How Intellectual Humility Promotes Friendships Between People of Different Social Identities

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Introduction

In the last few years, we have seen increasing calls for humility within the public sphere. More and more, journalists, commentators and activists encourage us to be humble in dialogue with our fellow citizens. This is often in response to the significant political conflicts of the last decade, and the activism they inspire: the MeToo movement, for example, in response to systematic misogyny which enabled sexual harassment and assault; or Blacks Lives Matter, in response to systemically racist methods of policing. This sometimes involves a plea - or demand - specifically for members of privileged groups (e.g. men, white people) to exercise humility in response to the testimony of marginalised people, at the vanguard of these movements. This, it is suggested, will lead to a better, more just society.

But what about the private sphere? And what about those relationships we all value, but which are easily overlooked: friendships. Too often, failure to understand the kind of political concerns and first-person experiences that motivate movements like Black Lives Matter or MeeToo undermines not just our society as a whole, but our ability to live up to the demands of friendship. It makes us worse confidants to our friends, for example, and undermines friendship's ability to be a safe haven from the injustice of wider society. As with the public sphere, this thesis argues that humility can help in the private sphere as well. In brief, my argument is that there are valuable features of close friendship which risk being jeopardised in friendships between members of privileged groups and members of marginalised groups. This is due to the privileged having epistemic limitations - chiefly, ignorance and bias, that can too easily go unaddressed. By allowing the privileged to 'own' these limitations, intellectual humility can help preserve these goods and promote these friendships.

But what is humility? And what kind of humility would best serve these ends? My argument focuses on 'epistemic' or 'intellectual' humility (I use these terms interchangeably): humility about what we can know, humility regarding (among other things) our epistemic limitations. Further, it is conceived of as an epistemic *virtue*: a trait of character that makes us better as knowers and, often, more likely to get at the truth. Privileged people failing to empathise with or take seriously the experiences of marginalised people can be all too common. Attempting to do this successfully can also present distinctively epistemic challenges. Often, it can confront us with the limits of what we know and how we enquire.

To this end, this thesis attempts to give an account of the virtue of intellectual humility. The first chapter surveys existing, prominent accounts of the virtue. Here, I argue that, while each hits on something intuitively right about the humble person's character or

behaviour, each account alone is inadequate. As we see, each is vulnerable to counter-examples, inherits an explanatory burden regarding the features of intellectual humility that it does not regard as defining, and makes implausible empirical assumptions. This, I argue, is a symptom of the standard methodology, employed by (almost) all the accounts discussed. That is, to define the virtue in terms of a single feature, that is necessary and sufficient for the possession of the virtue. This approach, I argue, is flawed.

With this in mind, Chapter Two considers not just alternative views, but alternative methodologies: different ways of going about giving an account of the virtue. Here, I argue in favour of a family resemblance account. I develop this view in some detail, suggesting it has numerous advantages over the standard methodology. However, I briefly consider Taneini's account (which defines the virtue in terms of two features, thereby departing from the standard methodology).

What is crucial for my purposes, I suggest, is that limitations-owning, as defined by Whitcomb et al. (2017), is highly likely to be intimately involved in intellectual humility on any of the accounts I consider. This is because it will either be a defining feature or have a close causal relationship to any of the other purported features of intellectual humility, according to the alternative views. And we can make good sense of this on the family resemblance account, as well as, perhaps, on Tanesini's Attitudinal Account. With this in mind, I proceed on firm ground in taking limitations-owning as the trait of primary concern in the rest of the thesis.

This thesis is specifically concerned with how the epistemic limitations of privileged people can undermine their friendships with people who are oppressed. I believe there are many good reasons we should care about this. As I argue in chapters Three and Four, close friendship provides a number of important goods. Close friends value one another in themselves, including valuing those features that might be socially stigmatised, they promote one another's self-esteem, create the conditions for comfortable, mutual self-disclosure, and receive and provide significant emotional support.

Each of these are important in their own right; but they are especially valuable when we consider friendships between members of different social groups, particularly where one friend's identity privileges them in some important respect, while the other's causes them to be subject to oppression. When these friendships go well, they can counteract a number of social, epistemic and moral ills within society. They can be edifying to the privileged person and help restore self-esteem to the marginalised person, who too often will have had this undermined by oppressive conditions. Unfortunately, when

these friendships go badly, they can reinforce the marginalised person's subordinate position, and squander the opportunities of the privileged person to morally and epistemically develop.

Thus, while Chapter Five considers some initial objections to the overall argument of the thesis, Chapter Six considers some major respects in which the epistemic limitations of the privileged person may show up in relationship with a friend of a marginalised background. As I suggest, these are ignorance and bias. The limited epistemic standpoint of the privileged can mean they do not need to know about the oppressive day-to-day reality experienced by the marginalised person. Society-wide prejudices and stereotypes can also inculcate in them biases towards the social group to which their friend belongs. This will be all the more likely when the group is oppressed and the other's privilege has limited their opportunities for authentic engagement with members of that group. Together, these can motivate the perpetration of a number of epistemic injustices by the privileged friend towards the marginalised friend.

As I argue, this is distinctively bad in friendship. It undermines some of the goods of friendship I discuss in Chapters Three and Four: creating conditions of self-disclosure; the promotion of the friend's self-esteem, including their epistemic self-confidence; and the ability to provide the friend with emotional support. Thus, we have particular reasons to worry about the consequences of these epistemic limitations in the context of close friendship.

Chapter Seven looks to epistemic humility as a remedy. If these problems are caused by one's epistemic limitations, then 'owning' these limitations looks like a promising solution. I discuss a range of behaviours that I take to be reflective of this disposition and which look especially helpful here. As I argue, the person who owns their limitations will take future-directed steps to address their ignorance and bias, with a view to preventing its negative impact in future interactions with friends. They will also take steps to address these impacts during the interactions with their friend. And they will take retrospective steps to address the negative effects that their limitations may have had on their friend in the past. Doing so will, I contend, either reduce the likelihood of the privileged friend committing epistemic injustice against their marginalised friend, or allow such injustices to be acknowledged and responded to in a salutary way, that need not undermine the goods of the friendship overall.

