generally and the virtue-based journalism ethics in particular.

Hence, if my account of the core characteristics of journalism developed so far can be considered acceptable, the following should begin to seem obvious: good and effective organizational (re)arrangements and clear and supportive ethical codes are needed, but they are not adequate. It is not sufficient to write rules requiring one to be creative or

[6] "Standard texts" should not be taken to display any opposition or arrogance in the part of the writer. I simply seek to refer to an arguably existing phenomenon that might be called "mainstream neo-Aristotelianism", within which an extensive and highly insightful defense of virtue theory already exists. I regard Rosalind Hursthouse (e.g. 1991, 223-246; 1996, 19-36; 2001) as one prominent representative of this line of thought.

[7] I will address the work of Klaidman and Beauchamp in more detail in *Part three.*

[8] See note 37, page 27.

innovative, in order to develop, deepen and take advantage of one's journalistic imagination. In addition there are hardly any commercial institutions which are disposed to compromise their profit-seeking logic in order to invest in the flourishing of citizenship. Absent the virtue, absent the high technical and moral performance, and there is no guarantee that journalism is able to remain viable and to avoid losing touch with its strategic role[9] as a crucial determinant in keeping democracies alive.

Finally, in *Part five, Digital Future and the Conclusions*, which also serves as the final summary of my work, I attempt to lay out the implications of the preceding discussion and, accordingly, to put them to the last tentative test. I do it by entering the world of online journalism to see whether the virtue conception developed also shows its strength on the Net. This kind of exploration clearly seems to be reasonable, since online work has its distinctive characteristics and, moreover, online is rapidly conquering the position as the major journalistic outlet, particularly as regards breaking news. One of the main conclusions I draw in this context is that there is to be found some evidence to the effect that the leap onto the Net actually has left the moral soundness of journalism more than ever dependent upon the virtues (and vices) of its practitioners. This is because the new communication technology has been prone to intensify the competition within the media branch to reach an unforeseen level, leaving the practitioners with diminishing resources to take care of the journalistic quality and moral integrity of their work. What is particularly scarce is time, even to the extent that journalists frequently are not allowed to wait for any real developments in the twenty-four hours' and seven days' -race for the newest version of whatever happens to be in the top ten of the journalistic agenda.

1.1. Journalism as a Craft

For the purposes of this study there seems to be no need to try to build a comprehensive (new) definition of journalism. Therefore, in what follows, I concentrate on those characteristics of journalistic practice which seem to be relevant to the context of this study.

Initially, I accept the rather conventional tenet that journalism has not only an important

[9] What I mean by "strategic role" will be under detailed discussion in Interlude One.

but even indispensible role in the totality of social arrangements which seek to maintain and develop democratic habits, procedures, and institutions.[10] Journalism, nonetheless, also serves readers[11] as consumers as well as social human beings with a multiple array of diverse interests. This adds to the ethical complexities of the practice. Along with consumer information -type stories and purely entertaining pieces the probability increases that the practice of journalism becomes, if not invaded, at least to some extent tarnished by external values which contravene and muddle the key goal and logic of the practice as a major contributor to the citizenry's knowledge of public affairs. I will later argue that the whole enterprise of journalism, with its modern working procedures and privileges, becomes plausibly legitimized only if it convincingly succeeds in its being for key human goods in its democracy-sustaining role.[12] In other words, the ethics of journalism indeed must be developed for the practice as it is, yet whilst keeping a sharp eye on the soundness of the habitually unquestioned legitimacy of the privileges and social role of both the practice and its practitioners.

Secondly, I consider journalism to be a literary and a moral craft with a considerable intrinsic element of authorship.[13] It is literary on the grounds that it was born in the act of writing and because the core *gestalt* of a piece of journalistic work – even today, in the days of 24-hour live news-casting and the Internet – remains a narrative, often written, sometimes unwritten: a report on what took place here and now. It is moral, since it

[10]Yet this "important, even indispensable role" can of course be challenged, as I myself also partly do in the course of this study. E.g. Doris Graber argues that neither citizens nor media are capable of performing the roles expected of them. And according to her also the *appropriateness* of these *roles* for life in modern societies is also open to question, as are"..(T)he many myths and stereotypes that obscure the interface between media and democracy. The fact that democracy can persist *despite* citizens and media that fall short of the expected performance suggests that political culture may be more important than citizen wisdom and media excellence" (Graber 2003, 139; 139-160; *italics added*). One factor keeping the myths live Graber considers to be their essential role in citizens' larger belief systems about how our social systems work. Changing essential parts would call the entire system into question. Secondly, it is also difficult to dispel the myths because they are so entrenched and so often repeated. And thirdly, scholars have thus far failed to challenge them or to test most of them empirically to discover what is true, or partly or conditionally true, and what is false. Graber also asserts that there are vast differences in content, framing, and mode of presentation among various types of news venues and within each venue. In that way it is"..(F)oolhardy to generalize about "the media" because any generalization leads to overly broad, deceptive summary judgments" (Graber 2003, 140; 139-141).

[11]I take the convenience of speaking of readers while actually referring to consumers of media in general. I dare take it for granted that in most of the cases nothing conclusive becomes lost, though broadcasting and online work admittedly have their own characteristics and traditions, which do not completely share the values and goals prominent within print journalism (see footnote 10 above).

[12]This of course is by far an empirical question, which so far has not been very conclusively answered (see footnote 10 above). "Key human goods" will be discussed and clarified in Interlude One.

[13]A declaration of interest may be in place here. I have been and continue to be a writing journalist and editor in service of the Finnish press since 1990.

should be deeply embedded in the workings of democracy and human relationships in general and hence accountable for its distinctive and privileged role to its readership as citizens of the community and dependent human beings generally. Finally, the element or likeness of authorship is also there, because the products of the craftsmanship are always, unavoidably, unique. However small scale, however routine the writing, the choice and the individual touch are unavoidable.[14] In these characterizations I draw heavily on G. Stuart Adam (Adam 2004, 247-257; Adam and Clark, 2006), as will be discussed below. Whether journalism also can be considered a profession is a question which I as well repeatedly attend to later, because I endeavor to gather evidence to the effect that the applicability of virtue approach in the ethics of journalism does *not* depend on whether journalism can be considered a profession. [15] What is more decisive is whether journalism exemplifies a Macintyrean practice.[16]

It is of crucial importance to see that mastering the necessary technical skills and tools is not enough for a journalist, according to the emerging definition of the craftsmanship under discussion. The moral element has also to be embraced. Technical competence does not secure moral soundness, *yet* at the same time both moral excellence and the membership of the journalistic community call for a persisting willingness to master the necessary technical skills of the craft.[17] This is an issue of considerable complexity and

[14]Yet there are also admittedly reasons to think that the space for and status of authorshipness in journalism are diminishing. Ruusunoksa and Kunelius e.g. write on ”planned template journalism”, by which they want to refer to the fact that journalistic production has become increasingly planned both in terms of forms *and* contents (Ruusunoksa and Kunelius 2008, 18-20).

[15]The discussion on professionalism in general has been, to say the least, extensive and non-conclusive. Julia Evetts argues that it is of importance to try to understand how professionalism as a normative value system and ideology is now being increasingly used in modern organizations and other institutions, and places of work, as a mechanism to facilitate and promote occupational change. The ideology of professionalism that is so appealing to occupational groups and their practitioners includes aspects such as exclusive ownership of an area of expertise and knowledge, and the power to define the nature of problems in that area as well as the control of access to potential solutions. It also includes an image of collegial work relations of mutual assistance and support rather than hierarchical, competitive or managerial control. Additional aspects of the ideology of professionalism and its appeal are autonomy in decision-making and discretion in work practices, decision-making in the public interest, and in some cases even self-regulation or the occupational control of work. Evetts, however, reminds the reader that *the reality of professionalism* in most service- and knowledge-based occupational contexts is very different from cherished images, and even medicine and law have to face some of the social structural and economical changes in their environment. Fiscal crises have been features of most states and such crises have been explained by governments as resulting from the rising costs of welfare states and particularly social service professionalism (Evetts 2003, 394-415; *italics added*). How all this applies particularly in journalism see Meryl Aldridge and Julia Evetts (2003, 547-564) and Tracy Russo (1998, 72-111).

[16] See Interlude One, section 2.

[17] Of course, the employer also is expecting her employees to succeed in doing this, yet obviously more often than not for thoroughly other than moral reasons.

importance and I shall reconsider it frequently. However, how all this should become concrete is simply that the journalist must conduct reliable, relevant and morally sound investigation, reflect carefully on his findings, choose or generate an interesting and useful point of view on the subject and material in her hands, and finally write it down in a clear and inspiring manner. Of course, there are always limits to how substantially one can use his own discretion; to the available resources which one can invest in a single case; or to how long to dwell on the details of one particular article.[18] Nonetheless, the embedded moral vein in the craft makes continuous and inescapable demands on its practitioners.

Moreover, since journalism, like other practices, evolves in typical organizational settings, there is frequently still more pressure to be expected on the integrity of the practitioner. She must distinguish the goals and excellences of the practice from those of the organization or institution, which in this study, in the context of journalism, is called media. Journalism, the practice, strives for the goods of its own with the help of its internal excellences and virtues. Media, the institution, on the other hand, leans on the logic of the marketplace, which dictates its own goals and promises currency mostly for completely different kinds of excellences.

When media prospers, there is more leeway available around the newsdesks, but even then the logic of keeping the shareholders happy demands greater efficiency, it is a matter of more output with smaller resources in fewer hours. The tension is there, arguably, and it is coupled with the fact that the market also is prone to curb the dissemination of diverse opinions and viewpoints required of a well-functioning, democratic society. This is so on the one hand by virtue of the rapid concentration and consolidation of the media-branch: less independent media outlets results in less diverse articles and opinions. On the other hand there is also the tendency in the media-houses to navigate where the market preferences show the way; and this tendency, contrary to the traditional market-liberal tenets, has, in the course of time, diminished, rather than enhanced, the diversity of the viewpoints on journalistic pages (Christians, Glasser, MacQuail, Nordenstreng and White 2009; Davis 2008; Franklin 2009, 1-12; Mäntylä 2007; O'Neill 1992, 15-32; Preston 2009, 13-20; Ward 2004).

[18] As a matter of fact, regardless of the editorial supervision, deadline is arguably the most prominent single factor that structures journalists' work.

However, as a definitionary sketch, to be defended and deepened in the following parts of the study, journalism is on the macro-level:
(a) arguably a viable factor in an effectively functioning democracy, and
(b) a practice producing and transmitting information and opinion for and with the help of the public while maintained by a market-driven institution called media.
And, respectively, on the micro-level journalism comprises:
(1) a literary and moral craft,
(2) a solid likeness of authorship and, finally,
(3) diverse technical skills and procedures typical of journalism but also shared by certain other crafts and occupations.

1.2. A Virtue Ethical Point of View

As a potentially both profession- and craft-type occupation, journalism has a long tradition in embracing internal ethical codes of its own.[19] In this respect it carries a strong resemblance and connectedness to more established professions. The codes tend to be national or specific to certain journalistic organizations, making direct claims primarily on the members only. On the other hand, as with all ethical codes, their influence is wider. They have an impact on what is generally regarded as acceptable methods and publishing policies, though not so much, presumably, within the readership as within the practice and media. The codes are also, in spite of their national and organizational flavors, fairly much in tune with each other (Laitila 1995, 527-544; Mäntylä and Karilainen 2008, 8-28; Himelboim and Limor 2008, 235-265). They stress the values of editorial autonomy, craftsmanship, and benevolence towards the informants and citizens in general. They also place emphasis on journalism's tasks in sustaining democracy, for example on its role as a watchdog of the powerful. The privacy of citizens is guaranteed to various degrees depending on the individuals' professional or political role or status in society, and furthermore, the readership has to be able to distinguish news from opinion and

[19]In Finland the first national code was accepted by The Union of Journalists in Finland in 1957. Since then the code has been revised six times (Mäntylä 2008, in Finnish). E.g. in U.S. the history of ethical codes dates back to 1912 when a group of editors formed a professional association around a code of ethics. The association was named The American Association of Newspaper Editors. Sigma Delta Chi, a professional journalistic fraternity and the forerunner of The Society of Professional Journalists, was however founded already in 1909 and its 1926 code, which also has been revised several times, became one of the best known at least in America. The Canadian Association of Journalists e.g. approved its very first own code of ethics no earlier than April 2002.

commercials, flaws are to be corrected at once, and opportunity to reply has to be offered.

The codes and their details abound, but typically they lack comprehensiveness and coherence. It seems, in most cases, that fairly little thought has gone into making the code well ordered with a coherent theoretical, or at least well-argued, base. There tends to be little attempt to state what its purpose is or "..(T)o demonstrate that the clauses are individually necessary and jointly sufficient to achieve whatever the aims of the code are" (Belsey and Chadwick 1995, 469). One example is the last version of the code of The Union of Journalists in Finland which states in its preamble that "..(G)ood journalistic practice is based on everyone's right to be informed in (public) matters".[20] There is, however, no explication on the origin of the "right to know" or how good journalistic practices are to be inferred from it. And what is also conspicuous to the aims of this study, is the absence of explication of any excellences or virtues in the Finnish code or many of the other ones. Even the obvious excellences of accuracy, objectivity, and truth-telling have not been documented in the Finnish or many other cases.

However, in spite of the general impression of the *ad hoc*, and a lack of consistency, the codes are in no way without value, as Belsey and Chadwick (1995, 468) argue. They provide journalists with guidance in areas that are going to be problematic in their practice, and the individual requirements and prohibitions of the codes are, on the whole, perfectly sound. In addition, as was asserted at the beginning of this section, codes have the advantage of making a public declaration to maintain high ethical standards and to serve the public interest. Yet, internal ethical codes can also be considered a tactical resource in defending a profession's autonomy to define its own standards and goals, and this of course also concerns the ethical codes of journalism.[21]

In the following parts of this study I endeavor to show that one plausible and practicable base for the ethics of journalism resides within virtue ethics. On the other hand, I do not try to argue to the effect that for instance deontology and consequentalist theories are not at all fit for the purpose. The aim of the study is more moderate, namely, to show the power and the distinctiveness of at least some certain virtue-based considerations. Hence,

[20] Translation from Finnish: K.H. For the most up-to-date version of the Finnish code (in Finnish), see http://www.journalistiliitto.fi/pelisaannot/journalistinohjeet/. I address the codes in more detail in section 4.2.1.

[21] John Kultgen uses the notion of 'The Ideological Use of Professional Codes' (Kultgen 1998, 273-290).

I shall argue both against virtue-extremism and particularly against virtue skepticism. However, before proceeding, some clarification of the way in which I use the core concepts in virtue ethics is probably appropriate.

First, by 'virtue theory' I refer to work on the meaning and internal relations of the virtue concepts and on how the moral phenomena could be (best) understood and described with the help of them in ethical theory. The issues and problems discussed, then, are abstract and at least partly meta-ethical. (Normative) virtue ethics[22], secondly, is the project of placing ethics on virtue evaluation. It is on this level of research that virtue ethicists try to show how virtue ethics is at least as comprehensive and plausible normative theory as deontology or consequentialism. Applied ethics in general and the ethics of professions as its sub-category draw for their part on resources produced by the work in normative ethics. Moreover, journalism ethics is a sub-category of the ethics of professions. By 'virtue', in the singular and without definite or indefinite article, finally, I refer to the holistic property of having a good moral character. To have it an agent must not only have a number of excellent traits, but he also must have them excellently composed into a whole. When I, on the other hand, discuss particular traits (of character), such as honesty and benevolence, I use 'virtue' in a non-collective sense, which allows for 'virtue' to be used in the plural and with a definite or indefinite article.

Character(-traits) and virtue are, arguably, the most central concepts in virtue-ethical considerations, and this is why I discuss them a little lengthier already in this *Introduction*. And, as stated above, virtue in this study is perceived in the way developed by Robert M. Adams. Put briefly, according to Adams's definition, virtue is"..(P)ersisting excellence in being for the good" (Adams, 2006, 14). What the definition means will be clarified in greater detail in sections 2.3., 2.4.2. and 2.4.3. Here, for the introductory purposes, it suffices to say that according to Adams virtues are dispositions to act, or have intentions or attitudes to act, excellently for various goods.[23] In other words, a virtuous

[22]Or "substantive" (virtue) ethics, as Robert M. Adams (2006, 4) chooses to call it. As regards these distinctions in general, I fully agree with those scholars who wish to see them as in no way mutually exclusive or decisive. Georg Henrik von Wright maintains:"The idea of a sharp separation of normative ethics and meta-ethics seems to me to rest on an oversimplified and superficial view of the first and on an insufficient understanding of the nature of the second" (von Wright 1996, 3; orig. 1963).

[23]In Adams virtue, then, resides not only in traits of character, as is frequently the case in more traditional virtue conceptions, but also in other persisting inner states. What actually are the goods that a virtuous person is excellently for, I discuss in section 2.3.

person is for (morally) good things and against (morally) bad things, and what is decisive here, is his or her being for the good and against the bad morally excellently. Furthermore, excellence has to be perceived as the intrinsic quality of being for the good. Virtue typically is also of instrumental value: beneficial to other people, perhaps, but when perceived as excellences, virtues and goodness have to be seen to be worth having for their own sake. Being excellently for good things brings about worth and goodness to the life of the virtuous person, and others' lives too, regardless of the instrumental value which the respective virtues may have.

In this way the virtue conception under discussion stands clearly apart from virtue-consequentialism or trait-consequentialism which endorses virtues only, or at least mainly, as good and useful vehicles for maximizing or optimizing well-being or other desirable ends or consequences.[24] How this kind of virtue conception can be seen as a core constituent of an ethics of a profession, and how it can outweigh in a plausible way theories which concentrate on optimizing the consequences of virtuous character or well-being producing actions, is a question which I have to face. This will be done in some detail, first in *Part two* and later on in a more pragmatic manner in *Parts three* and *four*. However, in order to anticipate my strategy, I summarize, tentatively, some of the plausible reasons to rely on virtue ethics in general. As can be seen, the reasons are multilayered or at least multifaceted, and in the course of the study they will be put to test, as a result of which some of them also will become left aside and some new ones discovered. Accordingly, I will also give newly emphasized summaries of the reasons to rely on virtue in journalism ethics, for example in the end of section 4.1. and in section 4.2.1.

First, virtues are traits of (professional) character or dispositions to think and act in a typical, excellent way. In other words, they have been internalized to be habitual, though under the scrutiny of practical wisdom. This is an obvious advantage in a profession which often requires rushed thinking and action.

Second, as a supplement to the First, rule-based codes and moral theories may be conducive to the habits of following the letter of the rules rather than their spirit, which a

[24]See section 2.1.

morality based on character does not easily allow and which, of course, is to be avoided in an occupation whose legitimacy draws on the innovativity and practical wisdom of its practitioners.

Third, as already stated, as a democratic, public-serving craft, journalism is a practice to whose excellences inherently belong also many (moral) virtues.[25] One might say, perhaps, that moral virtues have been irreversibly woven into the whole of the practice of journalism. Why and how or whether this is so, I attempt to lay out in *Parts three* and *four*. However, absent the virtues, journalism as a democracy-sustaining practice may wither away, at least in the long run.

The reasons, in turn, to rely on the virtue conception of Robert M. Adams in particular, are also multiple. Nonetheless, the main advantage of following Adams in the ethics of professions is his theory's potentiality to help productively to distinguish between professional and moral excellence. There is much discussion on professional virtues in the ethics literature, short of any specification not only of whether 'virtue' is meant to refer to professional excellence only, or whether it also indicates how one is managing morally, but also of how the complex relationship between these two categories should be understood. Adams's theory or conception of virtue, however, shows that the necessary distinctions are after all not so awkward to draw, and that at the same time one can even maintain sight of what all excellences have in common. Adams, then, helps us to the view that journalism, and particularly professionally excellent journalism *may* be also morally excellent, it is virtuous. Yet, virtue is no prerequisite for random professional excellence in journalism. It may happen, and indeed frequently does happen, that journalists write fascinating and informative articles without their being virtuous.

Overall I argue, however, that only the co-existence and reciprocity of the moral virtues and the excellences of the practice permanently bring about the central vein in the essence of journalism. A good journalist has also to consider the consequences of his work, and there is no reason why she should not follow the Kantian maxim not to treat human beings as means only. Nonetheless, even rationally plausible moral principles and ethical

[25]According to Alasdair MacIntyre we have to accept as necessary components of *any* practice with internal goods and standards of excellence at least the virtues of justice, courage, and honesty (MacIntyre 1981, 178). What ”a practice” means in MacIntyre and in this study will be under discussion in Interlude One.

rules, or exploring which acts bring about the best consequences, cannot guarantee the best choices or give an unshakable foundation for moral judgment. Unfortunately, however, neither could the virtues, since they are intrinsically fragile and fragmentary, as will be discussed in 2.4.2. Nevertheless, where excellence abound, there is more hope that divergences from the mean do not proliferate.

Finally, before launching a more profound treatment of virtues and ethical theories which build on them, let us consider the moral challenges and problems faced by journalists in their occupation today, when the profession is in a state of growing flux.

1.3. Change and Professional Integrity

In case I had to choose one single dominant characteristic of the change which journalists have faced, or have been made to face, in their work recently, it would be the steadily growing urge to react immediately and even without a journalistic cause. The obvious reasons for the phenomenon are the 24-hour news-cycle practice and the online services whose potency for pause*less* dissemination of news and other contents readily transforms into a (commercial) necessity to revise, as it seems, *ad infinitum* and *ex tempore*.[26] There are, nevertheless, a multitude of other reasons, supporting the transformation of many of the practices. At a very general level of analysis there is at least in western or westernized, post-industrial societies a strong tendency to see the running of time as identical to distance: it is, as a hindrance to efficiency, to be eliminated or transcended as thoroughly as possible. In addition, there are for example the effects of the net-based social media and other online services on the expectations and attitudes of citizens as well as purchasing customers and, in addition, there are the more direct growing pressures issuing out of global market forces, especially as regards the traditional newspaper industry, which is facing major cut-backs as a result of declining demand. (Friend and Singer 2006, 28-53; Singer 2006, 7-13; Nygren 2008, 27-126; Bauman 2000; 2008; Castells 1996; O'Sullivan and Heinonen 2009, 233-247).

The challenges which journalists are facing are, then, emanating out of the process of rapid technological, cultural, as well as economic change, but in what respects are the challenges new and in what way moral? It seems that at least part of the answer lies in the

[26]For a more detailed discussion on the core characteristics and their moral and ethical implications in online journalism, see *Part five.*

fact, that the autonomy of the journalistic practice to define its own excellences and goals has been called into question in a new and possibly more forceful way than ever before. The Internet has altered the mass communication landscape in many ways and perhaps most profoundly through its inherently open, participatory nature. Clear distinctions between professional and popular communicators, as well as between producers, consumers and sources of information, merge and blend.

However, in the process the autonomy of the traditional professionals to define the ethical standards and excellences of their work has been challenged.[27] Bloggers require greater transparency and often cast doubt on the reliability of the sources or on the validity of the agenda-setting and gate-keeping roles of traditional news outlets. And so also does, increasingly, the wider public communicating through various forms of social media.[28] The technological change, combined with the logic of market-economy and the expectations of the employers and shareholders, on the other hand, also challenges journalists' professional integrity in a very direct way.[29] The questions arising include how to be accurate and how to double-check the facts when"..(T)here is no time to think" (Rosenberg and Feldman 2008, 1-32, 45-66; Singer, 2007, 79-95; Friend and Singer 2006, 12-53; 115-222; Bardoel 1996, 283-302).

However, it seems certain that there is considerable pressure for the journalistic practice

[27]The journalists' protective measures to hold on to their autonomy, however, also receive understanding. Michael Mc Devitt argues that what might appear to be a defensive orientation is, in fact, quite understandable, given numerous threats to autonomy originating from inside and outside the newsrooms. He also contends that,

> ..(A)s a conglomerate of attitudes, autonomy is reflected in resistance to publishers, revulsion toward "pack journalism", cynicism toward politicians, defensiveness toward critics in the academy, and rejection of public journalism. In practice, autonomy has produced subtle narrative techniques, such as "disdaining the news" and the use of irony, that reflect a desire to transcend restrictive conventions. Autonomy is thus a powerful, adaptive, and creative phenomenon within the profession, and its importance to practicing journalists will endure regardless of public journalism critiques (McDevitt 2003, 161; 155-164).

[28]This can be seen as a transformation of both society and citizenship. Accordingly Mark Bovens has suggested that the information society, in which we arguably now live, also calls for the recognition of a fourth group of citizens' rights in addition to the traditional civil, political, and social ones, namely the information rights. These rights would guarantee for citizens a constitutional right to government information (Bovens 2002, 317-341).

[29]Tony Harcup even goes as far as to assert that "..(T)he ethics of journalism can only be understood if scholars take into account the conditions under which journalism is practiced and produced" (Harcup 2002, 101; 101-114). He continues that ethics cannot be divorced from everyday economic realities such as understaffing, job insecurity, casualised labor, bullying, and unconstrained management prerogative. Harcup also sees as ethically relevant the tension between journalists' roles as truth-seeking professionals, as employees or factors of production within a marketplace, and as citizens. We discuss this issue later on e.g. with the help of the concepts of modularity and domain-specificity of virtue (section 2.4.2.).

to be reflectively responsive to the emerging phenomena and expectations which are transferring rapidly the cultural and technological environment in which journalists have to work. Yet at the same time the logic of practices readily allow that their goals and excellences develop and change in accordance with both their inner dynamics and the pressures from outside. What is new in the situation and causing unforeseen uncertainty, is possibly, even obviously, first, the speed with which the techno-cultural change is taking place and, second, the profundity and interminability of the ongoing renegotiation concerning the roles, autonomy and power relations in the field of communication and its subfield of journalism (Bauman 2000; 2008; Franklin 2009, 1-10; Ruusunoksa and Kunelius 2009, 33-49; O'Sullivan and Heinonen 2009, 233-247; Arsenault and Castells 2008, 488-513; Bourdieu 1996; McIntyre 1981, 176-177).

To sum it up once more, some of the major moral challenges which journalists seem to face today are:

First, the perennial one to be accurate and insightful in producing truthful and meaningful journalism. This is a moral issue since not only scholars and citizens but also journalists themselves habitually consider the production of truthful and relevant information to be their major task. Hence, for their part not to do is equivalent to breaking a promise, a general journalistic promise.[30]

Second, in close connection to the first is the one to adapt to the online environment and to an increasingly hectic profession generally, both without losing touch with the lasting excellences and virtues; and, on the other hand, remaining receptive to new moral claims which the changing communication environment is legitimately laying on practicing journalists.

Third, the one to hold on to ones professional integrity, when excellences and goods belonging to other practices are let loose in, or introduced to, the working environment of journalists. By this I refer here, among other things, to contentious issues exemplified in notions like carnevalization, commercialization, infotainment, and tabloidization.[31]

Fourth, the necessity to remain professionally self-critical for example by manifesting sensitivity to the difference between professional expediency and moral soundness.

[30] See section 4.2.

[31] All these notions refer to the arguably ongoing commercialization and trivialization of journalism. See e.g. Brants (1998, 315-335) and the classic work by Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Showbusiness* (1984).

To turn it all into even more concrete terms, we may consider one simple example. In a middle-sized Finnish daily newspaper, the editors organize a training-session on how to write good online journalism.[32] The teaching begins and the main lecturer appears to concentrate on headlines. He underlines once and again how the visitors to the online news site make their decisions on whether to stay or leave, and also whether to come back, on grounds of the attractiveness of the headlines. And, of course, the subject matter of the news story in turn contributes to the attractiveness of the headline.

So far all looks good. This clearly applies in the traditional print environment, too, thinks the audience, the journalists. But then a minority of the audience becomes uneasy. The lecturer merely seems to appreciate the sum total of the ”clics” the headlines can generate. “What about journalism?” the traditionalists start asking themselves, does all this have anything at all to do with it anymore?
And indeed, does it, and under which conditions can this kind of hunting of the clicks manifest journalistic excellence or virtue? Or might it even be that the excellences which the lecturer wanted to inculcate to his audience eventually are external to the practice of journalism? On the other hand, can one actually define what is internal or external to journalism? Nonetheless, these are some of the problems we attend to and also at least partly answer below.

However, ahead of it and in order to develop the tentative definitions further, the time has come to make more explicit what I mean by virtue ethics generally and virtues and excellences particularly. In *Part two* of this study I defend a distinctive virtue conception which is based both on the very long tradition of virtue ethical thinking and particularly on the recent work by Robert M. Adams (2006). I subsequently put the conception into use particularly in *Parts three* and *five* when exploring, on the one hand, in which ways and how successfully virtue-based considerations so far have been prominent in journalism ethics and, on the other hand, how well they could be applied in future, i.e. in online journalism. In *Part four* I widen the whole of the virtue horizon by discussing some examples and new points-of-view in order to show how excellence and virtue could have a decisive place in the ethics of journalism, and also by defending my view against some of the objections it might provoke.

[32] Here I refer to *Satakunnan Kansa*, a Finnish paper with an estimated circulation of 52000 and with 125000 daily readers.

2. VARIETIES OF VIRTUE ETHICS

The aim of the *Part two* is (1) to open a general view into contemporary virtue ethics[33] with its deep roots in ancient thinking, (2) to defend the way I choose to apply virtues in my argumentation, and (3) to open the discussion on whether there is reason to regard virtues or normative virtue theory as valuable parts of the ethics of professions. I begin by discussing, briefly, the return of virtues and virtue theory to the center of serious work in the field of ethical theory (2.1.). Although it is somewhat contentious whether virtues ever were totally absent from the conceptual arsenal of the theorists, they can at least be said to have been pushed into a minor role in the shadow of deontological and consequentalist considerations for centuries, or decades, depending on the point of view favored.

However, since 1970's virtue theory has gained growing recognition and can by now be considered even a ”third alternative” beside Kantian deontology and Utilitarian consequentialism.[34] In section 2.1., I also discuss three virtue-based approaches or broad views in more detail to illustrate the many directions in which virtue theory is developing today and also to lay the background for my argumentation in the later sections and *Parts* of this study. The approaches or theories discussed are neo-Aristotelianism, broadly understood, the theory-building of Michael Slote (Slote 1992; 1997; 2001; 2006) and virtue-consequentialism by Julia Driver (Driver 2001; 1996). Later on, in section 2.3., I also address the work of Robert M. Adams (Adams 2006; 1999) in more detail to show the merits of his virtue conception.

In section 2.2., I analyze whether it really is legitimate to talk about virtue ethics as a ”third alternative”. In this context I consult mainly the celebrated article by Gary Watson on ”ethics of virtue” as he chooses to call the virtue tradition, and I also refer back to section 2.1. (Watson 1990, 449-69). One of the conclusions I draw from that discussion is that it is not necessary for virtue ethics to become accepted beside consequentialism and deontology as an equally renowned alternative in order for it to be powerfully and

[33]By ”contemporary” I mean in this context the work carried out during the last fifty years, yet with a clear emphasis on the very last decades of that period.

[34]Deontology, consequentialism and virtue ethics, each with their innumerable varieties, do not of course comprise all ethical theory-building. However, I follow the standard procedure in the literature to discuss virtue ethics in comparison with deontology and consequentialism in particular. In *Part three* we nevertheless see that also e.g. contractualism has figured and still figures high in the ethics of journalism.

legitimately used in applied ethics generally, and in the ethics of journalism particularly. Virtue theory and virtue ethics clearly offer a distinctive and defensible viewpoint from which to consider moral phenomena and are in this way also able to give theoretical support to the application of virtues in the ethics of professions. In 2.3. I move on to more detailed analyses of virtue conception(s), and here I draw heavily on Robert M. Adams, as anticipated in the *Introduction*.

From the work of Adams I embrace particularly the large array of psychological modalities within which he allows virtue and excellence to present it, and the many subsequent modes of action into which it potentially leads in our lives. Accordingly, I shall argue in 2.4., that the emerging virtue conception corresponds to some of the deepest intuitions we share in our moral deliberations and justifications. Broad scope, however, does not entail moralization or moral elitism. On the contrary, it merely shows the moral point of view to be our daily bread; it is something we all share and should (and frequently do) take into consideration in our daily chores.[35]

The main task, however, in 2.4. will be to face the major challenges from outside the virtue tradition. I begin by briefly outlining in 2.4.1. some of the standard objections and counter-objections to the plausibility of virtue ethics, particularly as a resource to guide effectively our actions in the morally right direction. Then I go on to address what are, in my opinion, the two most prominent challenges to virtues and virtue theory, namely, the so-called situationist challenge and the view that virtue theory is not to be regarded as an ethical theory at all. In the issuing discussion I aim to show that even though situationism succeeds in supplementing and altering the way we traditionally comprehend human character and virtues, it nevertheless fails to show them absent or representing misguided theoretical or practical thinking (2.4.2.). Likewise, I gather evidence in 2.4.3. to the effect that virtue-based ethics indeed deeply concerns the moral dimension of human life. A virtuous agent strives to further the good of others, too. As a matter of fact, virtue cannot even be plausibly construed absent the agent being empathetic, as becomes tentatively obvious already in section 2.1.

In Interlude One, I finally summarize my considerations on virtue theory and virtues by

[35]I.e., moral deliberation is ”but” one dimension within our daily task of practical thinking.

giving an example of a well-argued virtue ethical approach to the ethics of professions, developed by Justin Oakley and Dean Cocking (Oakley and Cocking 2001, 39-137). I lay out the core elements of their approach by drawing a comparison between the position I embrace and the one they hold. In this way I wish to lead the reader out of the theoretical considerations of *Part two* into the more concrete concerns of *Part three*, where I discuss various, both non-virtue ethical and virtue ethical approaches, to the ethics of journalism.

However, where my position seems divergent from that of Oakley and Cocking is, in the first place, the way in which I, loyally to Adams's approach, explicate the cohabitation of virtues and other excellences, both of which are certainly amply needed in every profession and practice. In the second place, I see reasons to believe that situationism's challenge to virtue theory is worth more attention than Oakley and Cocking readily allow to it. And, finally, although I consider virtue theory's plausibility and potentiality to be decisive when compared to its deontological and consequentalist rivals, I nevertheless endorse a more pluralistic view than Oakley and Cocking see reason to explicate. There is a place for obligations and rules, too, in the ethical codes of professions and there are very good reasons to be reflective on the consequences of the deeds of the journalists. However, only the virtuous practitioner can be hailed as an exemplar of a good professional.

2.1. The Past and the Present of Virtue Theory

G.E.M. Anscombe's article ”Modern Moral Philosophy”, published in 1958, was the parting shot of the revitalization of virtue ethics (Anscombe 1958, 1-19; Adams 2006, 4-5; Crisp 1996, 1-2; Crisp and Slote 1997, 1-5; Darwall 2003, 4, n. 2; Oakley 1996, 128; Oakley and Cocking 2001, 7; Statman 1997, 3). Anscombe asserts in her paper that the concepts of moral obligation and moral duty, as well as moral right and wrong, should be abandoned by modern moral philosophy, because they belong to a law-conception of ethics, which does not make sense without a belief in divine commands (Anscombe 1958, 1). Anscombe then moves on to suggest that there is, after all, an alternative way to do ethics, namely, to follow the example of Aristotle (Anscombe 1958, 7-8); and, of course, the core concepts in Aristotelian ethics are (traits of) character and virtue.

Since Anscombe's brisk attack on the deontological tradition in particular, the number of

her followers-in-spirit has grown, in the 60's and 70's hesitatingly, but later on steadily, to allow for a comprehensive and detailed analysis of various directions into which virtue theory and virtue ethics could and should be developed (e.g. Crisp 1996, Crisp and Slote 1997, Darwall 2003, Statman 1997). One prominent feature that characterizes these developments so far is that Aristotle is vital and important, time and again. Hence the broad term neo-Aristotelianism to refer to the work of those theorists who have left recognizable in their writing at least considerable parts of the structure of Aristotle's theory.

In the second place, there is by now a tendency to rather to look after similarities than discrepancies between the great traditions or, on the other hand, upon plausible and decisive grounds, to merge one theory into another (i.e. Driver 2001, Nussbaum 1999, O'Neill 1996).[36] As an exemplar of the emphasis on convergence, we address below the work of Julia Driver, who in this study argues as a consequentalist, but with a place in her theory for virtue, too (Driver 1996, 111-130; 2001). In this broad vein, there are also eminent philosophers, like Robert Audi, who look after thoroughly pluralist views, at least on the level of application (Audi 2007, 3-56; 2004). And, finally, there has been a lot of interest to do applied virtue ethics.[37] Since one of the standard arguments against the ethics of virtue has been so far that it fails to give advice on how to act in morally disturbing situations, the lively activity towards application, for example in the field of ethics of professions at least shows that a growing number of scholars simply find it plausible that virtue ethics on the contrary also has ample potential in daily practical decision-making.

2.1.1. Neo-Aristotelianism

However, the legacy handed down by Anscombe to her followers have been taken care of

[36]On the other hand, in applied ethics in general and in the ethics of professions in particular it is of course also common merely to take advantage of the key conceptual resources of divergent theories, without pursuing any kind of theoretical merger. Some of the works we concentrate on in *Part three* of this study belong under this heading. As a rather lucid example of such work outside the confines of journalism ethics, see e.g. Pursey P. M. A. R. Heugens, Muel Kaptein and (Hans) van Oosterhout (2006, 391-411).

[37]In addition to and ahead of journalism ethics virtue has figured e.g. in medical, and, maybe a little surprisingly, in business ethics. Instructive ”mainstream” texts in business ethics are e.g. Robert C. Solomon (1992, 317-339; 2004, 1021-1043) and John Dobson (2008, 43-50). For a more individual application see e.g. Miquel Bastons (2008, 389-400). Standard virtue ethical treatments in medical ethics are e.g. James Drane (1988) and Edmund Pellegrino and David Thomasma (1993).

and pushed further. For decades part of this work has been labeled neo-Aristotelianism (NA). To my knowledge, there is no generally accepted definition for NA, for good reasons, perhaps, but I use it when referring to contemporary work which leans at least considerably on the structure of Aristotle's theory.[38] I also take it that work both in virtue theory and in normative virtue ethics can be labeled as neo-Aristotelian. Nevertheless, some of the essential features of NA would then be (i) that an action is considered right if and only if it is what an agent with *a virtuous character* would do in the circumstances (e.g. Hursthouse 1996, 22; Oakley 1996, 129-138). This is a claim about the primacy of character in the justification of right action. In place of or in addition to 'character' we could also have 'motives', 'intentions', or even 'inner states'. The claim reveals, in any case, a central feature of virtue ethics overall (VE), but does not show the difference between NA and some other versions of VE. Nevertheless, (i) is also central in NA.

As a more characteristic feature of NA, (ii), the content of a virtuous character is determined by what one is or needs in order to be a flourishing human being, living an *eudaimonistic*[39] life; this might be contrasted with, as an example of a non-neo-Aristotelian variety of VE, Michael Slote's suggestion of an approach in which virtuous character is grounded in our commonsense views about what character-traits we typically find admirable or intuitively see indispensable in modern densely populated and firmly connected world (Aristotle 1975, 1-20; Hursthouse 2001, 9-10; Slote 2001, vii).[40] Moreover, (iii), in NA, character-traits and activity issuing from them are regarded as together partly *constitutive* of eudaimonia; i.e. virtues are components of, not (mere) instruments to, a good human life.

In this way, the good life is not a passive external consequence of acting virtuously, but the eudaimonist good already constitutively resides in the virtuous activity itself. Aristotle thought, namely, that humans flourish by living virtuous lives, because it is only in doing so that they exercise the humanly characteristic activity, that is, the rational capacity of

[38] Aristotle of course himself drew on an existing and lively tradition of virtue-centered thinking, but on the ground that his Ethics still has immense status and influence I readily allow him alone to represent the classical approach to virtue in this study. For a more comprehensive view see e.g. Julia Annas's *The Morality of Happiness* (1993) or Sarah Broadie's *Ethics with Aristotle* (1991).

[39] The proper English spelling would be "eudaemonistic", but I prefer to follow Martha C. Nussbaum (2001, 31, note 23) in retaining to the spelling that is closer to the original Greek one.

[40] Alongside Hippocrates G. Apostle's 1975 English translation I have used Simo Knuuttila's 1989 Finnish and Patricio de Azcárate's 1978 Spanish translations of The Nicomachean Ethics.

human beings to navigate in their lives excellently (Aristotle 1975, 21-56; Annas 1993, 47-114; Nussbaum 1986, 322-327; 290-336). (Neo)-Aristotelian virtue is, then, active and grounded in rationality. As is implicit in (iii), and in order to make the notion NA substantial in relation to Aristotle proper, it is of importance to maintain that the virtues do not necessarily, however, have to be seen as constitutive of eudaimonia or grounded in characteristically human life, but for instance grounded simply in what is good for human beings as individuals or as a community, i.e. what is beneficial to them. This kind of approach has been developed by one of the eminent neo-Aristotelians, Philippa Foot, whose arguments will be introduced below (Foot 1978, 1-3; 2001, 38-51; 81-98).

Even as a tentative sketch on NA, the preceding items may need some supplements. First, it might be useful to see as a separate feature (iv), although it is implicit in (i), that in VE *goodness is prior* to rightness. That is, the notion of rightness can be defined only in relation to goodness. And, further, (v), that virtues are and bring about plural, *intrinsic* good(s). What this means in detail, is under discussion in 2.3. However, to put it briefly here, intrinsic goodness means that virtues are valuable for their own sake, rather than being instrumentally valuable, i.e., valuable as a means to promoting some other values. Finally, to conclude this descriptive sketch, (vi), acting from virtue means not only giving the appearances of virtue, for example by way of helping ones neighbor on the motivation to make one look like a good neighbor. To be virtuous one has to be disposed to act both *for certain reasons* and *in a certain manner*. Helping out of virtue means that one wants to help, without hesitation and feeling sorry when in some way barred from helping (Aristotle 1975, 33-34; Hursthouse 2001, 11).

One important question that I have neglected so far is, whether and in what way the features (i) to (vi) are adequate to distinguish NA (and VE) from deontological and consequentalist theories. Item (i) for example might quite well be compatible with the Kantian virtue conception and I will address the issue at some length when addressing the work of Julia Driver. However, before proceeding beyond the limits of virtue theory as defined above, I first discuss Michael Slote who has carried out extensive and multifarious work within the (neo-Aristotelian) virtue tradition, although by now also he has taken a course that seems to have led him outside the confines of virtue theory. In what follows, I concentrate on how he argues, first, for his rejection of NA and, second, on what grounds he seems to be rejecting the whole of VE, too. In that way, we can fill in

our picture of NA and also widen our horizons on VE generally.

2.1.2. Michael Slote and Pure Sentimentalism

Originally Michael Slote could have aptly been considered one of the most prominent neo-Aristotelians. His major contribution at that time, *From Morality to Virtue* (1992), works clearly in a neo-Aristotelian vein, but the following years bring about a change to his approach that culminates in *Morals from Motives* (2001), in which Slote rejects NA and embraces a sentimentalist account of VE (Slote 1992; 1995, 83-101; 2001). In order to see the crucial points of Slote's criticism of NA, and to shed in this way more light on the essence of NA, we have first to address how he develops new distinctions with which to analyze virtue ethics. Slote begins by arguing that virtue theories can be separated into agent-focused, agent-prior, or agent-based (Slote 1995, 83-84; 2001, 3-10). Neo-Aristotelian ethical systems are agent-focused or agent-prior, but, in contrast to them, sentimentalist theories are agent-based.

2.1.2.1. Slote's Agent-basing

According to Slote, a theory is agent-focused if there is an emphasis in it on the moral importance of the moral agent and her character-traits over the importance of the rightness or wrongness of her actions. And, as is implicit in the above discussion on the characteristic features of NA/VE, all virtue theories are at least agent-focused. What, then, makes some of them agent-prior, is that they not only emphasize the importance of the moral agent's character-traits over her actions, but additionally take the moral worth of actions be *derivative* from the agent's character-traits or motivations. In a more schematic way, when agent-prior theories see the moral worth of an agent's actions to issue most of all from her motivations (or character-traits or some inner states), agent-focused theories can frequently see moral worth reside also, even for a considerable part, in the agent's very actions. Slote reminds us that Aristotle characterizes the virtuous person as someone who *sees* or perceives what is good or right to do in any given situation. And this implies that the virtuous individual does what is virtuous because it is a virtuous – for example a benevolent – thing to do, rather than its being the case that what it is virtuous to do has this status because the virtuous person actually has chosen it; it is virtuous because of her virtuous motivations (Slote 2001, 5; Aristotle 1975, 108-110; Annas 1993, 89-90;

Nussbaum 1986, 303-306; MacIntyre 1988, 115-117; Sherman 1989, 28-29; 28-44).[41]

Finally, agent-based theories are a sub-category of agent-prior theories. A virtue ethical theory is agent-based in case it "..(T)reats the moral or ethical status of actions as *entirely* derivative from independent and fundamental ethical/aretaic facts (or claims) about the motives, dispositions, or inner life of moral individuals" (Slote, 2001, 7). To be sure, Slote's typology is somewhat awkward because on first reading it seems rather to have a resemblance to a continuum than that to a system with mutually exclusive categories. On the other hand, contrariwise to agent-focused and agent-prior theories, agent-based theories have a definite position on that continuum: they are situated at one of the far ends.

However, Slote further distinguishes between two possible approaches to agent-based ethics, which he labels "warm" and "cool". Whether a theory is warm or cool depends on which character-traits it hails as most admirable or virtuous. Theories advocating excellences like strength, health, and inner harmony Slote classifies as cool. Their origins are to be found particularly in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. In warm agent-based theories, on the other hand, the central and most admirable virtues are the ones needed in furthering altruistic behavior, like benevolence, empathy, kindness, and an attitude of caring. The inspiration for warm agent-basing Slote finds in the classical tradition of great British moralists, especially in James Martineu and also to some extent in David Hume and Francis Hutcheson (Hutcheson 2003, 51-62; Hume 1998).

And now, equipped with these distinctions, Slote can move on to explicate his criticism of NA. First, he sees agent-based theories as the purest and most theoretical forms of virtue ethics, because in them the virtues form ground-level, fundamental criteria for evaluating the moral worth of actions. Yet this is not entirely fatal to the plausibility of theory-building in Aristotelian vein, because the cool approach to agent-basing also maintains the connection, as stated above. However, secondly, Slote finds it implausible that notions such as the harmony of the soul or the agent's health or strength can promise co-existence

[41] Slote seems to find whole persons, their motivations, as well as their acts as potentially virtuous, which may be regarded as somewhat inconsistent or misleading. I prefer to describe one's moral good or worth - producing inner states as virtues, and the one having that kind of inner states as a (potentially) virtuous person. Acts in turn may *show* virtue, yet at the same time they may not be right as will be discussed in section 2.4.1.

with such virtues as kindness, benevolence, and altruism. He contends that while Aristotle seems aware of the value of warm virtues, a cool virtue theory like his cannot properly support them. And why the warm virtues are crucial in a theory of virtue, is, thirdly, because "..(A)lthough Aristotle mentions the fact that we tend to praise lovers of humankind, his theory of morality doesn't seem to require a concern for human beings generally, and for any moral philosophy seeking to deal with the increasingly connected world we live in, this lack is very telling" (Slote 2001, vii). Steven Darwall for example strongly agrees with Slote and considers Aristotle's virtue ethics not a moral but a perfectionist theory (Darwall 2003, 1-4).

The reason for Slote to reject NA and embrace a sentimentalist variant of VE is, then, the fact that he finds the warm or sentimentalist approaches the only plausible ways in which a general humanitarianism can function as a ground-level element of moral thought and theory-building. By ground-level, or "ground-floor", he refers to agent-basing which does not call for *eudaimonia* or other, more fundamental concepts to legitimize the status of altruistic virtues, of which Slote takes benevolence and caring for others to be the most fundamental and plausible ones, at least in a densely connected world like ours. In this way, it is possible to see in Slote one well-argued answer to the above-stated question as whether VE can realistically be considered a moral theory at all, with its substantial lack of emphasis on virtues having to do with altruism, empathy, and connectedness.

However, we return to this possibility in greater detail in 2.4.3. Meanwhile, it seems reasonable – before of exploring in what way Slote has recently moved still further on in his theory-building – to investigate how decisive are the grounds on which his rejection of NA actually rests. Here we can find Eric Silverman's paper instructive (Silverman 2008, 507-518). In it Silverman works on two fronts. First, he endeavors to show that the Aristotelian framework is, after all, compatible with the claim that properly functioning, virtuous, and flourishing human beings *necessarily* develop and act on warm virtues, too. Secondly, Silverman argues that Slote is not capable of providing detailed and nuanced moral evaluations, because his theory loses valuable resources when constructing its basis merely to support merely a few warm virtues (Silverman 2008, 510-518).

2.1.2.2. The Problems with Agent-basing

In order to show that at least a neo-Aristotelian framework can be developed to be responsive to, or even to show the necessity for warm virtues, Silverman refers to the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, and especially to his *Dependent Rational Animals* (1999), in which MacIntyre, indeed, argues for and construes warm virtues as necessary for human well-being (MacIntyre 1999, 119-128). In addition, and to avoid question begging, Silverman also finds evidence other than the testimony of writers already happily working in the Aristotelian vein. He points to certain concepts and results, within both empirical psychology and popular use of English language, which would have us find the warm virtues necessary for personal flourishing.

Psychologists have developed diagnoses such as Antisocial Personality Disorder and Narcissistic Personality Disorder to describe the complete failure to care for others as mental illness, and, obviously, people who are mentally ill are not flourishing, Silverman argues. In the same line, there are colloquial expressions connecting an agent's lack of concern for others, even for the near and dear, with her being short of flourishing. In such cases the agent can be described as immature, callous, or shallow. When Silverman estimates his own arguments he admits that the accuracy of his claims might be challenged, but that "..(I)t is indisputable that within ethics, psychology and the English language there are conceptions of well-being requiring an agent to possess the warm virtues to flourish that are widely seen as conceptually plausible" (Silverman 2008, 511).

As a further reason for embracing NA, Silverman sees its ability to accommodate a broader range of virtues than does Slote's sentimentalist theory. Slote's theory reduces all of morality to some warm virtues or motivations, which makes it unable to evaluate other morally relevant character traits. In addition, warm agent-basing seems to lose grip of the details and nuances of morally relevant situations and their evaluations. I may, for example, have good motives to help my neighbor, but absolutely fail to accomplish anything useful at all. Now, according to Slote's warm agent-basing my failing does not amount to diminishing the worth of my benevolent motives, in spite of the clumsiness and sheer harmfulness of my deeds. I am to be admired because my motives were genuinely good and sincere.

However, Silverman contends that there is much more detail to attend to in case we consider the situation in a neo-Aristotelian framework. I may be benevolent, but short of practical wisdom, which is in NA frequently regarded as a major virtue. Therefore, my good motivation may render me virtuous but not fully virtuous. In sum, agents who lack practical wisdom and strength of will perhaps, to carry out good motivations effectively, lack excellences with significant moral relevance and ramifications.

Slote, on his part, as may easily be expected, has been aware of this kind of criticism as predictable. He makes clear that he understands that there may seem to be something awfully wrong in an ethical theory which does not seem to render morally relevant what one actually does, if only one's motives are admirable. Part of Slote's defense is grounded in his believing that someone who has genuine concern for the well-being of his neighbor does make every effort to find relevant and effective ways to help her, and in that way heedless deeds or inactivity are not to be expected. Slote says that he does not utter an empirical claim here, but that it is a criterion, a constitutive element of genuine concern, to do one's best to help, and if one does her best, she cannot be criticized for acting immorally, however badly things eventually turn out (Slote, 2001, 34). For now, I leave the dilemma but return to it in 2.4.1. where I will address the standard objections which VE usually has to face, particularly from the deontological and consequentalist camps.

Whether or not Slote has been able to convince his neo-Aristotelian colleagues and other readers, he certainly has not given up his project. On the contrary, he has continued to embrace and develop agent-basing with the result that the theory is beginning to take a firm shape of an ethics of care. At the time of finishing the *Morals from Motives* (Slote 2001, esp. 63-140) Slote still thought that he had two available alternatives with agent-basing: first, as an approach with impartialistic morality as universal benevolence and, second, as a partialistic ethic of caring. At the beginning of the millennium Slote considered impartialistic benevolence more potential and plausible, but a period of intensive research on some principal findings of the psychology literature on empathy and moral development made him believe that there is a way to (re)construct an ethics of caring as a total approach to ethics and political morality.

Throughout *The Ethics of Care and Empathy* (2007) Slote argues that distinctions of empathy seem to mark or correspond to plausible moral distinctions. By that he broadly

means, for example, that what we find morally worse also tends to go more against the flow of fully developed human empathy (Slote 2007, 8, 10-20). In other words, it seems that Slote seeks forcefully to defend the position that an adequate philosophical account in the area of ethics also has to respond to the best work done within the discipline of psychology and other research, and also reacts according to this position.[42] Whether his kind of ethics of care can be seen as a subcategory of ethics of virtue seems unlikely, yet Slote leaves the issue somewhat open in his discussion (Slote 2007). However, the issue can be considered highly controversial in general and there also seems to be no need to try to settle it within the context of this study (Okin 1996, 211-230; Halwani 2003, 161-192; Sander-Staudt 2006, 21-39). Rather, I now turn to address Julia Driver's virtue conception, which clearly positions us outside the confines of both NA and VE as defined above (Driver 1996, 111-130; 2001).

2.1.3. Julia Driver and Virtue as an Instrument

Julia Driver's argument is relevant in the context of this work for many reasons. First, it is time for us to start to delineate the challenges aimed by consequentialism and deontology at VE. Second, Driver is able to issue a comprehensive and well-argued challenge to NA from outside the whole of VE, *yet* without depriving virtues of their substantial importance. And, finally, Driver endeavors to attack particularly the intellectualism of Aristotelian systems, which gives us an opportunity to discuss *practical wisdom*, a central feature in NA, which we have so far neglected.

Driver argues that in the neo-Aristotelian conception of virtue the moral excellence is located much too decisively in cognitive excellence. She maintains that Aristotle held that a central feature of virtue is correct perception. Moreover, correct perception means here that the virtuous agent is one who correctly sees or perceives which are the morally relevant features of a situation and, in addition, what, then, is the virtuous thing to do (Driver 2001, viii-ix; Aristotle 1975, 108-110; Annas 1993, 89-90; Broadie 1991, 179-265; Nussbaum 1986, 303-306; Sherman 1989, 28-29; 28-44). Moreover, Driver goes on to argue that NA implicitly involves the idea that it is foolish to rely on rules, because it is always an enormously complex task to see how one should act and it is, accordingly,

[42]This seems to be a view he shares with Robert M. Adams, whose virtue conception is a foundational element of my argumentation in this study. See sections 2.3. and 2.4.

impossible to generate codes that can fully cover the continuously changing terrain, with all its details.[43]

It seems that here Driver also launches an indirect challenge to what I argue in the *Introduction*, namely, that it is indispensible or unavoidable to rely on an ethics of virtue in a profession like journalism in which rapidly changing situations and their details and, accordingly, the need for rushed thinking abounds. However, Driver goes on to suggest that we should totally abandon the highly intellectualist (neo)-Aristotelian view of virtue and instead adopt a consequentalist approach in which virtue is simply a character trait that *systematically* produces good consequences. Driver favors consequentialism at least partly because she finds some ”virtues of ignorance” to be counterexamples to accounts of virtue which hold that moral virtue must involve practical wisdom.

Driver's approach in her *Uneasy Virtue* (2001) is, thus, in one way more radical but in another more conventional than Slote's. When Slote radicalizes virtue ethics internally by relying entirely on one or two foundational virtues in locating moral worth, Driver makes an exit from the main scene altogether. At the same time, both are highly suspicious of NA's intellectualism and its conception of practical wisdom. Slote has to move it from its central Aristotelian place to make certain that the ethical status of actions is always entirely derivative from fundamental aretaic facts or claims about the motives or dispositions of moral agents.

Driver, on her part, finds evidence to the effect that there are virtues whose sheer existence depends on ignorance, rather than on rationality or intelligence as is normally maintained in relation to *phronesis*, i.e. to practical wisdom. And this gives her reason to suggest our retreating to consequentialism. Driver's interpretation of Aristotle's account of *phronesis*, indeed, is fairly well in tune with standard ones. *Phronesis* can, according to Driver, and many other theorists, be roughly characterized as practical good sense. It requires of the agent that he deliberates well, both in the sense that the end of the deliberation is good and the reasoning involved is fluent and is backed by virtues. The agent must be able to consider the relevant facts, weigh them, detect alternatives, and

[43]Accordingly one primarily considers vocational ethics codes public relations, ideology or a way to inform the public on the ideals of a vocation or a profession. I already touched on the issue in *Introduction* and address it in greater detail in section 4.2.

finally find the right decision (or at least one of them). Hence, a virtuous action is one performed knowingly and voluntarily, that is, it manifests a choice. (Driver 2001, 1-15, see also e.g. Aristotle 1975; 101-115; Sherman 1989, 4-7; 28-43; Broadie 1991, 179-265; Annas 1993, 87-95; McDowell 1979, 331-350).

Driver takes modesty to be her paradigm virtue of ignorance. She considers three accounts of modesty and comes to favor the one which takes modesty to be underestimation. The modest person unknowingly underestimates her self-worth to some limited degree. She has to do it unknowingly, because otherwise she would not be modest but only be trying to give a modest appearance. And if she would underestimate her self-worth dramatically, she would not be modest either but exhibit the vice of self-deprecation (Driver 2001, 16-19). However, Driver's analysis aims to make clear that in order to be modest one has to think herself less deserving than she actually is, and in this way the virtue of modesty seems to rest upon an epistemic defect.[44] It is ignorance, then, that makes modesty possible, not practical wisdom. Now, in defense of VE, it is not sufficient to simply argue that modesty is not a virtue after all. It is, and what is more, Driver has some other, though arguably not quite as valid examples of virtues of ignorance as is modesty. Still, I do not see that modesty as a virtue of ignorance gives a reason to reject VE, or even NA.

One point is that the epistemic defect in modesty concerns only the modest person herself. It is only self-worth or self-image that is (to a minor degree) defective in her reasoning. It does not seem of necessity to impair her ability to be practically wise in other contexts. As a matter of fact, it even seems essential in exhibiting modesty that one is cognitively able and virtuous in general or at least in some respects. In case Driver is right, one cannot be modest, if there is nothing one can underestimate in oneself. This seems to be precisely the reason why modesty is/has been widely considered a virtue: the modest person gives anything and anybody else their due, maybe even according to the Aristotelian mean, except herself. Modesty seems to underline the sincerity of all those evaluations and actions of hers which do not concern herself since there obviously is no (cannot be any?) reason for the modest person to discredit others (i.e., at least *as* the

[44] One might of course argue that Driver errs in her analysis. Being modest might simply amount to not wanting to make a big fuss of oneself, even when people would expect it. In such a case one also might regard herself as modest and be right about it. Hence, modesty would not rest on self-underestimation. Nevertheless, in the following I opt for a strategy to try to beat Driver on her home-court.

modest one). Modesty enhances trust. It gives a signal to the effect that this (modest) ego certainly is not on the verge of self-indulgence and self-absorption. Modesty may be considered to exhibit a kind of supererogation in avoiding self-indulgence, a legitimate or even hoped-for tolerance in following the principle of the mean.

The argument above does not refute Driver's argumentation. There really seem to be virtues of ignorance and they challenge to some degree the logic of practical wisdom and the force of the principle of the mean, as Aristotle laid them out. On the other hand, practical wisdom *always* comes in degrees and is frail and domain-specific as all virtue, as will be discussed in sections 2.3. and 2.4.2.2. Perhaps being modest simply means that one carries a permanent or long-standing defectiveness in estimating her self-worth. According to the virtue conception I shall shortly start examining, phenomena like this are to be expected. Virtue is incomprehensive and inconsonant, yet real. At any rate, I have already addressed one strategy to avoid the implications of Driver's challenge to VE without rejecting it altogether, namely, the strategy of Michael Slote. It seems, accordingly, that in addition to the virtues of ignorance, Driver must have other reasons to favor consequentialism.[45]

However, what Driver's discussion amounts to in the end is, that she defines virtue as "..(A) character-trait that produces more good (in the actual world) than not systematically*"* (Driver, 2001, 82). Being systematic is vital for Driver, because it is her solution to moral luck.[46] One is virtuous even though she fails to produce good in certain particular situations, perhaps due to bad luck, in case her actions are good-producing when considered in the long run. Driver favors objective consequentialism, too, which she takes to be a form of "evaluational externalism". Evaluational externalism is the view that the moral quality or worth of actions or character of a person is determined by factors external to agency, such as actual consequences. A paradigmatic case of evaluational *internalism*, contrariwise, would be the agent-basing of Michael Slote, in which the moral

[45]Of course, Driver is unable to accept Slote's internalism, either. And she has doubts whether in the end Slote can do without external indicators while determining which motivations are acceptable or admirable (Driver 2001, 59).

[46]Luck and tragedy is included in the major issues in modern ethical theory, too. Within the confines of this study I, however, found it reasonable not to give any separate treatment to them. One classical and renowned contribution on luck is Bernard Williams' *Moral Luck* (1981). See also Nafsika Athanassoulis (2005, 265-276), who discusses moral luck as regards the theory building of Michael Slote, and Martha C. Nussbaum's *The Fragility of Goodness* (1986), which sheds light on how the ancients deliberated on moral luck and human tragedy.

quality of one's actions and character are determined by factors internal to agency, i.e. by her motives. Driver on her part takes Kant to be a good candidate for an evaluational internalist because Kant puts so much emphasis on will (Driver 2001, 68-69). In Kant's view the action has moral worth if and only if the agent consciously willed in accordance with the Categorical Imperative. In this way the will's goodness is intrinsic, to which notion and also to Kant and deontology we return in 2.3.

Driver, finally, also lays stress on the objectivity of the kind of consequentialism she wants to embrace. This she does in order to avoid the problems generated by more subjective views of consequentialism. One of these is the problem of the apparently self-defeating quality of Utilitarianism. The theory urges one to pursue the greatest overall amount of happiness, yet in pursuing it one seems to destroy goods that are intrinsic to happiness. A devotedly Utilitarian journalist might for example feel forced to tell lies and deceive in order to acquire and disclose information that is useful for her readership. And since vice is counter-productive of happiness, at least in virtue ethical terms, the journalist would downgrade, if not destroy, goods that are intrinsic to happiness.[47]

Nevertheless, I have argued that, first, there are many interesting developments going on in the field of virtue ethics and, secondly, that at the same time virtue theory does indeed not comprise a coherent and clearly demarcated, uncontroversial domain of scholarship. Yet, what are Julia Driver and Michael Slote rejecting, when they reject NA, and at least Driver also VE, as defined above? What are, fundamentally, the core elements or the decisive distinctions within NA and VE. This is the question we attempt to probe further by discussing in greater detail the structure of virtue theory in the following section.

2.2. The Primacy of Character and Virtues

At the time when the revival of virtue ethics had gathered some impetus, deliberations on the possible shortcomings of virtue theory and virtue ethics also became commonplace. In this vein Robert B. Louden launched a critique on virtue ethics as it was as a normative theory at the beginning of 1980's (Louden 1984, 227-236). Louden tracked down the most substantive problems in VE to be its poor ability to give guidance to action and the

[47] The issue will be developed in a more detailed manner in section 2.3.

epistemological problem concerning the question of who is virtuous. ”(V)irtue theory is not a problem-oriented or quandary approach to ethics: it speaks of rules and principles only in a derivative manner”, Louden summarizes his structural analyses and then goes on to describe how he sees it as unintelligent to ”..(S)ay things like: the virtuous person (who acts for the sake of the noble) is also one who recognizes that all mentally deficient eight-month-old fetuses should (or should not) be aborted..”(Louden 1984, 232).

The want of intelligence, says Louden, stems precisely from the derivative kind of oughts in VE. The oughts of VE seem to be frequently all too vague and unhelpful for agents who have not (yet) acquired the requisite moral perception and sensitivity. VE, therefore, cannot be expected to be ”..(O)f great use in applied ethics and casuistry”, Louden contends (Louden 1984, 232). Moreover, when discussing the epistemological problem concerning VE's ability to explicate who in fact *is* virtuous, Louden finds himself pouring skepticism over the very core of VE. While vagueness in action-guidance merely undermines VE's usefulness in applied ethics, indeterminateness in its ability to sort out who is virtuous threatens to call into question even the very existence or at least the theoretical independence of VE. We address these lines of thought in more detail in section 2.4.1. below.

However, criticism accumulated during the 80's until it finally was answered in equally systematic ways. One of the major theorists who worked for years in this vein is Rosalind Hursthouse (Hursthouse 1991, 223-246; 1996, 19-36; 2001). She has concentrated extensively on those problems which Louden discusses. According to Hursthouse a good normative theory must in part be determined by premises about what is worthwhile and important in life, truly good and so on. She asks whether we want to seek advice from persons who say that they do not know anything about such matters, or who claim that although they had opinions about them, these were likely to be wrong but that this does not matter since they would not play a central role in the advice they gave (Hursthouse 1991, 231).

In this way Hursthouse seeks to show that the very premises of deontological and consequentialist theories (also) have difficulties in fulfilling the conditions of adequacy as

normative, action-guiding theories.[48] And, as if she were reacting to Louden's exact argumentation (without making it explicit) she also endeavors to apply her approach to the ethical complexities of abortion. Hursthouse begins by noting that abortion is commonly discussed either as a question of the status of the fetus, whether or not it is the sort of thing that may or may not be justifiably killed, or in relation to women's rights. And in case this framework determines all there is to say on abortion, Hursthouse continues, no wonder, virtue theory does not seem to have much to contribute.

On the other hand, if one puts all questions about the justice or injustice of laws to one side and supposes only that women have a moral right to do as they choose with their own bodies nothing follows from this supposition about the morality of abortion, according to virtue ethics. That is, one can be cruel or callous when exercising a moral right. So, Hursthouse concludes, whether women have a moral right to abortion is irrelevant within virtue ethics[49], for it bears no relevancy to the question whether one is acting virtuously or viciously or neither when terminating her pregnancy. In this way Hursthouse endeavors to show that virtue theory not only has its say in applied ethics but can even contribute to a deeper understanding of old ethical problems (Hursthouse 1991, 231-246).

In considering the epistemology of virtues and of virtuous persons Hursthouse adopts the same strategy as above. She first discusses the epistemological difficulties which both deontology and consequentialism have with their major premises. She then points out that the structure of specification of right action in all of the major theories, with their respective weaknesses, is very much alike. Many versions of deontology, for example, can be laid down with first providing a specification of right action – saying that action is right if and only if it is in accordance with a correct moral rule or principle – and then moving on to specify further what are the correct rules.
In the same vein virtue ethics first specifies an action as right if and only if it is what a virtuous agent would characteristically do in the circumstances. It then goes on to specify a virtuous agent as one who has and exercises the virtues and, finally, to specify virtues as certain character traits or motives or inner states. Hursthouse also maintains that, contrary

[48] Hursthouse refers to the fact that also rules and comparison of consequences may fail to give any clear-cut advice in particular, morally problematic situations.
[49] Note that this is Hursthouse's view. It makes good sense to argue that, in addition to virtues, one also needs rights to do justice to all of our ethical intuitions e.g. as regards abortion. See section 2.4.1.

to what Louden and many others argue, it is simply false that incompletely virtuous agents would not have any knowledge at all of who are virtuous and how they opt to choose. One practically cannot avoid being exposed to situations in which virtue is displayed, discussed and taught. People are frequently considered benevolent, courageous or unjust in common daily parlance without it being necessary to clarify what the words mean or whether the meaning has a moral dimension, too (Hursthouse 1996, 19-25).

2.2.1. Gary Watson's Ethics of Virtue

Hursthouse favors NA and does not address the explicit problems that for example agent-based virtue ethics face in action-guidance (e.g. van Zyl 2009b, 50-69). I also do not discuss them until in 2.4.1., but instead I now wish to turn to Gary Watson's celebrated article in order to explore further and on a more general and abstract level, the identity and originality of virtue ethics, and the problems Louden and Hursthouse discuss above (Watson 2003, 229-250).

Watson starts by first making clear that the way in which an ethics of virtue concerns him is as a set of abstract theses about how certain concepts are best fitted together for the purposes of understanding morality. In our terminology, then, Watson is concentrating on virtue theory, i.e., an ethics of virtue is not in his consideration a moral outlook or ideal but a claim that the concept of virtue is in some way theoretically dominant. Moreover, according to Watson, in an ethics of virtue, how it is right or proper to conduct oneself is explained in terms of how it is best for a human being to be. This Watson calls the claim of explanatory primacy or explanatory priority (Watson 2003, 231-232).

The claim can also be formulated as saying that action appraisal is derivative from the appraisal of character. However, Watson goes on to argue that to be interesting, or even meaningful, the priority claim has to be included in a theory of an ethics of virtue, which consists, in addition to some version of the claim of explanatory primacy, of a *theory of virtue*. And what is crucial to the distinctiveness of virtue theory, according to Watson, is how well particularly the theory of virtue, succeeds in maintaining the distinctive identity of the approach. I agree with Watson and discuss in detail one plausible conception of virtue in 2.3.; as was argued in *Introduction*, the problems with the theory of virtue are in the focus of this study.

Watson moves on to explore different variations of theories of virtue. He first considers the possibility that virtue simply is a human trait the possession of which tends to promote human happiness more than the possession of (most) alternative traits. However, this does not clearly work, because in this way one cannot find an ethics of a third kind. To see this, we only have to recall the discussion on the virtue consequentialism of Julia Driver above. The virtues have a substantial part in her theory, yet hers is a theory of an *ethics of outcome*, as Watson calls them. All theories of ethics of outcome share the view that the ultimate standard of appraisal is outcome, it is, the consequences of actions or character-traits or some other outcome. In these terms the major problem is to find out how to avoid classifying also Aristotle proper and NA as species of ethics of outcome, since the ultimate standard of appraisal on Aristotelianism seems to be flourishing, the idea of living properly as a human being, from which the value of virtue is then derived.

Watson sees that there are two possible ways out of the impending *cul-de-sac*. He first states that the originality or independence of an ethics of virtue must depend on the special character of its theory of good. He then goes on to analyze two proposed accounts of this speciality. On the first explanation, what distinguishes Aristotelianism from, for example, character Utilitarianism is its conception of virtues as constitutive of, not merely instrumental to flourishing. Watson finds this difference conspicuous, and we can find it familiar, too, due to the above discussion on NA. Yet while moving on Watson finds the difference deeper still. According to Watson, it is not only that an ethics of virtue employs a different theory of what is ultimately good from, say, that of character Utilitarianism; "..(I)t is that an ethics of virtue does not have that kind of theory *at all"* (Watson 2003, 237).

2.2.2. The Third Alternative

Watson's conclusion is that only the second account identifies a distinctive, third kind of moral theory. This is so because on the first reading an ethics of virtue is, nevertheless, a species of ethics of outcome while the second account contrasts importantly with both ethics of outcome *and* ethics of requirement (deontological theories). Moreover, on the second reading, there need be no appeal to the idea of a valuable state of affairs or outcome from which the moral significance of everything else derives. There is now no foundational role for the idea that living a characteristically human life is intrinsically

good. Watson nevertheless allows that it *may* follow from the theory that the virtuous agent will desire to live such a life, but that would be because such a desire is part of human excellence, it is a life in accordance with the virtues, rather than the other way around. One implication of this, in turn, is that the theory of ultimate good is dependant on the theory of virtue. In this way the theory of virtue also qualifies what kind of goals and ends one can cherish as parts of her life-scheme.

Which character-traits, then, finally, could actually count as virtues, can at least in part be identified by their contribution to a characteristically human life. This *can* be so, because none of these judgments have to be mediated by any notion of the (independent or intrinsic) value of an agent's living a characteristically human life. The fact that virtues are identified as virtues by their ”heuristically instrumental” properties does not make them of instrumental value proper. To illustrate the developments so far, Watson sees it as appropriate here to take to the standard procedure of comparing a theory of human excellence with a nonhuman animal. The judgment that lack of speed is an imperfection in a lion is based on a notion of a good specimen of lion. This idea in turn depends on what is characteristic or average of lions. On an ethics of virtue, the same seems to apply to people, Watson argues. The specific excellences will be different, of course, and, as will be defended in section 2.3., there are grounds, although not very straightforward and conclusive ones, for a distinction between virtues and other human excellences (Watson 2003, 240). In fact in section 2.3. I shall discuss how the virtue conception developed by Robert M. Adams (2006, 3-64) is able to give credence to the possibility of occasionally bridging the gap between moral and non-moral excellence. I also discuss in more detail the comparison itself when addressing the concept of natural normativity by Philippa Foot in 2.4.3. (Foot, 2001, 25-51).

But did Watson, in the end, find a theory of third kind? It seems that he himself does not know. He thinks that ethics of virtue indeed contrasts importantly with both ethics of outcome and ethics of requirement, but that there are problems which must be faced before the prospects for an ethics of virtue can be determined. The problems which Watson find unsolved center around the question of human nature in virtue ethics, and that is why we readdress them in 2.4.3. Watson thinks, *inter alia*, that at best an objectively well-founded theory of human nature would support evaluations of the kind that we made about lions above, that this one is a good or bad specimen or that this

behavior is abnormal. According to him these judgments might justifiably be seen as part of a theory of health, not of ethics. .."Such evaluational essentialism does not sit well with modern notions. Just as God is dead, it will be said, so the concept of human nature has ceased to be normative" (Watson 2003, 244).

However, Watson believes that the distinctive features of virtue theory may reveal theoretical possibilities that help fashion something new and that is why it is important to clarify further its core characteristics. By taking seriously Watson's conclusions on where the decisive work has to be done, this study purports to concentrate upon the conception of virtue in particular. In other words, whether Watson is right in arguing that an ethics of virtue does or should *not* have a particular theory of ultimate good, in order to exemplify a third alternative, I leave open. Instead, I consider his argumentation on virtues decisive: in case one has no plausible and detailed conception or theory of virtue at one's disposal, virtue ethics is inadequate and its potential for action guidance remains limited.

2.2.3. Justin Oakley and the Characteristics of the Third Alternative

However, one theorist who volunteers for the task almost immediately is Justin Oakley (Oakley 1996, 128-152; Oakley and Cocking 2001, 9-25). I address Oakley here because, first, he is able to contribute to my tentative definition of NA above and, second, because below in Interlude One I open to question some parts of the virtue-based conception of the ethics of professions which he embraces together with Dean Cocking (2001). Oakley's strategy is not so much to outline the exact structure of virtue theory (in the manner of Watson) as to find and list those characteristics of VE which help to distinguish the theory particularly from its deontological and consequentialist rivals. He thinks that the focus in outlining the characteristics of virtue ethics has all too often been on what the theory is *not* like (and what the other theories are like). This is why he endeavors to say what virtue theory and virtue ethics is *for*, rather than what it is against (Oakley 1996, 129).

What, then, does he have to add to what we have already established when discussing NA? To repeat briefly, I outlined NA as arguing that an action is right if and only if it is what an agent with a virtuous character would do in the circumstances and that the content of a virtuous character is determined by what one is or needs in order to be a flourishing human being, living a eudaimonist life. Moreover, in NA character-traits and

activity issuing from them are regarded as together partly constitutive of *eudaimonia*, i.e., the virtues are components of, not instruments to, a good human life. Furthermore, it was argued that in VE, goodness is prior to rightness, that is, the notion of rightness can be defined only in relation to goodness, and finally, that virtues are plural, intrinsic goods. Now, all these are necessary, but not sufficient constituents of VE, says Oakley. In order to make the distinction between virtue ethics and its rivals clearer, and the distinctiveness of virtue ethics still more plausible, three further features have to be added to the previous ones. The first of them is the suggestion that virtues are objectively good, the second that some intrinsic goods are agent-relative and the third, finally, that acting rightly does not require that we maximize the good (Oakley 1996, 141-144).

To be sure, all of these three new characterizations can be readily identified as being also distinctive features of NA, and there are, no doubt, still more which so far go unmentioned. But what is more essential to notice and discuss in the context of this study is that both Watson and Oakley are able, within their respective levels of analysis, to make it thoroughly *meaningful* and plausible to regard virtue theory and VE as a distinctive way to consider moral phenomena. They are able to portray an independent viewpoint on morality and ethics, which marks the boundaries and core characteristics of moral relevancy in a new way. There is, of course, the classical tradition on which they can build, but theirs is a treatment that also takes into consideration the later achievements in ethical theory-building. Hence, if there are reasons to decide not to do virtue-based *applied* ethics, they indeed have to do with the application, as Louden endeavored to show above, rather than with the absence of general theoretical background for application.

Accordingly, in what follows, I turn particularly to questions on applicability and try to show that by concentrating carefully on the potentiality and ontology of virtue we can find it both theoretically plausible and practically useful. In section 2.4. and in Interlude One I try to maintain that VE *can* be successfully defended against many parts of the standard critique and that its sensitivity to contextual detail and resources for intricate analysis of everyday life make it commendable in the ethics of professions, although it may remain controversial whether virtue theory can *equal* the clarity and coherence of its rivals. My position is that the plausibility of normative VE can be shown, although there *may* be problems with virtue *theory*. I say “may be”, since as discussed above, there are

good reasons to hold virtue theory a distinctive and promising alternative for the analysis of moral phenomena, yet controversy as regards its autonomy and decisiveness remains unsettled. To quote one renowned virtue theorist,"..(P)erhaps the most persuasive argument in favor of studying the virtues is simply that they are the stuff of which much of the moralities of everyday life are made. If we are to give moral experience precedence over moral theorizing, we must study the rich and subtle phenomena of moral character" (Velazco y Trianosky 1997, 53).

To sum up the core elements revealed in section 2.2., to be further developed below, let us ponder once more in brief those characteristics upon which the distinctiveness and strength of virtue ethics can be seen to draw. To begin with, there is the assertion in accordance with Hursthouse, that a good[50] normative theory must in part be determined by premises about what is worthwhile, truly good, and important in life. This "must" of course first of all exhibits our willingness to see worthwhileness and goodness as somehow more comprehensive or substantial than rightness. We may ask, as Hursthouse does, what is the point in following recommendations or rules that do not (explicitly, comprehensively) rely on what is good and important? When we have rules in the contexts of expediency or subordination, they readily render their reasons, but it seems that a rule also has to have its reasons when it is a moral one. Normativity has to be based on value(s).

Virtue ethics, however, is not the only one of the main theories to embrace goodness over

[50]Good of course is a notoriously complex attribute. In his classic treatment on the varieties of goodness von Wright (1996) takes the position that moral goodness is but a secondary form of goodness, having as its primary category the variety of goodness that has to do with beneficial intentions and actions. What may be the relation of a sub-form (category) to the main form of a certain variety of goodness or the relation of a form of goodness to its very form, or whatever "form" in this context may mean, remains explicitly unanswered in von Wright's treatment. However, what is clear are his concluding words of his Introduction:"I shall prefer not to talk of it (moral goodness) as a special form of goodness at all" (von Wright 1996, 13-18, orig. 1963; *parenthesis added*). When von Wright in the same context refers to philosophers who consider moral goodness to be indefinable, but *sui generis* an irreducible form of the good, he might well be referring e.g. to Iris Murdoch who was at the time of von Wright's writing his book lecturing on "The Idea of Perfection". This lecture became later included in her *The Sovereignty of Good* (2001, orig. 1970), which advocates a very different approach to goodness and good than does von Wright *except* what concerns the immense difficulties in defining goodness. Murdoch asserts that "..(T)he scene (the human condition and excellence as part of it) remains disparate and complex beyond the hopes of any system, yet at the same time the concept Good stretches through the whole of it and gives it the only kind of shadowy unachieved unity which it can possess. The area of morals, and ergo of moral philosophy, can now be seen, not as a hole-and-corner matter of debts and promises, but as *covering the whole of our mode of living and the quality of our relations with the world*" (Murdoch 2001, 94-95; *parenthesis added*). Dame Iris Murdoch of course was a highly skillful novelist, too, yet I find many traces of her thinking in the work of Robert M. Adams (1999; 2006), on whose virtue conception I heavily draw in this study.

rightness. Why not take consequentialism, which purports to maximize the good? The reason is because too much depends on what goes into the goods of the respective consequentialisms, and too much goodness becomes frequently lost. Potential goodness resides in motivations, attitudes, initiatives, persistent ways of reacting, traits of character, not only in actions and their consequences, which either advance or fail to advance goods that are worth advancing. Now, an alternative can be suggested also by Kantians in the traditional form of separating ”moral” to the world of obligations, rules and duties and giving to the rest of morally relevant considerations the title of ”other deeply ethical aspects of human life”. But why do this? Why not instead take virtues wholeheartedly and with them a much more nuanced and broad as well as down-to-earth view of moral phenomena, without losing the rules or the most ground-floor obligations. Virtue ethics in no way excludes critical use of rules. On the contrary, a wise educator, a prominent figure in virtue ethical tradition, fully understands the practical worth of rules as a helpful device. And, moreover, Mark LeBar (2009, 642-671) below endeavors to show, that virtue ethics can also allow for the existence of some basic obligations (and duties).