Befitting a thesis about humility, I believe the aims of this thesis are important but modest. As I make clear in Chapter Five, I do not claim that intellectual humility - as an individual or even a collective virtue - will wipe out oppression. Indeed, I do not even claim it can expunge all our biases or expel all our ignorance. But it can help us begin to

confront these epistemic obstacles in a realistic, sustained way, and this can help us become better epistemic agents. In the process, it can also help us to be better friends.

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Part One

Chapter One: Intellectual Humility: The Problem With Standard Accounts

1. Introduction

My thesis argues that intellectual humility (IH) has a valuable role to play in promoting close friendship between people of different social identities, particularly those friendships between members of dominant and marginalised groups. Specifically, I will argue that a feature claimed by some (e.g. Whitcomb et al, 2017) to be defining of IH - that is, owning one's limitations - is especially likely to promote such friendships.

To make the case for this, I need some account of what IH is, and why we should see limitations-owning as being an important feature of it. However, the nature of IH is contentious for two reasons. For one, while existing accounts in the literature seem to largely agree on the methodology we should use to determine the character of IH, they disagree about how to define the virtue. For another, as I will suggest, one need not accept the methodological commitments of the standard accounts; indeed, I argue that there are good reasons not to.

Fortunately, for my purposes, there is much agreement in the literature about the content of IH, that is, the kind of motivations, behaviours, beliefs and affects that the intellectually humble person will exhibit. Thus, there are important respects in which these theories are talking about the same kind of person, with the same kind of character, even if they disagree about how, theoretically, we should understand such a person. At least, that is what I will suggest in this chapter and the next. My overall argument is as follows.

The standard accounts of IH largely agree on what the explananda of the virtue are. For example, they for the most part agree on the kind of behaviour someone with IH is likely to exhibit. Such a person will, for example, own their limitations. The disagreement is largely about the causal structure of the virtue. For example, one view will argue that IH is composed of X, its primary feature; and that X causes Y, its secondary consequence.

Another will state that IH consists in Y, and that Y causes X. The fact that X and Y are both deeply implicated in IH is therefore not in question. So long as these theorists agree that both X and Y are intimately involved in IH, I remain on solid ground in claiming that IH, in virtue of its close relationship to these features, may promote close friendships between people of different social identities. After all, whether they do this by being a constituent of the virtue, or a reliable causal consequence, the end result is the same. This part of the argument therefore needs to illustrate that the features the theorists take to be IH-relevant share a broad overlap.

But what about where the features of IH themselves are disputed? As we'll see, there are cases where a feature generally taken to be either causally or constitutively involved in IH is not seen as such by a specific account in the literature. Here, then, I cannot rely on broad agreement. The second part of the argument is therefore to argue why they should accept both X and/or Y as features of the virtue. The reason for this is as follows. The general, broad agreement across a range of philosophers places those sceptical of specific features being involved in IH in the minority. In other words, this broad agreement is evidence that many people - even those who disagree about the precise causal structure of IH - feel the intuition that the feature in question is at least involved in the virtue, in some way for which we need to account. As such, if the minority view cannot account for this feature, it risks putting itself at a disadvantage. One thing that counts in favour of a view is its explanatory power. If it can honour and explain a good deal of our intuitions about IH, that is a reason for thinking it might be true. If it cannot do this - or do it to the same degree as rival accounts - that is a reason to think it less false.

I said that the accounts in the literature all use the same methodology. I also said that this is not the only methodology available. Indeed, the standard accounts do suffer similar methodological limitations; one way to address these would be with an account with a substantially different methodology. It's these considerations (which I will explain in more detail further on) that might motivate the family resemblance view of IH. I argue that this alternative can proceed with the same kind of agreement about the explananda of IH. If anything, one reason one may be tempted by the view is because it may do a better job of accounting for all the various (often heterogeneous) features that are IH-relevant. Once again, then, the disagreement is not over the content of IH (where this includes its reliable causal consequences), but exactly how it is to be accounted for and explained.

In summary, I will argue that accounts of IH share broad agreement about what is 'in the ballpark' of IH - that is, about what constitutes it or what it reliably causes. I consider first those accounts that are prominent in the literature. I examine the features they identify

as constituting IH, such as limitations-owning, low concern for intellectual status/high concern for the intellects of others, proper doxastic tracking. Later on, I also consider Tanesini's attitudinal account of IH. I then look at the features each view takes to be a reliable consequence of this defining feature. As we'll see, these collections of features largely overlap. Pointing this out is necessary for my thesis for a number of reasons.

The first is pragmatic. I want my account to be accessible to a wide range of readers, who may have different views on what IH is. If I staked my view of the virtue on any specific account being the right one, and argued that all else were inferior, this would make the account unpersuasive to those who held a different view of what IH is.

The second is philosophical. As I will argue, it isn't clear how different these views of IH are. In terms of the 'end product' - how an intellectually humble person will think, feel, behave, and what motivations they will have - I suggest that the picture of such a person ends up looking similar across the various different accounts of what the virtue is. As such, there seems little motivation to argue for a particular view above all others, especially when this broad agreement can be utilised to make those with a wide range of views here sympathetic to the argument of my thesis.

In what follows, I begin by outlining several prominent accounts of IH in the literature. I examine first, what they take to be the defining feature; I then consider what they take to be reliable causal consequences of that feature. As I suggest, they largely agree that something is either a constitutive feature or a causal consequence. Further, I argue that, for those features about which there is disagreement as to whether they are truly features of IH, it is in the interests of the sceptics in the minority to give some account of how these features could be involved in IH in some regard.