In case the argument above can be accepted to show virtues' potentiality, we can move on from where Watson left us, namely, from the virtues as the ground-floor foundation of virtue ethics. At least the old-fashioned essentialism can indeed go, and we can instead partly rely on our intuitions and interpretation about the human condition, when we decide what moral goodness comprises and what counts as virtues and why. The next sections concentrate on showing what this means in detail and how it can be brought nearer the everyday (professional) life.

2.3. Virtue and Human Excellence in the Work of Robert M. Adams

A valid and firmly established point of departure for studying and analyzing virtue, I think, is to regard it as (a) trait(s) of character. The ancients did so, as do most of the present theorists. Even the most serious attack on the plausibility of virtue theory and the very existence of virtue depends on the explication of virtues as character-traits (see section 2.4.2). However, in this analysis, from the very start, I want to both widen and narrow our horizon on and our definition of virtue. Widening means seeing and defining virtue as *persisting excellence in being for the good*, in which ”good” is understood very broadly (Adams 2006, 14-23). Virtue, then, is being for the good, but not occasionally

and in whatever way, but excellently, and more or less permanently. The traits of character may be useful and acceptable, but in case they are not excellent and worthy of admiration, they do not count as virtues. Not every sort of excellence, however, constitutes a virtue, only *moral* excellence does. Hence, one should narrow the scope of the concept of virtue as a character-trait.

As suggested by Watson, there are grounds for a distinction between virtues and other human excellences. We seem, *prima facie*, to be morally badly adrift, if we cannot distinguish moral from other excellences. In addition, we would lose grip of a useful analytical tool. The distinction, however, is a subtle and controversial one, as will be discussed shortly. Many of the ancients either did not consider it of decisive relevance or did not see it at all, and there are also modern neo-Aristotelian theorists, who either lay no considerable emphasis on the distinction or see certain non-moral excellences as contextual or local virtues. However, one common way to make the distinction is to talk, on the one hand, of virtues and on the other on skills. (Aristotle 1975, 40-42; 101-115; Annas 1993, 120-134; Broadie 1991, 185-198; Irwin 1996, 37-56; MacIntyre 1981, 169-226; Oakley and Cocking 2001, 116-136; Wallace 1978, 15-59).

In any case, to say that virtue must be excellent is not merely to say that it must be good. Excellence is a particular type of goodness, namely, intrinsic goodness. This in turn means, that excellence is not (only) usefulness or instrumental goodness, but something that is in itself worth having and worthy to be admired, honored or loved.[51] A generous person is, then, not (only) to be admired because of the benefits her generosity is likely to yield to the well-being of others. It is the trait, the tendency in her to be generous when appropriate that renders her worthy the admiration.

According to Adams, however, moral excellence is not completely independent of the value of its consequences.[52] When considering anew the above mentioned example of helping one's neighbor[53], it is more admirable also to be able to really help than only to have a tendency or good motivation to help, as also Silverman above pointed out in defense of NA. Eventually there are three differing dimensions that may give rise to

[51] For a differing and more detailed approach to intrinsic value and good, see Audi (2004, 121-160).
[52] Recall the discussion above on Slote in section 2.1.2.
[53] See page 29.

admiration: the disposition or tendency to help, the helping activity itself and the goods that add to the well-being of the beneficiaries. In sum, ours is the approach to see the goodness of virtue as intrinsic in moderate sense. It means at least that the excellence is not defined in terms of the value of consequences of having a quality Q of moral character, and is not simply a function of their value. By ”consequences of having a quality Q of moral character” is meant in this context objects or states of affairs to whose occurrence an agent's having Q contributes or has some likelihood of contributing (Adams 2006, 24-25). As already discussed above, in case we allow excellence or virtue to be defined mainly in terms of its consequences, we are compelled to reject both NA and VE. In Watson’s terms we would in that case embrace an ethics of outcome.

In order to be considered a virtue in an ethical theory, a trait or a disposition must be an enduring *psychological* property[54] (Adams 2006, 32; Broadie 1991, 61). Good sight is not a virtue in ethics, though it may help to accomplish virtuous deeds. But not even all excellent psychological properties can be regarded as virtues. The will has to be involved. There has to be a tendency or a disposition in one to be for or against something. Remembering a fact, for instance, does not involve any disposition to be for or against it (Adams 2006, 33). A good memory, then, may be of considerable help in living excellently, but it does not count as a virtue. In general, we can say, that being for some good X ”..(I)s an intentional state, and must involve an action or attitude that means X or has X as an intentional object, or a tendency to such an action or attitude” (Adams 2006, 16; cf. Aristotle 1975, 38-42; Broadie 1991, 3, 41-50, 57-58).

Finally, it may also be useful to make a distinction between motivational and structural virtues. Some virtues are clearly defined by motives which in turn are defined by goods one is for in having them. Benevolence, for example, which Slote above chose to be (the one and the only) cardinal virtue in his theory, is defined by the motive of willing good for others. Patience, or continence, on the other hand, cannot be considered motivational in the sense that benevolence can be. They may be better described as structural features of our character, which can be used to organize or manage whatever motives and other

[54]”..(M)oral character is largely an interconnected set of traits, such as honesty, fairness, and fidelity, which, in turn, are largely deep-seated dispositions to do certain things for an appropriate range of reasons...A trait of character, unlike an action, is not an event; it is like a state of being, something that both *persists over time* and does not entail change...A trait need not be unchanging or static, however; one can, for instance, become more fair, or more judiciously fair” (Robert Audi, 1997, 160; *italics added*).

inner states we have. And what renders (at least some) structural features virtues is that in them we excel in personal psychic strength, it is an ability or willingness to govern our behavior in accordance with values and ends we are for. Yet in case the aims one pursues and is for are not good and thoughtfully chosen ones, even excellent patience in pursuing them does not render one virtuous. Being patient, or courageous, reveals virtue only on the condition one is patient or courageous in being for some (moral) good. (Adams 2006, 33-35).[55]

However, what is the good or what are the goods the being for which constitutes virtue? When embracing broad virtue conception after the manner of Adams, we are bound to include in it any good that human beings can exemplify excellence in caring about. Moreover, not only the sphere of virtue, but also the territory of morality must likewise be understood very broadly. The reason why Adams opts for breadth is the perspective from which he sees it as most fruitful to think about character, and that is a perspective from which one considers what kinds of person one should *admire,* and not only what personal qualities one should be *grateful* to other people for having. It is a perspective, from which one thinks comprehensively and seriously what kind of person one should want to be and what kinds of values one should want to further and also what kind of persons one should want people one loves to be. Adams argues, that we can treat more accurately the complex and subtle relations among our interests in diverse goods, if we do not allow our theory of virtue to depend heavily on where a line is drawn between moral and non-moral value (Adams 2006, 19; 1991, 93-101).[56]

To be sure, those lines *are* often difficult to draw in a clear and uncontroversial way. Think first of caring excellently of the good life of others. It is, indeed, a major virtue, and at least at first sight there seem to be no problems with the above-mentioned lines of thought. For many, to be benevolent and to add to others' well-being *is* what ”moral” means. But on the second account the picture becomes more indefinite, for is it not the case that caring for or appreciating excellently *any* good that can enrich the life of others also affects the excellence in caring of the good life of others directly? In this way for

[55]Recall footnote one on page 7. Definitions as well as lists of virtues developed within philosophy and literature abound. An example of popular yet refined and thoughtful work in classical vein, which remains outside the confines of the analytical tradition, is André Comte-Sponville's *Petit traité des grandes vertus* (1995).

[56]Adams shares this view with several contemporary (virtue ethical) writers. See e.g. Martha C. Nussbaum (1986, 5; 25-50) and John Cottingham (1996, 67).

instance developing one's artistic or journalistic skills excellently might be seen virtuous. It is at least in no way counter-intuitive to think that in being excellently for (the good of) truthful and eye-opening journalism one at the same time is (excellently) for the good of others, too. Yet this argument, as I see it, is conditional on whether journalism can be considered a practice whose aims and ends are or can be considered (key) human goods. However, I will give this idea an important place in this study and develop it in a more detailed manner in section in Interlude One and in *Parts 3* and *4* below. (Adams 2006, 19; Oakley and Cocking 2001, 74-94).

For now, there is still more to say of the breadth of sphere ascribed by Adams to good and virtue. One point is, that the good one is for in being virtuous also includes one's own good. It is part of virtue to desire, for its own sake, that goods one cares about should be realized in one's own life, too. This approach to virtue is a classical one, but I defend it later on in section 2.4. and in *Parts three* and *four* also on the grounds that I want to subscribe in this study to an account of good (and right) which make authentic contact with the commitments that deeply and pervasively inform both our professional and private day-to-day life (Cottingham 1996, 57-59; Annas 1993, 249-290, 322-325; Adams 2006, 20). Of course it is not virtuous to care about one's own good only, or to have an exaggerated preference for it. However, to risk one's life for some goods one knows to have minor place in the life of others hardly ever constitutes virtue.[57] Such behavior can, on the contrary, be seen as an act of folly, and folly is a vice, a serious lapse from excellence in being for the good. So being *excellently* for the good seems unavoidably also to include caring excellently, i.e. in right proportion, for one's own good. What the right proportion actually is will be discussed in the next section where I discuss various challenges which VE it has been made to face.

In any event, secondly, there is also the aspect of the breadth of virtue's concerns that they are not limited to the well-being of human agents, which already was implicit in the discussion above. A deep concern for quality in aesthetic and intellectual pursuits for their own sake seems (intuitively) to be virtuous. And respect for the value of nonhuman animals or even life-sustaining ecological processes seems often to be considered

[57] In case one errs in estimating the significance of a certain good in another's life one might be virtuous even when risking one's life for a minor good. I thank Juha Räikkä for helping me to become aware of this possibility.

virtuous. But as Adams shows, this only holds in case we reject the thesis of the unity of the virtues (Adams 2006, 21; 1999, 38-41; Annas 73-84). We cannot tolerate the claim that an otherwise virtuous agent is not virtuous if he does not love or admire arts, or, on the other hand, that an agent with virtuosity in aesthetic pursuits but with otherwise bad moral character would be virtuous. The reason this is so becomes more visible with the concept of vice. Not caring of the good of others is a vice, and a grave one. However, though failing to appreciate or admire aesthetic pursuits is lacking in virtue, it is unreasonable, maybe even misleading, to call it a vice.

It is hoped that the virtue conception argued for, is broad enough to be able to take into consideration the innumerable complexities and subtleties of the human condition and at least to give a promise to facilitate integration of character. It endeavors to offer a comprehensive ideal of excellence in valuing, caring, and choosing which will include, as a major part, an ideal of excellence in being for others and their good, and in being good to them. This very comprehensiveness may, however, arouse justifiable suspicions as to whether the virtues of caring for the good of others figure sufficiently prominently in the conception, and I will address the issue below in 2.4.3. Nonetheless, the broad view which Adams suggests makes illuminating allowances for treating what are commonly regarded as cases of moral and non-moral goodness as instances of excellence in the same sense, though not necessarily in the same degree (Adams 2006, 22). In this way the concept of excellence also offers a key conceptual framework in which narrowly moral goodness can be commended without circularity. ”Why be moral?” becomes ”Why aspire to other-regarding virtues?”, and receives the answer, ”Because they are part of the more excellent way to be” (Adams 2006, 22).

However, in addition to coming in degrees, excellence and virtue also tend to be fragmentary and frail. They are fragmentary to the extent they fail to show such consistency and generality across different situations, that they can be regarded as solid traits of character. The frailty problem, on the other hand, is whether all the otherwise desirable traits of character there may be are too frail or too dependent on situational factors to have the excellence required of virtue (Adams 2006, 129). In sum, are there any traits of character, and in case there are, are they sufficiently robust to count as plausible motivational inner states in being excellently for some goods? These are hard questions which I answer partly in the next section. However, this is broadly the virtue conception

on which I heavily draw from now on in this study.[58] It will be put to full work from Interlude One onwards. Ahead of it I address some of the main challenges of VE.

2.4. Are There Too Serious Vices in Virtue Ethics?

As has already been noticed in the above discussions, virtue ethics has been challenged in various ways. In what follows, I meet with some parts of the critique in three sections. First, in 2.4.1. I address what I call some standard objections to VE. They include most importantly the application problem and the epistemological problem of ascertaining, who actually is virtuous, which was already briefly discussed above. Secondly, in 2.4.2. I return to inconsistency and frailty problems which we above left behind unsolved. I devote a section of their own to them because of the seriousness of their challenge to the plausibility of VE and especially to one of its core concepts, namely (traits of) character. In 2.4.3., finally, I discuss whether VE is a theory about moral phenomena at all, at least in the way morality is seen today. This is of course a question of outstanding importance for the whole of my argumentation, and that is why it receives a section of its own and a central place as a summary of the section 2.4.

In section 2.4.3. I also return to the question of whether benevolence and the good of others in general occupy a distinctive and sufficiently important place in VE. In more specific terms I address the problem of whether there is excellence in altruism and discuss the challenges of partiality and moral luck, which issues will be touched on also in 2.4.2. It seems that the main, comprehensive idea in the massive critique of VE is that the question about how one should live is allowed in it a major place.[59] However, a good life is an individual project and aim, not something that first of all defines our relation to other persons. As such, it also of course frequently affects, even adds to, others' well-

[58]The way Adams accounts for virtue, has by now been found attractive by other modern writers, too. E.g. Daniel Star writes:

> ..(D)espite much recent skepticism regarding the virtues, which has its origins especially in certain findings in social psychology, the ideal of virtue remains attractive. I believe this skepticism is best construed as attacking certain traditional accounts of the virtues, rather than as undermining contemporary theories that do not set the bar for moral virtue either too low or too high, and that appreciate that the virtues are typically fragmented, fragile, and lacking in the type of unity that the traditional doctrine of the unity of the virtues supposes they possess (see Adams 2006, for an excellent example of such a theory). (Star 2010, 1, note 1).

[59] Particularly in classical VE the question about the supreme end or good and how one should live to reach it, constitutes the core of ethics. The answer, however, is approached by delineating what sort of character one should have and not so much what sort of deeds one should accomplish or avoid (see e.g. Annas, 1993, 27-46).

being, but that is thoroughly contingent both on the way in which one endeavors to live up to one's standards of the good life, and particularly on those very standards themselves. On a more minute level of examination the same critique manifests itself as juxtaposition of rightness of action and quality of character. The first is seen as (the) proper (key) concern of morality and ethics, the latter either as contingently conducive to the first or as a thoroughly misplaced creation of folk psychology. In sum, one cannot avoid the impression that VE has been attacked severely and on many fronts. However, let us see what there remains to be done about it.

2.4.1. Agent-basing Re-examined

VE has often been attacked on the grounds (i) that it does not explicitly and directly concentrate on agents' actions or on the consequences of their actions, (ii) that at least some versions of VE give poor action-guidance, and (iii) that in case VE can be construed to give action-guidance, it is of no substantial use because of some unavoidable epistemological difficulties. As regards item (i), I think we need some specification in order to make it answerable. If (i) means that VE does concentrate more on persistent, characteristic patterns of motivational states or behavior, instead of discrete acts, it is true, nearly trivially so, because of VE's conceptual commitment to virtues and character-traits. When Robert Louden argues that "..(I)t seems to me that virtue ethics is structurally unable to say much of anything about that issue" (i.e. about the rightness of actions or what people ought to do), I think he refers exactly to this commitment (Louden 1984, 231).

On the other hand, in case (i) is meant to indicate that action and its consequences are of no relevance to living virtuously (i.e., in deontological terms, according to high moral standards) in VE, it is misguided. For, as stated in our above definition of NA, virtue issues in a rational and *active* life. Virtue partly means continuous choosing on two levels. First, virtues are neither rigid, innate traits of character nor some feelings which we simply can't avoid having, but something into which we have been educated and which we have chosen and *continue* to choose more or less successfully in our daily practical life. Being benevolent one is, as it were, "fixed" into being benevolent. It does not easily come into her mind not to be that way. However, one *could* choose otherwise, simply because (any particular) virtue is no locked-up, blind disposition. Secondly, virtue, when

one has secured herself such a thing, is being for the good, in valuing, in caring, but also and prominently, in *action*. Virtue is, or gradually becomes, a way of being and choosing. That is why it seems intuitively perfectly right to doubt one's benevolence if one never manifests it in action, when there is no legitimate reason for remaining continuously inactive (Adams 15-18, 24; Annas, 1993, 51).

However, in order to clarify further VE's ability in action-guidance and some related issues, I choose a new, but at the same time familiar point of view for our discussion. And I do it by returning to Michael Slote and his agent-basing, a theory, in which, as we saw above, the rightness of action is based fundamentally on the motive from which it proceeds. Now, as Liezl van Zyl argues – a point which we already touched on in 2.1. above – a frequent objection to agent-basing is that it does not allow us to draw the commonsense distinction between doing the right thing and doing it for the right reasons (van Zyl, 2009b, 50-69). According to van Zyl, agent-basing can be defended against this objection, yet what is worth noticing, there is a more fundamental problem looming: namely, that agent-basing fails to provide adequate action-guidance. In addressing first agent-basing's failure to make a distinction between act-evaluation and agent-appraisal, i.e. between doing the right thing and doing it for the right reasons, van Zyl discusses a standard exemplary scene of which Slote also takes advantage (Slote 2001, 13-14; van Zyl 2009b, 54-58).

Consider a scene in which a prosecutor is motivated by malice in prosecuting a particular defendant. The commonsense view in this case seems to be, that he does the right thing in prosecuting, but that he does it from the wrong reason, namely, from malice. However, an agent-based view, according to which badly motivated acts are wrong, is committed to saying that the prosecutor acts wrongly. Slote claims, however, and van Zyl agrees, that this is not at all an unfortunate consequence of agent-basing (Slote, 2001, 14-15; van Zyl 2009b, 54). What they mean is, that on grounds of the inferior motive of the prosecutor, the deed, the very prosecuting, cannot be held to have moral value, and maybe even less to be admirable, and in that way it seems intuitively right to say that the prosecutor, nevertheless, acted wrongly.

But if the prosecutor acted wrongly, (when he did his duty out of malice), does it imply, that he should not have prosecuted at all? No, says Slote, too, in addition to many other

philosophers and the commonsense view. He argues that if the prosecutor decides not to prosecute, his motivation will also be bad, because in such a case he fails to show real concern for doing his job and playing the contributing social role that that involves. Hence, Slote concludes, agent-basing does not have implausible results, and it *does* allow us to make (something like) the distinction between doing the right thing and doing it for the right reason (Slote 2001, 15; van Zyl 2009b, 56). This is the idea, according to van Zyl, on which we can draw in order to revise agent-basing to be adequately action-guiding.

We, first, have to ask: how is it possible for an agent to act wrongly despite doing what he *ought* to have done, i.e., despite making the right decision? The answer, then, lies in realizing that there is no reason to suppose that a criterion of right action should also serve as a practical action-guiding tool. Slote's original principle says that a decision is right if (and because) it exhibits or expresses a virtuous motive, or at least does not exhibit or express a vicious motive. And it serves *both* as a principle of action appraisal *and* as a principle of action-guiding. There simply are no other principles to appeal to. Van Zyl, however, is able to give rather convincing evidence that even Slote himself implicitly draws on two different principles when discussing some practical cases. Slote notes among other things, that while one is judging in relation to an inner factor (motivation) she is actually judging according to an entity that makes reference to and takes account of facts about people in the world (Slote 2001, 38-39). Hence, Slote actually seems to draw on an independent action-guiding principle.

In this way van Zyl ends up embracing a version of agent-basing with two core principles, one for deciding the rightness of actions, another for action-guiding (van Zyl 2009b, 64). To put it in a more detailed manner, the proposed agent-basing version distinguishes between making a right decision and performing a right action. Accordingly, a decision is right if and only if it is what a virtuous person would characteristically choose in the circumstances, while the rightness of action depends on whether it is well-motivated, as also Slote originally argues. As van Zyl points out, traditional deontological and consequentialist approaches also make a distinction between acts that are *right* and acts that are *praiseworthy*. Yet their focus is on the first, which is providing an account of the rightness in terms of principles or consequences. In agent-basing, and in other versions of VE, by contrast, the focus is on the latter, for an agent can make the right decision for the

wrong reasons or for no reasons at all.

In my view, the major advantage of van Zyl's version of agent-basing is that it provides an account of right action in terms of the actual motives from which the act proceeds and which are manifest in the act. In that way it is able, first, to explain *why* an action is right, and, secondly, by focusing on motivational and other inner states in defining moral worth, it seems to be at least tentatively compatible with the virtue conception we have been embracing. NA, on the other hand, is not able to specify in a noncontroversial way what exactly makes an action right. That is because of its criterion of right action:"..(A)n action is right if it is what a virtuous agent would characteristically do in the circumstances" (Hursthouse 1999, 18). It tells *how* to choose the right action but fails to tell *why* the right action is right. In that way NA can be objected to as relying on an unexplained or indefinite concept of right action (van Zyl 2009b, 68).

Now, when discussing right action above, I deliberately also used certain other terms, such as "duty" and "ought to". But are they totally out of place when used in VE-based considerations? Above we made the distinction between making a right decision and performing a right action. The latter means acting virtuously, admirably, being excellently for some good. Right action, in fact, then, means good action. But when an agent makes a right decision yet does not act virtuously, what does he in fact do and why? He can be seen to do what a virtuous person would do in the circumstances, and in this way to make a right decision, but what does *this* 'right' stand for? It cannot stand for 'good' (or any derivative of goodness), because for 'right' to be in some plausible sense 'good' in this context would mean that our distinction between right action (virtuous action) and making right decisions would at least become ill-defined or even collapse. We would be back to the way in which NA both defines right action and gives action-guidance in the form of only one, by now familiar principle: "An action is right if it is what a virtuous agent would characteristically do in the circumstances" (Hursthouse 1999, 18).

According to van Zyl the problem with the concept of right means that VE needs an account of moral obligation (van Zyl 2009a, 91-104). She argues that an account of what is right, just or morally obligatory is actually also presupposed by the practice of assigning moral praise and blame. An act is unjust, not because of what motivates it, but because it does not give moral agents what they are due, or violates an *obligation* to an

agent.”..(A) moral theory that focuses only on the goodness (or otherwise) of actions is unable to account for the fact that others have claims against us, or conversely, that we *owe* it to them to treat them in certain ways. And such a theory is incomplete.” (van Zyl 2009a, 102).

Van Zyl believes that there are a number of ways in which this shortcoming of VE can be remedied. She prefers the strategy of looking at justice as a set of rules or conventions stating which rights and obligations people have, and which are adopted by a community to make it possible for members of that community to live the best life possible (van Zyl 2009a,102). In my view, van Zyl's strategy is thoroughly plausible, but I prefer the way Mark LeBar endeavors to solve the problem (LeBar 2009, 642-671). He begins by addressing the familiar objection that VE is unable to account for the wrongness of wrong action in terms of the effects of the action on its victims, because of its commitment to virtue and character as fundamental concepts. However, as LeBar argues, at least an account of egregious forms of wrongdoing, say murder or rape, must give central place to the effect on the victim. To account of the wrongness of a murder (merely) in terms of a lack of virtue seems gravely misplaced.

In any event, LeBar argues that NA and the classical forms of VE can maintain that virtue requires that we regard others in just the ways that the objection suggests we should. In his argumentation LeBar draws heavily on recent work by Stephen Darwall on the ”second-person standpoint”, in which others are seen as sources of claims on us. LeBar refers to those sources of claims as ”deontic constraints” (Darwall 2006; 2007, 52-69; Korsgaard 2007, 8-23; LeBar 2009, 642-43). However, what his argumentation eventually comes to is that at least eudaimonist virtue ethical theories provide a framework for maintaining that we have the same reason for occupying the second-person standpoint that we do for being virtuous generally: doing so is of crucial importance for living excellently and well. Put another way, occupying the second-person standpoint is part of being virtuous, so we have reason to do so. And, in this vein of thought, the use of the deontic 'right', which preoccupied us in van Zyl's version of agent-basing above, also becomes legitimate and accounted for (LeBar 2009, 650).

There is much more to say to make a case for LeBar's approach. In this section of the study, however, my aim has been merely to try to show, first, that there is serious work

going on in VE to reveal its potential to give action guidance and, second, that this work also has yielded plausible considerations and results. In addition I have wanted to demonstrate how the challenges to or problems of VE do very much combine. We started above by first discussing whether and in what degree VE allows us to lay stress on (the importance of) an agent's actions and the consequences of her actions. We then moved on to address the problem of action-guidance and embraced a principle according to which a decision is right if and only if it is what a virtuous person would characteristically choose in the circumstances (as was also suggested by Hursthouse above).

Nevertheless, we did not attend to the possible epistemological problems in identifying virtuous agents and their choices, and to the fact that there obviously are situations in which at least a completely virtuous agent would never find herself and would not accordingly be in a position to provide any examples for the less virtuous.[60] Instead, we ended up considering whether VE is in need of a theory of obligation. And it seems to me that at this point we came very near addressing the subject of section 2.4.3.: is VE really a theory of morality at all? Or, in a somewhat more considerate fashion, does the well-being and good of others figure sufficiently prominently in VE? However, the challenges to and misgivings about VE all seem to be due to its commitment to character, virtue and goodness as its foundational concepts. That is why I now address the question of whether there may be any plausibility in the recent situationist challenge to the very existence of character-(traits) and virtue.

2.4.2. Inner States vs. Outer Situations

Virtues and vices are typically classified as character-traits. Recently some moral philosophers have argued that situationist social psychology has radical implications for moral philosophy. For example, Gilbert Harman suggests that psychological research calls into question not only folk psychology about character and character traits but also virtue ethics (Harman 1999, 315-331; 2000, 223-226; 2002, 87-94; 2007). In his argumentation Harman takes character traits to be relatively stable and long-term dispositions to (re)act in distinctive ways. He then maintains that"..(E)mpirical studies designed to test whether people behave differently in ways that might reflect their having

[60] One may also consider whether there are situations in which a non-virtuous person should *not* do what a virtuous person would characteristically do. See e.g. van Zyl (2011, 80-92).

different character traits have failed to find relevant differences" (Harman 2000, 165-178). So, argues Harman, in this way"..(O)rdinary attributions of character traits to people may be deeply misguided, and it may even be the case that *there is no such thing* as character" (Harman 2000, 165).

The features of situations in which people find themselves explain the differences in their behavior. Occasionally some of the influential features seem to be surprisingly subtle or even (in advance) seem quite trivial. Here is one standard example. A member of a team of experimenters drops a folder-full of papers in a shopping plaza, in front of a stranger who is emerging from a telephone booth (once upon a time there were such things). Now, will the stranger stop to help pick up the papers? She did help in fourteen of sixteen cases in which she found a dime planted by the experimenter in the phone's coin return, but in only one of twenty-five cases in which no coin was to be found (Isen and Levin 1972, 384-388; cited e.g. in Adams 2006, 117-118, Doris 2002, 30-32 and Kamtekar 2004, 465). Isen and Levin suggest that finding the dime led agents to feel in a good mood and that feeling good leads to helping. But would we not expect benevolent persons to help whether or not they are feeling good? I think we frequently would, but I also think that there is much more to it, as will be discussed in the following sections.

2.4.2.1. The Three Strategies to Meet the Challenge

There are many others who have noticed and answered the situationist challenge, and according to Adams there are already discernible in the literature three main ways of responding to the challenge, without giving up the language of virtue and character (Adams 2006, 118-120). First, there are those who are ready to concede the most to the situationist challenge and who would free the terminology of virtue and vice from commitment to (traits of) character by applying it primarily to actions and attitudes or other mental states occurring at a particular time. One hallmark of this strategy S1 is Thomas Hurka's *Virtue, Vice, and Value* (Hurka 2000)[61]. At the opposite extreme, secondly, is the strategy S3 of arguing that a classical conception of virtue is untouched by situationist experimental evidence and that the situationist philosophy drawing on it is

[61] Alfano (2011, 121-136) interestingly argues that.. "(R)egardless of whether people have traits, folk intuitions would lead us to attribute traits to them". Whether people actually *have* character-traits, should – according to Alfano – be explored with the help of scientific methodologies of psychology and behavioral economics.

badly misguided. Ethicists following S3 are among others Julia Annas, Rachana Kamtekar, and Nafsika Athanassoulis (Annas 2003, 20-34; Kamtekar 2004, 458-491; Athanassoulis 2000, 215-221). I address their arguments in more detail shortly.

However, the strategy S2, which Adams himself favors is the one I see as being most plausible, since S2 readily and realistically allows virtues to be frail and fragmentary, yet in the way that they can be considered real moral virtues that are not extremely rare. The specific challenge which S2 has to face is whether traits of character or personal qualities in general, can be sufficiently *excellent* to be virtuous if they are allowed to be frail and fragmentary. This is an important question, since personal qualities might be considered real and beneficial without their being (at least highly) excellent, too (Adams 2006, 119-120).

Now, in order to help us still deeper into situationist research and thinking, let us consider one more empirical test and its results before moving on. Over 8000 schoolchildren were placed in moderately tempting situations where they had opportunities (1) to cheat in tests, (2) to cheat on homework or by faking a record in athletic contests, (3) to steal money from a box used in a test, and (4) to lie about their conduct in general or about cheating on tests in (1) above. The correlation between behaviors listed *within* any one of the groups (1) - (4) was quite high, but the correlation *across* behavior types (1), (2), (3), and (4) was dramatically lower. Situationists maintain that we call a person who cheats in exams dishonest, expecting that she will also pocket any money she finds and lie, too. The honesty studies, according to the situationist reading, however, falsify this expectation. Instead, they find that people do behave consistently only across situations that are very alike: the correlation between cheating in an exam and cheating in another exam is quite high. Yet, this kind of consistency at most licenses us to attribute to people narrow dispositions or traits such as ”cheat on exams” (Kamtekar 2004, 465-66, orig. in Hartshorne and May 1928).

Next, consider Kamtekar’s summary of situationist experiments. She has four concerns. First, some of the reported experiments – for example the dime in the phone booth test discussed above – have been carried out on an extremely small number of subjects. A question arises as to whether significant information could be distinguished from mere

noise? Second, the experiments do not usually track the behavior of participants across situations. Most of them observe any given person only on one occasion. But what can reasonably be concluded about the consistency of people's behavior on the basis of a single observation?

Third, those experiments that *do* carry out several tests on the same subjects (such as the honesty study above) nevertheless do not track their behaviors as individuals but instead infer the behavior of the individuals from the behavior of the groups. However, not all the individuals in a group behave in accordance with the group average; therefore, as Sreenivasan also points out, the consistency data, being averages, are consistent with there being a few highly consistent (in this case ”honest”) individuals in the group. But surely the observation that cross-situational consistency and stable character are not the norm cannot be considered as a challenge to VE. And, finally, Kamtekar's fourth concern is about what we should infer about adults from observations of children's cross-situational inconsistency or narrowness of disposition: might it not be highly plausible that children are more impressionable, less committed to particular ideals of conduct, or less integrated than adults (Kamtekar 2004, 466; Sreenivasan 2002, 56-57)?

The proponents of S3, however, hold that a classical conception of virtue is untouched even by that part of the situationist experimental evidence which seems methodologically immaculate. According to Annas,

> ..(W)hen Doris tells us that we should focus on situations and the complexities they raise, he is, unawares, telling us just what virtue ethicists tell us. When he says that our duties are surprisingly complex, and that we have a responsibility to think about the background and ”determinative features” of situations, rather than waiting till the situation confronts us, his advice is not all that far from the advice to develop character by intelligent choice (Annas 2003, 28; Doris 1998, 517).

Annas proceeds to argue that since virtue, contrary to what situationism seems to hold, is *not* a rigid (reactive) habit, close attention to situations and their contexts is required, not excluded, by it.

She considers one major reason for the evident misunderstanding among the situationists

to be that they underestimate and misconceive the intellectual component of virtue. In case virtue is granted an intellectual component in situationist considerations, the intellect in question is interpreted as a perceptual capacity to see things in a certain way. However, Annas maintains that this also makes the virtuous person into a passive spectator of situations. The role of intellect in virtue should, instead, be seen as a far more active and critical one. The virtuous agent not only judges what is the right thing to do, he does this from understanding,"..(S)omething which enables him to criticize the judgments he originally started from, and to explain and give reasons for the judgments he makes". Annas also maintains that the virtuous judges in the light of an understanding of his life as a whole and the workings of both the virtue in question and other virtues to which the situation is relevant. If virtuous, a journalist not only works out whether a certain situation bears characteristics which might legitimize invading someone's privacy, but she also deliberates on whether she really is now, or was in the past, for any important good while invading peoples' private lives, and whether such measures possibly threaten(ed) her personal integrity or her good life as a whole (Annas 2003, 28).

Annas's intellect-argument, on the other hand, may be and has been dismissed as an approach laying too great an emphasis on the intellectual component of virtue. Julia Driver for instance agrees that sensitivity to the morally relevant features of a situation is important. However, she wants to avoid making this sensitivity highly intellectual, as was discussed above, and maintains that virtue must be accessible also to those who are not wise but kind;"..(T)o those who had the misfortune to grow up in repressive environments that warped their understanding, yet who are capable of showing the appropriate compassionate responds to human suffering" (Driver 2001, 54).

Moreover, and perhaps more to the point, there is also a wealth of theorists working within the confines of the (neo-Aristotelian) virtue ethical tradition, who wish to press the important role of emotions in VE, emotions having arguably a distinctive place in Aristotle proper. Rosalind Hursthouse in particular argues, in deeply Aristotelian vein, that virtues are dispositions not only to act, but to feel emotions, and that these function both as reactions as well as impulses to action. Hursthouse also argues further that appropriate emotions have intrinsic value. In other words, having contextually right emotions counts as one mode of being for the good (Hursthouse 2001, 108).

In sum, Aristotelian VE invests emotions and feelings with much moral significance, even

to the extent that virtues might be interpreted as more or less equivalent to states of emotion, feeling or appetite, ordered however in accordance with some deliberative ideal of practical wisdom (Carr, 2009, 31-2). But does the role of emotions in VE carry any relevance to the situationist challenge? In my view, it certainly does. The multi-dimensionality of virtues as such speaks against the rigid, behavioral virtue conception which situationism favors. However, emotions also have a distinctive role in motivation, and it is only a *well*-motivated disposition to be excellently for good that constitutes a virtue (Stocker 1996, 173-190: Adams 2006, 130).

It seems to me that S3 conveys in a correct manner the tension existing between the situationist conception of character traits and that of the broadly (neo)-Aristotelian tradition. I nevertheless consider that (neo)-Aristotelians do not heed all the value there is in situationist observations and in the respective conclusions on the inconsistency and frailty of virtue. Hence, I endorse S2 in facing the situationist challenge. And as was discussed above, S2 readily allows virtues to be frail and fragmentary, yet in the way that they can be considered real moral virtues that are not extremely rare. In that way I can both retain a commitment to more or less enduring traits or qualities of character as a central object of moral evaluation, and revise the neo-Aristotelian virtue conception better to account for the findings of empirical sciences and everyday observations and intuitions.[62]

2.4.2.2. Modularity and Frailty of Virtue

To consider first the apparent inconsistency of virtue that exists in our everyday doings, I draw on Adams by introducing the concepts of *probabilistic virtue* and *modularity of virtue* (Adams 2006, 122-130). To consider virtue probabilistic, adds to the familiar consideration that to have, for example, a generous inner quality or character trait a person does not have to be generous on every single occasion and all the time. As I see it, a probabilistic view can be considered a heuristic to virtue.

To see the point, suppose we had an extremely large number of past observations of a

[62] Vranas (2009, 213-233) argues that evaluations of people in terms of their moral character as good, bad, or intermediate are almost always epistemically unjustified. He maintains that most people are fragmented (they would behave deplorably in many and admirably in many other situations) and because one cannot reliably distinguish those who *are* fragmented from those who are not, one is not entitled to evaluate people in terms of their moral character as a whole. His thesis, however, does not concern the evaluation of, or suggest the non-existence of, character-*traits*.

population of a hundred individuals in a great variety of situations. Suppose further, that on that basis the individuals have been accurately ranked with regard to a set of behavioral characteristics including generosity and that the positive correlation measuring cross-situational consistency in the population with regard to generosity is 0.16 (significant but low). But as was discussed in the context of the honesty test example above, this does not necessarily reveal very much about the honesty of any particular individual. On the other hand, if we learn with the help of our extremely large data-base, that the probability of a certain individual, say my neighbor again, being one of the two most generous on at least one of the next ten occasions, is about 60 percent, the situation looks quite different for pragmatic purposes. I think that I might now have good reasons to ask for her help when necessary and praise her character at least in this respect, if she is disposed to act with notable generosity as much as 10 percent of the time (Adams 2006, 122-125).

The idea of the modularity of virtue can in turn be seen to include two causal and two evaluative claims (Adams 2006, 125). The first causal claim is that an agent will frequently acquire and exercise a disposition to act in a certain way *in one domain* without being disposed to act similarly in (somewhat) different domains. In another words, direct behavioral dispositions commonly are mutually independent in a way that is domain-specific. The domains may be either types of situation quite narrowly defined, as in the honesty test above, or they may be as widely defined as social roles, such as those of a parent, a top-athlete, or a journalist. How the phenomenon of domain-specificity might, then, be seen to relate to the Macintyrian concept of practice will be discussed in Interlude One and *Part three* below (MacIntyre 1981, 175).

However, Adams argues further, that to classify a disposition as domain-specific is *not* to say it is not affected in any way by a larger causal nexus. In addition, ordinary moral experience makes clear that we also have holistic and relatively domain-neutral (non-modular) capacities of moral and other practical thinking that we more or less often apply in and to a wide variety of situations. Accordingly, such general and relatively domain-neutral intellectual capacities can sometimes inhibit or otherwise override the behavioral potentiality of more domain-specific dispositions (Adams 2006, 126).

The second causal claim is that virtue modules can be added together to form a more

inclusive composite disposition. In this case honesty is again an apt example. It can plausibly be thought to manifest itself as specific dispositions to different domains, yet it can also eventually combine to be a more consistent and general disposition to behave in the relevant way (honestly) in a wide variety of situations. The evaluative claims, finally, are, first, that at least in some cases the independent modules also have (independent) positive moral value; and, secondly, that the result of adding such dispositions together to form a cross-situationally consistent composite disposition can rightly be regarded, in some cases, as constituting a more complete case of the particular virtue (Adams 2006, 126-27).

Though the point is not explicitly discussed by Adams or by Kamtekar – who also sees the modularity of virtues without embracing the very notion – it seems that there are at least two different aspects or dimensions to the modularity of virtue. First, there is the domain- or role-specificity. A person can be honest to his near and dear, yet cheat grossly on the taxman or his employer. However, there is also the functional modularity of the composite (traditional) virtue(s). Honesty means at least both the dispositions not to lie and not to cheat, *and* the disposition not to steal. Furthermore, in a more detailed analysis, there is also arguably the still more subtle distinction between the disposition not to lie *and* the disposition not to cheat. Accordingly, one might as a job applicant lie (how *ardently* he wants to work in this particular media house) but not cheat (forge his application documents) and, on the other hand, as a journalist cheat (not to tell an informant he is a journalist) but not lie (distort the information the informant discloses). As Kamtekar argues, and the above analysis suggest, there may be reason – as a result and in line to situationist thinking – to abandon some folk-psychological character traits, because they assume cross-situational consistency where there is no reason to expect any (Adams 2006, 127-28; Kamtekar 2004, 468-69).

Now, before moving on to address the frailty problem, two more remarks. First, one might claim that virtue modules are not sufficiently important or effective to qualify as virtues, or, in case their importance can be accepted or secured, that they are not sufficiently excellent. Here, I think, Adams is correct when he suggests that it is not".. (I)n general right to deny that excellence can come in small packages" (Adams 2006, 130). Is it not, indeed, "small packages" with which we unavoidably have to begin, in any event? To become virtuous is to become cared for as well as educated and also to grow

more experienced. And even when already more experienced, one cannot reasonably be denied the domain-specific, modular excellence, because being for the good excellently does not primarily concern how comprehensively, but rather *in what way* one is for good. This idea, at the same time, allows virtue to be more or less fundamental or central, as was discussed above.

Secondly, I once more wish to lay emphasis on the idea that virtue should not only be considered as direct behavioral dispositions, whether domain-specific or more general. This was also ardently argued by those in favor of S3. One implication of the wide virtue conception, which was adopted in section 2.3., is that one has reason to seek excellence and virtue also or even *primarily* in a variety of distinctive psychological characteristics and dispositions that lie behind our overt behavioral dispositions. Such characteristics may include motives, beliefs, different cognitive schemes, desires, as well as attitudes, and they typically shape behavior jointly in highly complex, multi-level interactions. As a matter of fact, I already have worked with this insight above, particularly when addressing the work of Michael Slote (Adams 2006, 130-38; Kamtekar 2004, 474-77; Slote 2001, 7).