I consider some limitations with the methodology that might make one sympathetic to a different style of argument altogether - namely, a family resemblance account of IH. I briefly outline this account, before showing that it too is chiefly an argument regarding how we should see IH as being structured. Once again, the explananda will remain the same. As this is all I need to be the case for my argument, this is not a problem for my view

2. Intellectual Humility: The Current State of the Literature

Intellectual humility has received a diverse treatment in the literature. Among the various different philosophical definitions, three have gained prominence. These are:

- The Limitations-owning Account
- The Doxastic Account
- The Low-concern Account/Interpersonal Account

As we'll see, each takes a single feature of IH and treats it as both necessary and sufficient for the virtue. One exception to this is the attitudinal account of IH, as offered by Alessandra Tanesini. As her account could be viewed as a response to the methodological problems I identify in this chapter and the next, I consider it in chapter two.

On the standard methodology, this single feature, which is taken to be definitive, is often broken down into more fine-grained traits, which affect how the individual is disposed to behave in a wide range of circumstances. Taken together, these theories present us with distinct bundles of dispositions corresponding to whichever overall feature they take to be defining. If one focuses on these specific sets of dispositions, it seems there is quite a bit of disagreement.

Interestingly, however, these theories show a good deal of agreement on the features that intellectually humble people are expected to exhibit. While they differ on what defines IH, there is relative similarity on what the defining feature needs to explain. As will become clear, they broadly agree that intellectually humble people are likely to do a number of things. They own their limitations. They non-culpably track the positive epistemic status of their beliefs. They show low concern for intellectual status. And they show a high concern for the thoughts and ideas of others. Given that there is this agreement regarding the explanandum, the difference is at the level of how these fine-grained features are to be explained: what is the feature of intellectual humility that is causing or otherwise explains the presence of these other features? In order to get a better sense of how this plays out, let's first examine the theories themselves.

2.1. The Limitations-owning Account

The idea that intellectual humility is a virtue consisting in owning one's limitations was first put forward by Whitcomb et al (2017). On their view, it entails two things: being aware of and attentive to one's limitations; and 'owning' them. As IH is a virtue, we should expect it to have a complex dispositional profile, consisting of cognitive, behavioural, motivational and affective components. This is what we find in the notion of limitation 'owning' (Ibid: 8-13). For Whitcomb et al., this consists of:

Cognitive responses - Intellectually humble people 'tend to believe that they have those limitations when they come to mind…accept that they have them, and believe of the negative outcomes of their limitations that they are due to those limitations' (Ibid: 517).

Behavioural responses - Intellectually humble people 'tend to admit their limitations to others, avoid pretense, defer to others, draw inferences more hesitantly, seek more information, and consider counter-evidence judiciously' (Ibid: 517).

Motivatonal responses - 'In owning his intellectual limitations, the person with IH is disposed to care about them and take them seriously, in accordance with what the context demands' (Ibid: 519).

Affective responses - 'The person with IH is disposed to regret, but not be hostile about, her limitations, and more generally, to affectively respond to her limitations as the context demands' (Ibid: 519).

On this account then, IH has cognitive, behavioural, motivational, and affective components. And, I submit, they all seem like the kinds of things we would think an intellectually humble person would exhibit[1].

2.2. The Doxastic Account

Next, consider the Doxastic Account as proposed by Ian Church and Peter Samuelson (2017; 2016). On this view, IH is 'the virtue of accurately tracking what one can non-culpably take to be the positive epistemic status of one's beliefs' (2017: 25; 2016: 427). This takes some unpacking.

The positive epistemic status is that in virtue of which one has good grounds for thinking that a given belief is justified (Ibid: 22-24). This could be evidence, consistency with other beliefs, testimony from a reliable source etc. The 'non-culpability' component is there to cover cases in which one fails to track the positive epistemic status of their beliefs, but where this failure is not blameworthy, and shouldn't lead us to doubt a person's intellectual humility. For instance, if an otherwise very reliable informant tells a believable lie on a specific occasion, and I believe them, I will fail to track the positive epistemic status of my beliefs. I'm not culpable for this, however, because my belief that this person would tell me the truth was justified (Church, 2016: 425; Church and Samuelson, 2017: 21-25).

Church and Samuelson clarify that IH consists in *tracking* this positive epistemic status rather than *attributing* it. This is because tracking is something one can do unconsciously, while attributing is a more conscious, cognitive process. As such, this epistemic tracking (as I'll refer to it from now on) does not require that one be consciously thinking about the positive epistemic status of one's beliefs in order for one to be exercising the virtue (Church and Samuelson, 2017: 24; Church, 2016: 426). And this seems in line with the habitual way in which we generally take virtues to operate[2].

There is something plausible about this. After all, there are two ways one can fail to track the positive epistemic status of one's beliefs - one can have an excess of confidence in a belief, or a deficit of confidence. A person with excessive confidence looks like an intellectually arrogant person; a person with insufficient confidence looks intellectually servile. As both of these represent the two vices that lie either side of intellectual humility, the Doxastic Account seems to get at an important aspect of what IH is (Church and Samuelson, 2017: 20-27; Church 2016: 423-428). This account also sees IH as being a corrective to dogmatism, and this coheres with our everyday notions of what an IH person is like - they are someone who is not slow to change their mind when given sufficient reason to do so.

As with limitations-owning, there is something right about this view. And as with that account, it remains to be seen whether this captures everything we want to say about the intellectually humble person.

2.3. The Low Concern Account/The Interpersonal Account

Both the limitations-owning and the doxastic account could be classed as 'belief-based accounts'. Those who own their limitations are defined, in part, by having the right beliefs about what their limitations are. Those who practice the proper doxastic tracking are concerned with having correct beliefs about epistemic matters in general. This is in contrast to both the Low Concern account and the Interpersonal Account. While these accounts do have some differences, I believe they share significant similarities that justify grouping them together. As such, while I will briefly discuss each, I will from then on treat them as broadly interchangeable. In what follows, we'll see that both view IH as being essentially about how one relates to one's intellectual community.

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[2] Note that this view, unlike the others I consider here, offers a reliablist (rather than responsiblist) account of IH, and thus conceives of IH as a purely cognitive trait. For an explanation of the distinction, see Baehr (2011).

What I'm calling the 'Low Concern Account', was proposed by Roberts and Wood (2007). This sees having an unusually low concern for one's intellectual status and entitlements as the defining feature of IH. This low concern ranges over several related aspects of one's psychology. Firstly, an intellectually humble person will have an unusually low concern for:

> The kind of self-importance that accrues to persons who are viewed by their intellectual communities as talented, accomplished, and skilled, especially where such concern is muted or sidelined by intrinsic intellectual concerns—in particular, the concern for knowledge (Ibid: 250).

Further, the intellectually humble person has a low concern for 'intellectual domination'. That is, the need to leave 'the stamp of one's mind on disciples, one's field, and future intellectual generations' (Ibid). Finally, it consists in the 'disposition not to make unwarranted intellectual entitlement claims on the basis of one's (supposed) superiority or excellence, out of either a concern for self-exaltation, or some other vicious concern, or no vicious concern at all' (Ibid: 250-251).

For example, one might have made important contributions to a field of inquiry, for which one deserves certain rewards in the form of status, influence or recognition. However, on this view, if one is intellectually humble, one would have an unusually low concern for these entitlements. One would be more likely to turn down an award for one's achievements, for instance, and one would spend very little time thinking about how one's next project would enhance one's reputation, except for instrumental reasons[3]. On Roberts and Wood's view, the intellectually humble person has a deep concern for epistemic goods, which crowds out any concern for intellectual status. And while caring about status for instrumental reasons is compatible with IH, an intellectually humble person would place no intrinsic value on these intellectual entitlements (Ibid: 237-238).

There is something right about this. Some people do seem unusually unconcerned with their intellectual entitlements due to a comparatively high intrinsic concern for epistemic goods, and we are often inclined to call these people intellectually humble. Whether this is all that IH consists in, again, is a different question.

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[3] E.g. if getting an award made it more likely that an academic would get grant applications accepted in future to carry out further research, they would have instrumental reasons to care about it. But this is only because it helps ultimately further their epistemic ends.

Maura Priest (2020) offers the Interpersonal Account, a reformulated version of Low Concern. She aims to distinguish her view from these other theories, by framing IH as an interpersonal, rather than a merely personal, virtue. In her words:

> If virtue V is a personal virtue, then V can be adequately described while referencing the virtue holder alone. If virtue V* is an interpersonal virtue, then V* can only be adequately described with reference to agents other than the virtue holder' (Ibid: 468).

For her, IH cannot be adequately described without reference to those other than the virtue holder. This is because (contra Roberts and Woods) the intellectually humble person isn't defined as such by their low concern for intellectual status or entitlements, but by a high concern for the views of others in their intellectual community. This person takes the views of others seriously, and sees herself as having no special intellectual entitlement claims over them. As such, the intellectually humble 'do not feel entitled to dismiss criticism' (Ibid: 471). As she puts it:

> The characteristic which manifests in persons who are *prima facie* humble is not a low concern for status, but rather a *special concern for others*. The humble person sees himself in the same light as he sees all others. So, while there may be occasions when he mentions his own accomplishments, he is *just as likely* to mention the accomplishments of others…Intellectual humility is exemplified in treating the intellect of others like the intellect of one's own. This absence of self-privileging can come across as a lack of self-concern (Ibid: 472)

We should pause here to consider how different Low Concern and the Interpersonal Account really are. After all, the desire not to elevate one's own intellect above that of others seems of apiece with the lack of concern for self-importance highlighted by Roberts and Wood. It's not clear (to me, at least) exactly where these two views part ways in any significant sense. Certainly, for my purposes, whatever differences they may have, their equal focus on how one relates to one's intellectual community and its various status hierarchies, justifies treating them together[4].

Having discussed each of the rival accounts of IH, it will be helpful to see how they would apply their views to an intellectually humble person. What are the different explanations that these accounts would give of the same example? As I suggest, while they differ in the details of the analysis they provide, their explanations are, structurally, the same. They all utilise the same methodology. To see this, consider the following case, and how each theory would need to explain it.

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3. The Case of Anne Kearney

In 1996, counsellor Anne Kearney first published ‘Politics, Class and Counselling’ (2018), a book that’s widely credited as having put politics and class at the centre of discussions about counselling, and the effect these realities have on both counsellors and clients. In the book’s second edition, several counsellors describe what the book did for them professionally, and what it was like to know Anne personally. One of these people is Jacqueline Roy, a university lecturer in postcolonial studies and creative writing. Her description of the dialogue she had with Kearney is worth quoting at some length. I believe the responses Roy describes from Kearney are highly illustrative of the behaviours we would expect from the intellectually humble person. As Roy puts it:

> My friendship with Anne Kearney was just beginning when I first read her book on counselling and class. Although I saw its great importance in terms of class and power, as a black woman I found the assertions that class was considerably more important than race hard to swallow, as this did not tie in with my own experience of race and racism or those of people I knew. I was also concerned that, although the book stated the importance of middle class counsellors positioning themselves in relation to class, Anne hadn’t positioned herself as a white woman in relation to race. I didn’t know Anne well at the time, so I braced myself for a difficult conversation; it was important to raise this with her and, as an academic, I had engaged in many such discussions with others and had been met with resistance and defensiveness (Kearney, Proctor, 2018).
>
> Anne’s response was totally different. She was truly remarkable in her willingness to acknowledge that the class-over-race perspective was flawed and to rethink those aspects of the book…At one point in the conversation, I said that she was allowed to defend her position. Her response was ‘Not if it’s indefensible,’ and my respect and admiration for her were sealed. It was clear that, although she was disappointed in herself for not getting it right first time, her only concerns were not to perpetuate misconceptions about race and to ‘undertake to educate herself’, as she put it, in order to raise her awareness and bring this to her work with non-white clients. She said she was excited to be learning something new and that she wanted to be challenged. The depth of her understanding took my breath away.