If the inconsistency problem reveals that virtue frequently is domain-dependant and probabilistic, then the frailty problem adds a further point: these small domain-specific virtue packages may often fail to be sufficiently robust to qualify as virtues. There seem to be all too many social temptations, too deep a dependence within us upon what others think and do, for virtue to survive. However, on the other hand, how robust or invincible does virtue have to be in human life as we generally experience it? Adams answers in part by pointing to the fact that we do not in general doubt that excellence can be fragile or dependent on a situation.

Consider for example the performance of a top-decathlonist. His performance being excellent depends heavily on situational factors: his mood and shape, the weather conditions, the quality of track, and sheer luck. Nevertheless, the very existence of all these factors does not render his accomplishments less admirable. Why therefore would frailty or dependence on social context be a reason for not admiring traits of character, or for not regarding them as excellent? Similarly, we should not be surprised to find that someone who performs brilliantly in his usual life-context may go to pieces in a novel

(social) situation that is sufficiently complex, or ambiguous. A journalist who manages quite successfully with her routine work in the familiar local paper, might have considerable problems with her integrity when told by the editor that it is now time to adopt a more aggressive and eye-catching journalistic genre. It would take an intelligence more prodigious than the human to see at once and in detail how to apply general (moral) principles and past experience on encountering a new and very unfamiliar type of situation (Adams 2006, 157-58).

However, there is more to the challenge raised by the apparent situational and social dependence of traits of character than the question of how excellent a virtue must be: the question of *whose* must the excellence be. Now, the writers within the tradition of VE have, in fact, been very aware of the fragility, and the dependence on chance and luck, of the human condition since the time of ancient Greek ethical thought. According to Martha Nussbaum, as it was comprehended at that time, the phenomenon can be divided into three sub-problems: the vulnerable components of the good life, contingent conflicts of values, and the ungoverned elements of the personality (Nussbaum 1986, esp. 1-21; 318-342).

The issue is, to be sure, complex and controversial. There is indispensable dependence on moral luck both in the development and in the persistence of virtue. Our education in virtue is shaped by and dependent on social contexts and persons whom we did not and could not choose. Moreover, virtue once achieved is not intrinsically permanent. In addition to situational factors, there are both physiological and psychological transformations that affect us and our ways of responding. However, as Adams argues, this does not mean that virtue is not real. Our learning how to live is always and of necessity a learning how to live in a certain range of contexts and a certain field of expectations. One cannot be prepared for the unforeseen. Human moral excellence cannot be an ability to respond well to every possible circumstance. In sum, virtue is real, but it is dependent and conditional virtue. We are dependent creatures, or ”dependent rational animals”, as Alasdair MacIntyre sees reason to put it, and dependent also in matters of virtue and vice (Adams 2006, 158-165; MacIntyre 1999, esp. 63-128).

Human mutual dependency has a significant place also in the following section, where I address altruism and its controversial status in VE. However, before moving on, I wish to

bring up two further issues which both have relevance in the present context, and which also have topicality in my argumentation below. The first is the view, that the domain-specific excellence of being good at a social role, or a (social) practice, is not neatly separable from the moral value of the role itself and the institutions and social arrangements and processes that provide its indispensable context. I believe that this point is highly relevant in the ethics of professions.

However, one major implication of the inseparability of the moral worth of a role and the excellence of being good at it is that if collective arrangements that shape some certain role are sufficiently poor (bad), it seems that being good at that role will be no virtue (or at the extreme will turn into being a vice). It *may* still be possible to manifest virtue in occupying the role, but that is likely to involve subverting the role rather than being good at it in the usual or conventional sense. The capacity to adapt this critical distance grows along with the learning and embracing of the more general and domain-neutral virtues and other practical dispositions. It may even be thoroughly plausible to hold that any social role can be inhabited more virtuously with this kind of critical stance than without it (Adams 2006, 142-43; Oakley and Cocking 2001, 74-94; MacIntyre 1981, 187-189).

In the second place I wish tentatively to refer to the accumulating literature on evolutionary and experimental psychology which suggests that human moral judgment may characteristically be a complex interplay between (at least) two distinct types of processes, namely domain-specific, social emotional responses, and domain-neutral reasoning processes applied in moral contexts. Evidence to that effect has recently been gathered for example by Lanteri, Chelini and Rizzello (2008) who manipulated the familiar trolley problem[63] in their experimental research and found that people indeed have differing strategies or ways of responding in situations which can all be considered morally relevant but which can be otherwise decisively distinguished from each other (Lanteri, Chelini and Rizzello 2008, 789-804).

It has also been argued that our"..(M)oral thinking is driven largely by social-emotional

[63]Philippa Foot (1978) introduced the so-called trolley problem, in which an agent is faced with two simple alternatives, both of which result in tragedy. The scenario is roughly as follows. A trolley is running down its track, but nobody is in control. Along the track stand five people who are unavoidably going to die unless the trajectory of the trolley is altered. By flipping a switch it is possible to lead the trolley to a different track, where unfortunately a single person is standing and is then condemned to die. Though a case can be made both for hitting the lever and for not hitting it, there seems to be no obviously superior option to choose.

dispositions built on those we inherited from our primate ancestors" (Greene and Haidt, 2002, 519). In other words, in an evolutionary perspective it seems to make sense to regard an emotional aversion to damaging other humans as a fitness-improving trait that confers upon its possessors some advantage in grouping successfully. Such adaptation could be considered arisen at a time when the scope of aggression was limited literally to a stone's throw, there being no need to avoid harming other humans at long distances, since this was not even, technologically speaking, a possibility.

Nonetheless, the way in which this relates to our discussion is that we frequently develop emotional responses particularly when we have to act immediately and intimately. On the other hand, when we have more time and do not face the people whose life we may or have to affect, we characteristically lapse into an elaborate abstract moral reasoning. What partly turns the situation into a "complex interplay" between at least two types of processes is the way in which we also often elaborate *afterwards* the domain-specific, emotional responses (Lanteri, Chelini and Rizzello 2008, 793). These results can for their part shed some light on the findings of situationist psychology both on the indeterminacy of our responses over a range of different kinds of situations, and on the considerably higher coherence of our responses over a range of situations of the same kind. At the same time they can be seen to give plausibility to arguments to the effect that S3 indeed may lean too heavily on the intellectual dimension of virtue. Practical wisdom not infrequently accumulates as the years pass, but it cannot nullify our evolutionary history. However, in my view, all this is very much in accordance with our everyday experience and also adds to the plausibility of the virtue (theoretical) conception, in which virtue is regarded as domain- and situation-specific, as well as frail but real.

2.4.3. Altruism as an Excellence in Being for the Good

In his introduction to virtue ethical readings Stephen Darwall considers consequentialism, contractarianism/contractualism, and deontology moral theories (Darwall 2003, 1-4). According to Darwall, these theories concern distinctive moral notions of obligation, concern, and respect and, ultimately, questions of right conduct. Virtue ethics, on the other hand, can be advanced, not as a moral theory at all, but as an account of other aspects of human life which are in and of themselves ethically deep. One kind of such

theories is perfectionism, of which Darwall considers Aristotle to be one example. A *moral* virtue ethics, however, is a theory of what is worthy of distinctively moral esteem, that is, worthy of esteem or admiration in a moral agent.

As an exemplary case of such an approach Darwall considers the eighteenth-century Scottish philosopher Francis Hutcheson. Hutcheson argued that the basic moral phenomenon is a distinctively moral esteem for benevolence, the desire to benefit others (Hutcheson 2003, 51-62). Further, as was discussed above, the reason for Michael Slote's rejection of NA and his embracing of a Hutchesonian, or a generally sentimentalist line of thought, was that he finds the warm or sentimentalist approaches the only plausible ways in which a general humanitarianism can function as a ground-level element of moral thought and theory-building. Slote takes in particular benevolence and caring for others to be the most fundamental and plausible moral virtues. Hence, the approaches of the sentimentalists or of Slote might – at least at first reading – be considered good candidates for strategies to defend VE as a distinctively (others-regarding) moral theory.

Unfortunately we cannot wholeheartedly draw on Slote's strategy since it seems incompatible with the broad Adamsian virtue conception for which I have argued. But how does NA, in turn, when considered as a separate approach from Aristotle proper, succeed in the sentimentalist test, and can we plausibly consider it compatible with Adams? Recall how Silverman endeavored to show that the Aristotelian framework is, after all, compatible with the claim that properly functioning, virtuous, and flourishing human beings *necessarily* develop and act on warm virtues, too (Silverman 2008, 510-514). In other (Darwall's) words, Silverman argued that NA (if not Aristotle proper) *is* a moral virtue ethics. In my view, Silverman is able to make his case plausible yet not quite decisive. Silverman himself admits that the accuracy of his claims might be challenged, but that "..(I)t is indisputable that within ethics, psychology and the English language there are conceptions of well-being requiring an agent to possess the warm virtues to flourish that are widely seen as conceptually plausible" (Silverman 2008, 511).

As an alternative or an amendment to Silverman, we might also consider LeBar's insightful strategy to equip Aristotle proper with deontic constraints. According to LeBar eudaimonist virtue-ethical theories at least provide a framework for maintaining that we have the same reason for occupying the second-person standpoint that we do for being

virtuous generally: doing so is of crucial importance for living excellently and well (LeBar 2009, 650; Darwall 2006; 2007, 52-69). LeBar works in a eudaimonist virtue tradition, but I do not quite see why deontic constraints could not hold in uneudaimonist NA, too. According to NA we have reason to do what is virtuous therefore we also have reason to occupy a second-person standpoint.

For the sake of the argument I assume that (at least some forms of) NA *does* manifest the characteristics of moral virtue ethics. In addition we can accept, with much more ease, Silverman's second argument that Slote's warm agent-basing is not capable of providing detailed and nuanced moral evaluations, because Slote's theory loses valuable resources when constructing its basis merely to support merely a few warm virtues (Silverman 2008, 510-518). *This* clearly is also compatible with Adams. However, in order to assist us further in this vein, we first have to consider whether Adams favors NA, and he definitely cannot be said to do this. Adams claims that he is offering a contribution to the ”ethics of virtue” but not a form of ”virtue ethics” (Adams 2006, 6).

His ”virtue ethics” has approximately the same scope of reference as ours in this study: by it he is referring to a normative, or substantive, virtue ethical theory. Adams' ”ethics of virtue”, however, has a different meaning from that of Gary Watson's above in 2.2. Whereas Watson works on an abstract and general (meta)-theoretical level, Adams sees himself as providing an account of the nature of virtue without attempting to analyze or to define the concepts of right and wrong in terms of it. There is a fundamental difference between judgments of virtue and judgments of obligation, and there are no plausible grounds to give priority to either, Adams argues. Adams therefore cannot be seen as an advocate of any form of NA, at least as long as we define NA, for instance, as holding that goodness is prior to rightness (as we did above).

Now, although Adams does not offer his virtue conception, or his ethics of virtue, as a part of any form of NA, we might try by all means to make a case for their compatibility. That Adams defines virtue as being persistently and morally excellently for good (things) causes no friction between his virtue conception and NA. Neither does the fact that Adams interprets goods that we can be excellently for very broadly. As a matter of fact this characteristic features very prominently already in classical forms of virtue ethics and seems to be in no way precluded from modern ones either. Excellence can also be seen

here as a common vantage point, if not common terrain, between moral and non-moral. Virtue and moral goodness in the meaning of being for the good of others can be considered (merely) one, *yet* by far the most pivotal form of excellence. A neo-Aristotelian theory that embraces this kind of virtue conception at the same time succeeds in laying a claim to be a *moral* virtue ethical theory. As regards, finally, Adams's view on the frailty and fragmentariness of virtue, it actually seems conducive to the plausibility and applicability of NA by showing how recent psychological findings as well as commonsense experience can be readily integrated into the theory.

2.4.3.1. Does Excellence Really Matter?

Let us, however, turn to consider how Adams fares independently with the altruism challenge. This is necessary in any case, because Adams defines virtue as *excellence* in being for the good. That altruism, defined as other-regarding benevolence, is a way of being for good seems obvious. It even seems to be a major way of being for good, solely on grounds of the numbers of others and their mutually dependent goods. Hence what is more in need of discussion is whether altruism is excellent and whether it matters. And, indeed, *does* it matter? Is it not at least superfluous, if not thoroughly misguided, to look towards the admirableness of a person rather than towards the benefits received by others?

However, when considering the answer, we must first recall that excellence is a particular type of goodness, namely, intrinsic goodness. This in turn means, that excellence is not (only) usefulness or instrumental goodness, but something that is in itself worth having and worthy to be admired or honored. A generous person is, then, not (only) to be admired because of the benefits which her generosity is likely to yield to the well-being of others. It is the trait itself – the tendency in oneself to be generous when appropriate – that renders her worthy of the admiration. Adams also analyses the issue by discussing the desire to be of service to others. He points to the fact that it is different from the desire that other people be served, no matter by whom. The desire to be of service seems to mean that one wants to contribute to something good by way of having some responsibility for it and, in that way, participating in it. "..(I) believe the way in which we commonly desire such participation makes clear that we regard it as enriching our lives with a value that is not merely instrumental, but is something over and above the benefits

that is received by the other person" (Adams 2006, 68).

To summarize, Adams seems to believe that if we think of an interest in the non-instrumental value of altruism as harmfully shadowing or undermining the interest in its (instrumental) benefits, we are likely to be thinking of the benefits on the model of commodities. This, in turn, could mean that we have a (very) truncated conception of the goods of human life, notwithstanding that much human good *does* depend on commodities. To put it in another way, there is the question of whether a person is regarded as a means or as an end when she is seen as virtuous. If altruism is seen in merely instrumental (consequential) terms, it follows that people are regarded (mainly) as means to the ends of others when they are praised for altruistic qualities or actions. And to be regarded mainly as a means and not as an end in oneself can be considered degrading. However,".. (W)hatever else a virtue should be, the praise of it should not be degrading" (Adams 2006, 67).

Adams, in fact, explicitly argues here against the trait-consequentialism of Julia Driver as discussed above. He finds Driver's theory paradigmatically representing an outlook in which the moral point of view is situated (implicitly) in a system in which the interests of people are seen as in competition rather than community with those of other people. And to praise one from that point of view is to actually praise the benefits that others derive from one's qualities, inner states, and actions, without regard to whether one's life is or becomes happier or better in any intrinsic way (for those qualities). According to Adams, this leaves us without a satisfying answer to the question of why one should desire moral virtue for oneself or for anyone that one cares for. In communal environment, however, it is natural to identify virtues with qualities of will and personal relationship. Such a point of view supports a conception of virtue as fundamentally a form of excellence rather than of usefulness (Adams 2006, 66-73).

However, although it may matter whether altruism is excellent, the question remains whether it *is* excellent? Adams believes, first on, that there is a conceptual connection between value and valuing. He does not mean that either can be defined as a function of the other, but that, nevertheless, if something is good, there is a way in which it is good (excellent) to value it (Adams 2006, 74). But this suggests, however, that one could be excellently for good things that one wants for himself alone. This we would generally

consider a selfish thing to do, but what is it that would be more excellent about wanting good things for others (too)?

First, there is the issue of wider scope. An altruistic interest in the good of others typically has wider scope than one's interest in one's own good can have. Moreover, it seems to be more excellent to be for more rather than less of what is good. Secondly and closely related to the first, a great proportion of our own possible (intrinsic) goods depend on how we relate to others and how we take care of their goods. Thus my caring about my own good alone could not have sufficient richness to compensate for its narrowness. Third, intuitively, not to take care of the goods of other people not only is less excellent but is morally bad, too. In other words, it can be considered a vice, at least in cases it develops into a settled motivational pattern or disposition. And, moreover, not to take care of the goods of others seems to be bad or even vicious in another way, too. Namely, not to take care of the goods of other people is a way of relating badly to them. Whether or not it is reciprocated, caring for others' goods constitutes an interpersonal relationship which, according to Adams, is richer and more excellent than the more reflexive relationship to oneself involved in caring for one's own good(s) (Adams 2006, 73-7).

What this suggests, it seems to me, is that in Adams' virtue conception it *is* excellent to take care of the good of others and, accordingly, altruism is a virtue in Adams. It even may be seen as a major virtue, since most of us are related or at least connected to a large number of others in multiple ways, and as argued above, it seems to be more excellent to be for more rather than less of what is good. However, all this does *not* remove the fact that in the Adamsian (kind of) virtue conception(s) potential virtue has broad scope and the territory of the moral is considered broadly, too. Moreover, in Adams virtue is considered a socially dependent, probabilistic inner state or quality of persons.

Being so vulnerable and indeterminate in its manifestation, can virtue, after all, serve as a plausible key concept in a coherent endeavor to try to understand and theorize about morality? I think it can, and partly so precisely on grounds of virtue's frailty and fragmentariness. These characteristics for their part render an ethics of virtue and virtue ethics indisputably relevant to and compatible with the way we actually live and are. How we manage with others or how we take care of their good is a major constituent, maybe the very essence, of what morality means. However, the notion of morality cannot

plausibly be truncated to apply merely to altruism. To add to this idea and, at the same time, to face one more challenge to VE and NA and their respective plausibility as moral, other-regarding theories, let us discuss briefly the problem of partiality.

2.4.3.2. Is Partiality to Be Tolerated or Even Welcomed?

The issue has received a wide indeed treatment in the philosophical literature, but I now choose to draw particularly on John Cottingham, for reasons soon to become apparent (Cottingham 1996, 57-76). Cottingham, namely, takes it to be the rootedness in the real world that gives VE a decisive edge over its competitors, i.e. the different varieties of deontology and consequentialism. Further, what facilitates this kind of rootedness, even without the well-developed virtue conceptions like Adams', is among other things the network of preferences and partialities that VE allows and that generally is part and parcel of the human condition. Cottingham calls this kind of virtue ethical perspective "autocentric" and maintains that it can largely be rescued from the accusations of complacency and bland social conservatism with which it is sometimes charged. However, Cottingham works through some parts of Aristotle proper and finds rich evidence to the effect that a virtuous person"..(I)s in no sense either a global utility-maximizer or an impartial seeker after Kantian moral worth" (Cottingham 1996, 62).

Accordingly, Cottingham argues that the Aristotelian idea for excellence assigns value in a way which is heavily dependent on decent upbringing, solid endowments of income, good health, and other determinants and qualities of life which clearly are not only requirements for a worthy life (in Kantian sense), but for outward success and flourishing. Thus, Cottingham goes on to argue, the virtuous can plausibly find place and time for charity and benevolence, but that will only do after the central (external) ingredients of human flourishing are in place; and the securing of those ingredients requires the existence of strong and stable networks of partiality and preference. Within the Adamsian virtue approach we might respectively say that although excellence (in being for the good) brings to our life a prominent part of what is morally worthwhile in it, there are also many basic goods that depend on commodities and services of various kinds; which are necessary for us; and which we secure by relating to certain others, some of whom we regard as our nearest and dearest (Adams 2006, 19-23, 70; Cottingham 1996, 57-64).
Cottingham anticipates the wealth of protest which his perspective arouses. In his

defense, to put it briefly, he reminds us that those tempted to take the high moral ground against Aristotle must be prepared to undergo a good deal of honest self-examination on how their very own lives take course. Even a minimal level of honesty is enough to reveal to most of us that in the structure of the great part of our day-to-day lives we are Aristotelians. It becomes visible in who we regard as friends, in which kinds of goods we want for ourselves and our families and so on.

Cottingham also suggests that perhaps it is best for virtue theorists to simply bite the bullet when confronting the critique. The achievement of (neo)-Aristotelian ethical excellence, like other forms of human excellence, *is* and will be contingent on more than mere inner worth. There is the (moral) luck, and there are the other contingences and dependences. Cottingham actually asserts that it is a central feature "..(O)f the conception of ethics put forward by virtue theory" that ethical appraisal is seen as continuous with, and of the fundamentally same type as other kinds of human appraisal (Cottingham 1996, 67). This, indeed, comes rather close to how excellence, virtue and the sphere of morality are seen very broadly in Adams, too (Adams 2006, 19-23). Moreover, as I see it, both perspectives are able to gain in plausibility exactly on the grounds of these mutual features: their conceptions of virtue are susceptible both to empirical findings and to overall intuitions on the human condition.

This concludes the core parts of my defense against the main challenges of VE as I see them. I believe that the discussion so far at least shows that VE (i) has ample potentiality as a distinctive departure in considering the features of the phenomena of morality and that (ii) VE also can be developed as a moral theory, in the sense that there is not only a central but also a conceptually or logically necessary place in it for the virtue of altruism. Shortly, in the beginning of Interlude One, I will actually summarize the features which have proved to constitute the core of the virtue ethical conception, which I have been analyzing. Before doing so, however, I want to return to comparing a theory of excellence for a nonhuman animal. I want to do this because of what I claimed about the conceptual necessity of altruism in VE and because of the critique VE has been facing on grounds of its commitment to human *telos* or other fundamental values or ends behind or above the virtues.

2.4.3.3. A Postscript about the Telos

Now, as we saw above in section 2.2., Watson found evaluational essentialism to sit badly with modern notions:"..(J)ust as God is dead, it will be said, so the concept of human nature has ceased to be normative" (Watson 2003, 244). Cottingham, however, sees us within the confines of his virtue theoretical conception as creatures whose commitments and possible goals *are* largely determined by specific biological and social ties. In other words, Cottingham thinks that it is important to draw a connection between the goodness of an individual and considerations about the way of life of the species of which the individual is a member (Cottingham 1996, 61-2).

Cottingham seems, on his part, to draw rather heavily on Philippa Foot, who has recently been working on the concept of natural normativity (Foot 2001, 25-51). Foot argues that there is a *logical* kinship between evaluative judgments made of plants and animals (generally non-human organisms) and moral judgments applied to human beings. An organism of a given type, on Foot's account, will count as defective if it lacks something that is vital for carrying through with its characteristic mode of survival and reproduction. Similar norms apply to human beings as organisms. Yet since humans are practically reasoning organisms, there are norms of conduct that they must comprehend and act on in order to count as good humans. Foot then goes on to argue, that by the natural norms applying to human beings, one counts as defective if she lacks virtues. The claim is that to lack virtues (and vices?) is to lack features that we need to get on with a life that is characteristically human. Moral judgments assess human conduct from the standpoint of natural human goodness:" ..(T)here is no change in the meaning of 'good' between the word as it appears in 'good roots' and as it appears in 'good dispositions of the human will'" (Foot 2001, 39).

This kind of neo-naturalism has brought Foot face to face with a rather cool reception. The critique seems to focus on the fact that Foot clearly does not adhere to the contemporary scientific account of the biological world. The orthodox, neo-Darwinian view maintains that organismic traits function essentially to promote gene replication, while Foot identifies survival and reproduction as basic goals of an organism's traits. The critique, however, has also been seen misplaced. John Hacker-Wright maintains that the critics both miss the distinctive *logical* approach to the biological world employed by

Foot to define natural normativity and also misconstrue how natural normativity applies to practically reasoning human beings. In other words, Foot does not try to challenge the superiority of evolutionary explanations. Her aim is completely different, namely to show that to establish what is normal for a given species is an irreducibly interpretative task and that we are always employing some interpretation when we approach organisms. In sum, Foot's theory is not a biological one. Rather, it is a theory of the structure and the logic of how we make (evaluative) statements about living things (Hacker-Wright 2009, 315-17).

Is Watson eventually wrong in his non-naturalism and Foot right in her (neo)-naturalism? I have not found reason to close the case in favor of either, yet I embrace Foot's notion of interpretation. I think the core point of the idea becomes clear in Hacker-Wright's formulation of it. Foot does *not*, he maintains, either recommend, or see as virtuous, behavior on the basis of its being the way people normally behave. Instead, recommendations spring up as a result of internal observation or interpretation that we (at least partly intuitively) employ in our situation as dependent creatures with practical reason. To express it via an example from Foot: "..(By) the criteria of natural normativity charity is a prime candidate as a virtue, because love and other forms of kindness are needed by every one of us when misfortune strikes" (Foot 2001, 108). And Hacker-Wright continues:"..(I) would argue that there are certain, central, almost inevitable human experiences that provide the framework for our ethical self-interpretation" (Hacker-Wright 2009, 320).

Now, what Hacker-Wright says can also be accepted without any commitment to naturalism, or to Foot's natural normativity. I also remarked above Watson's conceding that what actually count as virtues, can at least in part be identified by their contribution to a characteristically human life, without any commitment to naturalism (Watson 2003, 240). Our human condition and experiences as dependent rational animals simply provide the framework for our (ethical) interpretation of our social and existential environment. One such plausible interpretation might be the one offered by Michael Slote when he considered benevolence to be the one (and only) cardinal virtue in a densely populated and tightly connected world like ours. However, allowing all this, VE gains in rootedness in real world.[64]

[64] Linda Zagzebski argues that the foundational concepts of a (virtue ethical) moral theory should be

INTERLUDE ONE

A. Virtuous Craftsmanship and Professionalism

In the present section, Interlude One, I endeavor to delineate a more concise and coherent picture of the virtue conception (and virtue ethics) for which I have argued in this study. I do it both by drawing a comparison between the position I embrace and that developed by Justin Oakley and Dean Cocking; and by laying out a more explicit schema on the virtue conception which I embrace (Oakley and Cocking 2001, 39-137). Overall, Interlude One is construed as a bridge along which the focus of the conversation shifts from purely theoretical considerations onto virtue ethical applications in the ethics of professions in general and in the ethics of journalism in particular.

To make the following of my argumentation easier while discussing Oakley and Cocking, I start with the schema. I will both draw on my discussion above and provide some new clarificatory remarks and arguments. My aim is not to develop a distinctive and coherent virtue ethical theory, but to try to show how a broadly neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical framework – which allows for a rich and real-life-rooted virtue conception – has individual and indispensable potentiality in normative ethics and action-guidance.

1. A decisive feature of an ethics of virtue or any kind of virtue ethics is its *theory of virtue*. I draw in this study on the virtue conception of Robert M. Adams which considers virtue excellence in being persistently for the (moral) good. In Adams virtue is frequently domain-specific, probabilistic and frail, but real and the source of intrinsic good-(ness).
2. In virtue ethical approaches, including my own broadly neo-Aristotelian one, character-appraisal dominates over or is prior to act-evaluation. Instead of character it is often (more) meaningful to refer to diverse persistent motivational factors in the psyche of a person. However, act-evaluation is also an integral part of a plausible virtue approach. In this I also draw on Adams and certain other theorists and note that virtue ethical theories frequently and unfortunately lack within them a place for obligation. This, then, strongly contravenes the general intuition that we owe to other people not to hurt them.

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defined by reference to real-world exemplars. She thus gives an important place in her theory to empirical investigation (Zagzebski 2010, 41-57).

3. Which character-traits or motivational states can be regarded as virtues does depend, in some versions of VE, on what is seen as conducive to or constitutive of characteristically human life, which in turn can be defined or grounded in various ways. I, however, find it plausible to ground the virtues particularly in common interpretative intuitions on objective goods and intrinsic goodness (in accordance and partly inspired by Adams); or secondarily on what is considered admirable in human beings, or good and necessary for human beings to live a rewarding or flourishing life in (a) communit(ies). This part of virtue ethics can be referred to as their respective theories of good.
4. Virtue ethics presupposes a strong continuum between moral and other types of human appraisal, excellence, and practical thought.
5. And, finally, both virtue ethics in general and the virtue ethics developed and favored in this study allow for partiality and are auto-centric in their orientation.

Now, the reason why I see it as productive to discuss Oakley's and Cocking's arguments (2001, 1) in this study is that they aim to show in their work how a theoretically advanced virtue ethics offers a plausible and distinctive alternative to consequentialist and deontological approaches to the understanding and evaluation of professional roles, and I consider that they are very much on the right track in their endeavor. Indeed, I am inclined to agree with most of what they claim about VE's superiority to consequentialism and deontology, *yet* I disagree on various issues relating to the way in which they consider the characteristics of VE and virtue, and, accordingly, on how the virtue-ethical approach can be seen to serve as a basis in an ethics of professions. In sum, I discuss Oakley's and Cocking's approach in order to assist the reader out of *Part two* with its emphasis on virtue theory down to *Part three* where I concentrate on the ethics of journalism and on the concrete work of journalists.

Nevertheless, Oakley's and Cocking's analysis of VE fails to meet some of its most severe challenges and is therefore partly theoretically and empirically adrift, although there is indeed much to acclaim in their endeavor to develop a genuinely virtue-ethical theory of professions. On the grounds of the indeterminacy of their virtue conception and on the implausibility of some aspects of their brand of VE (or NA) I believe, nevertheless, that Oakley and Cocking are running the risk of receiving wrong or inaccurate answers to correct questions when applying their theory. In order to be able to show this, I proceed

by first addressing the manner in which they set out the basic features of virtue ethics as they see it. And as will be noticed, theirs is also a neo-Aristotelian theory of virtue, and one which I consider to belong to the traditional or mainstream kind of theories within the confines of NA (Oakley and Cocking 2001, 9-38: Oakley 1996, 128-152).

Being a traditional neo-Aristotelian theory of virtue, there are bound to be characteristics in Oakley's and Cocking's approach which I am unable to accept as parts of my virtue(-ethics) conception. However, Oakley and Cocking begin with a discussion on the core features of VE, in which they draw heavily on Oakley's earlier work that we touched on above (Oakley 1996, 128-152). They first define in a familiar way an action as right if and only if it is what an agent with a virtuous character would perform in the circumstances. They then observe that there are forms of consequentialism and deontology which also give the character of an agent an essential role in the justification of right action. This we already discussed when addressing Julia Driver's consequentialist virtue theory. However, in this way it is clearly unacceptable to speak of virtue ethics as distinctive *merely* by the primacy it gives to character, and this implication Oakley and Cocking naturally take into consideration.

They also address the issue of the very plausibility of a purely character-based criterion of rightness of action, but fail to develop it in the direction we took above. One shortcoming, as we saw it, resides in the very definition of right action which Oakley and Cocking also lean on. It specifies *how* to choose the right action but fails to indicate *why* the right action is right. In that way traditional NA and accordingly also Oakley's and Cocking's approach, can be objected as relying on an unexplained or indefinite concept of right action (van Zyl 2009b, 68). Moreover, Oakley and Cocking discuss the major challenge faced by VE in the claims of situationist psychology concerning the very existence of character(-traits) merely within one footnote, which I find somewhat alarming in a work which takes character as one of its fundamental theoretical cornerstones (Oakley and Cocking 2001, 9-38) .

One major implication of Oakley's and Cocking's negligence as regards the situationist challenge is the way in which their definition of virtue is left wanting in descriptive and analytical depth. They define virtue as plural and intrinsically valuable or admirable traits or activities, but this seems to be all: there is no substantive discussion, for example, of

the frailty or, particularly, of the domain-specificity of virtue, which, after all, has major leverage in their theory, as we shall see below. What they also do not explicitly discuss is the relation between moral and other kinds of excellence, or to put it another way, how narrowly or broadly and as how established they see the very territory of morality. In addition, however, Oakley and Cocking hold that goodness is prior to rightness. There is much meta-ethical controversy on this question, and with Adams, I reject it in case there is included in it the idea that there is no room for duty or obligation in moral theory at all.[65] In contrast, I *do* share the view that the rightness of an action is dependent on the motives of the agent in question. In other words, acting rightly means in VE or NA acting out of virtue or admirably, it is being excellently for some good in action. Right action, in fact, then, means in VE good or praiseworthy action.

This approach, on the other hand, leaves ample room for ”deontological rightness” in making decisions. I not only act decently when holding back from burning my neighbor's house: I first of all owe it to her not to burn it. As a matter of fact, I consider that the point and meaning of this kind of continence cannot even be adequately described in standard aretaic terms. Yet one solution to that effect might be to consider occupying the second-person standpoint as a major virtue, in accordance with LeBar's suggestion (LeBar 2009, 642-671). However, Oakley and Cocking rightly add that the priority claim effectively distinguishes VE from traditional forms of Kantianism and deontology in which rightness is *not* derived from notions of goodness or accounts of human good, well-being, or virtue. In contemporary Kantianism (deontology), a good agent is one who is disposed to act in accordance with certain moral rules or requirements, which themselves are derived for instance from the nature of practical rationality (Oakley and Cocking 2001, 19-21).

Nonetheless, according to Oakley and Cocking, there are three more core features in VE: the virtues are objectively good, some intrinsic goods are agent-relative, and acting rightly does not require that we maximize the good. These are features that I not only accept but also see as necessary: indeed we briefly discussed them at the end of section 2.2. Objective goodness, first, means that virtues are good independently of any connection which they may have with desire, and this is clearly compatible with how we

[65]See e.g. Wedgwood (2009) and particularly Thomas Hurka (2010) on the issue. On Hurka’s account rightness and virtue go together because each is defined by a (different) relation to some other, more basic moral concept, e.g. happiness or pleasure. I regard Hurka’s solution as elegant and in many ways plausible, but on grounds that it is not virtue ethical I leave it aside in this context.

described the virtue conception of Adams above. Second, that some intrinsic goods are agent-relative is in turn implied by auto-centricity for which I argued above. To describe a certain good as agent-relative is to say that its being a good of mine gives it additional moral importance (to me). Friendship, for example, which is a standard example of an agent-relative virtue, *could*, nevertheless, be regarded as an agent-neutral virtue, too. In that case, it would be the friendship *per se* which is intrinsically valuable and a pluralist (though hardly a monist) consequentialist who believed that friendship is an agent-neutral value would tell us to maximize or at least promote friendships themselves.

Finally, Oakley and Cocking argue that acting rightly does not require that we maximize the good. In VE we are told to have *excellent* friendships, not the best ones possible for us. And theirs being excellent means that we are guided in our friendship relations by the particular and appropriate normative conception of what friendship involves, i.e. we have to act out of our knowledge on friendship*ness*. The non-maximizing principle is particularly ill-suited to the core thesis of most versions of consequentialism, which instructs us to maximize the good, whether goodness is understood in monistic or pluralistic, subjective or objective terms. In this way, the distinctive features which Oakley and Cocking (Oakley and Cocking 2001, 9-25) delineate are arguably mutually able to effectively distinguish VE from (at least most of) its deontological and consequentalist rivals.

Friendship also figures strongly in how Oakley and Cocking proceed in developing their virtue ethical theory of professions. The virtue of friendship, namely, shows how VE productively allows departures from what impartialist ethical theories would ordinarily require of us. And although there are, according to Oakley and Cocking, some important distinctions between friendship and professional life – with respect to the challenge each might have been thought to pose to impartialist theories – there are also some plausible analogies (Oakley and Cocking 2001, 38-73). In terms of our Adamsian terminology, Oakley's and Cocking's analysis of friendship strives to show us how professional virtues in VE may, or even should, legitimately be more or less domain-dependent. What then actually counts as acting well in the context of a professional role is, in their view (Oakley and Cocking 2001, 74) importantly determined by how well that role functions in serving the goals of the profession, *and* by how those goals in turn are connected with key human good(s). That is, good professional roles must be part of a good profession, and a

good profession is one which involves commitment to (a) good(s) which play(s) a crucial role in enabling us to live a humanly flourishing life.

Thus, in Oakley's and Cocking's terms the question of whether the whole enterprise of journalism can be considered morally sound, depends first upon its goals being in service of some key human good(s) (or at least not being against any such good(s)); and second, upon journalism's being a profession. Moreover, if all this can be granted, the moral status of the pieces of journalistic work, for example of a sports reporter, in turn depends on how well the role of sports journalism functions in serving the goals of journalism in general.[66] So, for example, if it is appropriate to take serving democracy, or some of its constituent parts, such as freedom of speech and administrative transparency, as either a goal or even *the* central goal of journalism, then given the importance of democracy to human flourishing, journalism would count as a good profession (or at least occupation) on this approach. Further, for example, given the (general) news reporter's broad concern with what is taking place in the local and national political and social environment, the news reporter's role within journalism seems clearly to count as a good journalistic (professional/occupational) role.

In this way, in Oakley's and Cocking's virtue ethical approach (Oakley and Cocking 2001, 75), in the generation of a defensible professional (occupational) ethic, the norms of the profession in question cannot simply be taken as given (as they often seem to be in professional codes); rather, they must be shown to reflect a commitment to (an) important substantive human good(s) that contributes to our living a good or flourishing human life. In addition, the excellences of, for example a good journalist, must be determined by reference to some model of what being a journalist purports to be. That is, those excellences will be informed by an account of the proper goals of journalism as a *practice*, a philosophy of journalism, and an account of what sorts of relationships between journalists and readership (citizenry) are appropriate in such a practice.
Oakley and Cocking develop the concept of "regulative ideal" to refer to how internalized ethical considerations guide one in her actions and particularly keep her from distancing herself too far from excellent or virtuous conduct within a practice. Nevertheless, I

[66] As Professor Juha Räikkä kindly pointed out to me, there probably are very few who use this kind of criteria to assess the journalistic (or moral?) quality or legitimacy of sports-pages. However, it seems that the logic of Oakley's and Cocking's approach leads to the above inference.

consider ”regulative ideal” to be rather superfluous and as overlapping with ”excellences” and ”virtues” (or ”principles”). As I see it, what we need, in order to plausibly explicate the moral considerations within the dynamics of a practice, is the Macintyrian frame modified with the deeper and more analytic virtue conception discussed above. On the other hand, there is nothing *misleading* in Oakley's and Cocking's idea of regulative ideal. With it, I think, they simply wish to emphasize the importance of grounding the ideals and virtues of any one profession (or occupation) on the goals of the respective profession, rather than looking towards more general universalistic virtues or moral principles.

Accordingly they also contend that this grounding of VE in practice and its inherent goals makes the charge of impracticality, which is so often directed at VE by the proponents of universalist ethical theories – and which we addressed above – seem rather ironic.

> ..(F)or on our account, the regulative ideal of a good doctor is informed by the appropriate conception of the doctor's role, and this must be derived in important ways from the *practice* of medicine itself. And indeed, other ethical theories, whose regulative ideals are distinctive by the prominence they give to universalist concerns, look decidedly impractical in their distance from the actual roles and concrete sensitivities of actual doctors (Oakley and Cocking 2001, 74-75, 115; Adams 2006, 14-35, 65-94, 115-165; MacIntyre 1981, 175-183; Borden 2007, 15-30; 49-123; cf. Garver 2006, 15-46).

But to what extent should the ordinary prohibitions and requirements of broader ethical considerations or theories limit what one may be required to do by one's role within any particular profession or occupation? Or is the general conception of the virtuous person always inappropriate for evaluating conduct within a professional role? Oakley and Cocking argue that it is not. They maintain that in giving an account of the distinctive sensitivities and requirements of various professional roles, and of how those requirements may diverge from what broad-based morality would allow, one is in no way committed to the idea that those role requirements are absolute. One should not overvalue the good that might be claimed for excellent performance in certain professional roles. In particular, there generally are strong reasons not to violate *the founding value(s)* of a certain profession (or occupation) (Oakley and Cocking 2001, 130-31).

Thus, if journalism be a harbinger of administrative and political transparency and accountability, untruthfulness and deception cannot be considered journalistic excellences or virtues, even though they might occasionally be conducive to disclosure of crucial information. It is common knowledge, after all, that a person acting within a role may lose sight of how his acting within it promotes or constitutes or fails to constitute his leading a good life; and that to the extent that he does so, the broad-based moral values making up the picture of good life ought to correct his narrowed vision. Moreover, as was discussed at the end of section 2.4.2., the learning and embracing of the more general and domain-neutral virtues and other practical dispositions in addition also tends to enhance one's ability to make out the moral worth of the respective role or practice and its goals. I actually suggested above, in strong concordance with Robert M. Adams, that it may even be thoroughly plausible to hold that *any* social role (including occupational roles) can be inhabited more virtuously with this kind of critical stance than without it (Oakley and Cocking 2001, 130-136; Adams 2006, 142-43).

Simone van der Burg and Anke van Gorp serve us with an illuminating example on how losing sight of general and domain-neutral virtues may contribute to the ways of seeing the moral responsibilities in one's occupation (van der Burg and van Gorp 2005, 235-256). They discuss an example of engineers who design truck trailers and who do not consider traffic safety to be part of their responsibility, although the common supposition is that designers in fact should do all that is in their power to ensure safety in traffic. Van der Burg and van Gorp argue that engineers understand their responsibility only in the light of their role in the practice of trailer design and that this understanding steers their decisions, as well as their interpretation of the moral codes. As a matter of fact safety *does* play an important role in design and development, *but* the engineers' view of a ”safe trailer” seems to be based solely on structural measures. And because the engineers have always perceived a safe trailer to be a structurally integral trailer, they have never thought about traffic safety measures. In other words, their general picture of good life has not affected their practice-dependent work and its goals.