This passage reveals Anne to be a prime exemplar of someone with intellectual humility. She exhibits behaviour that all the theories surveyed above claim is defining of the virtue. While this puts an ascription of IH to Anne on firm ground, I’ll argue that it throws

the existing theories - and the methodology common to them all - into question. If even conflicting theories can make conflicting assertions about the nature of IH, that nonetheless ring true when applied to particular cases, this suggests that no one of them is fully capturing these real world examples. Further, as we'll see, it makes it difficult to decide which theory is the right one.

4. Applying these Theories to this Case

It seems that each of the four theories can claim that their sole defining feature of IH is present in this example. In line with the Limitations-owning Account, Anne does seem to be owning her limitations. Recall that the affective component of 'owning' one's limitations entails that 'the person with IH is disposed to regret, but not be hostile about, her limitations' (Whitcomb et al., 2017:). Anne seems to demonstrate this in her reaction to Roy's testimony. Anne's disappointment with herself is clear evidence of her regretting the results of her intellectual limitations as a white woman writing about race. Still, the fact that her remaining concern was to not 'perpetuate misconceptions about race' and to 'undertake to educate herself' shows that this regret did not lead to hostility or defensiveness, as it might in a less intellectually humble person.

The description here also gets at the motivational aspect of limitation owning: 'In owning his intellectual limitations, the person with IH is disposed to care about them and take them seriously, in accordance with what the context demands' (Whitcomb et al., 2017: 10). Anne's clear concern not to perpetuate misconceptions about race motivates her to educate herself. This recognition of the need for education implicitly acknowledges that there are important features of the social world about which she does not know enough, and her response is to find out more.

This is congruent with the behavioural aspect of limitation-owning, which claims that intellectually humble people 'tend to admit their limitations to others, avoid pretense, defer to others, draw inferences more hesitantly, seek more information, and consider counter-evidence judiciously' (Ibid: 9). This just seems to be what 'undertaking to educate one's self' would consist in. Moreover, we can see the care and attention with which she engages in the conversation with Jacqueline - a woman of colour, who's views on race surely counted as a significant form of evidence - as an instance of 'deferring to others' and 'considering counter-evidence judiciously'. In sum, Anne Kearney really does seem like someone who owns her limitations. According to the Limitations-owning Account, it's this trait that means we should ascribe IH to her.

Regarding the Doxastic Account, Anne does seem to be tracking the positive epistemic status of her beliefs. As Jacqueline confirms at one part of the discussion (not quoted

above) ‘in the time that followed, Anne did indeed change her perspective with regard to race and class, and she intended to talk about this process in future writing’ (Kearney, Proctor, 2018:) (Anne passed away not long afterwards).

In other words, Jacqueline presented her with new evidence and argument that showed Anne that her claims about class being more important than race were not as well-founded as she had previously thought. Because she was tracking the positive epistemic status of her beliefs, and realised they had a less of a positive epistemic status than she had realised, Anne adjusted her credence in those ideas accordingly[5]. It is this feature of her comportment, according to the Doxastic Account, that explains why we should ascribe IH to her.

With respect to the Low Concern Account, Anne does also seem to lack a high concern for intellectual status and entitlements, that could have prevented her from giving Jacquelines’s views the attention and credibility they deserved. After all, by the time they were having the conversation, Anne’s book was a success, having significantly shifted the discussion about the influence of class and politics on counselling. She could have easily taken the book’s acclaim as a clear vindication of the ideas contained within it. Having to rethink such ideas as a result of a single conversation could have seemed like it undermined the book’s importance, or that Jacqueline was simply failing to accept this success as proof of Anne’s ‘superior insight’.

Happily, however, Anne didn’t respond this way. Instead, she accepted Jacqueline’s position, welcoming the new perspective with enthusiasm. The fact that she ‘was excited to be learning something new' and ‘wanted to be challenged,’ seems to speak of a deep concern for epistemic goods, one seemingly untainted by concern for status and intellectual entitlements. This is exactly what the Low Concern view would predict, the feature that defenders of this view will claim is both necessary and sufficient for our ascription of IH to Anne.

Finally, the Interpersonal Account can say something important about Anne’s behaviour as well. Anne does seem deeply concerned with the views of others, and unwilling to give herself any special status in the interaction as a result. One could argue that it’s this special concern for the intellect of others that explains why Jacqueline was able to help change Anne’s mind. When Jacqueline tells her she can defend her position, for instance, she responds ‘not if it’s indefensible’. This seems to speak to a strong sense that her views should stand and fall on their merits, not on any intellectual status that

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[5] Of course, one could argue she initially failed to track the epistemic status of her beliefs, because she initially made claims about race that were not justified. However, my point here is just that this represents an intellectually humble response to one’s past errors.

could allow her to claim superiority over others. It's in virtue of this deep concern for the intellects of others, and her corresponding lack of self-privileging, that we should ascribe IH to Anne, according to the Interpersonal Account.

In summary, then, all four accounts can pick out interesting and important features of the case described, that do seem to play a role in our ascribing IH to Anne. I said earlier that these theories agree on the explanandum of IH. That is, they agree that intellectually humble people are likely to exhibit certain features that relate to their being intellectually humble. What they disagree about is why it is that they possess those features. This becomes most apparent when we examine how the theories try and incorporate the other features taken as central by the rival accounts.

5.1. The Methodology of the Standard Approach

The Limitations-owning, Doxastic, Low Concern/Interpersonal accounts disagree about what IH is; what they have in common is their methodology. As I'll stress below, most of us come to the discussion with a range of intuitions regarding what an intellectually humble person is like. A standard strategy in the philosophical literature on IH is to isolate one of these intuitions, treat it as defining, and take this primary feature as central for explaining the intuitions about other features. Typically, these explanations are a matter of explaining why these other features - especially those taken to be defining in the eyes of rival theorists - are secondary consequences of this primary trait. There are many examples of this in the literature, and they will clarify what I mean here.

For instance, many of us feel the intuition that an intellectually humble person is someone who, among other things, owns their intellectual limitations. It's this that helps ground the Limitations-owning Account of IH, and it's this they use to explain the other features we typically associate with an intellectually humble person. So their account predicts that:

> IH reduces a person's propensity to treat intellectual inferiors with disrespect on the basis of his (supposed) intellectual superiority…For if one is properly attentive to, and owns, one's intellectual limitations, then one will admit to oneself that one has the limitations that one is aware of, including the limitations of one's strengths, and one will be more apt to respond to that awareness appropriately, e.g. by expecting less in the way of recognition and praise for them, and by being more appreciative of the difficulties of intellectual endeavors and so more readily sympathetic with and respectful of intellectual inferiors. So our account embraces what is right about Low Concern (Whitcomb et al., 2017: 18).

In other words, the intuition that an intellectually humble person has this form of low-concern (something the Low Concern Account takes as the defining feature of IH) is explicable on the Limitations-owning Account, even if this trait is not defining of the virtue. Applying this to the case of Anne Kearney, this account would say that Anne's low concern for status and intellectual entitlements is a causal consequence of what actually makes her intellectually humble - the fact that she owns her limitations.

Whitcomb et al. offer an explanation with the same structure to explain how the Limitations-owning Account can embrace what is right about other belief-based accounts[6]. While they don't reference Church and Samuelson's Doxastic Account specifically, I believe what they say extends to it: 'IH increases a person's propensity to have a clearer picture of what he knows and justifiedly believes and what he neither knows nor justifiedly believes' (Whitcomb et al. 2017: 17). That is, it's because limitations-owning causes one to have this clear picture of their doxastic attitudes, that we can expect this reliable epistemic tracking from the intellectually humble person. Thus, insofar as we see this from Anne, it's because she is owning her limitations.

Maura Priest (2020), in defending the Interpersonal Account, uses the same methodology to reach the opposite conclusion regarding how limitations-owning figures in the psychology of the intellectually humble person. As she puts it: 'the intellectually humble, for the most part, own their own limitations. But this is because they take advice and criticism seriously, not the other way around' (Ibid: 470). That is, it's because the intellectually humble, on her account, are so invested in their intellectual community, that they take advice and criticism seriously. Consequently, they are aware of their capacity to get things wrong, and invested in learning from others. While this might produce much of the limitations-owning behaviour Whitcomb et al. see as defining of IH, this is a causal consequence of what actually constitutes this virtue. Namely, low concern for intellectual status and entitlements arising from a deep concern for the views of others. Thus, her view can accept the intuition that limitations-owning is something the intellectually humble person does, without seeing it as a defining feature.

Likewise, those who subscribe to the low-concern view, or Priest's interpersonal variant, can use a similar strategy against the Doxastic account. Presumably the former views would agree that intellectual humility is valuable in part because it can make us better at getting at the truth. Or, more precisely, allows us to track the positive epistemic status of our beliefs. If intellectual humility consists in a low concern for status, or a high concern for the intellects of others, this ought to serve this function. If status is at best an imperfect measure of another's epistemic competence within a particular domain, a

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[6] They have Allan Hazlett's 'Higher-order Account' of IH in mind here (Hazlett, 2012)

disposition to not place undue weight on this factor, and to be open to the thoughts and ideas of those at all level of the intellectual hierarchy, is likely to provide sources of knowledge otherwise unavailable.

One view we haven't covered yet is Tanesini's (2018b). I have left it until now because her view differs from the others in that she regards two features as constituting IH rather than one. Her Attitudinal account incorporates both acceptance of limitations and modesty about successes. On her account, both are seen as being features of IH in their own right and neither has asymmetric causal powers over the other. Tanesini maintains that a psychological need to reduce cognitive dissonance will likely cause an agent who possesses one of these features to possess the other, and that the two can be self-reinforcing:

> It is true that modesty and self-acceptance can be exhibited somewhat independently of each other. Nevertheless, it seems likely that it may be psychologically hard to secure and preserve either true modesty or self-acceptance whilst being very deficient with regard to the other feature. Further, the development of modesty may promote the development of self-acceptance and vice-versa. As one acquires modesty about one's own successes, one's attention may be drawn to one's limitations which one may then learn to accept. By the same token, acceptance of limitations should generate some sort of cognitive dissonance with one's tendency to immodesty. It thus makes sense to think of humility as a cluster of two conceptually distinct psychological features which tend to harmonise because of the psychological need to avoid cognitive dissonance (Ibid: 409-410)

Structurally, then, this view seems similar to the others insofar as one trait is explained as being a causal product of the other. The relationship is still contingent and causal: it is still possible for someone to have one of these traits yet lack the other. The only differences here being that the two features discussed are both seen as features of IH in their own right. Rather than one having asymmetric causal powers over the other, both features can mutually cause and reinforce one another.

The intellectually humble person, then, comes out looking very similar on this account to how they look on the others discussed. If one accepts that low-concern can cause limitations-owning (as I have suggested) or limitations-owning can cause low-concern (as has been argued by Whitcomb et al.), one has at least some reason to be sympathetic to an account that argues that each can cause the other, and for similar reasons as those adduced by the other accounts.