Neil Levy, for his part, discusses how the practice-dependent myopia can possibly lead to violations of the founding value(s) in journalism (Levy 2004, 106-118). Levy first takes journalism's goal to be “the production of truth”[67] and accordingly its founding value to

[67] This notion of Levy’s seems indeed highly ambiguous or even misleading. I take it that he merely means

be truthfulness. Levy then goes on to contend that journalists frequently find themselves in situations where deception might result in disclosure of information which they are ardently reaching for. What is alarming here is that occasionally deception *can* be considered warranted. However, there is the danger that within the practice deception is allowed far too self-evident a status, in spite of its being against the practice's founding value(s).

B. Journalism, a Practice and a Prospecting Profession

Now, what is still missing in our discussion is a consideration of whether doing journalism actually constitutes a profession, and whether it in turn has substantial relevance to how our approach to the ethics of journalism should be developed further. Oakley and Cocking for their part argue that it is widely agreed that for an occupation justifiably to claim to be a profession, its practitioners must not deal simply with goods that many of us desire to have; rather, its practitioners must be able to help us attain certain goods that play a crucial *strategic* role in our living a humanly flourishing life (Oakley and Cocking 2001, 78-9). They also maintain that it is in account of this strategic nature of the goods which professionals characteristically help us to secure that cases where a professional fails to uphold his role – in comparison with a non-professional who fails to fulfill her occupational role – gain such moral significance.

I think that a case could be made on these lines that journalism also qualifies as a profession, or that it at least is a solid claimant to become one, even though at the same time ample empirical evidence is accumulating to the effect that the phenomenon of de-professionalization of journalism may also have gathered impetus particularly during the last two decades (Aldridge and Evett 2003, 547-564; Nygren 2008, 15-26; Singer 2007, 79-95; Friend and Singer 2007, 14-53; Russo 1998, 72-111; Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon 2001, 16-36).

Nevertheless, I do not believe that anything decisive hinges on this issue. Journalism can be plausibly considered a practice, and to work as a journalist means adopting an occupational, i.e. a social, role within the practice of journalism. What also importantly characterizes journalism, as I see it, and as I already argued in *Introduction*, is how it can

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that journalists are supposed to write truthful reports. However, to formulate it in the way that he chooses to do, the notion appears to point to the direction of social constructivism.

also be considered a craft. There is, then, the practice with its own goals and craft-specific excellences, of which, according to my approach, some may be regarded as (at least) minor virtues, depending on how reliably they can be seen to further some key good(s) of readers or citizens. Now, to conclude Interlude one, let us take a yet more detailed look at what a Macintyrean practice boils down to and how it relates to other key concepts in this study.

First, I take journalism to be a practice in a broadly Macintyrian formulation, on the grounds that it clearly is an established and co-operative social activity with its own internal goals and excellences in accomplishing those goals.[68] Typically, for one to be able adequately and productively to act (or react) within a practice calls for intimate knowledge of its rules, standards, values, and goals, which, also typically, are either conceptually or at least practically connected. Examples of practices, in addition to journalism, are basketball, archeology, housing construction, and correctional treatment, *yet* occasionally tossing a ball or painting one's house are not practices. A practice is also importantly to be seen as separate from its organizational or institutional settings. The practice of journalism evolves within media, as does the practice of ecological research within universities and other scientific institutions.

Note, however, that practices and their organizational settings frequently, even typically, have differing internal ends or goals. While journalism strives to break news and to provide readership with relevant information on what is taking place at present in the community, media seeks to boost the turnover and keep the shareholders satisfied. Of course, there is solid common terrain within the interests of the practices and their respective organizational settings, and as a matter of fact – at least in market-driven environments – it cannot be otherwise: excellent pieces of journalism, that is excellent within the criteria and goods of journalism, often also sell well, as do well-constructed houses.[69] And there is also decisive evidence to the effect that thriving media houses can

[68]"..(B)y a practice I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and particularly definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended" (MacIntyre 1981, 175).

[69]Yet one could argue that they frequently do not sell well enough or that media executives do not ultimately trust their commercial potentiality. When e.g. in Finland the top television channels transmit their main news programs at different times throughout the evening: at 6 p.m., 7 p.m., 8.30 p.m. and 10 p.m., the leading American television networks transmit their main news programs in the early and late

and do provide more abundant resources and more leeway to the newsrooms than do the ones fighting their way through tougher times.

Nevertheless, making money, the key internal goal of media,[70] is an external goal to journalism. It is not compatible with the conceptual structure of the journalistic practice.[71] If we allowed high profit margins as journalism's internal goal, we should also allow, respectively, a radical re-negotiation of its excellences. However, the relation between the internal and external goals of a practice is a subtle and complicated one and we shall discuss it further in *Parts three* and *four* (MacIntyre 1981, 175-189; Borden 2007, 15-30; 66-69).

Second, the excellences, goals, roles and the whole internal culture of a given practice generally gradually develop or transform by virtue of the dynamical and deeply interconnected nature of social systems and their sub-systems. People normally simultaneously occupy positions and roles in various practices and organizations. Change and transformation inevitably issue from this social complex with its power relations, both intentionally and by chance, however strong may be the normative and psychological resistance both of a given practice and within it. Change however frequently also issues on grounds of practice's internal revisionary logic. ”Practice”, then, is not in general susceptible of conservatism and of fostering of *status quo* as a theoretical construct, as is frequently argued (Borden 2007, 21-23, Lambeth 1992, 73-74; Mason 1996, 191-210).

Third, whether or not journalism can be considered a profession, I hold as *one* of its decisive characteristics – something which both distinguishes it from other media-related occupations and gives credence for the consideration of at least some of its excellences as

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evening, reserving the hours between 7 p.m. and 11 p.m. for entertainment to maximize ratings and revenue. The situation e.g. in Denmark is very much like the one in Finland. However, the difference between Finland and U.S. seems rather plausibly to be traced to the difference between the public service model of broadcasting (to which also the commercial channels have to adapt to some degree) and the purely market-driven one (Curran, Iyengar, Brink Lund and Salovaara-Moring 2009, 5-26).

[70] The so-called public service channels of course have other main goals which are defined in law and regulation.

[71] MacIntyre writes:

> ..(I)ndeed so intimate is the relationship of practices to institutions, and consequently of the goods external to the goods internal to the practices in question, that institutions and practices characteristically form a single causal order in which the ideals and the creativity of the practice are always vulnerable to the acquisitiveness of the institution, in which the cooperative care for common goods of the practice is always vulnerable to the competitiveness of the institution (MacIntyre 1981, 181).

virtues – its being for democracy and in that way also for human flourishing. ”Democracy” is indeed a notoriously complicated and controversial concept, but I take it as acceptable to see it as an umbrella notion, under which are included for example the freedom of speech, administrative transparency and an equal opportunity to pursue political power. In this way journalism *as a practice* can be seen to be at least for some goods which are conducive to democratic arrangements and habits and which can also be considered independent strategic human goods. Yet, this does not mean that journalism could or would not also have other goals, as was considered in *Introduction*. For example entertainment and consumer-counseling are often considered legitimate journalistic goals. In other words, readers can be and are seen within journalism not only as citizens but also as consumers (Baker 2002; Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng and White 2009, 223, 225-6; Ruusunoksa and Kunelius 2008).

Fourth, the virtue (-theoretical) conception discussed above gives a plausible view of how virtue either may manifest it domain-specifically or may *contingently* issue from the domain-specific, i.e. from role- or practice-specific excellence. On the other hand, in my Adamsian approach excellence and virtue are not autistic in their domain-specificity in virtue of their being frequently overridden not only by more holistic and domain-neutral moral and other practical considerations but also on grounds of their connectedness to those key human goods which the respective practice is for (in case it is for any such good(s)). In this way the virtue conception embraced secures an opportunity for a detailed ethical analysis of both what it is to be and act out of virtue in a given role within a given practice.

However, in what follows I go on to analyze in greater detail how virtue is understood in earlier work in the ethics of journalism, and what are the very reasons to adapt into the approach I have been developing and go on to develop below. The main goal of *Part three* is, then, to re-evaluate that work already done on the subject, which has a basis or a flavor of virtue ethics.[72]

[72]Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, and Damon (2001) write interestingly on ”good work” from the point of view of psychology; they seem to regard this as a work that is both professionally excellent and morally sound. In addition they maintain that professions, and more generally all ”realms of work”, have a distinctive, central mission as well as standards of performance. The ultimate ethical edge of each realm, however, resides in practitioners' identities which they bring along and develop further when entering a realm. Nonetheless, these authors seem to think that to qualify as good or competent, professional performance has to be morally sound (virtuous?), too.

3. VIRTUE'S STANDING WITHIN THE CRAFT

In the following sections I aim to lay out how virtue and virtue theory has been mobilized to provide the foundation – or some foundational elements – for the ethics of journalism. Because the body of work in journalism ethics which have at least virtue ethical flavors is considerable, I proceed via examples. First of all, for reasons of clarity and coherence of presentation, we have to choose a plausible and defensible way to compartmentalize the material, i.e. the existing literature. And what I consider to be a solid basis for mutually differing categories, is how firmly and plausibly the concept of virtue used, and the virtue ethical view developed, are argued for and in what way, if any, they are defended theoretically (or empirically).

Following this line of thought, there seems to be justification for developing four categories with respect to the material in hand. The first is the zero-category for developments where there is neither reference to nor interest in virtue or virtue ethics. Second, there is the work on journalism ethics which either only briefly mentions the existence of virtue (ethics), or considers its position subordinate particularly to deontological or consequentialist considerations. In the third category, in turn, I place the varieties of journalism ethics which on the one hand rather heavily draw on virtue-ethical considerations or virtues but on the other do not strive to explore their plausibility or ontological and epistemological status in any considerable depth. The fourth category, finally, is our main target of analysis on grounds that there we can find both decisive reliance on virtue and willingness to argue for its predominance in a theoretically coherent manner.

The main interest in the following will be in categories three and four, but in order to give a fuller portrayal of today's journalism ethics and the way journalism is considered today, I also discuss selected examples of categories one and two. Accordingly, the examples addressed in sections 3.1. and 3.2. will be given a more superficial treatment than those which for this study are the decisive ones in sections 3.3. and 3.4.

3.1. Implicit Contract and Fair Agreement: Ward and Kieran

Stephen J.A. Ward (2004) finds the foundation for his version of journalism ethics in

contractualism. He suggests that journalism duties, like all ethical duties, arise out of agreements and that the ethical duties of journalism are the duties that arise from the distinct social role of journalism. This role, in turn, is to be considered a role as defined by a contract between journalists and their society. According to Ward this contract calls on journalists to be impartial, independent communicators. Journalists come under the general duties of truthful communication that apply to all public communicators, yet they also inherit duties specific to their profession. Professional journalism is the organized, socially recognized activity of communicating *to* the public and *for* the public from the impartial perspective of the public good. Ward then suggests that journalism also importantly is not the politically neutral activity of disseminating bits of data but"..(T)he dissemination and analysis of the most important information for a self-governing polity or for a polity that aspires to be self-governing" (Ward 2004, 26).

However, when discussing further the duties and values which he finds specific to journalism, Ward concentrates on objectivity, which he sees as the principal norm of journalistic work. He explains objectivity as a rhetorical invention that emerged from a new journalism-audience relationship in the nineteenth century. New technology, the commercialization of news, professionalism in journalism, fears about the manipulation of public opinion, and the advent of the "objective" society were among the motivations for the construction of objectivity as at least a rhetorical core norm of journalism. Ward, nonetheless, considers the traditional view of objectivity in journalism to be untenable. Journalism cannot plausibly be understood as the passive recording of events, objectivity being a matter of merely expressing the recorded facts. The traditional view exaggerates the norms of neutrality and detachment, Ward argues, and suggests that it be replaced by his "pragmatic objectivity" (Ward 2004, 9-36; 314-331).

To be sure, Ward's treatment of objectivity is many-sided and firmly anchored both in the history of journalism and in the history of ideas. Yet what is of importance in the context of this study is that his is not an approach of virtue ethical considerations. He himself puts his position as follows: ..(T)he ethical perspective that stands behind my contractualism is a Kantian view of value. We confer value on the objects of our rational choices." And then he also adds existentialist flavors to his conceptual arsenal: "..(O)ur notion of persons as "ends-in-themselves" is a conferring of value on ourselves as autonomous, rational beings. We are, in a Sartrean way, condemned to choose, as rational beings in a

causal, natural world" (Ward 2004, 27).

It is difficult to see precisely what this Kantian and Sartrean contractualism embraced by Ward is, because he does not explicate it in any detail. As a matter of fact his approach is eventually neither straightforwardly built on nor decisively affected by traditional ethical theories nor is it a standard piece of applied journalism ethics. He concentrates on objectivity, both on its origins as journalistic value and on adequate interpretation of the notion in the context of today's journalism. As far as I can see, there is no definite reason why Ward could not have construed his kind of objectivity alternatively as a core journalistic virtue. There is the practice of journalism in his discussion and his "pragmatic objectivity" also seems to readily lend itself to the situation-specific and domain-dependent reality in which the virtue conception which I have been defending obtains.

However, Ward's is but one example in the substantial body of work in journalism ethics which professes more or less contractualist contours without any deeper commitment to any specified theories. As a further example Matthew Kieran writes on the notions of the fourth estate and the implicit *contract* that obtains between citizens and the news media (Kieran 1997, 25-30). He argues that it is important to realize that this kind of implicit contract entails a normative conception of good journalism. What good journalism then amounts to, is what we already traditionally consider it to be, namely, the covering of what we ought to know, construed in terms of events and policies that affect how we are governed and how our society is governed. Hence politics and the processes of government are legitimately considered a mainstay of good journalism.

Kieran, nonetheless, also suggests that journalism cannot plausibly be seen merely in terms of the fourth estate account. Any account that totally rules out what we are interested in, seems intuitively false, for without any doubt, we *are* ardently interested in many other things in addition to (or instead of) politics and the maneuverings of central or local administration. Why, on the other hand, it is or would be illegitimate and outright wrong for journalism merely to become part of the vast entertainment culture is that media's freedom to intrude into privacy and to speak freely against politicians and those with economic power is granted by society on the grounds that the media has its watchdog function to fulfill. "..(T)ake away the function, or where the news media as a whole fails to fulfill that function, and it is not clear that the news media have any right to

behave in such a manner nor indeed that the price is one worth paying" (Kieran 1997, 33).

Kieran interestingly finds an opportunity for excellence in journalism, too, yet he couches his view in the language of obligations. There are the minimal obligations to ensure that the events reported did in fact take place, and that the reports consist of information about which a readership with reasonable education and compassion would want to know. Yet good or ideal journalism would do more. It not only reacts to and reports on episodic events but also seeks out and explains fundamental shifts underlying episodic events (Kieran 1997, 39). From our virtue ethical viewpoint, however, Kieran seems to lose some analytical resources and power. When taking journalism to be a practice with its practice-dependent skills, excellences and virtues, we have at our disposal a more fine-grained and real-life-rooted set of analytical tools to describe how journalists ethically speaking get along.

In terms of Kieran's approach it seems that in order to fulfill her contract, journalists either do what they are minimally obliged to do or exceed the minimal expectations, but the question lingers: what would the exceeding amount to? Why is it in any way more ethical than fulfilling the minimum? Does the fulfilling of contract come in degrees, and in case it does, how is it to be understood? Nonetheless, from within our virtue conception, the answer is clear: while exceeding the minimal, one is in a better, in some cases even in a more excellent or virtuous way for good; it is both for the internal goods of journalism or the key goods of humans which journalism as a whole (arguably) is for, or even for the good of some certain human other(s). In other words she is living and working more excellently and in that way bringing more intrinsic – and with a high probability also instrumental – good into the lives of readers. The virtue approach effectively enables one to see moral life as it is, in different shades of grey, instead of a misleading black-and-white image of more absolutist theories.

However, Kieran in the end comes closer to our approach not only by attaching to his conceptual arsenal two regulative ideals which he more or less derives from his contractualist view but also by discussing extensively the characteristics of an ideal reporter (Kieran 1997, 43-63). The first regulative ideal states that journalists must shape and phrase their reports according to the level of understanding of the intended audience. This statement aptly emphasizes the fact that doing the minimal generally is not

sufficient. In order effectively to further the good(s) of citizens, the reporting has to be accessible and to give a firm factual basis for readers' own judgments. This is where journalistic excellence according to our virtue approach can habitually be seen to transform into (minor) moral excellence if the craftsman is, by virtue of his dedication, able to deliver crucial information which furthers the good(s) of readers.

The second regulative ideal in Kieran's scheme is that of the impartial reporter[73], and the discussion on impartiality brings Kieran, in turn, to the issue of objectivity, in relation to which he clearly shares some insights with Ward's pragmatic objectivity. How Kieran then finally characterizes a good journalist is by and large what we can read in any well-reflected standard journalism ethics textbook or in various ethical codes for journalism professionals. One of the most influential of these books might be Kovach's and Rosenstiel's *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect* (2001). In it the authors define journalism's primary purpose to be "..(T)o provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing" (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2001, 17). They then go on to suggest that to fulfill this task journalists at least must maintain an independence from those they cover, serve as an independent monitor of power, strive to make the significant interesting and relevant, and keep the news comprehensive and proportional. In portraying the essence of journalism and the core responsibilities of journalists Kovach and Rosenstiel typically do *not* draw on any explicit theoretical considerations but suggest that theirs are principles that "..(H)ave always in some manner been evident" (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2001, 17).

Many of the characteristics which Kieran or Kovach and Rosenstiel suggest that journalists should have, nonetheless, can perfectly well be considered excellences or virtues of the practice of journalism. One can reach deeper and deeper into excellence; it is to grow more courageous, accurate, insightful, or to be able to track the significant in complex, multidimensional issues. Moreover, the internal goods of the practice can at the same time be seen to constitute a reason for and a direction of the striving for excellence. The emerging journalistic pieces are of relevance and interest to people both as citizens, consumers and inquiring social beings. Nonetheless, the point in the discussion of this

[73] The notion "impartial reporter" has its origin in the history of (American) journalism (ethics). I think that today it can be interpreted simply to mean that reporters should only work with the good of readers in their minds.

section is that a major part of journalism ethics either draws on other theoretical resources than virtue ethical, or rejects theoretical considerations altogether. And much of relevance indeed can be said even without any commitment to some certain coherent theory.

Next I will turn to examples which demonstrate a willingness to see theoretical resources in general and virtue ethical approach in particular, as either useful or even necessary. I will first address the work of Jane B. Singer who has recently explored the way in which the rapid developments within online technology and virtual culture impinge on ethical issues in journalism, and how all this may also affect the way we see journalism and alternative answers to the question of who actually is a journalist. I will subsequently discuss how Elliot D. Cohen draws on virtue ethics in his article on the end of the democratic press and find that his is an approach which might be labeled a version of virtue consequentialism (Singer 1996, 95-106; 2003, 139-163; 2006, 2-18; 2007, 79-95; Friend and Singer 2007; Cohen 2004, 266-275).

3.2. Ethics and Journalism Quality: Friend, Singer, and Cohen

Cecilia Friend and Jane Singer open their discussion on online journalism ethics by giving some examples of where one might find philosophical backing for one's endeavor to handle the ethically challenging situations today's media landscape presents (Friend and Singer 2007, xxi-xxv). What they, and especially Singer, find particularly relevant in the online world, with its emphasis on the individual and her decisions, is existentialism. Yet in her earlier work Singer also strives to base her visions about virtual journalism on virtue ethical considerations (Singer 1996, 95-106). However, the emphasis on the individual and her opportunity or inescapable predicament for choice certainly also fits into virtue ethical thinking, and subsequently Friend and Singer also briefly discuss Aristotle. In particular, they find the value of moderation or the principle of the mean interesting and useful.

In their respective example an editor working on a story about a local murder rejects both an extremely gruesome photograph and likewise the option to omit a photograph altogether, instead choosing a photograph that complements the story without sensationalizing it. "..(A)ristotle would approve of such a choice", Friend and Singer venture to conclude their discussion (Friend and Singer 2007, xxiii). Further, and what is

to the point of our discussion, Singer is not the only scholar to drift to and fro between existentialism and virtue ethics. At least John C. Merrill, who can be considered to be the leading advocate of an existentialist approach to journalism ethics, has in his more recent works moderated his radically existentialist views and stressed the need for a more Aristotelian approach (Merrill 1997).

What then might it be that makes Singer, as well as Merrill, oscillate between different philosophical approaches? At least part of the answer may be that she considers autonomy and accountability to be the two core journalistic norms, yet it seems to be hard to demonstrate a frictionless fit for them, as has been also contained by Kaarle Nordenstreng (Nordenstreng 1998, 124-134). Singer, nonetheless, develops a notion of ”the socially responsible existentialist” in which she seeks to draw both on existentialism and on social responsibility theory in order to construct a productive merger between the two contravening ideas (Singer 2006, 2-18). The medium that particularly cries for socially responsible existentialists is, according to Singer, the Internet. It affords all individual users complete autonomy over personal communication, along with the power to disseminate that communication globally with a single click.

At the same time, however, no inherent social responsibility is connected to that action. An online user need have no obligations to any other user; but, however it may be with others, journalists *should* have. Singer suggests that it is their explicit acknowledgment, as well as the ways in which such responsibilities are enacted that set them apart from those who decline to do so. In this way, in addition to delineating ethical foundations for the profession, Singer also strives to give a new, up-to-date definition of who actually is a journalist.

Traditionally the journalist was someone who engaged in the particular process of gathering, organizing and disseminating timely information in a way that drew its credibility from various ethical precepts or virtues, such as truthfulness, balance and fairness. Yet in today's networked world millions of people gather, organize and disseminate information every day. Clearly, in this environment, while all journalists still publish information, not all publishers of information are journalists.[74] There is no longer

[74]Mark Deuze and certain other scholars consider the change to be even deeper. Deuze sees the whole of

a gate for the gatekeeper to guard. Hence, the shift in the definition of a journalist moves from process towards normativity. In this way a virtuous freelance blogger might become regarded as a better journalist than her colleague working in a traditional newsroom environment, although waving decency (Singer 1997, 72-89; 2003, 139-163; 2006, 2-6; 2007, 79-95; Robinson 2006, 65-83).

Whether or not Singer's project succeeds, it is not difficult to see why her writing also reveals an affinity to virtue ethics. In order to meet the demands of the profession, journalists have to be independent and autonomous, Singer writes. They have to remain free from external *and* internal pressures that dilute the truth-telling enterprise, at least in its more excellent, innovative and investigative form. Yet simultaneously they have to recognize that as professional journalists they are accountable to the public (Singer 2006, 6-7). There are, then, the profession- or occupation-dependent internal goods towards which journalists have to reach; and because one of the prerequisites for being able to approach those goods is to work autonomously one must to high degree draw on one's personal traits of character and on (one's) journalistic excellences.

Elliot D. Cohen presses in a yet stronger way the need for autonomy and individual virtue (Cohen 2004, 266-275). He finds American journalism to be fraught with incestuous relations between government and big corporations, and that this relationship is conducive to an environment which turns the press, the watchdog, into a docile representative of government authority and business enterprises. In addition there is the unavoidable logic of market-driven media houses to concentrate on maximizing their bottom line profit. According to Cohen, under these circumstances to be a good journalist emphatically involves speaking out loudly against those powers working to undermine the central goals of journalism and the public trust.
He also argues that it is not only cowardly to accommodate oneself to external or internal pressures and remain silent; it is journalistically incompetent as well. The central virtues

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society transforming into a media life in which we live in our own ”personal information spaces”. However, in a more concrete vein Deuze also argues that *convergence culture*, as he calls it, takes place on both sides of the media spectrum: production and consumption. Within this spectrum, then, the distinctions between the traditional role-players are dissolving. ”..(T)he key to understanding the currently emerging relationships between media consumers and producers, or between media owners and media workers (whether paid or voluntarist), is their complexity. These relationships are constantly reconfigured in a convergence culture, and at times are both reciprocal and antagonistic. Such liquid relationships are seldom stable, generally temporary and, at the very least, unpredictable” (Deuze 2009, 477; 467-480).

in journalism – habits of being responsible, loyal, fair, impartial, honest, and courageous – are also part of what it means to be a competent journalist. So, argues Cohen, one cannot be a competent journalist without being a virtuous journalist. Nonetheless, Cohen's is an ethics of virtue *and* principle and it is ultimately also an ethics of outcome. He writes:"..(T)hese habits (virtues) involve dedication to *principles* of conduct that follow from the journalistic end of serving democracy. Insofar, as this end is a moral end, these virtues and their corresponding principles are also moral" (Cohen 2004, 268; also O'Neill 1992, 15-32).

Cohen sees the difference between virtues, i.e. moral excellence, and "merely" professional or occupational excellence in much the same way as we do, but he considers excellence and virtue as being a way to adhere to principles the following of which in turn is conducive to the ends and goods of journalism. However, rather incoherently, or at least ambiguously he at the same time suggests that the virtues also conduce in a direct way to promoting the ends of journalism (Cohen 2004, 268). Moreover, he does not specify which exactly would be the principles journalists ought to follow. Nonetheless, what is now importantly issuing out of the conversation and to which I return repeatedly, is how the relation between the ethics (of journalism) and the goal(s) of journalism is considered. Singer considers moral goodness to be a criterion to distinguish journalists from non-journalists. To avoid any ambiguities it would be important to know whether Singer is referring to journalistic excellence or to excellence in being for good, i.e. to moral virtue(s). It seems legitimate to discern from her writing that the second alternative obtains. However, because in our virtue conception journalistic and moral excellence may combine, we ought also to know whether, and under which conditions, Singer considers doing journalism to qualify as being for the good (of others).

These questions remain open also in Cohen's work but he at least is cognizant of the situation:"..(*I)nsofar* as this end (of serving democracy) *is* a moral end" (Cohen 2004, 268). And indeed, in case increasing circulation and boosting profit would be, or is considered to be, the goal(s) of journalism, journalistic excellence cannot in general become regarded as virtue. As discussed above, to be virtuous means being excellently for some (moral) good, which, in turn, frequently – if not without exception – means being for the good of other human being(s). In addition, profit-seeking also seems unavoidably to be a good external to journalistic practice, and thus it might call for a

wholesale redefinition of the very practice of journalism to consider blooming circulation or high profits its internal goals or goods. What, however, remains to be discussed in *Part Four* is the (current) situation in which poor quality seems to diminish citizens' interest and trust in journalism and also, subsequently, to throw media houses into the perils of dramatically declining circulations and profits which, in turn, leads to dismissals and other human hardships. Under these conditions, then, can one show virtue in striving to improve the quality as a means also to boost the withering business (e.g. Belsey and Chadwick 1995, 461-473)?

Now, returning to our main concern in this part of the study, we see how virtue gradually becomes more prominent as one or even the core concept of genres of journalism ethics. In Ward and Kieran explicit discussion of virtue is absent, Singer recognizes virtues' potentiality, even having some interest in drawing on them, and Cohen finally considers them an integral part of journalistic competence. Cohen however sees virtue as merely an instrument to other, major ends or goods, and on grounds of this we addressed his work as an example of category two in our scheme which purports to throw light on the multiplicity of the depth in which virtue has become analyzed and mobilized in journalism ethics.

However, let us subsequently discuss some category three examples, which, in comparison with category two, manifest a heavier reliance on virtue but no systematic analysis either of the ontology and epistemology of virtue or of its place in the whole of the tradition of virtue ethics or theory. The main category three examples in the following will be the classical work of Klaidman and Beauchamp and the journalism ethics of Karen Sanders. In addition we discuss some aspects of the journalism and journalism ethics conception of G. Stuart Adam, which do not particularly draw on VE but do, however, manifest some characteristics upon which I want to touch briefly in this context (Klaidman and Beachamp 1984; Sanders 2003; Adam 2004, 247-257; Adam and Clark 2006).

3.3. The Virtuous and Competent Journalist: Klaidman and Beauchamp

The Virtuous Journalist (1987) by Klaidman and Beauchamp could perfectly well also figure as one of our category two examples. There are, nonetheless, some plausible

reasons to discuss their approach as an example of category three. Firstly, although there is ample room in their considerations for rules, duties and obligations, Klaidman and Beauchamp at least implicitly give the impression that character and virtues are the notions which capture in the most adequate manner the essential in moral phenomena. They argue that even journalists who are repelled by virtue language would probably agree that the public is better served when journalists perform well because of good character than because of sanctions, threats, rules, laws, regulations and the like. In this they draw on Henry Beecher, a Harvard anesthesiologist, who was convinced that rules and regulations, if used to restrict experimentation in medicine, were more likely to do harm than good. Accordingly, Beecher, in fact as early as the 1950's, recommended educating physicians through a virtue-based rather than a rule- or duty-based ethic (Klaidman and Beauchamp 1987, 18).

Secondly, Klaidman and Beauchamp find some of the particularities of the practice of journalism to inescapably make demands especially on the practitioner's character. They suggest among other things that virtuous traits of all kinds are significant in environments such as journalism on grounds of their being too pressurized to permit prolonged and careful reflection:"..(B)y cultivating moral virtues, doing what is right in these situations can become a matter of course rather than a conflicted debate over how to interpret rules whose meaning and application may be less than clear" (Klaidman and Beauchamp 1987, 19).

Klaidman and Beauchamp, finally, also do what many others with virtue ethical inclinations neglect, namely give an account of what they mean by virtue and character. What they mean by virtue is a beneficial disposition, habit, sentiment, or trait, and as they use the term, a moral virtue is"..(A) fixed disposition to do what is morally commendable, which entails a desire to act according to moral principle" (Klaidman and Beauchamp 1987, 18). Klaidman and Beauchamp also, insightfully and in accordance with the approach endorsed in this study, assert that almost all professions have virtues that are keys to success in the profession but are *not* moral virtues. Although I allowed the possibility of professional virtue or excellence under certain conditions to grow into or become legitimately interpreted as a moral virtue, the original insight and the point of departure is the same: one not only loses in descriptive power but also fails to have an accurate close-up view on the phenomenon of morality if one fails to notice the distinction.

Klaidman and Beauchamp (1987, 18-19) also produce a vivid example to drive their point home. A militiaman opened fire on a taxi during the Israeli occupation in Lebanon in the beginning of the 80's. The driver perished immediately, the customer on the backseat was injured. Meanwhile the shooting increased, preventing rescue workers from approaching the car. Goskun Aral, a Turkish photographer, however, joined Ali Moussa, a Lebanese soundman, in a rescue effort. The men dragged the injured customer from the car under a hail of machinegun fire. Other photographers, who had taken positions by the nearby hotel, displayed a different kind of courage. They also braved the shooting, and clicked away at their colleagues (orig. Nora Boustany in *The Washington Post*, March 30, 1986, D3).

3.3.1. Virtue as a Necessary Element of Competence

That courage, like certain other traits of character, may reveal and constitute either professional or moral virtue, is the conclusion drawn by Klaidman and Beauchamp from their example. In our terminology, then, courage may serve both as a professional excellence and as a (moral) virtue. However, to manifest virtue in being courageous, one has to be excellently for some good. Rescuing the injured ones Aral and Moussa clearly so acted. At the cost of risking their own health or lives they helped a fellow human being from bleeding to death. The other photographers, contrariwise, helped themselves into an opportunity to cover and deliver something humanly touching, and in this they, on their part, showed professional excellence. But is it totally out of place to think that they were for some moral good as well?

Imagine that it was not yet at all well known that Lebanon and its inhabitants were severely harassed once again, and that to turn the heads of the global audience absolutely called for some striking pictures with an intimate story to go with them. Would the covering and disseminating of this kind of material, then, be virtuous too, in addition to its manifesting professional excellence? To be sure, it all seems to depend on a multitude of situational and contextual details. What eventually motivated the photographers? Were there good reasons *not* to join in the rescue operation? And did the news-desks of the world actually suffer from a severe shortage of vivid material from Lebanon? Questions abound and the respective answers may very well give plausible reasons to believe that the photographers indeed manifested professional excellence yet did *not* excel in being

for any moral good. Nonetheless, the point of asking these questions in the first place is in giving credence to the view that professional excellence and moral virtue occasionally *may* merge. A journalist may simultaneously, in one single sequence of motivation, deliberation and action, show up both professional and moral courage or some other virtue(s).

Klaidman and Beauchamp do not explicitly venture to analyze the territory of the moral, yet they share Cohen's view that moral qualities are intrinsic to journalistic competence. They assert that incompetence in journalism not infrequently results from moral failure, rather than merely from a lack of professional rigor or experience. In other words, they see virtue embedded in competent journalism. In this way they eventually come very close to how I consider the relationship between professional and moral virtue, for in case virtue or ”moral criteria” are embedded in professional competence, how exactly are we to see professional excellence apart from virtue? Here is Klaidman’s and Beauchamp’s insight verbatim:

> ..(T)ape can be edited accurately, fairly, and objectively, or it can fail to meet these criteria. The editing cannot justifiably be called competent unless they are satisfied, which suggests that moral criteria are embedded in our very conception of competent journalistic practice. That is, standards such as fairness and accuracy are moral dimensions of competence (Klaidman and Beauchamp 1987, 23).

Note that Klaidman and Beauchamp regard competence partly as constitutive of moral criteria or standards.[75] There seems to be implicit in their thinking that to be competent, or, more emphatically, to be excellently competent, one has either to meet the moral standards excellently or at least to meet them, and this in addition to non-moral standards. In my terms, in case one meets them excellently one can be said to be for some moral good excellently or, in other words, to manifest virtue. On the other hand, if one in addition to the non-moral criteria meets the moral dimensions of competence but without any at all or traceable excellence, his work can manifest competence *yet* be lacking in

[75]According to Alasdair MacIntyre”..(W)e have to accept as necessary components of any practice with internal goods and standards of excellence the virtues of justice, courage and honesty. For not to accept these, to be willing to cheat...so far bars us from achieving the standards of excellence or the goods internal to the practice that it renders the practice pointless except as a device for achieving external goods” (1981, 178).

virtue (and vice). In case this last reading holds, one *can* be competent without being virtuous. Whether or not the reading will survive closer examination, it at least allows for more nuanced and detailed deliberation and distinction in moral and ethical judgment and is consistent with the virtue conception developed above. To allow for at least domain- or situation-specific competence without virtue also seems intuitively right. If I write a nice, entertaining portrait of a local sports celebrity, it seems reasonable to call my work competent yet not necessarily virtuous (at least on grounds of my writing this particular piece).[76]

On the other hand, whether or not one considers virtue to be a constitutive and accordingly a necessary component in journalistic competence, one has also to consider whether and to what degree or in what manner a journalist have to be technically competent or able, i.e. skillful, to be considered virtuous *as a journalist*. On first reading the answer may seem self-evident: moral goodness does not, indeed cannot depend on technical aptitude or social skills. My commitment to excellence as a kind of convergence or mutual platform to goodness, however, makes demands to be explicit here.

Thus, to manifest moral excellence in being for some good does not mean to be in a technically or logically impeccable way for that good. It simply means what it says: to be morally excellently for some good. And as was discussed above, moral excellence confers intrinsic goodness on one's own and others' lives, and something intrinsically good is worth having as such, regardless of its possible instrumentally favorable consequences. Nonetheless, there is the issue which we briefly discussed when addressing Michael Slote's work in section 2.1. Imagine some journalist to be so clumsy, with his gear or with his reason that he tends repeatedly to make bad mistakes, in spite of his good motives to inform and help other people. Can such a journalist be called virtuous (as a journalist)?
Michael Slote might answer that the situation cannot hold as such. In case the journalist has good motives, it follows that, out of respect to his readers, he does all there is to do to meet the necessary standards. If need be, no doubt, he resigns. A neo-Aristotelian observer, let us say Eric Silverman, might instead consider the journalist to be clearly lacking in certain virtues, such as practical wisdom, patience, honesty (about himself) and perhaps continence. The journalist may indeed show benevolence and other warm virtues,

[76] All this discussion, of course, becomes futile if one *defines* virtue to be a necessary element of journalistic competence.

but clearly he does not *perceive* the situation aright. Silverman might grudgingly, however, call him virtuous.

But then, how do I fare, with Robert M. Adams? Quite well, as I can see it. One can begin by maintaining that the journalist in question obviously is not a fully virtuous person, but as discussed above, such *are* very rare. Virtue comes sporadically and is even then frail. Secondly, one is entitled to argue that in case the journalist works hard to forward some good of his readers or some particular group of people in his community, he at least may show virtue. This obtains on grounds of the possibility of his being for that good, say the just distribution of labor opportunity among local ethnic groups, excellently. The details of his managing the situation then contribute to a thoroughly-argued answer on whether he manifested virtue. In sum, according to the virtue conception I embrace, virtue certainly is possible in the absence of non-moral journalistic competence. However, the issue of whether the conclusion can be considered self-evident we re-address in *Part four.*

3.3.2. Journalism as a Moral Craft: Adam and Sanders

Returning to our main line of present discussion, one scholar who might ungrudgingly follow the main thrust of Klaidman's and Beauchamp's as well as our reasoning is G. Stuart Adam. He defines journalism as a literary and moral craft and argues that there is also authorshipness embedded in journalism. Hence, the consideration of the ethical obligations of journalists should be construed in relation to the activity of authorship and the creation of individual journalistic texts. A second consideration of moral significance, according to Adam, is that the authorshipness we are speaking of has evolved within a democratic system of government and a democratic civil society. In that way, asserts Adam, journalism is"..(A) democratic art and the place and role of journalism are crucial to the operation of democracy" (Adam 2004, 249).

Adam naturally considers journalism to be a literary craft in complete understanding of the rapid technological change that is stirring up today's media landscape. Despite the upswing of new media and the convergence of old and new, text is still for him the core *gestalt*, the foundation, of journalistic work both in print and broadcast as well as in online. Where Adam then comes near the virtue approaches is when he argues that democracy's processes, including journalism, are not natural or inevitable outcomes of

some hypothetical contract between journalists and citizens. On the contrary, they are the products of moral learning which are, or should be, embedded in the operations and methodology of the craft. Adam also alternatively argues that"..(O)perations of freedom are to be found in the disciplined application of clear standards that must be learned and worked at" (Adam 2004, 251).

Adam seems to suggest that effectively to be for the core human goods of freedom and self-governance, journalists have to develop their professional skills and excellences to a level of considerable refinement, and that some of those excellences are moral. There occurs in his discussion, nonetheless, a theoretically rather unsystematic set of concepts, although, to be sure, this is also true of Klaidman and Beauchamp. Virtue figures highly both explicitly and implicitly in Klaidman and Beauchamp as well as in Adam, yet they first of all see virtue as instrumentally beneficial in living and working in accordance with the right principles which they, in the end, fail to explicate.

There is, however, much insightful contemplation and conversation both in Klaidman and Beauchamp and also Adam which I take along to *Part four.* In the features that deserve further attention are included particularly Adam's definition of journalism as a democratic craft and the way in which all three writers find excellence and virtue intrinsic to journalism. But there are further steps to take before we are ready to proceed to *Part four.* As the next link in our exemplary chain towards theoretically coherent versions of virtue based journalism ethics I will consider Karin Sanders's book *Ethics & Journalism* (2003). In it she explicitly opts for a virtue ethical approach, and when she gives a more detailed treatment of what kind of virtue ethics she favors, hers proves to be a version of NA. In addition to Aristotle proper Sanders draws for example on Rosalind Hursthouse as well as on Oakley and Cocking, both of which we found to be central figures when discussing NA in *Part two* (Sanders 2003, 27-39; 160-170).

Rather than addressing further Sanders's familiar neo-Aristotelian views, let us see how she finds an important issue which we so far have not wholeheartedly faced.[77] While discussing reporters' integrity, Sanders namely lays emphasis on how economic and structural realities such as understaffing, job insecurity, and casualized labor heavily

[77]However, see footnote 15.

affect the way in which journalists conduct their work. In general, she considers intense competition and the market logic to be formidable factors in shaping the environment in which journalists make their choices. But choices they have to make and ethics is about making one's own choices, Sanders asserts. In other words, she rejects any negative implications of her view that there is no place for ethics in the modern global market economy or that an individual agent is not sufficiently able and resourceful to affect the practices or the institutions (and finally the whole of the economic system?) from within (Sanders 2003, 136-37; cf. Bauman 2008; Harcup 2002, 101-114).

Sanders, finally, refers to the general data which suggests that if organizations pursue profits to the exclusion of all else, they will end up losing both customers and their best workers. In this she also takes advantage of Belsey's dichotomy of industrial versus ethical journalism (Belsey 1998, 1-14). Within industrial journalism is included the view that there are particular difficulties in embedding ethical practice in media organizations. Media houses are fast-moving, with little time either to examine the issuing subjects or to acknowledge mistakes. An instinctive aversion to reflection may even harden into an arrogant rejection of criticism and the development of journalistic cultures which are inimical to honest practice. In addition, it often seems that the industry has seen ethics merely as a public relations problem upon which action need only be taken when problems arise.

How, then, can ethical industrial journalism be encouraged, Sanders asks, and answers, that it originates in "ethical efficiency". She seems to think that there are core moral values and virtues which work for the good of all parties involved and that there are also ways to make it apparent for all (Sanders 2003, 137; cf. Craft 2004, 258-266). However, the main features of Sanders's work seem to look very familiar to us. She draws on virtue in general and on NA in particular and has an affinity to how Oakley and Cocking consider professions and their respective role demands on practitioners. "Ethical efficiency" finally also revives the issue of how to think of (journalism) ethics as a vehicle to (economic) efficiency. In order to be virtuous one has to be morally excellently for some (moral) good. But granted that virtue might be promoted as a means to improve quality and to increase the level of turnover do we not have before us a case of an ethics of outcome?

In *Part four* we also address the efficiency problem but we first concentrate on our final examples of virtue ethics as a more or less foundational element of journalism ethics. The main examples explored below are Aaron Quinn's ”Moral Virtues for Journalists” (2007) and Sandra L. Borden's *Journalism as Practice* (2007). The reasons to dwell on these particular writers and to present their work as category four examples are that they draw heavily on the work of scholars which we have discussed above, and that the work of these scholars in turn is at the center of the recent developments in virtue ethics and virtue theory. Quinn's and Borden's reliance on virtue theory is also ”purer” than that of most writers in today's journalism ethics. They are at pains actually to ground their work on explicit and coherent virtue ethical foundations. And in the same thorough manner they also explicate the definitions of the virtue conceptions which they mobilize in their respective works. The theoretically more plausible way in which Quinn and Borden proceed at the same time provides to an opportunity for us to show where their approaches might fall short of ours, despite the many respective similarities (Quinn 2007, 168-186; Borden 2007).

3.4. Moral and Professional Virtues for Journalists: Quinn

Aaron Quinn writes that his essay outlines an account of virtue ethics applied to the *profession* of journalism. He also asserts that his is an original account of journalistic virtue ethics. It seems that Quinn takes as given that journalism can be considered a profession, because he does not discuss the issue and in addition draws rather heavily on Oakley and Cocking, particularly on their notion of a regulative ideal in professions. But, once again, *should* journalism be considered a profession and does it matter? I have already argued above that a case could be made to regard journalism as a profession, yet a more plausible and productive way to proceed is to consider journalism a practice, a craft-like occupation with its internal excellences and goals. This is also broadly the strategy adapted by Sandra Borden, as will be discussed below. Quinn, nonetheless, proceeds by introducing his views on virtue ethics generally and his key virtue ethical concepts. This section does not seem to reveal anything particularly original in his approach: his is broadly a standard version of NA, modified to allow for an emphasis on the virtues of justice and integrity.

Then, however, there comes an opening for an important feature which clearly also resides at the centre of the virtue ethical conception which we are embracing. Quinn

stresses, namely, that his is an internal view of professional ethics. By internal he simply means that moral reasons and motivations originate in the journalist's thinking and are not handed down in the form of external rules or principles. Quinn, nevertheless, argues that his internal approach does not require the rejection of the useful forms of external regulation.

> ..(I)n fact it is a foundational complement to some forms of external regulation. However, a strong moral framework requires that its possessors both understand and accept the inherently *normative nature* of journalism and gradually inculcate key journalistic moral virtues, moral values, and moral principles to positively develop their professional character (Quinn, 2007, 168).

Quinn joins Cohen, Klaidman and Beauchamp, and also Adam in emphasizing the way in which virtue is embedded in competent journalism and in addition seems to distinguish between professional and moral virtue. As a matter of fact there is implicit in his discussion that there also exist certain journalistic moral virtues. However, I take it that he merely means that journalism characteristically and frequently calls for certain moral virtues, such as justice and integrity which he considers key journalistic virtues in his modification of NA. Why Quinn then considers justice and integrity the key journalistic (moral) virtues is that he finds them, respectively, the main agent-neutral and agent-relative virtues. According to him justice is an overarching virtue which does much of the work in clarifying many difficult decisions that are less clear in alternative moral theories or traditional journalistic ethics codes. He argues that justice even permits in certain situations the omission of truths or deception or lying when it brings about some appropriate good.

Quinn regards integrity as a sense of what being a good journalist means, and as a willingness to adapt one's behavior accordingly. In other words, acting with integrity is acting according to what we have reason to do (on grounds of our understanding of what it is to be a journalist).[78] Note that when interpreted in this way integrity may also steer one away from certain general journalistic conventions (or, at the extreme, from the very

[78]Normative (moral) reasons have recently been receiving a great deal of attention. I do not, however, address the issue in this study, yet I find it interesting and of deep importance. For some key insights and approaches to the issue, see *Ethics*, volume 119, number 1.

occupation) in case those conventions are at odds with what one accepts as professional excellences or goods in journalism or with what one considers major virtues and values in the whole of her life plan. When discussing Oakley's and Cocking's approach to the ethics of professions in Interlude One, I accordingly maintained not only that it is common knowledge that people acting within a role may lose sight of how their acting within it promotes or constitutes or *fails* to constitute their leading a good life; but also that to the extent that they do so, the broad-based moral values making up the picture of good life ought to correct their narrowed vision (Quinn 2007, 170-184; Oakley and Cocking 2001, 130-136; Adams, 142-43).

3.4.1. Avoiding Moral Schizophrenia

Quinn admittedly builds rather coherently on a virtue ethical foundation. However, probably partly because of the limited space at his disposal, even the key concepts are defined in a very general manner. There is for instance no substantive discussion of a theory of virtue, yet Quinn declares that there are three fundamental concepts derived from classical Greek notions of virtue ethics that are central to understanding virtue theory, namely virtue, *phronesis*, and *eudaimonia* (Quinn 2007, 170). In the brief accounts of each of these he then draws heavily on Hursthouse as well as on Oakley and Cocking. Hence, his no doubt is a (mainstream)-neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical theory. Accordingly he argues that for one to be a virtuous journalist, one must usually have a good broad-based education including an emphasis on"..(P)arochial and theoretical matters in journalism" (Quinn 2007, 173).

In addition one must be trained in an environment that both provides examples of and supports moral behavior among journalists. This, Quinn asserts, is analogous to a virtuous person (broadly construed or understood) having been raised in a good family, which provides the proper assurance of moral understanding through one's childhood days. Finally, both in journalism and more generally in one's life, one must be internally motivated to do good in part as a result of the respective upbringing and in part from one's understanding that the good life can only be achieved in this way. The main challenges or objections to VE, according to Quinn, are the justification problem and the virtue-conflict problem, which we above in 2.2. and 2.4. regarded as the standard or even the routine challenges to VE. Quinn does not even mention the situationist challenge and the

challenge to show that VE actually is a moral theory, which I considered the main challenges to VE. On grounds of his heavy neo-Aristotelian reliance on character and its virtues, this strikes me, to say the least, as odd. (Quinn 2007, 170-179).

Quinn, finally, sees his study as indicating several reasons why virtue ethics is preferable to competing moral theories. Virtue ethics, *inter alia*, relies on good character and practical wisdom for practical reasoning rather than committing to the strict decision procedures common to both consequentialist and deontological theories which fail to offer the correct moral judgment for all moral problems. Quinn seems to refer here to the widely discussed problem of moral schizophrenia that is instructively addressed by John Dobson in his article on how to apply virtue ethics to business. Dobson argues that in Kantian and utilitarian (business-) ethics one is supposed to step out of her occupational role and "..(D)on the hat of a Kantian or of a utilitarian" (Dobson 2004, 2). In such approaches, Dobson maintains, the agent adopts a type of moral schizophrenia in which being a good professional for example in the sense of being an innovatively writing journalist becomes separable from being a good professional in the sense of being an ethical journalist.[79]

In this way, given the action-based, i.e. consequentalist or deontological approach, a journalist could be a good journalist in the sense of being very efficient and widely read, yet at the same time not be a good journalist in the sense of being ethical. And as Quinn at least implicitly argues, and several of the writers discussed above explicitly assert, this would be a (conceptual) misunderstanding. In order to be a good or competent journalist, one has to be ethical as well, because moral excellence is unavoidably embedded in journalistic excellence and competence. At the same time, however, as was also discussed above when addressing the work of Klaidman and Beauchamp, the virtue conception of Adams importantly seems to allow for the intuitively obvious possibility of showing (domain-specific) technical excellence without virtue, as well as showing virtue without being technically competent. Still, one can of course refuse to call a technically superior but not virtuous person competent (Quinn 2007, 184; Dobson 2004, 2; Stocker 1976, 453-66).

[79] A classic treatment of moral schizophrenia is Michael Stocker's "The Moral Schizophrenia on Modern Ethical Theories" (1976, 453-466; reprinted e.g. in Crisp R. and Michael Slote (eds.) 1997).

Quinn, nonetheless, also regards as the virtue of his approach that with practical wisdom guided by the virtues of justice and integrity, virtuous journalists have both an impartial and agent-relative view of morality. Moreover, virtue ethics is particularly suited to journalism because journalism requires quick thinking and is fraught with moral confusion. VE offers a habituated person who by disposition is prone to make morally good decisions (Quinn 2007, 184). This concludes Quinn's "several reasons" to consider VE preferable to its rivals. Yet, whether his reasons are multiple or not, they are overall fairly well in accordance with our considerations. Quinn allows virtue ethics comprehensively to structure his work and is willing to show why a virtue ethical foundation is particularly appropriate in the ethics of journalism. Why he prefers NA to other varieties of VE remains, however, unclear, and if the originality of his approach merely means that he finds the virtues of justice and integrity the most decisive ones in journalistic practice, his approach cannot be considered very groundbreaking or even novel.

It is problematic to draw conclusive comparisons between Quinn's work and our approach because Quinn mainly seeks to argue for the superiority of virtue ethics as compared to deontology and consequentalism; we on the other hand have worked mainly to find out and show in more detail where exactly reside the potentiality and the resources of virtue-based approaches and how they can be mobilized to allow for rich ethical evaluation and judgment in journalism. Indeed, one might think that Quinn is somewhat late with his project; from the writers under discussion Sanders in particular worked very much in the same vein as Quinn quite a few years earlier (Sanders 2003). Nonetheless, as a comparison to both Quinn's and our approach we explore in what follows how Sandra L. Borden develops a highly detailed and thorough virtue ethical approach to journalism ethics with the help of basically the same theoretical foundation as that of Quinn (Borden 2007).

3.5. The Moral Community within the Practice: Borden

Borden's point of departure is the philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre (1981; 1979), particularly the concept of practice which is central to MacIntyre's virtue conception and virtue theoretical approach. Borden's goal, in turn, is to show how by using practice as a central theoretical concept we can find substantive resources from within theoretical

ethics to fight against the on-going commodification of journalism. She enters the core parts of her work by asserting that providing a definition of journalism is notoriously difficult. However, a virtue framework directs us toward a teleological definition grounded in a theory of journalism that provides a substantive link between the practice's product and purpose. According to Borden, such a theory should include at least five elements, namely a link to human flourishing, commitment to the common good, reporting as the defining activity of journalism, a desire to make a difference, and a way to make a living (Borden 2007, 49).

These constitute the marks which distinguish journalism-as-practice as a normative activity, and which at the same time clarify its relationship to readership. In addition, as was discussed above – and in common with all practices – journalism also relies for excellence on a set of skills, a vocational aspect and certain institutional resources. Overall Borden maintains that her kind of journalism theory proposes that journalism's immediate goal is to create a special type of knowledge[80] necessary for community members to flourish and that this knowledge becomes produced and disseminated by journalists in the form of "news". The ultimate goal of journalism, subsequently, is"..(T)o help citizens know well in the public sphere" (Borden 2007, 50).

What then are the internal goods, according to Borden, that promote the ultimate goal? Recall here, that every practice manifests its own internal goods which at the same time are partly constitutive of the ultimate goal and the whole of the practice. Accordingly Borden, following MacIntyre, argues that internal goods are the reasons why practitioners in the first place participate in a *particular* kind of practice. If a good can be achieved or gotten (also) in some other way, it is not internal to this particular practice. So, what counts as a good that can only be achieved by practicing journalism (or something like it)? Borden's answer takes the form of a comparison between science and journalism. Although there are major differences between these practices, there are similarities as well, even mutually recognizable internal goods. Science's system is well-developed and more rigorous, but both are intellectual practices with respective internal goods of an intellectual practice. These include, among other things, knowledge, inquiry, originality

[80] Borden does not introduce us to any system of different kinds of knowledge here. I think that with "special type of knowledge" she simply refers to the type of knowledge generally presented by news-stories, i.e. to bits of daily information on the workings of diverse spheres of our social machinery.

(in the sense of doing one's own investigation and thinking), and newness (in the sense of being the first to find out, think, or experience something).

Nonetheless, this is clearly not enough. What kind of internal goods journalism has that other practices do *not* share? Borden is not able or willing to give any explicit list of the relevant goods, and probably for good reasons. She discusses some characteristically or exclusively journalistic goods, such as practical knowledge aimed at citizens to be used as a tool in self-governance, when scientific knowledge, in comparison, is created for its own sake and is accessible to but a small audience. There are also similarities between, say, journalism and teaching, as well as between journalism and history as an intellectual practice.

All this gives Borden reason to consider journalism a specific *configuration* of resources and influences from or shared by various other intellectual traditions or disciplines with their internal goods. This particular configuration then also determines what counts as living an excellent life as a journalist, rather than a scientist, teacher, novelist, or public official. However, there are some very exclusive journalistic goods too:"..(T)he thrill of a scoop, the pleasure of a well-written lede, the satisfaction of pinning down a pattern of wrong-doing, the honor of witnessing history. For a journalist, it does not get any better, as only a journalist can truly understand" (Borden 2007, 64; 59-64).

3.5.1. Journalism in the Grip of Market Economy

Borden's reliance on MacIntyre is conspicuously comprehensive since she draws heavily not only on his key virtue ethical concepts, such as virtue, practice and internal and external goods, but also embraces his foundational view of the hostility of market economy and modernity in general to the virtues. Although she is not explicit on the point, what seem to be the most profoundly inspiring lines for Borden in MacIntyre's work are to be found in his *After Virtue* (1981). I quote MacIntyre here at some length, since we address what follows in detail also in *Part four:*

> ..(A)s, and to the extent that, work moves outside the household and is put to the service of impersonal capital, the realm of work tends to become separated from everything but the service of biological survival and the reproduction of the labor

> force, on the one hand, and that of institutionalized acquisitiveness, on the other. *Pleonexia*, a vice in the Aristotelian scheme, is now the driving force of modern productive work. The means-end -relationships embodied for the most part in such work, on a production line, for example, are necessarily external to the goods which those who work seek; such work too has consequently been expelled from the realm of practices with goods internal to themselves. And correspondingly practices have in turn been removed to the margins of social and cultural life. Arts, sciences and games are taken to be *work* only for a minority of specialists: the rest of us may receive incidental benefits in our leisure time only as spectators or consumers (MacIntyre 1981, 211).

To put it briefly, modernity, and in particular the market economy, is hostile both to practices and to those virtues which are supposed to sustain the respective practices. As regards journalism, Borden asserts that media-houses' organizational reward systems do not necessarily honor journalistic achievement and often undermine journalistic authority by blurring the boundaries of the practice. Managerial objectives, in turn, often run directly counter to journalistic standards and excellence, for example by insisting on efficiency over completeness. Business logic in itself, finally, is reluctant to meddle with the psychology and rigor of money-making or to upset political or commercial allies (Borden 2007, 66).

The practice of journalism, then, is in danger either of becoming removed to the margins of social and cultural life, or of becoming hijacked or diluted by external goods and goals with their respective excellences. Borden opts for the threat that comes in the form of dilution, possibly simply on grounds not only of her own experience but also of ample general evidence to the effect that journalism – at least so far – has remained a major factor in today's market-driven societies. Nonetheless, Borden accordingly analyzes virtues in their practice-sustaining roles or functions. She regards her approach to be a departure from other virtue-based views which underline the virtues required of individuals, or which focus on practices as the context for the individual exercise of the virtues. From the approaches discussed above she regards as individual-centered the ones of Oakley and Cocking, Klaidman and Beauchamp, Cohen, and Adam (Borden 2007, 65-66).

Borden, however, considers that there are five different practice-sustaining functions for virtues to fulfill. First and foremost, they should protect the practice from corruption by external goods. Newness for example, a legitimate intellectual internal good of journalism can degenerate into mere novelty aimed at turning peoples' heads when reporters are required to constantly update stories even when they are unable to confirm any developments. With the capacity for real-time online reporting it indeed would be a deficiency to adhere to old production cycles that only offered news updates once or twice a day. Yet, striking the appropriate mean calls *both* for the virtues of initiative and curiosity *and* for an appreciation of what constitutes true knowledge as opposed to mere trivia and gossip (Borden 2007, 65-69).

The additional practice-sustaining functions delineated by Borden for virtues are (a) keeping the institutions that house the practice healthy, (b) maintaining the kind of relationships that are necessary for achieving the practice's internal goods, (c) preserving continuity with the practice's tradition and (d) supporting the practice's regenerative capacities. With regard to (a) Borden draws verbatim on MacIntyre who maintains, that the ability of a practice to retain its integrity depends on how well the virtues also work to sustain the institutions that harbor the practice (MacIntyre 2009, 195). In these institutions are included also the commercial news organizations and media houses. Their commercial vitality is needed to guarantee the autonomy and integrity of newsdesks.

Under (b) in turn Borden discusses how, in order to achieve its internal goods, journalism as practice requires collegial relationships that are trust-based rather than autonomy-based, contractual relationships. This is so, because journalists need each other to secure journalism's credibility and its effectiveness as an authoritative intellectual practice with civic aims. They are constantly working to prove that the news they create is generally accurate and dependable and that their judgments are oriented toward public service rather than self-interest. Moreover, this endeavor, to be successful, must be a mutual one each individual journalist trusting her colleagues to take care of something which she values and depends upon herself.

The good of a whole human life, and beyond that, of a tradition are also needed in order to provide an overall pattern that can order and prioritize the goods that inform practices, maintains Borden in (c). She argues that to sustain the integrity of a practice, practitioners

need to consider how both their own choices and key events in the life of the practice fit into the larger narrative of the practice's tradition. Such ongoing self-reflection also partly explains the dynamic nature of a practice's goals and goods. However, Borden finally argues under (d) that this dynamic aspect of practices requires virtues to perform at least one more practice-sustaining function, namely, to support the practice's regenerative capacities. By them Borden refers to how well the journalistic practice is able to display adherence to interactive feedback processes, transparency, and correction procedures. She also recommends tentativeness, in the form of acknowledging the epistemic limitations of even the most systematic forms of (journalistic) inquiry. Hence, the central virtues of practice-sustaining in this context are accountability and modesty, while for instance in the context of (c) they are integrity and a sense of legacy (Borden 2007, 70-86).

3.5.2. MacIntyre as a Harbinger of Post-Modernity

The unquestionable originality and ingenuity of Borden's work is due to her commitment to MacIntyre's giving prominence to collectives and to tradition. By leaning on MacIntyre she is able to put the practitioners as a distinct group with their moral predicament into a historical and social context. In this way she is indeed a follower of MacIntyre both in detail and in his more sweeping reflections on modern western culture. What is totally lacking, nonetheless, is any discussion on how MacIntyre also has come under severe attack. Mason, among others, sees one of MacIntyre's key tenets, namely the one that modernity is hostile to the virtues, problematic in several ways. MacIntyre asserts that virtues cannot flourish where there is radical disagreement because they rely on the existence of a shared conception of the good. But why does it follow that the virtues must suffer where there is no agreement on a substantive conception of *the* good? (Mason 1996, 195-199).

Mason and in particular Dobson also show how MacIntyre's critique of market capitalism is vulnerable and at least partly misguided (Mason 1996, 202-206; Dobson 2009, 43-50). Dobson provides evidence to the effect that excellence can flourish even in environments marked by the hardest market-driven competition. He shows how MacIntyre's description of a utopian fishing crew has striking resemblance with how John Roberts characterizes the factors that contributed to the success of Nokia in the 1990's (MacIntyre 1994, 285; Roberts 2004, 174; 276). Dobson in the end concludes that MacIntyre's logic rests on the

premise that economic goals corrupt other, non-economic goals, the type of goals people had in pre-modernity. But the evidence does not support this premise, he argues. ”..(T)here is now available a wealth of evidence to indicate that it is precisely advanced capitalism in general and the modern firm in particular that has engendered human flourishing” (Dobson 2009, 48). Of course, Dobson too acknowledges that this is not to say that the modern firm, embraced by capitalism, is perfect in the sense of nurturing internal goods and virtues within practices. However, it has provided unparalleled material wealth as a foundation for practices (Dobson 2009, 46-49).

The practice, however, is the main locus of Borden's considerations because that is where the practitioners become endowed with the tradition. The practice typically not only assists or inculcates appropriate technical mastery, but in addition plays its role as a moral community and hence as a source of moral identity. Borden also in this context discusses the practice's potentiality for successfully supporting individual members who resist ethically questionable business requirements. She considers practice at least potentially to be an effective moral community fostering a true willingness among practitioners to sanction each other and also to go to each other's aid (Borden 2007, 87-100).

Borden's approach has considerable functional or structural flavors and she leads and couches her discussion repeatedly in sociological terms. Journalism's function is to participate in keeping democracy alive and to help citizens to be well-informed in the public sphere. The practice's function is to secure journalists' adherence to the goal(s) of journalism and to the tradition which endows them with appropriate skills, values, and virtues. The function of virtues is to sustain the practice (and the institution). Finally, because modernity (and liberalism) in general and market economy in particular are hostile both to the virtues and to the practices, there is the danger of the corruption (and even the collapse or the extinction?) of the journalistic practice by the influx of external goods and excellences.

In addition to the problems which Borden's work shares with MacIntyre's theory-building, there are several other questions to be asked. First, what is Borden's virtue conception in detail, and is it an instrumental and consequential virtue conception? Borden suggests, following MacIntyre, that a virtue must not only enable one to achieve a practice's internal goals and goods, but must also be integrated into an overall picture that defines a

good human life (Borden 2007, 29; MacIntyre 1981, 187-189). This, however, does not exclude the option that a good human life could be defined in consequentialist terms. The lack of any discussion on the intrinsic value of virtue(s) adds to the impression that Borden's is a markedly instrumental type of virtue conception, and that hers is an ethics of outcome. With a modification of Julia Driver's words, traits of character are virtues as far as they are systematically conducive to the sustenance of some practice, in Borden's case the journalistic practice.

Secondly, there is not a single word on the plausibility of the folk psychological kind of virtue conception used in her work, either in terms of its commensurability with the modern developments in virtue theory or with empirical, social psychological research. This counts as a particular shortcoming because Borden's work is not merely a piece of ground-floor applied ethics but a treatise on journalism's social function illustrated with the help of the classical theoretical apparatus of MacIntyre. Thirdly, Borden considers her work as a departure from other virtue-based views that underline the virtues required of individuals, and she accordingly concentrates on the practice-sustaining potentiality of virtues.

This can be considered an insightful shift in emphasis, yet it leaves us without any guidance as regards the morally demanding situations in which journalists frequently find themselves, and accordingly there is also no advice on the evaluation of how well journalists manage in moral terms. One can of course argue that they at least collectively manage well when the practice prospers, and granted that Borden's is a work on the journalistic practice and how it can be sustained, one might not be entitled to expect any treatment of how virtues can guide practitioners' individual work.[81]

Nonetheless, what Borden's analysis leaves open is whether all or any of the practice-sustaining virtues are *moral* ones, ways of being excellently for the good(s) of others. Furthermore, it is difficult to see clearly in what way a practice is in need of some particular virtues of sustenance. The excellences of a practice contribute to the attainment of the internal goods of the respective practice. The goods and the respective excellences may and do change, but they nonetheless work together to constitute and sustain the

[81] And Borden, indeed, has attended to this issue elsewhere (Borden 1999, 93-104).

practice. Overall, it seems that Borden rather wants us to take certain measures to ensure the sustenance of the journalistic practice. This indeed might be advisable, yet hardly renders such measures virtues. Their being expedient does not allow for them to be called (moral) virtues. However, as I see it, there should at least be a discussion on whether, and under what circumstances, being morally excellently for some good also promotes the sustainment of the practice.

Now, in order to facilitate our moving into the still more concrete *Part four,* I put forward for consideration what I think we have secured so far and what, on the other hand, demands further argumentation and support of examples below. To begin with, let us recall that the main goal of this study is to argue for a particular virtue conception and integrate it to an otherwise broadly neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical background. This synthesis, then, is argued for to make for a more detailed and many-sided consideration and judgment of the ethical complexities and dilemmas of journalism than is provided by its rivals in the virtue ethical tradition. This approach was also defended above against deontological and consequentialist attacks, yet this has been considered to have already been mainly and more fully accomplished elsewhere and is secondary to the main goals of this work.

Nonetheless, I take it that we by now have a case for a ”third alternative”, that is for the view that virtue ethics is a plausible, autonomous[82] alternative for the consideration of moral phenomena. In my broadly neo-Aristotelian approach to it I regard as its core elements its theory of (moral) good and its theory of virtue. The good resides constitutively in virtues, which can be secured with the help of the innate intuition and the respective interpretation that our position as dependent human beings amongst our likes confers upon us. Hence, what is generally found to be morally admirable in us or what is inscribed in ethical tradition also importantly provide information about virtue. Accordingly there also is no reason for grounding the virtues in some supposititously more foundational good(s) or goals such as the characteristically human life. Virtues as such can be considered traits of character or other persistent characteristics of the human psyche, and this in turn renders them prone to situation-dependency and frailty. This view on virtue(s), adopted from Adams, gives them plausibility both when considered as a part

[82]By 'autonomous' I refer in this context to the fact that with the help of virtue ethical concepts only, we are able to lead meaningful and detailed discussion on what is of moral value in human life.

of everyday experience or against the results of modern social and evolutional psychology.

The approach is a moral virtue ethical theory on grounds of its virtue conception which renders warm virtues a major status in being excellently for good(s). This is highly important in the ethics of journalism where solid expediency, encouraged by hard competition and deadline, repeatedly allows more readily for professional virtues such as courage, determinateness, and detachment than for warm virtues such as benevolence and empathy. However, the virtue conception of Adams is one with breadth and depth. This permits the giving credit for excellence and virtue also in circumstances where it is not so obvious or habitual. Moreover, to regard excellence as a common ground for various kinds of virtuosity gives one a further analytical asset for disclosing the morally challenging situations and characteristics of journalism, as well as for accordingly making balanced judgments on them.

What nonetheless remains to be done below is to discuss further the introductory definition of journalism. This now falls due, on the one hand because the discussion in *Part three* has opened up many new horizons on the subject, and on the other because I have to consider once more what actually are the most essential characteristics of the practice of journalism in order to secure beyond doubt that the approach argued for in this study signifies a powerful enough way to consider their ethical repercussions. I do this via addressing recent research on journalists' work procedures and culture. The work under discussion has been carried out by Laura Ruusunoksa and Risto Kunelius (2008; 2009) and it conveniently also allows for a quasi-phenomenological discussion on grounds of its heavy reliance on journalists' own voices.

In addition I shall return to some issues which have been recognized as being important but which I have left without (full) treatment. They comprise for instance the problem of the arguably inherently moral character of journalism and the issue of what it actually means to try to be more ethical in order to improve the quality of journalism. I also left the discussion on external goods unfinished above. In the course of completing all this I also try to explicate in more detail my position against some of the most plausible counterarguments that it might provoke. Whether or not virtue ethics as such is a plausible foundation for doing normative ethics I however do not return to discuss. In

sum, in *Part four* I strive to fill in the picture of how an Adamsian virtue conception can be applied in discovering the morally relevant features and facts in today's journalistic work. Accordingly, I will continue to make theoretical remarks but will at the same time increasingly rely on the force of examples.

4. THE PRACTICE AND THE VIRTUOUS JOURNALIST

As a preface to my brief exploration of some key characteristics of journalistic work I immediately take up one issue which readily presents itself as a challenge to my approach. It is due to the simple and solid observation that journalists generally work together: theirs is an occupation that calls for team work. There are of course free-lancers and other loners, but predominantly journalism is practiced in hierarchically and functionally ordered newsrooms and other working facilities. There also prevails a common professional tradition and mythology which hails independence and originality, even to the limits of deviance, whereas modern news production at the same time draws on predictability, standardization and concentration. Under these circumstances, then, how can a journalist be personally accountable for what she is doing? Do not the market logic and employer pressure on the one hand, and both the written and unwritten collegial and occupational expectations and rules on the other hand dictate what one should and *can* do? And, ultimately, does a virtue ethical approach actually render it applicable in collectives? (Machin and Niblock 2006; Ruusunoksa and Kunelius 2009, 33-49; Deuze 2007; Borden 2007, 1-14.)

This issue certainly deserves attention. However, as regards the discussion on the potentiality of the Adamsian approach to detect in detail the moral dimensions in the hard cases which journalists repeatedly find themselves solving, there seem to be no insurmountable problems. Whether a journalist works free-lance or as a member of a newsroom her work nonetheless manifests or fails to manifest virtue (or vice). To work from within a group hardly nullifies one's individual status as a moral agent in spite of the collegial pressures and expectations. Further, the virtue ethical approach delineated in this study is hardly called into question by the fact that journalists live and work in different kinds of groups and teams, as almost all of us do in these days. On the contrary, compared to its virtue ethical rivals it features particularly well when the situation is characterized by a multitude of details within a widening net of human relations, including the collegial and co-operative relations. This is due among other things to the prominence given by the approach to warm virtues generally, as well as to partiality when legitimate. The general comprehensiveness also naturally adds to its applicability.

However, granted that both outsiders and the practicing journalist are able to tell what the

relevant moral characteristics of a situation are, and perhaps even what the journalist should do, *can* she do it? Recall that there are at least both her employer's expectations and the collegial community with its commitments, ideals and habits that more or less affect her interpretation of the situation. Therefore it seems obvious that in case the journalist, let us say, should for moral reasons negotiate or act counter to what editors urge, solid support from colleagues would help her not to submit. The occupational or professional community, which conveys and renegotiates the excellences of the respective practice, might be considered a moral community, too (Borden 2007, 87-104). It at least *may* have, and often does have, potentiality to support its member(s) who pursue both the goals of the practice and moral soundness, possibly in defiance of her employing organization. On the other hand, it may also sanction those of its member(s) who run foul of the excellences or values of the occupation or craft, at least by withdrawing its acceptance and solidarity.[83]

It is of course possible to say that a journalist has to do what she is morally bound to do, whatever her collegial community or employer may expect, and in certain cases she indeed should ignore all such expectations, come what may. Such cases might at least be the ones in which a journalist is expected to act against the very founding values of the practice or to discharge her general moral integrity, as discussed above. Moral heroism[84], however, demands exceptional circumstances. Larry May suggests that two conditions must be met for heroism to be expected on behalf of the community's shared values: either the good at issue is very great or the person who is expected to sacrifice receives steady support from her (collegial) community (May 1996, 27).

How the virtue ethical approach I have been arguing for, then, could support the maintenance of a healthy and firm moral community, is by providing an applicable and down-to-earth arsenal of concepts with which to explore the moral ramifications both of the day-to-day journalistic decision-making and of the output. To be successful at a community level, virtue-based thinking, however, should feature high in newsrooms; it should loom large in daily editorial meetings and general feedback sessions. In other words, it should become a shared, cherished and internalized part in the whole process of

[83] According to my experience, however, this possibility is seldom put into effect.
[84] A classic text on supererogation and moral saints is Susan Wolf (1982, 419-439; reprinted e.g. in Crisp R. and M. Slote 1997, 79-98).

looking at and talking of journalism both in the community and within the practice.[85]How the introduction of this kind of newsroom policy into the concrete then takes place, is no different from how new policies in general become ushered in: key figures are needed, argumentation and co-operation are required, together with a steady demand for that which it is desired will become embraced and internalized. In sum, the whole procedure is largely a matter of education and of newsroom leadership until a virtue ethical viewpoint takes shape as a definitive part of the occupational moral tradition.[86]

It is, however, important to dwell a little longer on the basic observation that journalists mainly work from within groups. I already suggested that the collegial group and its tradition may give support to a practitioner yet may at the same time put (negative) pressure on him; i.e., and as Borden also argues, solidarity does not substitute for individual conscience and reflection. Solidarity even may degenerate into some kind of unreflective or mindless followership that characterizes the groupthink phenomenon in cohesive groups (Borden 2007, 92).[87] In such a case there is ample need for what both Adams and Oakley and Cocking insisted on above: one has to broaden her horizon beyond mere practice- or role-dependant excellences and virtues and other practical thinking in order not to lose sight of how acting within the practice either constitutes or fails to constitute leading a good life (Oakley and Cocking 2001, 130-136; Adams 2006, 142-43).

Borden discusses individual conscience mainly as one resource in resisting business demands on the journalistic practice, and this indeed can be considered a vital observation. She nonetheless leaves unattended one complicated issue, namely, how one should (re)act in situations such that external excellences and goods, mainly ushered in by business demands, are on the verge of becoming, or have already become, more or less

[85]The language of the journalistic community however does not have to be conspicuously virtue ethical to the letter. As Klaidman and Beauchamp assert,"..(T)he language of both *character* and *virtue* sometimes sound ridiculously prim, as journalists occasionally delight in pointing out" (1987, 17). The discussion can e.g. draw on the names of the virtues without explicitly calling them virtues. To reflect on how truthful or just an article or a procedure is obviously does not make people feel as uneasy and awkward as talk of virtues or vices may do. As a matter of fact this is how journalists themselves repeatedly and routinely state their opinions and cases e.g. on political procedures and decisions.

[86]Ethics consultation as such, however, is considered a controversial undertaking. See e.g. Jukka Varelius (2008, 65-76).

[87]There prevails in Finland a long tradition on referring to journalists as lemmings, i.e. as un-autonomous members of a herd heading unreflectively in the same direction. Note the deep divergence between the public lemming image and that which journalists have traditionally cherished of themselves as individualistic lone riders in the service of the Truth and the People.

generally accepted as (new) journalistic excellences by the very journalistic community *itself*[88]. Under these circumstances the community as a community obviously cannot help the one(s) with a differing view. Whether and how decisively the problem is a moral one, depends on the new values and goals inculcated and accepted. However, granted the possibility that journalism or a journalist *qua* journalist frequently may be excellently for some good, the question of the practice's goals and excellences also bears moral relevance. In the following, section 4.1., I continue to develop the issue whilst at the same time amending our original definition of journalism as it was delineated in *Introduction.*

4.1. The Practice: The Consumer Overcomes the Citizen

As was already briefly discussed in *Introduction*, the journalistic work, in common with so many other professions and crafts, is in a state of flux, reflecting the influence of a number of technological, cultural, economic, and political changes. Laura Ruusunoksa and Risto Kunelius have consequently explored how professional journalists in Finland make sense of and adapt to the changing environment (Ruusunoksa and Kunelius 2008, 1-26). Their empirical evidence is mostly derived from two sets of qualitative interviews of journalists, one of the sets comprising interviews with journalists occupying mid-level editorial positions in daily papers. Ruusunoksa and Kunelius also discuss and develop at length some sociological concepts and horizons in order to analyze their data, but I find it advisable in this context to pass all that and merely to consult their data and their concluding remarks on the very answers of the interviewees.

The first dimension of change discussed in the editor-interviews is economy, and the respective central notion with which the interviewees seek to portray the core of the change and the challenges they have to meet appears to be *competition*. Competition is now considered harder than ever, but according to Ruusunoksa and Kunelius, competition also gains positive connotations when editors reflect on its impact and meaning. It seems that the editors are willing to understand and communicate the economic realities; it takes special commitment and skills to take care of the circulation and catch people's attention on a daily basis (Ruusunoksa and Kunelius 2008, 10).

[88] Recall our discussion in 2.4.2.2. on how virtue may call for subverting one's role in a community.

Another constantly reappearing notion in the vocabulary of the editors is *business thinking*. And again, respondents draw a clear line between the past and the present. In the old days marketing people of the same media house were regarded as outsiders, today the shared vocabulary of the whole corporation is the vocabulary of business. Overall, the editors seem to think that understanding the business logic is a proactive capacity and a source of power and competence. According to Ruusunoksa and Kunelius, news managers' general strategy of dealing with new economic pressures is to turn them into virtues of hard work, competition and cooperation. This does not, however, mean that they would all take at face value that journalism is a business, like any other. Rather, there is a sense of struggle: the economic facts are objective and unavoidable ones with which one has to live. (Ruusunoksa and Kunelius 2008, 10-11).

As regards the technological dimension of change, then, the editors also manifest a deep need to adapt to its imperatives, and what those imperatives bring about is, for example, a more format-driven model of journalism. Planning means, again, effectiveness but on the other hand it gives opportunity to make clearer judgments of what is important, that is, to steer toward a more active journalism. Another aspect of technology which manifests itself in editor response is the uncontrollable flow of information which is felt to make the life of journalists harder and the task of providing good journalism more difficult. (Ruusunoksa and Kunelius 2008, 11-13).

While analyzing how the editors adapt to the ongoing cultural changes, Ruusunoksa and Kunelius make at least two noteworthy findings as regards our view on and definition of journalism. First, news managers seek to adapt to the growing consumer-orientation in society by emphasizing the notion of *service journalism*. The notion refers to news stories and other material which are produced to readership as consumers (in contrast or in addition to as citizens), *inter alia* writing about consumer issues and also framing issues as consumer choices. Second, the experience-driven journalism and even the *entertainment* values are seen to be welcome. Accordingly Ruusunoksa and Kunelius find"..(A)profound renegotiation of the professional attitude here" (Ruusunoksa and Kunelius 2008, 14). A lengthier citation from the original data may also be in place here:

> ..(W)e have of course taken in much more of the light stuff, gone to a more tabloid-like direction, and not everybody (among the staff) likes this. They would just

> prefer to produce the world-changing journalism and save the rain forests. Well, there is no social demand for that, you know. Of course we have readers who like to read that stuff, and that kind of stuff is also created automatically, since we have these, what you might call more old-fashioned reporters (Ruusunoksa and Kunelius 2008, 14; *trans.* from Finnish by Ruusunoksa and Kunelius).[89]

The analysis and discussion on the political dimension of change, finally, brings forth the belief in a trend of depolitization and in a need to detach journalism from bureaucratic power. The editors want to follow their audiences who no longer seem to attach themselves to political collective identities, yet they find a role for their papers as agents for local well-being and as forums for debate. In sum, editors seem to welcome at least many of the details and dimensions of the flux that has submerged them. On the other hand, there seem to linger doubts that the role of acting as a watchdog weighs less today, and mainly so because of the entertainment seizing the ”newsholes” of the pages. The surveillance of socially important issues has become perhaps more lazy than it should be in a more and more complicated world where political and economic interests are deeply intertwined and global: ”(T)he prize of accommodating to changes in political landscape has been that journalism has become socially less ambitious” (Ruusunoksa and Kunelius 2008, 15-16).

The decisiveness of the results of only one (plus one) interview survey may rather easily be counter-claimed but I nonetheless think that there is a case to consider (newspaper) journalism as verging on an encroachment by external goals and excellences. Ruusunoksa and Kunelius at least substantially add to the earlier findings and to the general popular impression of journalism's questionable state. Moreover, they try and do look into the future.[90]So, granted that the above analysis reliably characterizes the present state and future of (Finnish print) journalism, how should we possibly change our definition of the very practice, and did we in the end find something that has any moral relevance?

[89]Editors, not unexpectedly, submit to the rapid change and employer pressure more willingly than reporters. This becomes verified e.g. via additional interview survey material with which Ruusunoksa and Kunelius compared their editor interviews. I find editors, in any case, decisively important sources when exploring to the phenomenon of (changing) journalism and how it is considered among journalists on grounds of editors' influential positions in newsrooms and because they nearly all also display a meritorious background as reporters.

[90]To receive a more general and deeper view on the possible futures of newspaper industry, see e.g. Franklin (2009).

In the introductory definition I suggested that on the macro level journalism is arguably a viable factor in an effectively functioning democracy, and a practice producing and transmitting information and opinion for the public when maintained by a market-driven institution called media. As far as I can see, as regards the discussion so far, we should at least place more emphasis on the fact that journalism only *potentially* is a viable factor in sustaining democracy.[91] Whether or not the potentiality becomes reality is contingent upon how high on journalism's agenda is the task of participating in the creation of a well-informed public; and consequently this has to be empirically verified. However, during the last years there clearly seems to have been a shift toward considering readers (predominantly) consumers instead of citizens in journalism. This suggests that the material implications of the notions of service journalism and even of entertainment could or should be included in the definition, too.