The Doxastic Account does less to spell out how tracking what one can non-culpably take to be the positive epistemic status of one's beliefs would produce the kinds of low concern or limitations-owning characteristic of other accounts. But it isn't hard to see how they would employ a similar strategy. Indeed, Church seems to allude to this when he says that 'ultimately, what I want to argue…is that whatever social or moral dimensions the virtue of intellectual humility might have, that it should be built alongside of or understood within the doxastic account' (2016: 430). While 'built alongside' and 'understood within' are perhaps vague, it seems that one way of doing this would be to employ the strategy I sketched above.

For instance, tracking the positive epistemic status of your beliefs would likely draw your attention to your intellectual limitations. This kind of epistemic tracking will, over time, alert the humble person to the ways in which their beliefs are inaccurate. Such attentiveness would likely allow them to notice patterns in their mistakes - ways they tend to reliably and systematically err. In other words, their limitations. Thus, this epistemic tracking will likely produce knowledge of and attentiveness to one's own limitations, even if having this knowledge is not IH's defining feature.

A similar story could be told with regard to how this conception of IH would produce low-concern for the epistemic status of others (a feature associated with the Low-concern Account and the Interpersonal account). This proper epistemic tracking might allow them to recognise that there is an imperfect correlation between intellectual status and epistemic accuracy. IH, on this view, allows them to better recognise when information provided by expert testimony is false. Equally, they accurately recognise when ideas offered by those with no intellectual status are correct. As such, they come to have low intrinsic concern for intellectual status, recognising that it is a poor marker of epistemic accuracy.

One final note to make on the Doxastic Account is that it is distinct from the others in being the only reliablist conception of IH. The others see IH as being a character trait, over which we can exercise agency. On this view, it includes affective and conative components, as well as purely cognitive ones. However, Church and Samuelson see IH as a purely cognitive faculty, akin to eye sight or memory, as is common to the reliabalist approach in general. When one's memory is working properly, one recalls events accurately. Likewise, when the 'intellectual humility faculty' is functioning correctly, one accurately tracks the positive epistemic status of one's beliefs.

If this seems like a fairly narrow conception of IH, that's because it is. This is in general a feature of reliablist conceptions of virtues, and something for which they are often criticised. One way for Church and Samuelson to ward off this criticism, therefore, would

be for them to adopt the kind of strategy I suggest above. Indeed, this is something they should be keen to do. After all, the alternative views of IH can, for the most part, explain how their account can capture the intuitions that drive the other definitions of IH. This is generally put forward in favour of the given view: that it has the explanatory power to account for features of IH we intuitively associate with the virtue. Thus, if Church's account is to retain sufficient explanatory power, adopting an approach like the one sketched above would be a good way to go. If not, the view will remain limited in its applicability.

In summary, then, each of these theories seizes on either one or two features of IH, and uses this to explain the features proposed as defining by the other theories. The limitations-owning view of IH explains how this feature would cause low concern, or its interpersonal variant, as well as the accurate tracking of the positive epistemic status of one's beliefs. The interpersonal account can explain why someone with this trait would own their limitations, and why they too would be more likely to track the positive epistemic status of their beliefs. And finally, while neither the low concern view or the doxastic account fully explain how these respective features would cause limitations owning, a plausible explanation, with the same structure, can be offered without much trouble.

The examples considered above show that, while they reach different conclusions, authors on this topic often use the same methodology. They seize on one intuition about IH, claim that it alone is defining, and then use that to explain the others. We should pause here to consider where this leaves us in the dialectic. Structurally, these responses are the same. In terms of their content, I suggest that no one of them is obviously superior to the others, certainly not to the extent that any of them could be decisive about which theory is best. As a result, it's not clear that we're left in a better position regarding which theory is best to proceed with.

5.2. Counter-examples

One might hope one could employ another familiar strategy to help ameliorate this: that of providing counter-examples, which show that some putatively necessary and sufficient condition for IH is not in fact accurate. This is a standard strategy in philosophy in general, and it proceeds as follows: if a feature is offered as sufficient for IH, put forward a case of someone who seems to possess this feature, but to whom we intuitively do not want to ascribe this virtue. If it's considered necessary, offer a case in which someone does not possess this feature, but to whom we want to ascribe the virtue nonetheless. If successful, this should show that the theory one is critiquing is failing to accurately capture the correct features of this virtue.

As I suggest, however, this road is not as straightforward as we might like. Just as each view has its own justification for how it can assimilate the intuitions of rival accounts, so too is each theory vulnerable to a counter-example.

For instance, in objecting to the Low Concern Account, and defending the Doxastic Account, Ian Church offers this case:

> Let's say that tragedy has befallen Saul—the ignorant, yet conceited wannabe dermatologist—and he has been shipwrecked on a small deserted island. He is entirely alone. And with no social status to care about, Saul can no longer be obsessed with his status amongst his peers and how much they think of him (Church, 2016: 420).

As Church argues, this person seems to lack IH, despite having no concern for intellectual entitlement. In the example, Saul is also portrayed as massively over-rating his competence as a dermatologist, indicating that he may also be intellectually arrogant. Problematically, this looks compatible with low concern for intellectual status. On Church's view, then, this shows that low concern is not sufficient for IH, nor for avoiding intellectual arrogance.

Likewise, in objecting to the Low Concern Account, Whitcomb et al. invite us to:

> Consider the case of Professor P, who is an extremely talented philosopher who knows he's extremely talented. He genuinely loves epistemic goods; indeed, his obsession with them drowns out any concern he might have otherwise had for status or entitlement. He simply doesn't care about impressing others, nor does he take himself to be entitled to special treatment or to disrespecting others. Status and entitlement aren't even on his radar. While extremely talented, Professor P is not perfect. When confronted with his intellectual imperfections or mistakes, his default response is to try to justify, cover up, or explain them away. He is notoriously bad at admitting when he has made a mistake or when one of his arguments is vulnerable to serious criticism. Professor P seems to be lacking in IH even though he is disposed to an unusually low concern for status and entitlement (Whitcomb et al., 2017: 8)

In other words, they argue that while Professor P has the low concern that should be both necessary and sufficient to make him intellectually humble, his reluctance to own his limitations makes us want to resist ascribing the virtue to him. As such, low concern is insufficient for IH.