On the micro level I defined journalism as a literary and moral craft with a touch of authorshipness. In addition I found it comprising many technical skills and procedures typical to journalism but also shared by some other crafts and occupations. To be sure, it seems that technical skills no doubt are called for in today's journalism, yet standardization and strict planning may be diluting the authorshipness. Furthermore, how moral a craft, journalism actually is, depends upon whether it can be shown to be convincingly for some major human good(s). In case entertainment and customer consultation predominate also on the journalistic pages, it becomes harder to legitimize the privilege of journalists to intrude upon people's privacy or to take advantage of free access to places or to information which are not wholly public. However, once again the moral soundness of journalism and the moral excellence of journalists as journalists of course ultimately depend on how truthful, just and courageous they are, or to put it in a yet more comprehensive way, how excellently they are for some indisputable good(s) in their work.

However, equipped with certain new tentative views on the reality of journalistic practice, let us finally turn back to the issue of discovering that the practice of journalism has been partly invaded by external excellences and goods. First of all we have to reflect on

[91] An alternative way to interpret journalism's function in society might be to regard it as an indicator of the state of democracy. A free press that is able to dig into the doings of the mighty and rich would in that case merely *indicate* that democracy is alive, and would not necessarily be doing so much to sustain its functioning. See also note 32 above.

whether we actually can distinguish the invasion of external excellences from the natural transformation of the practice with its goals and standards of excellence. I think we can. If the introduction of new values and excellences takes place in a very short time, possibly causing considerable resistance in the journalistic community; or if the motive or the justification for inculcating new excellences into the practice seem to have nothing, or very little, to do with existing core journalistic values, there is reason to raise the alarm. Business thinking and competitiveness, *inter alia*, do not readily translate into journalistic excellences. Both the minor and the more decisive transformations of the practice, nonetheless, have to become negotiated and accepted by the journalistic community itself. The reason and the initiative for the shifting of the values can of course originate outside the practice, but legitimate interpretation and acceptance can only issue from within the practice, as was argued in Interlude One.

According to Borden we need courage and ingenuity when fighting corruption by external goods (Borden 2007, 66-69; 80), and the same virtues are certainly needed as decisively when fighting against an already corrupted practice. In such a situation virtue alone can be drawn upon. The respective moral community, not to mention the respective organization or institution, may be or probably is hostile to redefinition or redemption, and additionally the existing internal codes (of ethics) may be of no use. This hypothetical, yet certainly plausible, state of affairs also renders it more obvious why virtue is necessary in professions and occupations such as journalism, even in more routine circumstances.[92]

First, journalists habitually find themselves in situations which considerably diverge from the mean, and which are in addition characterized by an abundance of more or less perplexing details; these in turn frequently render the existing rules or codes of ethics or of conduct inapplicable. Second, the habits, principles, and rules of a practice frequently sustain excellences of the respective practice which occasionally *may* infringe on moral soundness and virtue (and on some moral principles, I presume). Think of the traditional value of competitiveness in journalistic communities: it frequently induces infringements on privacy or poor verification policies, and these diminish the trustworthiness of the

[92]By a ”plausible state of affairs” I refer both to the popular view that journalism has become decisively invaded by commercial goals and to research results that at least point in the same direction, exemplified e.g. by the work by Ruusunoksa and Kunelius discussed above.

disseminated information.

Third, a plausible theory of virtue characterized by sensitivity to detail and circumstantial factors is able to help one to disclose and settle what actually *is* morally relevant in a *particular* case, and in this way to render also the hard cases more accessible and soluble. Fourth, at least some of the virtue ethical approaches allow for a plausible way to consider in what way and how well a particular occupation as a whole in various circumstances adds either to some (major) human goods or to practitioners' potentiality to be for some (moral) good(s).

The above summary can also be read as a defense against the objection that the moral soundness of journalism must be grounded primarily upon rules and codes. According to this objection, virtue-based approaches are too general and too vague, and virtues too frail, to be helpful and applicable in the communal heat of newsrooms. I nonetheless continue to discuss the relationship between rules and virtues in section 4.2., making however first some concluding remarks not only on the problem of the arguably inherently moral character of journalism but also on the issue of what it actually means to try to be more ethical in order to improve the quality of journalism.

4.2. Beyond the Minimum Performance

In this section I will develop further the argument on the reasons why the virtue approach argued for in this study has undisputable potentiality in journalism, and what the claim would mean that virtue is inherent in journalism. Thereafter I conclude the discussion on whether it after all makes any sense to talk of improving the quality of journalism by being more ethical or virtuous. The discussion and claim on the inherently moral character of journalism can, firstly, be grounded on our commitment to consider journalism as a practice. According to MacIntyre's original view we have to accept as necessary components of *any* practice with internal goods and standards of excellence at least the virtues of justice, courage, and honesty (MacIntyre 1981, 178-79). This is because every practice requires a certain kind of relationship between those who participate in it. The virtues are the goods by reference to which we define our relationships to those other people with whom we share the various purposes and standards which inform practices. However, I argue that as regards practices such as

journalism, it may also be the case that we are also bound to define in the same manner our relationships to certain other (groups of) people *outside* the practice.

As an example, consider how honesty indeed seems to be a necessary component of journalistic practice or the whole of journalism. If newseditor E is unable to trust journalist J to verify the facts properly and to decide upon what is relevant in a particular case which he is supposed to cover, she will be in difficulties when editing J's contributions. Respectively, colleagues C1 and C2 are also entitled to rely on J's honesty in many ways. It will be unacceptable that they habitually check over or neglect all information they receive from J. It would manifest a grave divergence from the collegial relationship on which doing journalism draws, and in the end would endanger the very existence of the practice of journalism as a practice. This obtains because a refusal (or failure) to accept the practice-dependent excellences in which are also included the virtues of honesty, justice, and courage, bars one from achieving the other excellences and particularly the goods internal to the practice and renders the practice pointless, except as a device to pursue some external goods, such as money and reputation (MacIntyre 1981, 178).

In journalism, nonetheless, the virtue of honesty seems to be a good in reference to which we also define some crucial relationships between insiders and outsiders. The practice of journalism habitually becomes partly defined by both scholars and journalists themselves as dissemination of *truthful* and relevant information. Readers, then, seem entitled to believe that a promise, if not a contract, obtains between them and journalists and to break a promise of course signifies committing the vice of dishonesty. General belief in this *collective journalistic promise* partly explains why journalists are so readily allowed certain privileges, as regards for instance access to information, personal contacts and various kinds of institutions.

”Promise” rather than ”contract” catches the essential in the journalist-reader relationship since violating the collective journalistic promise renders one dishonest, at least in the very case under discussion; whereas failure to submit to the clauses of a contract is a more formal notion and not infrequently (also) constitutes breaking a law. In other words, promise can be considered a purely moral category and institution, which also obtains with only one active party. Breaking a promise also frequently goes without (external)

sanction and it can be forgiven while a breach to contract normally has to be reconciled. And, finally, in case the relationship *were to* be considered as contractual, one is entitled to wonder in what way journalists could put the blame on readers for committing a breach of the contract and what it would mean.

Nonetheless, in the same way we could make a case of justice and courage also being inherent to journalism. Internally, courage means commitment to the standards of journalistic excellence (and virtue) even when there is communal pressure to forsake them; and externally in it is included exploration of the relevant issues in cases where one may also have to risk harm or danger to the employer's advertisement revenue and (consequently?) to one's own career or salary.

An alternative way to consider the inherence-claim, however, would be to resume a point left incomplete above in section 3.3. It was maintained that there seems to be at least implicit in Klaidman and Beauchamp – as well as in Cohen's, Adam's and Quinn's thinking – that to be a competent journalist, in addition to non-moral standards, one has also to meet the moral standards, and preferably excellently. Earlier, I argued for the view that in many cases it would not be necessary for a journalist to be virtuous in order to be competent and to produce skillful texts. This is because it seems obvious that I can, for example, interview an athlete and write a story on his future plans competently without being morally *excellently* for any good. To be competent, I naturally have to manifest honesty and benevolence to some degree, but I might do it merely to get along with my work; to secure my job and paycheck, for my own good only.[93]

The question then arises whether we can merge these two views. One move to that effect would be to argue that although virtue is not necessary in all single journalistic endeavors, it becomes of necessity in the long run and in case we consider journalism a practice with its internal goods, in which is included the good of citizens (and consumers and human beings in general). According to this plausible view we could not achieve the internal

[93] One might say that I have to be at least decent to get along with my work properly. Johan Brännmark suggests that there is ample room in virtue ethics for a creature he calls "decent person". Brännmark argues that decent person might simply be defined as a character-type that is non-vicious. Some of the decent ones may merely be free of vices but some may even be more or less virtuous. Hence, what one should see is a continuum with one end representing the darkest pits of badness and the other the saintly and heroic. Most of us, for example the decent ones, are to be located somewhere in between (Brännmark 2006, 589-604). See also Nuyen's account of what it is to act decently toward someone (2002, 499-510).

goods without virtue, as maintained by MacIntyre (1981, 178-79). Without moral excellence the practice would disintegrate into a detached community of journalists (if indeed they could any longer be so called) reaching for various external goods (if these could any longer be so called, in absence of the manifest dichotomy of internal and external goods).

However, would not simple reliance on rules and codes be adequate?[94] Would not rules and codes of ethics also guarantee the achievement of internal goods? I think not. Rules and codes of ethics have a place in sustaining a practice, in the way Quinn argues above in section 3.4. Rules and codes provide a starting point and a general view on how to manage in a particular practice, but they certainly do not fully guarantee the professional *or* moral excellence and the achievement of the internal goods. They rather indicate the minimum performance that can be considered or accepted as an instance of journalism, football, archeology *et cetera*. This is also why rules cannot serve as the critical foundation in the ethics of journalism. To give greater force to the argument and to continue my argumentation on the potentiality of rules and principles compared to that of virtues in journalism ethics, let us briefly explore the codes of ethics of The Union for the Journalists in Finland and The Canadian Association of Journalists (L'Association Canadienne des Journalistes).[95]

4.2.1. Journalism's Codes of Ethics

As argued in *Introduction* one of the main problems with the existing codes of ethics in journalism is that they lack comprehensiveness and coherence. In many cases fairly little thought seems to have gone into making the code well ordered with a coherent and well-argued base. There also tends to be little attempt to state either their purpose, or why the rules commended are individually necessary or jointly sufficient. As regards our examples, the Canadian code (C) fares a little better in this respect. It declares in its preamble that

[94]Ethical codes developed within and for journalism, namely, sometimes even act as points of reference for other professions. Rosenkoetter and Milstead e.g. write that"..(C)odes of ethics have proliferated over the past two decades and have been adopted by nearly every known professional group and discipline, including health care executives, the culinary arts, *journalism, and newspapers* (Rosenkoetter and Milstead 2010, 137; *italics added*).

[95]The Finnish code (2005):"The Ethical Rules for Journalists" (Orig. in Finnish:"Journalistin ohjeet") and the Canadian one (2002):"Ethics Guidelines". The translation from Finnish is by K.H.

> ..(I)t is our privilege and duty to seek and report the truth as we understand it, defend free speech and the right to equal treatment under law, capture the diversity of human experience, speak for the voiceless and encourage civic debate to build our communities and serve the public interest...A free flow of information sustains and vitalizes democracy because understanding emerges from vigorous discussion, openly reported. Our legal traditions give media privilege and protection. We must return this trust through the *ethical practice of our craft* (*italics added*).[96]

In addition C discusses in its preamble separately but briefly among other things the issues of privacy and public interest. So, while consulting the individual rules of C one can find at least some grounds or reason for them in the preamble. In the Finnish code (F) this is harder. In fact about all the preamble of F explicates is that "..(T)he aim of this code is to support the responsible use of free speech in media and to further ethical deliberation within journalism"[97]. In addition there is the familiar tenet that free speech establishes the foundation for democratic societies. No analysis of the important and controversial relationship between freedom of speech and freedom of the *press,* however, is available to the reader.[98]

As regards, the individual clauses of the codes, then, they are more often than not conspicuously general, vague or apparently ad hoc in nature. F for example asserts that the decisions have to be made on journalistic grounds in newsrooms, but to what does "journalistic grounds" refer?[99] It is to be hoped that it does not signify the circular assertion that the decisions should be made by journalists. As Borden argues above, "..(C)oming up with a definition of journalism is notoriously hard" (Borden 2007, 48), and in case one purports to create a code of ethics for such a slippery item, she at least ought to attempt to explicate what her subject matter concerns.

Later on F maintains, *inter alia*, that it is *recommendable* for a journalist to inform his interviewee of his profession; that a journalist has to verify his data *as well as possible;*

[96]This is a citation from the very beginning of the preamble of the Canadian code of ethics.
[97]Orig. in Finnish: "Näiden ohjeiden tavoitteena on tukea sananvapauden vastuullista käyttämistä joukkoviestimissä ja edistää ammattieettistä keskustelua."
[98]See e.g. Judith Lichtenberg (1987, 329-355).
[99]F §2

that a journalist *can* break the news despite an evident deficiency in his data; that *essential* mistakes have to be revised immediately *et cetera*.[100]C echoes F, if not in detail, at least in spirit: it also maintains that reporters should not conceal their identities, except in *rare* cases; that reporters *are responsible* (how and to whom?) for the accuracy of their work and that editors are responsible for the accuracy of any facts that they add or changes that they make; that the journalist or the paper should correct mistakes of fact or context promptly and *ungrudgingly* et cetera.[101]

In sum, C wins over F in accuracy and strictness, but the problem remains common to both: what is "possible" and "essential" in particular contexts and what do these epithets mean? The codes draw on experience and general knowledge in showing where there may be problems awaiting, yet the practitioner only fares morally well in particular situations if she be practically wise and virtuous. In other words, the codes hardly add anything at all to what practitioners' experience and (professional) education reveal, leaving aside how badly they give guidance in novel situations. Finally, this all becomes sadly underscored by the empirical fact that a considerable proportion of journalists do not even know their professional or occupational codes of ethics.

Far less, however, may they know of virtue; in which case, why continue to stubbornly insist on a virtue approach? The reason is because, first, the virtue approach argued for in this study has real, domain- and situation-specific analytical power, which can be used to analyze whether, and in what way, one is or could be more or less excellently for good in some *particular* situation. Secondly, one is able to make a distinction between professional and moral excellence, yet without losing sight of their habitual close coexistence or of their potential merging together. With the adopted virtue conception at her disposal one can show, in accordance with general intuition, how virtue may manifest itself without professional excellence or vice versa. Moreover, one can also allow for time- and situation- or domain-specific virtue or excellence and explore whether a domain, practice, association or other collective and their goals can be seen as morally acceptable or even virtuous. Overall, virtue draws on experience and education, as do the codes, but what makes the decisive difference is in the way experience and education is

[100]F §9, §10, §13, and §20.
[101]There is no numbering for the clauses of C but those referred to have been put under the headings "Fairness" and "Accuracy".

put into effect. In rules they become petrified into external, law-like commands, while in virtue they build into the internal psychical whole that guides the practical decision-making of a person and protects him against moral schizophrenia (Quinn 2007, 179-181; Dobson 2004, 2; Stocker 176, 453-466).

Consider an example. The previous Foreign Minister (FM) of Finland resigned in 2008 in the middle of intensive negative media exposure resulting from some of his personal SMS-messages becoming public. In those messages, to put it briefly and following the general interpretation of the course of events, he courted a couple of younger women. It seems that FM originally did not break any (written) law or rule, fail to fulfill his duties or in any detectable way endanger state security. Moreover, the press had recently hailed his career as a success. His had been a victorious comeback of a veteran politician. However, resignation was forced upon him. How did the Finnish media manage professionally and morally? The issue of course had considerable commercial leverage and would interest the audiences of all outlets, and therefore at the beginning it was a matter of breaking news. And the news could even be regarded as relevant and consonant with the collective journalistic promise: FM indeed is a powerful political actor whose choices and character makes a difference to all of us.

Yet, on second thoughts, FM's maneuvering had very little or nothing to do with his office, and consequently, the relevancy claim at least becomes doubtful. The manner in which, where, when, and with whom one associates *may* reveal something of importance, yet it seems clear that in this case publishing did not coincide with being for any good, neither can it be hailed as professionally excellent. In fact, if indeed one of the ladies courted by FM acted as the whistleblower, the first publisher was left with nothing to excel in within the practice of journalism, except to hasten in turning his ready-made information into a (commercial) scoop. Accordingly, the question that seems to deserve deeper reflection is whether the first publisher actually committed a vice. He clearly intruded into FM's privacy, even into its most intimate territory, and so acted against FM's personal good. The facts that FM's courting habits obviously manifested general bad taste and that he bewilderingly light-heartedly put *his* position at risk, do not (necessarily) license turning his privacy public. Therefore, according to the adopted approach, the publisher manifested at least a minor vice, yet it may be that he also manifested either a low level of professional excellence or at least of professional aptitude.

The sequel of the incident, however, changed the setting with its moral as well as journalistic ramifications. When pushed by the press raiding him for confirmation and further information, FM lapsed into a series of sidesteps which arguably could partly be regarded as straightforward lying. Now media had its case: a FM whose practical wisdom and honesty could be put into question. Nonetheless, as regards the general thrust of the argumentation, situational details and their moral relevance are of decisive importance. One importantly has to know moral excellence from professional excellence or expediency and one has to consider whether an intentional psychical state or act in any particular context manifests being for or against good or whether a particular act is both for one and against some other good.

Most of the codes of ethics also advise respect for privacy in similar words to those of the Canadian code discussed above: "..(I)ndividuals have a right to privacy except when that right is superseded by the public good." This leaves one pondering what is public good and under what circumstances it legitimately supersedes one's personal good. C however then adds a comment that one finds lacking in many other codes: "..(E)ach situation should be judged in the light of common sense, humanity and the public's rights to know."[102] In other words, the code tells us to be practically wise and be for others' good(s). As a matter of fact C provides us here (accidentally?) with a rule or principle that applies in all journalistic work, not merely as regards privacy: *each* situation should be judged in the light of common sense and humanity. This in turn comes very close to merely saying that one (also) needs habitually to manifest practical wisdom and warm virtues when practicing journalism. The rule, again, appears simply redundant by merely reminding us of the importance of virtue. Yet what is missing is the idea of being excellently for the good (of others). The virtue implicit in rules is of instrumental kind: it either is helpful in following a (higher) principle or is conducive to good consequences.

By now we have been able at least to some degree to substantiate the idea that absent virtue, journalistic competence is deficient. *First*, we can now draw on MacIntyre's definition of practice and maintain that as a practice and as a collegial community(-es), journalism simply cannot function without some virtues, such as honesty, justice, and

[102]Virtue ethics also has a long, solid tradition of the discussion of tragic cases, situations in which two or more virtues point in differing directions or in which one good can be achieved merely by sacrificing some other(s). An accessible introduction to the subject matter is e.g. Martha C. Nussbaum's *The Fragility of Goodness* (1986).

courage. *Second*, I defend the view that journalism also calls for the virtues of honesty and truthfulness when defining its relationship to readership. Only by giving and keeping the collective journalistic promise can a journalist gain legitimatization for the privileges she habitually draws on as a journalist.

Third, although a journalist can be virtuous without living up to high technical and professional standards – and professional excellence on the other hand does not guarantee virtue – professional excellences like accuracy and capacity to make out the relevant and pass it on to readers in an illuminating manner, may in a comprehensible way be seen to add to any journalist's potentiality to be *also* morally excellently for some good(s). Consider here as an example a journalist who wants to further the good of the people begging in the streets of Helsinki. Let us assume that she already does excellent altruistic relief work privately. But in case she in addition writes insightful and influential articles on the issue *with the motive* also to help the wretched, can we not say that she is all the more morally excellently for the good of these others? I would argue that we can and that this is how Adams' way to regard virtue as but one (albeit major) sub-category of excellence shows its potentiality and cohesion with the whole of human reasoning and condition.[103]

Finally, journalism can be considered a practice or a craft (or a profession) that is collectively for some (key) human goods, such as people's self-governance, or administrative transparency. Whether or not this actually obtains, nonetheless, is a contingent, empirical matter and hence has to be studied explicitly in individual cases (for example as a function of time). Some virtues may also be explicitly instrumentally useful for the sustenance of the very practice of journalism or for adhering to the principles of the practice or for complying with the hypothetical contract between journalists and the public. These notions, however, of course refer to theories of outcome or principle and fall outside the conception of virtue argued for in this study.

There seems to be a case for virtue being inherent to journalism; yet I would describe a

[103]I omit in this context any substantial treatment of the issue of whether being excellently for good (s) might in some particular cases run counter to professional excellence. At first sight it might seem obvious that it can, particularly in cases where moral excellence bars expediency. Recall, however, that we just found virtue to be inherent to journalism. Accordingly, it seems that virtue cannot be considered an impediment to professional performance, at least in the long run.

journalism which is devoid of moral excellence as barren and wanton rather than as deficient. As discussed above, single journalistic pieces might and frequently do show competence without being morally excellent. However, in case the production of a journalistic community is permanently marked by the absence of moral excellence, journalism as a surplus to merely entertaining or informative writing is prone to wither away. The writing of the community may very well meet the high technical standards, but without the motive to further either the public good, or the ability of others to become knowledgeable in public affairs, or simply the good(s) of others, even the most refined work is prone to become transformed into something outside the legitimate confines of journalism.

4.2.2. The Quality of Journalism and the Goodness of Life

The discussion in the previous section concentrated on whether virtue is inherent to journalism, and on what grounds we should prefer virtue to rules and other deontological considerations as the foundation of the ethics of journalism. Missing, then, are our answers both to the question of whether it makes any sense to talk of improving the quality of journalism by making it more ethical, and to the challenge of consequentialist views in general. It is to be noted that, there was a reason to sequence the issues in this way: in case virtue could not inhere in journalism, it would seem clear that ethical soundness does not bear – at least in any direct way – on journalistic competence or on the quality of journalism. However, we found the case to be the opposite, on condition that journalism should be considered a practice with the goal of helping people to become well-informed in public affairs, and that in so doing journalism is furthering some core human good(s). But even granted this point, does moral excellence really add to the quality of *journalism*? Let us first consider the case introduced above, namely that raising the question of how the journalistic quality of the article written with the motive of helping the people begging in the streets differs from the hypothetical alternative identical to the first apart from being written with the motive of boosting one's own career?

There is no doubt that the first *writer* is more excellently for good, but this in turn does not seem to make any difference to the journalistic quality of her article (yet it makes a

great difference to her living well).[104] On the other hand, journalism actually comprises the whole of the practice and the sum total of its products. And on this level of analysis moral excellence indeed also makes a decisive difference to journalism. First of all, and as discussed above, devoid of virtue the practice declines into mere groups of people active in search of external goods. Thus, virtue works more to keep journalism alive and oriented to practice-dependent goals than to secure its piecemeal quality. Devoid of virtue there are no internal goals and excellences, and without them the essence and the characteristics of the practice dilute into something that case by case may or may not bear the resemblance and execute the standards of journalism.

To support the quality of journalism, then, one should work for the sustenance of the practice and against its becoming invaded by external excellences and goods. To support the moral soundness of journalism one also should work for the sustenance of the practice *with* the initiative to secure moral excellences among the standards which the community within the practice cherishes and continues to renegotiate. However, in order to consciously head for the sustenance of a practice by adhering to virtuous behavior manifests a case of an ethics of outcome which I refused to regard as an example of virtue ethical theory in case virtue theory is considered a pure third alternative.

To be sure, without moral excellence journalism as defined by us does not exist. *Yet*, as regards single pieces of journalistic work, incidental moral void does not necessarily extinguish professional excellence. To manifest virtue is to live a better life, not to write a better story.[105]It may well be that one can be for good by being for the sustenance of journalism, at least in case we accept that journalism is, or at least might be, for some key human goods. Nonetheless, to be virtuous, one has to be *excellently* for the good (of others). In other words, to be virtuous and work morally soundly, one has to make excellent, not expedient choices. In accomplishing this one may also frequently add to the quality of journalism, yet on the individual level and within one's moral reasoning the

[104]Recall how Michael Slote opted for the moral worth of the action to depend entirely on the agent's motives.

[105]There are some well-reported cases in the history of journalism which give solid support to my view. Even fully or grossly fabricated stories have been acclaimed exemplary journalism. One of the incidents is the Janet Cooke case. Cooke, as a young *Washington Post* reporter in the beginning of the 80's, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for her story of an 8-year-old cocaine addict. However, it then turned out that she had made it all up. How the Janet Cooke story still lives on and affects both the journalists and the ethics discussion within the practice, see Sandra L. Borden (2002, 101-103).

point of departure is moral, not professional, excellence. Thus, the project of heightening the quality of journalism by making it more ethical is at least dubious. Although being virtuous is conducive to our having better lives, one reaches for virtue only (or at least mainly) because of its inherent worth and not because of its instrumental value.

Virtue becoming constituted in being for (others') good also bears heavily on how the adopted virtue conception excludes other, more established consequentialist considerations with virtue ethical flavors, such as the trait-consequentialism of Julia Driver discussed above. Consider a journalistic community that has read Julia Driver's *Uneasy Virtue* and has found her argumentation convincing. It now has as its goals the well-being of the citizens and particularly their being knowledgeable in public affairs, which is included in the general well-being. Now, as trait-consequentialists the practitioners regard as virtues all traits or other permanent human psychical characteristics which either more often than not, or systematically, to cite Driver, are conducive to citizens' well-being – something which in many prominent cases is defined as their being knowledgeable in public affairs. What might these virtues be? Might excellence in interviewing technique and in writing obtain? Why not, since informative and interesting pieces certainly become noticed and may enhance the knowledgeability of citizens. And although talent in persuading people to talk and open their heart generally is not considered a trait of character, it might conceivably qualify as one.[106]

From our point of view, nonetheless, two immediate objections emerge. First, the distinction between professional and moral excellence becomes blurred, and in close relation to this, with the help of persuasion and writing skills one can also be for good without excellence. One can persuade by putting illegitimate pressure on his interviewees, by intruding on their privacy, or by sheer deception. Behavior of this kind *might* also effectively help disclose crucial information in the long run, and hence might qualify as virtue among our consequentialists. Yet, since we regard as virtuous only being *excellently* for good, we have to disagree with the consequentialist community here.

But how can it be that being successfully for good is not virtuous? And how fatal is this

[106]One could e.g. consider it one instance of a more general virtue of being approachable and others-minded, which in turn is close to benevolence, an undisputable key virtue. At the same time it may very well be that for a psychic state to be a virtue (in consequentialism) it does not have to be a trait of character in the conventional sense of the phrase.

issue actually to the virtue conception argued for? Let us tackle the question by discussing competitiveness, a trait that has always had leverage in newsrooms (the eternal quest for scoops) and which editors in the Ruusunoksa-Kunelius -research also considered at least "a virtue of necessity" in modern journalism. It certainly is dubious whether (journalists') competitiveness *is* beneficial to citizens' well-being, or whether it can improve their knowledgeability, but let us suppose it can. Must we consider it a virtue, after all? No, we must not, says Adams. And the reason is the same as with the effectiveness in information seeking: competitiveness is not the sort of trait that (necessarily) makes one a morally good person. Competitiveness even involves a sort of hostility to the interests of other people, because competitiveness "..(I)s a matter of wanting to do better than others, which involves a wish that others do less well, which is hardly a mark of virtue, *even* if it has good consequences by spurring us to productive activity" (Adams 2006, 56; *italics added*).

This does not mean, as Adams also points out, that a virtuous person may never compete: virtues are many, and they often pull in differing directions. Virtue, if one is competitive, shows in one's ability to limit appropriately its field of operation. However, it seems possible, or even probable, that there are traits or other enduring psychic states which we cannot consider virtues, yet which carry more or less permanent beneficial consequences. In relation to this particular question I consider bullet biting the best strategy by which to defend my position. There are beneficial traits other than virtues, *and* they frequently manifest themselves within practices and other social environments whose very existence depends on virtue. Devoid of virtue journalism does not exist as a practice, and devoid of journalism there are no competitive or intruding journalists (who may or may not add to the good of others). In addition there is the old and intuitively strong argument against utilitarianism and consequentialism in general: the end does *not* justify the means. Deontology and virtue ethics agree on this. One is not allowed to treat a human being as a means only, and one cannot live a good life by being vicious.

Drawing on the virtue conception which was borrowed from Adams renders purely consequentialist considerations somewhat redundant. As discussed above in section 2.3. being excellently for good leads in most cases to consequences, that also benefit others. Moreover, benevolence and other altruistic traits and attitudes being major virtues it is hard to see how consequences would not secure the place they deserve in the judicious

and practically wise minds of virtuous people (Adams 2006, 53-60). Virtuous journalists hardly manifest an exception here.

However, in the following section I start summing up the whole of the discussion so far. In addition I finally also address at a little greater length the issue of external goods and how they can be seen to function within the dynamics of a practice.

4.3. The Individual: The Ability to Draw the Line

My concluding remarks to this study comprise two parts. In sections 4.3. and 4.4., I review all that has been developed to this point, mostly in the form of examples, and In *Part five* I study whether my argumentation also applies to journalistic online work with its particular characteristics. The viewpoint of the review will be that of an individual journalist with considerable freedom of choice in his work, yet at the same time increasingly squeezed by the transforming social structures around him. Towards the end of *Part four,* in section which has been named Interlude two, the individual viewpoint also receives strong subjective contours. In Interlude two I namely construe a sequence of short examples on how virtue helps one through a working day as a practicing journalist. In this section I also return to the dilemma concerning the responsibility and potentiality of an individual practitioner both as a moral agent *and* as a member of a working community. Online work, then, as I see it, deserves special treatment on grounds of its potentiality to become the major journalistic outlet. In addition it calls for procedures and ways of thinking that are not typical of other, more established outlets. In that way it may well serve as a plausible final test case for whether our approach to journalism ethics is able to stand up to the future challenges, too.

In any event, my main goal in this study has been to give some evidence to the effect that virtue ethics indeed forms a sound foundation for a plausible case for an ethics of journalism. Accordingly in order to render the developed approach and its particular conception of virtue conducive to distinction and conceptual clarity, as well as to theoretical plausibility, I have argued for the following:

1. Journalism can be considered a practice, a social arrangement with its internal goals and excellences.
2. Journalism's major direct internal goal is to disseminate truthful and relevant information in order to support people's knowledgeability in public affairs.

3. By supporting people's knowledgeability journalism also is for some major human goods, such as self-governance and other values conducive to democracy.
4. Good is the major moral category and good resides in how we are and relate to others and to ourselves. Good particularly and importantly also manifests itself in virtue, it is in being excellently for (other's) good(s).
5. Journalism as a practice cannot survive without virtue. Both the internal relationships of the moral community within the practice, and the community's or its members' relationships to readers are dependent on virtue.
6. Virtue, i.e. moral excellence, is only contingently included in occupational individual excellence. Hence one can occasionally manifest occupational or professional excellence without being excellently for any moral good.

In order now to further clarify and defend some of the above arguments and their ramifications, let us consider some problems typical to the branch of journalism covering cultural phenomena. I use as the point of departure a series of articles published recently in *Helsingin Sanomat*, the biggest daily paper in Nordic countries.[107]To draw on journalistic (meta-)material also facilitates understanding of how journalists themselves dwell on some of the moral problems of their practice. Nonetheless, the articles present as one of the main problems the fact that film and music producers, managers, importers, and the like largely decide who and when and how journalists are allowed to interview. In addition, importers frequently pay the costs when reporters fly to London or Paris to meet, or at least to see, the star. In these circumstances, the questions arise, therefore, first, can one write truthful and reliable journalism, and, second, what might the subsequent moral implications be?

One could of course rush into suggesting that writing on cultural phenomena does not on the whole notably contribute to people's knowledgeability of public affairs, but that would be an obvious mistake. The entertainment and culture industries and their products both strongly affect and direct people's lives, and subsequently call for intimate journalistic coverage. Furthermore, writing on cultural phenomena exemplifies the way in which journalism serves readers more or less successfully, not only as citizens, but also as consumers and curious human beings with diverse interests.

[107]I.e. in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. A summary of the articles was also included in the copy published on the 28th of May in 2010.

However, what precisely would be morally suspect for example in submitting to producers' ready-made viewpoints and answers? To be sure, the case establishes an example of the analytical power of the distinction between bad and immoral journalism. In case the journalist makes perfectly plain such issues as who sponsored her travelling, who set the questions and answers, and why the artist should be going public at this moment, the only major moral problem might that concerning the general journalistic promise, since the relevancy and even the truthfulness of the article clearly seem to fall suspect (by for example blurring the distinction between journalism and public relations). However, while the story may prove to be pointless or outright bad journalism, it *may* be truthful and may even be welcomed by the fans who long for whatever crumbs of information as regards their idols. The article might even also manifest professional excellence both by adding to the readership's becoming knowledgeable on the maneuverings of the entertainment industry and its concomitants, and by simply displaying a piece of excellent and enjoyable writing. This obtains in particular if the journalist also consults sources other than the artist and his staff, and purports to deliver the more general context of the session to the readers as well.

But are there any grounds whatsoever to suggest that the journalist also might have manifested virtue while succeeding professionally? Can we say that she was morally excellently for some good? This *might* be, on condition that she indeed did seek to be for the good of the readership and that she did it courageously and with perseverance and that she *was* for the good (of readers). On the other hand, one could argue, that she might accomplish all this also when failing to excel professionally. But is that so, after all? One *can* be courageous and care for others' lot while not being professionally competent. However, in case one is lacking in professional competence and is even aware of it (as fortunately we frequently are), and yet attempts to be for some (important) good, is she not at least lacking in practical wisdom and (self)-honesty?[108] I think she may be.

Whether or not all this, nonetheless, still amounts to or allows for her being excellently for some good despite her lack of competence, is hard to solve without exploring further details, but what is crucial in the context of this study is how the theoretical concepts at our disposal enhance our ability to analyze the situation and its moral relevancy minutely.

[108]Recall how in section 2.1. Silverman endeavors to show that Slote's agent-basing is driven into trouble while concentrating merely on warm virtues and agents' motivational states.

It is of particular importance to see how moral excellence diverges from professional excellence, *even though* they share in being modes of excelling, and even though professional excellence may contingently be seen to add to one's moral excellence in being for some good. This kind of sensitivity to distinction in concert with analytical power is frequently missing in other virtue-based approaches to the ethics of journalism. Particularly misleading or confusing in many of the earlier approaches is how 'virtue' is used to refer to any professional or practical excellence or skill that is helpful in reaching for the internal goals of the respective practice.[109]

There are however multiple other moral concerns shared by journalists writing on cultural (and other) phenomena. Let us address three of them in order to shed further light both on the moral problems harassing today's journalists and on the potentiality of the approach I have been outlining. First, professional and social circles may be very small, particularly in small countries like Finland. Journalists and artists and authors know each other well and tend to associate with each other. Under these circumstances, can one produce, say, credible critiques? Second, gifts and favors abound. How serious a moral problem does this present? Third, some of the specialized magazines are very small and economically vulnerable. Are they able (to allow freedom for the journalists working for them) to resist advertiser pressure in a credible and morally sound way?

In fact, all these issues concern the question of whether the readership can place trust in the truthfulness of what they read, or, from the point of view of an individual journalist, whether he is able to adhere both to the general journalistic promise and also to otherwise morally sound working procedures under such a manifold pressure. Consider the case of a journalist being acquainted with an author whose novel he is supposed to review. The papers and magazines of course probably apply some general rules which may advise to the avoidance of situations as this, yet the journalist in question has long experience and is known to almost all the more distinguished authors in country. That in turn counts as a professional advantage, too.

[109] Also MacIntyre himself perhaps has inadvertently helped writers into this unfortunate habit by not making the distinction sufficiently clear. He certainly emphasizes that there is more to virtue than what can be learned in the context of practices but he nevertheless may steer us into seeing some particular practice-dependent and non-moral excellences as virtues. This is because he argues for the origins of virtue (thinking) to reside in practices.

In case the editor urges the journalist to proceed, what should he do and what can he do? The practical situation in which the journalist now finds himself is as follows: he has an interesting new novel in front of him which he very much would like to review. The review would bring him extra payment. He knows the author well and occasionally even associates with him in private. The editor wants him to do the review. The unwritten rule or standard of the practice and the local professional community advises one to avoid reviewing work accomplished by colleagues, relatives, or friends. The author would be pleased to have the journalist to review his book.

Now, would it not be wise for the journalist simply to lean on the rules in a hopelessly complex situation like this? He indeed at least might attempt this, but as a practically wise citizen and journalist he nonetheless first wants to look clearly into what exactly are the morally relevant characteristics of the case. To put it schematically again: the journalist knows he is thoroughly able to convey the merits of the new novel to readership, maybe even more so than most of the other writers. He knows the author well, true, but *he* would not describe them as friends. He considers that he has as an employee a *prima facie* duty to obey editor's orders. There are the conventions and rules, indeed, but the journalist finds them either too self-evident or too coarse-grained to be helpful. On grounds of their acquaintance and mutual respect for each other as professionals and being aware of the author's hope to be reviewed by him, the journalist feels as if he is under some slight obligation to complete the work.

There are, of course, many other details that can be considered morally relevant in the context. However, the above list alone helps to demonstrate the complexity of even the average real-life decision-making situations and, equipped with the virtue-ethical conception developed above, one might reason on the case as follows: by writing the review the journalist would help people to become knowledgeable, and he would obey the editor's request to proceed with the job. Further, when one is acquainted with, not to mention when one is a friend of, someone, there is indeed a legitimate reason to heed his wishes. At least at first reading therefore it seems that the journalist could be for good (people's knowledgeability) by writing the review, and that he even might excel morally in doing so (by *wanting* to further people's knowing well, by taking heed of the opinion of an experienced colleague and by understanding the peculiar and positively partial character of friendship and similar relations). As regards, then, the negatively affecting

aspect of journalist's acquaintance with the author, the intimacy of the relationship fixes its decisiveness. To be sure, by destroying the credibility of one's writing one cannot be for any good of the readership or of his organization or of himself. Since, therefore the case is not an obvious one the virtues of honesty and practical wisdom are also definitely called for.

Concerning the next issue, gifts, favors and the like, we can take advantage of research carried out by Susana Herrera Damas and Carlos Macia Barber (2009) amongst journalists working in Madrid and its vicinity. Damas's and Barber's aim was to explore how journalists see the legitimacy of accepting various gifts when carrying out their work. The results of 30 in-depth interviews and 410 surveys of newspaper, radio, television, online and press office journalists showed that the interviewees are very reluctant to accept gifts with a monetary value of over 200 euro, or to carry out activities financed by a news source. Fewer scruples arise regarding acceptance of presents of nominal value of a promotional merchandising nature, free tickets to shows and exhibitions, or paid meals and trips. As a matter of fact many journalists considered not accepting small gifts of nominal value both unfriendly and unwise (Herrera-Damas and Barber 2009, 64-92).[110]In sum, in the eyes of the journalists the moral acceptability of gifts is very much a function of their monetary value. Accepting the smallest gifts, then, may even be regarded as manifesting minor virtue yet with the increasing of the monetary value of the gifts virtue gradually turns into vice.[111]

Accordingly, it seems that as regards reporters the issue in giving and receiving gifts is where to draw the line. Rules, obviously, will not work on grounds of the incommensurability of the cases, except by containing a reminder of the very general necessity to be heedful. What else then can one do but to draw on one's own and others' practical wisdom? One line of such a reflection might go as follows. Arguably the most

[110]In general, those journalists who according to Damas and Barber are most predisposed to accepting gifts are young professionals, those who do not have a degree, and those who work on the Internet, as well as producers, editors and assistant editors. Those who are most critical of the giving and accepting of gifts are journalists employed by public enterprises and those who work in small companies. Journalists who are situated at the ideological extremes show, interestingly enough, identical results for all types of gifts (Herrera-Damas and Barber 2009, 64-92).

[111]For one reason or another Spanish sayings and proverbs are rich with phrases which colloquially transmit the threat that gift giving can pose for one's integrity. "Hoy por ti, mañana por mí" (Today for you, tomorrow for me), or "Favor con favor se paga" (A favor is repaid by another favor) make good examples. And maybe most in place here is: "A la sombra del favor crecen vicios"(Vice grows in the shadow of favor). I find at least Finnish poorer in this respect.

important feature of a piece of news-writing is that readers can, for good reasons, believe in what they read. On the one hand journalism *means* disseminating truthful information and on the other hand, more decisively, there obtains the general journalistic promise. To accept a costly gift equates with, if not the making of another promise, at least giving the image of making another promise which *run counter* to the original journalistic promise on truthful writing. And while this holds, readers have good reasons not to believe in – not to be convinced of – the reliability and truthfulness of the journalist's production on grounds of the new image.

In more virtue ethical terms, the journalist who allows for the (wrong?) image to become existent commits the vices of indifference and disrespect as regards both his readers and his original promise, as well as the whole of the practice of journalism. And practically unwise and dishonest he no doubt also seems to be. In addition, allowing for the new image to emerge can be considered a sign of incompetence. Even though mistrust probably would not affect a journalist's ability as regards information gathering and writing, or other basic areas of technical competence, the expediency of his (and his colleagues') work, nonetheless, might suffer. He possibly could no longer be considered a reliable source of information.[112]

4.4. Goods External to Journalism

At this point I will finally also make further remarks on external goods.[113] As was maintained above, external goods are goods which typically can be secured by being active within some practice, yet which are not practice-dependent. Money and other material assets are one example, prestige and power others. As regards gifts and favors, they can also be considered external goods. One does not have to be a journalist in order to receive a free weekend trip to London. However, not all external goods are in all ways morally suspect. A good life consists of many external goods, too, as already Aristotle and other ancient thinkers argued (Aristotle 1975, 11-13, Annas 1993, 329-438, Cottingham

[112]This of course depends on several factors, e.g. on how reliable the journalist in question or the medium he is working for are considered ahead of the accepting of the gift; and whether the readership considers one (more) occasion of gift giving and taking as making any difference at all. However, there is the possibility that loose conventions in accepting gifts indeed is one of the factors that have resulted in the low credibility which today's media outlets enjoy.

[113]On the character and position of external goods in the virtue theory, see also MacIntyre (1981, 182-83) and Borden (2007, 66-69).

1996, 65-70).[114]Hence, one can as a journalist legitimately reach both for internal and external goods.

It is of crucial importance, nonetheless, to recognize that a journalist carries several roles, also *qua* journalist. Within the practice (of journalism) he can only pursue its internal goods and aims, and this is what it means to participate in a practice. Yet as an employee, as a member of the organization, within his relation to the media house, he generally pursues his (and his family's) material livelihood. And even this obviously does not exhaust the range of differing roles of any one and the same journalist. He might in addition be considered a human being reaching for respect and admiration, or perhaps personal influence.

Hence, the question arises of how a journalist knows which goals are acceptable and which ones she should prefer in a particular situation? Unfortunately, there is no better advice than to take heed of what one is primarily due to produce at the very moment. When practicing journalism, participating in the dissemination of relevant information to readership, one can legitimately only reach for the internal goods of the practice; while negotiating on one's organizational position and liabilities, it is natural to think and talk also of money. Moreover, as a practitioner one should prefer journalistic to organizational goals and pressures when they conflict at a basic level[115], even though it might jeopardize some of the organization's goals and hence the journalist's own pay check (Borden 2007, 92-3). This is because the employee role and other roles external to journalism are only contingently attached to it as a practice.

In case and at times when the differing roles are compatible, however, no problems may seem to exist. It may seem that one can contingently write relevant and informative journalism while also seeking after fame or pursuing better position in the organization. Or might it even be the case, that personal desire for esteem is productive of professional excellence and high-quality journalism? I think it may contingently be so. Yet it is much harder to manifest *moral* excellence while ardently seeking after personal success. To take

[114]The ancient Greeks did not use these exact words and concepts, yet they made it very clear that without e.g. health and at least moderate wealth, one's life is not as good as it might be. However, Stoic philosophers as well as Cynics, seemed to disagree with other schools of thought.

[115]A basic level case is e.g. one in which the goals of the practice are outright precluded by those of the organization. A situation in which advertisement revenue becomes secured by ignoring the advertiser's malpractices in workplace safety measurements could be regarded as one basic level case.

care of one's own good, is also part of living well, yet to be excellently for good(s) necessarily calls for being also frankly and prominently interested in others' good(s). As a matter of fact, with this in mind we can make a case for the potential co-existence of professional excellence and vice. Namely, there seems to be no conclusive hindrance, empirical or conceptual, for a single journalistic project to manifest vice, let us say on grounds of its gross disrespect for personal privacy, while simultaneously bringing into daylight some major injustice in administrative practices. In this way we take a more decisive step in arguing that individual pieces of professionally excellent journalism do not necessarily manifest virtue, while even the weaker formulation is contrary to what some other approaches with virtue ethical foundation or flavors maintain, as discussed in *Part three*.

In sum, external goods comprise goods that are general in the sense that they are not practice-dependent and can be accomplished from within various practices[116] (MacIntyre 1981, 178). MacIntyre's original text (1981) however ignores the fact that there necessarily exists another class of external goods, too, *in relation* to any particular practice P, namely, goods that are internal to some other practice(s) yet which P does not share as internal. These kinds of goods are not external in the very general sense, as are money and name that can be reached for almost from within every practice. Instead, they are merely relationally external. What renders the distinction meaningful, or even of importance, is the fact that internal goods *can* be, and often are, shared by various practices. Above, in section 3.4., we already discussed how Borden finds that journalism and science share the internal goods of originality and novelty, and how the distinct constellation of the whole of internal goods and respective excellences eventually fixes the independent existence of any practice. Accordingly one can also meaningfully regard practices as more or less close or akin to each other.

It seems appropriate to consider our final issue in this section – the economical vulnerability of a paper or magazine and its moral repercussions – within the conceptual scheme developed above, namely, by briefly exploring how the practices of journalism and advertisement diverge in terms of their respective constellations of internal goods. To be sure, journalism not infrequently even becomes defined in relation to advertising, and

[116]Perhaps they can also be accomplished *outside* the practices. Yet at least in the modern world close to all moral agents participate in practices.

perhaps for good reasons, on grounds of their cohabitation in the very same pages of daily papers and magazines. It seems that in the journalistic camp the emphasis is on deep divergence, while advertizing professionals frequently either seek to point at the similarities or even purport to generate journalistic look-alikes. In fact, it is arguably included in the journalistic promise, as well as in most of the journalistic codes of ethics, to make clear the distinctions between, on the one hand, the dissemination of information and opinion, and on the other hand between journalism and advertisement. But how do journalism and advertising differ from each other as practices and why is the difference considered less critical amongst the advertisers?

In the internal goods shared by both the practices are clearly included those of originality and novelty, as was also the case with journalism and science. In addition there is the efficient production and dissemination of potentially useful information for a local or national readership, as well as such goods as high visual and literary quality. Where, then, one can see the respective lists of internal goods beginning to diverge, is where the readers become regarded as citizens; as individuals whose being knowledgeable in public affairs is tantamount to democracy. However, caution is necessary here: today's politics also become not simply soaked in but also dependent on advertisement. Both politicians and (their) ideas become routinely and expectedly merchandized. Yet a more careful analysis reveals the decisive difference. Advertising is *for* (and) particulars: for some particular individual human or thing. And it is a personal investment by one or several particular individuals, to be cashed later on in future. Objectivity, generality and critique are either completely ignored or at least pushed into background, to be taken care of by journalism, which is for citizens and consumers in *general* by the journalists in general.

Accordingly, the internal journalistic goods of providing a critical and diverse picture of events and persons and their mutual relations are not shared by the world of advertisement. However, the various internal goods shared by the practices and their spatial coexistence tend to charge up the relations of the practitioners, and also occasionally lure advertisers to take advantage of the mutual resemblance of the practices. Paradoxically, in order to be of any use this kind of strategy presupposes that journalism both remains competent and morally sound and is regarded as competent and morally sound by the readership. The cynicism which journalists frequently have to face as regards the issue unfortunately gives the impression of at least partial failure.

To be sure, to participate as a journalist in making it difficult for readers to know whether they are being helped towards knowledgeability, or exposed to marketing efforts, can be regarded as breaking the general journalistic promise. It may also be regarded as being for someone's good (the advertiser, the shareholders et cetera) but it certainly is not being excellently for good. On the contrary, it is being for good, if not by deceit, at least by recklessly endangering the interests of those very readers whose good one has promised to further. This, in the end, amounts to committing at least minor vice(s).

INTERLUDE TWO

How virtue helps a journalist to choose

In what follows I purport to widen the horizon of the applicability of the adopted virtue conception and to describe, in a schematic and summary way, how virtue might guide a journalist through his working hours. The point of the description is to show how naturally virtue might function as one – but crucially important – dimension in the practical day-to-day decision-making of the newsrooms. The term virtue (or vice) is indeed seldom used in everyday journalistic parlance, yet all that is referred to by 'virtue', i.e. the necessity to be truthful, patient, fair and benevolent, readily makes sense to all journalists. Hence, all that is needed is a heightened awareness of virtue's demands upon us. Accordingly, consider an example of an average journalist (he could be the author of this study, but I reticently call him Joel) and his work in a typical (Finnish) middle-sized newspaper. On an ordinary day, while on duty, Joel might be bound to make at least the following choices, all of which have also moral relevance:

(8 a.m.) First thing in the morning, the news-editor presents him with a choice between two potential stories: an interview of a successful entrepreneur and a report on how unemployment is hitting the region uncomfortably hard. Joel opts for the latter on grounds of the relevance of the subject matter. He considers that writing on interesting and exemplary people is also important, but feels confident of his choice: "This is what readers want me to do under the circumstances". (*honesty, relevance*)

(9.45 a.m.) In order to charge his story also with the relevant emotional aspect Joel interviews a technician, who lost his job a couple of days earlier. The interviewee speaks in a very colorful tone, giving full vent to his frustration. However, Joel chooses not to

use the most furious comments: “I guess he might feel sorry to see it in the headlines first thing in the morning”. (*beneficence, moderation, honesty, relevance*)

(10.30 a.m.) The interviewee also gives some information on how his employer picked the ones who should go, and it really did not seem to do justice to all of them. However, the employer did not want to comment when called by Joel, nor could Joel verify the information through any other sources. He chooses to wait and see whether he can use it later on: “Right now I can’t rely on it.” (*patience, beneficence, justice, courage*)

(12.15 p.m.) In the middle of Joel’s most rushed hours, the online crew signals that they want him to contribute to their offerings. What is needed is a concise and intimate piece on the increasing unemployment, preferably in the form of a vivid example. Joel feels irritated: “As if I weren’t already swamped with work!” He first plans to refuse or alternatively to fool around with shocking headlines and over-colored text, but soon he succeeds in controlling himself:”Well, this is part of my work and these guys are also just doing what they are expected to do. Besides, this may also be of use to readers.” (*temperance, solidarity, reasonableness, truthfulness*)

(12.25 p.m.) That settled, Joel hears the buzzing of his cellular. This time it is his mother-in-law who wants his attention. She is not able to get her car out of the garage because of the snow and ice. Additionally, she insists that Joel’s paper should immediately run an online story on how bad the weather conditions actually are and on how to avoid the worst pitfalls in the evening’s snowy traffic. Joel silently counts to ten, then promises to call his brother who would be in a better position to help the lady in trouble. He also obediently forwards the idea of his dear mother-in-law into the hands of the online desk. The result: he gets rushed into completing his story on unemployment. Joel sighs complaisantly, calls his brother and finally tries to concentrate on his notes. (*benevolence, temperance, accountability, practical wisdom*)

(12.35 p.m.) Only a few minutes later Joel realizes that there are some slight inconsistencies in his notes on the unemployment statistics. The graphic artist is already working on the material he delivered to her. So, what to do? Should he dig into the discrepancies or concentrate on completing the story on the technician? What is certain is that he cannot get through it all during his regular working hours. Joel decides to pick up the cellular again: “I have to get it right. I have no choice. I just can’t throw in people’s faces whatever numbers I happen to have scribbled in my notebook.” (*truthfulness, honesty, accuracy, patience*)

(2.35 p.m.) After a surprisingly smooth period of two hours, the cellular calls Joel’s

attention once again. A workplace steward from the company which dismissed the technician wants to have a chat. Joel receives a lot of information on the personnel management habits of the company and although he tries to put an end to the call the steward just goes on venting her deeply-detailed and more or less hostile message. However, finally the trustee slows down and hangs up: "And remember, don't use my name in your story!" Joel feels a little bewildered and irritated. Interesting details, indeed, but do they have that much or anything at all to do with the main thrust of his article, the rapidly growing unemployment? "Not really", Joel murmurs while summing up the incident. "And I guess primarily it was meant to be background conversation, and not to be used as such in the story. So, because I don't want to call her back now, I'll put all this aside." (*trustworthiness, patience, practical wisdom*)

(5 p.m.) Finally, the story is completed and the main desk, as well as the online desk, has its share of the fruits of thorough spadework. Joel leaves the news room. While in the elevator between the third and the fourth floors, Joel feels the cellular vibrate in the pocket: "Hey, man, you forgot the commenting piece on your story!" It was the news-editor. "I..ah..actually I don't know how to comment it all. Why not just let the facts speak for themselves, uh?" The news-editor expresses unconvinced and half-hearted approval. Joel shoves the phone back into his pocket. He doesn't feel very proud of himself. However, his wife is already waiting in a nearby café: "You can't have it all", Joel snorts and rushes out of the elevator. (*sense of proportion, friendship, integrity in one's life*)

To conclude, finally, the whole of my argument, I now proceed to *Part five* and take a brief look into the future. As discussed above there may be good reasons to believe that in the online world journalism's characteristics and problems may change and manifest themselves in novel and unexpected ways. Let us then see whether our conception of virtue has relevance in such an environment.

5. THE DIGITAL FUTURE AND THE CONCLUSIONS

As was maintained in the beginning of section 4.3., journalistic online work may well deserve targeted ethical deliberation on grounds of its potentiality to become the major journalistic outlet in the near future. Moreover, online work calls for procedures and ways of thinking that diverge from those adhered to particularly in established print outlets. In that way it may well serve as a plausible test environment for whether our approach to journalism ethics is also able to stand up the future challenges.

Nevertheless, Ari Heinonen among others argues that as the conditions in which journalism is practiced change, so do the ideas of what comprises good journalistic practice (Heinonen 2010, 18; Singer 2007, 79-95; 2003, 139-163; Deuze 2007)[117]. At the same time Heinonen maintains that there also are constant, outlet-independent ethical issues, such as accuracy and truthfulness. Yet some of them may gain (or lose) in relevance. Such issues seem to be for example plagiarism and the blurring of borders between journalistic and non-journalistic content (Ess 2009, 169; Heinonen 2010, 19; 2004, 22-23). Finally, there are issues that may not be thoroughly new, yet that may now become ushered from the margins into the focus of ethical deliberation. Powerful examples of these might be the increased demand for speed and the expanded time-span of online journalism. The latter refers to the fact that journalistic articles stay online "forever". This in turn may cause problems, particularly in case some of the articles become modified long after their original publishing (Heinonen 2010, 19; Friend and Singer 2007, xviii-xxi).

Heinonen then goes on to show how the coming of the Net Age has hardly left any traces yet in the European ethics codes, including the Finnish one (Heinonen 2010, 19-20; Karilainen 2008).This indeed is unfortunate, since in case the codes should give guidance as regards good journalistic practice, they too should change as the environment and conditions in which journalism is carried out alter. As was discussed above, codes can be helpful in detecting where the typical ethical problems of a respective profession may reside and in securing the minimum standard for some certain repeated measures.

[117]This way of putting it leaves at least partly open whether what *should* be hailed as good journalism is bound to alter, too.

But what is the place of virtue here? In a state of flux and under the conditions of hard online competition, is it advisable to develop either a deep reliance on, or repulsion from, virtue thinking?[118] One could of course start by referring to what earlier became established: because there are no rules or codes of ethics for online work, at least on a national level in Europe, one has to rely on her practical wisdom by necessity. However, this would not help us greatly since the lack of codes is simply a contingent empirical fact which will find its remedy in the hands of journalistic organizations sooner or later.[119] Hence it might be more fruitful to turn to explicating the essential characteristics of online work and thereafter to carefully explore whether our virtue conception has relevance and distinctive power in the context.

5.1. The Characteristics of Online Work

Now, there unavoidably exist several ways to describe the essentials of journalistic online work. I however argue for a concise solution which I consider charged with productive and expressive power, partly because of its simplicity. It may be stated summarily as follows: by far the most dominant characteristic of online work is its potentiality for pause*less* dissemination of news and other contents which readily transform into a (commercial) necessity to revise, *ad infinitum* and *ex tempore*.[120]In other words, in online work one can never remove the dead line. Above I actually already suggested that the deadline arguably is the most prominent single factor structuring journalists' work, even in the traditional print environment. Yet in the online environment the stress becomes considerably greater. One cannot settle to dwell on anything one has just accomplished. In case nothing new comes up one is supposed to revise again and again, even *without a journalistic cause*, in order at least to give an impression of novelty. Hence, one easily becomes submerged in, and convinced of the necessity of, pause-*less*-ness[121] in the online environment.[122]

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[118] Richard Volkman, e.g., argues that at least information ethics in general must begin with virtue ethics (2010, 380-401).

[119]And there of course already exist plenty of rules of the house to lean on in every newsroom. How *moral* or morally inspired all these rules in the end are, however, is another issue.

[120]See section 1.3.

[121]In other words, the state of producing more and more in quantity, yet with less and less relevancy in content.

[122]This, of course, also partly applies in traditional broadcasting, but there are some relevant differences, too. In broadcasting any station has traditionally been expected to break news only intermittently, according to a fixed time-schedule, a released program. Nonetheless, however deep or weak the

In addition I argue that the impact of the general characteristics of the digital media on the online journalism should also be taken into serious consideration. One of these features is how digital information is "greased".[123] By one single "click" the delivered information receives a potential audience of millions, whether or not we eventually want it to do so. This raises serious ethical issues surrounding especially privacy.[124]

The demand for speed causes problems as regards accuracy and truthfulness in particular. When there is "no time to think"[125], it is difficult to verify and to take care of the relevancy of the disseminated information. Yet, all this matches up with print journalism and particularly with broadcasting, too. The difference between online and more traditional outlets however is revealed when one concentrates on the high number and the quality of mistakes made, and on the frequency of corrections published, under the disguise of revisions. Online revising actually frequently means only correcting the worst shortcomings in what was just published. And because of the continuous opportunity for immediate revision, there also lurks the temptation to make it a habit or a routine not to be so careful, not to think it over once more or to make one more call before publishing. The mistakes of the first items of a certain set of revisions, then, are more or less made on purpose, in full awareness of their proliferation and possibly substantial nature.

In other words, an entirely new working-strategy is emerging or has emerged, a strategy that allows for considering the dissemination of news as a long series of corrections that successively add to the previous piece, and which may or may not have anything to do with what actually is taking place. Hence, the question arises whether the story can be called accurate and truthful merely on grounds that only its final version corresponds to the facts. Is this a new, transparent way of writing news-stories, which the audience also approves of or even demands, or is it a plain hoax, an excuse for bad working routines? In fact, it may well be both. The logic of online work admittedly and readily calls for immediate reporting and re-reporting and the readership seems to share the view.

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similarities between online work and broadcasting, the logic and imperative behind the causeless revisions is commercial, not journalistic. Hence, the goal of maximizing the sum total of visitors and the excellences that come with that goal seem to be at least partly external to and at odds with the practice of journalism.

[123]The notion originates in James Moor (1997, 27).

[124]Online privacy has been the subject of lively debate for some years now. See e.g. Floridi (2005, 185-200), Tavani (2007, 1-22; 2008, 155-166) and Shoemaker (2010, 3-15). A firm general basis to rely on while consulting the information ethics specialists is Räikkä (2008, 534-546).

[125]Rosenberg and Feldman (2008).

Nonetheless, knowing that one has to revise later hardly entitles one to negligence or sleaze while writing the opening version(s).[126]

The demand for speed, then, seems to be an issue strikingly hard to underscore, while one is considering the core characteristics of online journalism. As a matter of fact, one might even argue that while one is working online, time, at least in its standard linear reading, ceases to refer. Past is past, and one is hindered from waiting for any one future to take shape. It is now or never, all the time. The market logic invading the practice calls for maximization of the "clicks", the number of the visits on the site which on its part is decisive for the site's commercial seductiveness. However, in addition to shortage of time, online journalism naturally gives novel meaning to many other characteristics which it shares with print and broadcasting, and in some cases they, too, relate to the time-issue. Plagiarism, as one example, saves time. In case some other online site breaks the news, it is far less time-consuming simply to copypaste or rewrite what is already available, rather than carrying out one's own research. And as regards old versions and mistakes, they stay online "forever" and may cause many kinds of harm.[127]

What, then, might be those differences between the old and the new genres of journalism which are distinctively due to the digital nature of online work? Again, I opt for simplicity and take up merely three decisive and strongly related issues: convergence, greaseness, and globality (Ess 2009, 8-16; Moor 1997, 27-32). What were once distinct forms of information are now swiftly translated into a commonly shared digital form of 0's and 1's that makes possible one of the core distinguishing characteristics of digital media, namely, convergence. What convergence amounts to, can be (literally) seen in a rich webpage (online site) that contains text, still photos, video, and audio sources, as well as facilities for sending email, participating in social networking *et cetera*. Hence, formerly distinct kinds of information in the analogue world (photos, texts, music) now share the same basic form of information. Luciano Floridi even argues for the ongoing "..(H)omogenization of the processor and the processed" (Floridi 2005, 188-89). He maintains that the digital revolution has "reontologized the infosphere", in other words,

[126]It is of course clear that the journalistic pieces published via more traditional outlets also frequently call for correction or supplements. Where, however, the new strategy profoundly differs from the traditional one, is how deficiency becomes accepted *as a routine or a standard*, at least as regards the first versions of the online news stories. Nonetheless, one might also legitimately be concerned about the possibility of the new strategy also gaining ground within the traditional outlets.

[127]See e.g. Heinonen (2010, 19).

that there is a qualitative break to be seen and lived in our (informational) *Umwelt*, not just a linear continuum of quantitative development in information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their applications (Floridi 2005, 188-90)[128].

Digital media are "greased" to the effect that the information they capture and record may be transmitted further with the utmost ease, as anyone who has hit the send button on an email a little too quickly knows all too well. Further, it is not only the ease, but also the global circulation that is significant when online journalism is under consideration. The slip-aways may have very numerous audiences and audiences with substantially varying world-views and values. To appreciate this, one only has to recall the (in)famous *Jyllands-Posten* and Muhammad cartoons case in 2006.[129] The nature of the digital world renders possible cross-cultural encounters online at a scope and speed unimaginable only a few decades ago. Here we meet the third key characteristic of digital media, namely, its global nature. However, although there would be much more to say about globality, for instance about the feature of interactivity, which also seems to have transformational potentiality in its own right, I now go on to address the moral and ethical implications of the characteristics of online journalism delineated above.

How the characteristics of online work relate to virtues in general, and to the virtue conception of Adams in particular, is that the approach endorsed in this study makes it easier to distinguish expediency from moral soundness, particularly in circumstances of hurry. The name might make a piece on a local politician, suspected of speeding, juicier, but would it be relevant; and what would be the position if he is later found not to be guilty? There may be a rule urging one in cases like this to consider the social position of the politician and other relevant circumstances before publishing anything at all or, alternatively, the very name of the politician. The rule, then, calls for reasonableness and practical wisdom, perhaps also for benevolence. In any case, it reminds us, deliberately or not, of the importance of some key virtues, of the necessity to be for the good (of others), or at least to be decent.[130]

[128] Floridi has actually proposed that we are on the verge of a fourth revolution in human self-understanding, and he emphasizes the importance of making this transition as ethically smooth as possible. E.g. Michael Byron (2010, 135-147) however argues that the coming revolution will call for a sharp break in traditional ethical theorizing.
[129] See e.g. Ess (2009, 105-14).
[130] On decency see note 86, page 116.

Nevertheless, whatever may be the rules and the policy of a house, the above case discloses the input/output pattern prevailing in online newsdesks. An item comes up, via email, other online sites, TV-channels, phone calls *et cetera*, and the journalist on duty has to react, without delay. There *may* be some rules to lean on, and there certainly *are* some customary and shared ways of proceeding, but the real-life situations vary wi(l)dly. Rules spell out the qualifications of the acceptable standard performance, yet they say nothing of the countless, messy details of the particular cases faced by journalists. In Martha Nussbaum's words: "..(E)xcellent choice can't be captured in general rules, because it is a matter of fitting one's choice to the complex requirements of a concrete situation" (Nussbaum 1990, 71). Additionally, frequently there would be no time to consult the book of regulations in the middle of the heat of breaking news. Accordingly the "Ethics Guidelines" by The Canadian Association of Journalists stops short of listing rules as regards privacy and merely sums up: "..(E)ach situation should be judged in the light of common sense, humanity and the public's rights to know."[131]

As regards, then, the very nature of the digital, it simply adds to the "complex requirements of a concrete situation". An online story can be spotted all over the globe[132], but is it valued and understood in the same way everywhere? And, indeed, it is unnecessary to think only globally in order to be faced with the complexity: A car crash takes place. Where, and how bad is it? Does some other news site already know of it? How much, and in what way, can one borrow other sites' material? A cell phone photograph of the accident is sent via email by a reader, but did all the people in the photo actually consent to being photographed? Again, there may or may not be rules, but beyond doubt there is growing complexity and the need for high context as well as case sensitivity. The rules have their role in fixing some standards or principles, and consequentialist considerations on the relevancy of the potential pieces may also often be in place, but the particular, situation-sensitive moral choices inevitably call for practical wisdom.

In sum, the very digital nature of online journalism is one major factor in how the practice on the one hand is susceptible to inflict and on the other hand able to face moral

[131] *Ethics Guidelines* by the Canadian Association of Journalists. Online at http://www.eagle.ca/caj/principles/principles-statement-2002.htm. Accessed on 16th October 2010.

[132] Online journalists writing in Finnish probably do not so much share the problem of globality, at least as regards their texts.

problems. Accordingly, following Shannon Vallor in his analysis of social networking and the virtues, I argue that

> ..(T)he novelty, complexity and mutability of the moral dilemmas presented by such [developing information] technologies provide an exemplary illustration of the need for prudential wisdom, and the insufficiency of universal moral principles or of consequentialist calculations in the absence of the contextual sensitivity..to respond appropriately (Vallor 2010, 159).

5.2. Virtues for Virtual World

When in haste, it helps one to bear in mind that in order to be virtuous, or at least decent, one ought only to be for (others') good, or at the minimum to avoid making others' life worse. This might be the core advisory contribution one can extract from the virtue thinking of Adams.[133] Particularly in hectic working circumstances, of which online desks are a good example, it certainly will help one to "keep it simple". Yet, of course, in fact things frequently become complicated and are ambivalent. The goods one could or ought to be for, or the evils one ought to avoid, tend to abound and evade commensurability. However, the plausibility and strength of virtue ethics resides in the very fact that almost all adults, indeed, have repeatedly found themselves exposed to the complexity of human coexistence in at least one cultural setting since their childhood and, hence, have grown to know how, more or less successfully, to navigate in it. In other words, as an adult every journalist also, while entering her occupation, necessarily already has a good knowledge of what it is to be honest and benevolent and on the reasons why one should further (other humans') good.

That said, what, then, might be the virtues particularly required in online work or in the digital world in general? Vallor discusses patience, honesty, and empathy in the context of social networking practices (Vallor 2010, 164-169). Social networking and online journalism of course diverge in many ways, yet I argue that the very virtues endorsed by Vallor, in stewardship of general practical wisdom, are the ones that should also guide the

[133] Section 2.3.

choices in online desks.[134] Patience ushers one to deeper reflection and accordingly to fewer mistakes and higher relevancy in disseminated stories. Patience gives a chance for further thought and for another opinion. It makes visible the benefits of the trade-off between high speed and thorough spadework.

Honesty, in turn, is part of the cement which glues professionals together to form moral communities and respective practices with their internal excellences (Borden 2007, 87-103). If not honest, a journalist breaks the promise to help the readership to become knowledgeable in public affairs. As discussed above journalists routinely make use of certain privileges, for example concerning easy access to many kinds of information and events. Without honesty, the legitimation for the privileges dissolves.

Empathy, finally, in addition to other warm virtues, such as benevolence, has an indispensable role in one's being for the good of others. Since online newsdesks tend to make working environments, in which traits such as competitiveness and aggressiveness predominate, empathy is badly needed to guarantee the minimum decency of online journalism. Without the empathy-filter to one's work, infringements upon privacy become more expected, as do general indifference towards "Others" and their cultural characteristics. The virtues of patience, honesty, and empathy eventually work together in the same direction to make one to hold on to a tiny but necessary mental check-list: is there sufficient substance and relevance in my piece for it to qualify as news? Would the publication be fair for all those involved (and almost everybody is "involved" in the days of online journalism)? Am I being honest to myself, to my colleagues, and to my readers while answering the first two questions and in disclosing this particular report of what is going on?

To express it in more general terms, applying a virtue ethical framework to digital media, and to online journalism in particular, is to ask the perfectly natural and commonsensical question about what sorts of dispositions and habits should one cultivate in his working behavior that will foster his practical reason and thereby lead to greater harmony within oneself and with others. The resources for the answer reside in one's particular life-

[134] At the same time and in accordance with how virtue is seen in Adams, I do not regard the outlining of virtue lists of pressing importance. Virtue simply is being excellently for the good. For the purposes of illustration and application, however, the discussion on some particular virtues may very well be of some use.

history, the life-long succession of educative encounters which one and all of us have had with our own social environment(s) in general and with our nearest and dearest in particular.

At the same time, as a practice online journalism has its own excellences, values, and rules, the origins of which reside both in more traditional genres of journalism and in the particular (technical and commercial) circumstances in which online work takes place. Nonetheless, good work at the online desk makes demands both on one's personal integrity and on the excellences of the profession. Without personal virtue, there would be no vantage point from which to keep an eye on whether the skills and excellences of the profession eventually serve people's knowledgeability in public affairs. In other words, patience, honesty, and empathy are needed not only to help one meet the multitude of single everyday choices but also to reflect the whole of the state of the art. Yet, without professional excellence, in turn, there would be no adequate tools to do good journalism, good in both professional and moral terms.

Now, I have indeed made it seem very simple: one merely has to grow to be virtuous and to learn certain professional skills in order to become a good journalist.[135] Not all philosophers and journalists agree, however, and there are many who neither trust in nor believe in (the existence of) the virtues enabling one to do the job. Further, as discussed above, there *are* substantial challenges to meet while advocating virtue ethical approaches to (online) journalism or to the ethics of professions in general.[136] However, without returning to the wholesale discussion on the subject, I merely address three issues that obviously gather relevancy particularly within online journalism.

First, concerning the novelty of many of the applications of ICTs in general and of online journalism in particular, is it not, even typically, a situation where one cannot have sufficient experience merely or mainly to rely on practical wisdom and (other) virtues? Does one not need the support of rules and regulations particularly while becoming introduced to novelties? There is an edge to this argument, of course, yet I think that it is in no way fatal to the virtue approach. Rules or regulations are certainly needed to

[135] Aristotle himself did write of virtues as skills, but for whether or not he really did mean that virtues, too, might be regarded as skills in the same way as e.g. carpentry and other crafts might, see e.g. Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (1993, 66-73).

[136] See sections 2.3. and 2.4. above.

demonstrate the standard performance in novel circumstances, but one cannot handle the growing number of variables and the increasing complexity of situations with the help of rules. Rather, the opposite is true. There is now more than ever demand for good personal judgment and choice, and at the same time there is less time for browsing through manuals, while on duty. Whether or not journalists or editors like it, they have to rely on the journalists' integrity more than ever while working in the constantly changing circumstances, i.e. while working online.

Second, one might wonder whether virtue, particularly in my Adamsian reading of it, may eventually be totally out of place in a harshly competitive online environment. Is it not the case that in order to be a successful online journalist, one has to be clever and tough, even aggressive, in order to overcome other sites and to attract readers' attention? If virtues are to be called for in the first place, should not one prefer those such as wit and perseverance, yet certainly not benevolence or empathy? Or, all in all, would it not be preferable merely to concentrate on fighting for the scoop of the day and let the casual following of some basic rules suffice as regards matters of law and ethics -department?

Now, this not uncommon line of thought clearly manifests the way in which professional and moral excellences frequently become mixed up and how indeed they, not infrequently also touch on each other. Expediency, however, should be seen apart from moral excellence or decency. Expediency and professional excellence of course almost invariably *are* conducive to helping people to become well-versed in public affairs on the one hand, and to helping journalists in keeping their promise to gather and disseminate relevant information on the other. Yet virtue is badly needed to monitor the degree to which the (general journalistic) promise becomes kept in a morally sustainable way. In case a journalist resigns himself for instance to lying or to invading to another's privacy in order to disclose interesting or important information, it may very well be that he can no longer be called virtuous or even decent. He may be for some good of readers, namely their becoming knowledgeable in public affairs, but he cannot be said to be morally excellently for that good. Hence, the rougher the times around the online desks become, the more journalists and readers alike have to rely on decency and virtue in order to retain journalism as a worthwhile occupation.

There may also be ample reason to wonder how virtue ethics, with its emphasis on

particularity and partiality, might help one in the global (virtual) environment, where one has to face an infinity of differing, even opposing views and values. Would not more abstract, impartialist ethical approaches, such as consequentialism and deontology, furnish a more promising moral backing to finding one's way in such a digital jungle? Now, as Charles Ess suggests, many virtue-ethical approaches actually resonate with numerous non-Western views that also lay stress on becoming an excellent or exemplary human being in particular collectives (Ess 2009, 207-19; see also e.g. de Silva 1991, 58-68). In Confucian ethics, for example, an exemplary individual is one who has shaped her character or dispositions through the practice of appropriate conduct and ritual propriety. In addition, the emphasis on emotions in ethical life brings virtue ethics closer to at least some of its non-Western counterparts, a feature which is harder to trace, or is thoroughly non-existent, in other major Western traditions. Hence, because of these and other similarities with non-Western ethical views, virtue ethics might at least tentatively be regarded as a promising counterpart in the development of more global (online) ethics, an ethics that works more or less successfully in both Western and non-Western cultures and traditions.

In the heat of the online-desk even the virtuous, however, will make moral, in addition to other practical, mistakes. Virtue appears fragile and fragmentary. Yet, this is how Adams and I see virtues: one may only have some of them, and one may even occasionally lose grip of those one has. Virtue comes in degrees and discontinuity, yet it is real, and, in the end, all this gives our virtue conception particular relevance in online environments, too. It alone makes demands that less than fully-informed and busy persons can also meet, and that are proportionate to the findings of modern psychology. On the other hand, the bar for moral virtue is not set too low: to be virtuous, one has to be morally excellently for some good (of others). Thus, to return to the example of the speeding politician, manifesting total indifference to the interests and good of the suspect would also mean manifesting (at least minor) vice.

Finally, to conclude the whole of the conversation I once more summarize the main goal(s) and subsequently the main findings of the study and then propose an agenda for future work within the field of virtue ethical journalism ethics.

5.3. What Remains to Be Done

The point of departure for the study was the observation that what is meant by virtue, in much of the journalism ethics texts with a virtue ethical flavor, remains alarmingly vague. Frequently there is no discussion of the way in which the concept used relates to the long tradition of virtue thinking, nor of how the problems of defining virtue could or should be attended to or solved.

In the *Introduction*, I summarized the aims of the study to be: (1) to show how a plausible and well-defined conception of virtue gives more credibility to the view that a virtue approach can also give good action guidance in the ethics of professions; (2) to argue that the virtue conception developed by Robert M. Adams carries the requisite characteristics; (3) to exemplify how earlier work on journalism ethics in general, and virtue-flavored or virtue-based work in particular, would have been more accurate and more nuanced with the help of Adams' insights; (4) to test in preliminary fashion how virtue thinking in general and the virtue conception of Adams in particular succeed in journalistic online environments. In addition I strove to provide a general picture of the recent developments in virtue theory and normative virtue ethics in order to give greater credibility to virtue's potentiality to take its share of ethical reflection and action guidance. The general discussion on virtue and virtue theory, however, was not intended to show either that (a) virtue theory is superior to other main ethics theories or that (b) the virtue conception of Robert M. Adams has its roots or could somehow be inferred from the presented theoretical literature.

Accordingly, I discussed issues related to (1) and (2) theoretically in sections 2.3. and 2.4., and in a more practical manner in *Parts three*, *four*, and *five*. The discussion in 2.3. and 2.4. revealed that a multi-dimensional and well-defined virtue conception can be developed in a plausible manner. It was also shown in sections 2.3. and 2.4., as well as in *Parts three* to *five*, that with the help of such a conception one can make many morally important distinctions more visible than is the case with an "old-fashioned", one-dimensional virtue conception which simply regards virtues as good, solid character-traits. Examples of such morally relevant distinctions and issues are the difference between professional and moral virtues or excellences, and the insight that virtue manifests itself by degrees and is frail and fragmentary. Moreover, since virtue in the

Adamsian reading manifests itself in one's *being* excellently for good (i.e. in *doing* something beneficial for someone in a morally sustainable way), the virtue conception of Adams also tends all the more firmly to support action guidance. And finally, the virtue conception of Adams was also shown to be capable of plausibly facing the challenges leveled against virtue ethics and even against the very existence of character traits (or other permanent inner dispositions) by in particular situationist social psychology.

Part three is where I particularly discussed the earlier work in journalism ethics and showed how it would have benefited from the virtue ethical approach in general and from the virtue conception of Adams in particular. With the help of the Adamsian virtue conception there would have been less ambiguity in the texts, particularly where the authors are referring to professional or to moral virtues. Adams would also have helped the authors to analyze more clearly how a journalist should choose in a certain situation in order to be at least decent, i.e. simultaneously not to manifest either vice or (notable) virtue. Moreover, a broader and deeper virtue conception would have rendered many of the analyzes examined more nuanced and richer in detail, which in turn would have helped one to map out what actually is or was morally relevant in cases under discussion.

The challenges of (4) I met mainly in *Part five*. I discussed the situation which finds journalism in a wild state of flux and the way in which journalists have been pushed into a corner by the demands of online work. I argued for the view that today's restless digital work environment makes growing demands on journalists' personal decision-making abilities and on their personal moral integrity. Instructions and rules proliferate, and are certainly needed, but they do not eliminate the growing pressure on one's patience, honesty, and empathy, i.e. on one's personal moral character. Hence, in circumstances where time is scarce and expedience tends to dominate, a virtue conception which on the one hand directs one to see the difference between technical and moral excellence, yet on the other hand also celebrates less than complete virtue, seems helpful and close to the average human condition and to day-to-day realities. It is of undoubted use not only for the one in action at online-desk but also for the one who analyses the situation from the outside.

Yet, there still remains much work to be done. In the following I pick up only a few of the issues which I consider highly important and interesting, but which have been left without

sufficiently deep examination above. First, I did not show in any *conclusive* way that the virtue conception of Adams is compatible with neo-Aristotelianism or any other coherent virtue theory.[137] Might our virtue conception, then, despite its analytical power in the ethics of professions, after all remain in isolation from other, more established work in virtue thinking? The discussion above suggests that not, but a more detailed analysis is needed. Second, while I was arguing for virtue and virtue theory I also maintained that obviously there is much to be learned from deontology and consequentialism; if that be the case, what could it mean in precise terms?[138] In the ethics of professions it is indeed customary to rely on the concepts and insights of all the great traditions, but what are the legitimate ways to do so?

Third, granted that virtue ethics and our virtue conception are powerful tools for the analysis of professionals' moral behavior, how might these virtues be inculcated? In other words, how well might virtue thinking eventually be welcomed in the newsrooms? I have concentrated in this study more on the analytical power of (one particular variety of) virtue thinking, leaving aside any substantive reflection on whether it could also be an attraction at newsdesks, and whether there are reasons to have faith in its potentiality to actually survive in journalistic environments, increasingly pressed by business-related goals and excellences. This issue, nonetheless, cannot be thoroughly explored without the aid of empirical experimentation. Hopefully there will also arise interest in such work.

Finally, and maybe with the greatest urgency, the relationship between professional and moral excellence deserves yet more profound deliberation. The varieties of good(ness) indeed have for millennia interested both philosophers and laymen, but there is no evidence to the effect that the case is closed. Above we took the view that it is both important and possible to make the distinction *yet* that there is reason not to mark the boundaries between moral and non-moral too sharply. But how sharp is sufficiently sharp, and under precisely what circumstances can professionally excellent work be regarded as also morally excellent, i.e. virtuous? The relevance of the question, however, might on many occasions be revealed more clearly if it were put somewhat differently: under what circumstances may professionally excellent work nonetheless turn out to be morally

[137] Whether there really are any such things may be controversial, but I leave the issue outside the confines of this study.

[138] In particular on grounds of there being several kinds of consequentialist and deontological approaches.

dubious, or to manifest vice? And I am of course not referring here to the “professions” or crafts of bank-robbing and terrorism, but to those occupations and professions of whose services we and our near and dear routinely and daily take advantage, such as engineering, teaching and – journalism. In a world which increasingly opts for expediency, I think that the question will long continue to gain in importance.

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