In objection to the Limitations-owning Account, Maura Priest offers this case:

> Imagine a professor who is acutely aware of his own limitations. He also justifiably believes that he is better than most of his students in physics. With this realization in mind, he looks down on them with contempt as his intellectual inferiors. Even when they understand, he lectures patronizingly making sure they recognize his superiority. He acts this way not only toward his students but to all whom he justifiably believes to have less intellectual acumen. Additionally, he jumps at every opportunity to mention his success and prominently displays his awards and accomplishments wherever and whenever he can. To summarize, he is both aware of his limitations and responds appropriately. He is also, however, aware of strengths, wants everyone else to be so aware, and thinks these strengths entitle him to treat intellectual inferiors contemptuously. It is counterintuitive that such a professor is intellectually humble (to say the least) (Priest, 2020: 467).

Thus, while Whitcomb et al. predict that limitations-owning will lead one to have the low concern Priest describes, her case suggests that this won't always be so. It is conceivable, on the Limitations-owning Account, that one owns one's limitations but fails to own one's strengths, in such a way that one is intellectually arrogant. As intellectual arrogance is a vice in opposition to IH, limitations-owning is not sufficient for this virtue.

As Priest's is the most recent of all the accounts discussed so far, no other theorist has offered a counter-example to her view. But, given the structure of the methodology, it would not be difficult to come up with one. Recall Priest's argument that those who have high concern for the intellects of others are likely to own their limitations, but only because they take advice and criticism from others seriously. As in previous examples, we have a claim about what IH is, and a claim about its causal relation to some other apparent feature of the virtue.

While it may be true in many cases that taking advice and criticism from others seriously results in limitations-owning, we can imagine scenarios where this contingent, causal connection fails. Priest's argument assumes that others in one's community will have the competence to point out one's limitations and where they have led one astray, and that they will feel able to do so. But we can imagine - and in some cases, know - that there are scenarios in which they won't.

For instance, if Anne Kearney, the counsellor from our previous example, had no non-white people in her community to challenge her claim that class was a more significant determinant of one's identity than race, she may not have had this potentially false belief undermined. Nor would she have had her epistemic limitations as a white person, for whom race was a much less salient part of life, exposed. Indeed, as counselling in

the UK remains a largely white-dominated profession, this could be part of the reason why the issue was not addressed prior to the book's publication. Equally, if the non-white people in her circle lacked the confidence to challenge her on this - perhaps fearing the hostility and defensiveness that Jacqueline Roy describes - such criticism would not have been forthcoming.

Moreover, even if they had felt able to speak up, concern about speaking to a white person about these issues might cause them to practise testimonial smothering, providing truncated testimony so as only to offer information that will be non-threatening to dominantly situated groups (Dotson, 2011: 244). Likewise, hermeneutical injustice may mean that their testimony may not be properly informative or intelligible because they lack the concepts to fully articulate their criticism (Fricker, 2007). In both cases, it is likely that what the speaker is unable to communicate would have significant bearing when it comes to helping Kearney recognise her limitations. As it cannot be communicated, however, the testimony that remains will not fully perform this function.

Finally, even if Roy had been in Kearney's community and felt able to raise her concerns, it is possible that Kearney would not have been able to fully appreciate them, at least if such concerns drew on significant differences in their epistemic standpoints. All of this could be true regardless of how eagerly Kearney solicited criticism, or how seriously she took it. In other words, whether taking criticism from others seriously will result in limitations-owning depends on contingent, sociological facts about one's community. In the example just described, we have a case where lacking in intellectual entitlement and thus taking criticism seriously is insufficient for limitations-owning.

The previous example illustrates how the causal relationship between a constitutive feature of IH, and its secondary consequences, opens up the space for counter-examples. As I'll suggest, all of these accounts suffer from the fact that the relation between what they take to be defining features of the view, and what they see as secondary consequences, is contingent.

6. Where to go from here?

If one finds each of these counter-examples plausible, this offers little hope of resolution. We're still left with the question of what best defines IH. Certainly, the debate around this question is interesting and seems unlikely to be resolved here. Another important question, for my purposes, is 'does this matter?' In answering this latter question, it's important to consider what role any account of IH will play in my thesis. My thesis examines how IH can promote friendship between people of different social identities. To do this, I do not need to have an account of IH that is clearly superior to all

the others offered, and to argue for it in a way that would persuade a defender of one of the alternatives. This would be an ambitious project, and one that's unlikely to be successful. Further, if it failed to convince defenders of these alternative accounts, it would risk limiting the appeal of the proposal considerably. One might worry that a failure to commit to any one of these theories specifically would leave me powerless to say much of substance about IH.

Happily, I don't think this is the case. As we saw above, the explanandum - what it is that IH people do that is characteristic of the virtue - is fairly well agreed upon. The limitations-owning defenders agree that those with IH have low concern for intellectual status; that they show high concern for the thoughts and ideas of others; and that they track the positive epistemic status of the beliefs. Likewise, Priest, in defending the interpersonal account, recognises that intellectually humble people own their limitations, and are unconcerned with the intellectual status of others. And both defenders of the doxastic account, as well as the low-concern account, would need to tell a causal story along similar lines, to show that their account can explain the other relevant features. So, though they do not spell it out explicitly, they ought to agree, in the absence of some (as yet unspecified) reason for dissenting.

Given this, it is not clear that the definitional question needs to be settled before I can make use of the features ascribed to IH in my argument for its utility in friendships between people of different social identities. So long as the defenders of rival accounts agree that limitations-owning ought to be attributed to IH in some way, I believe I can quite reasonably stay agnostic on the question of what feature is supposed to be defining of the virtue.

Following what I have said above, it should be clear how this is so. On the accounts canvassed, limitations-owning will end up being intimately involved in IH in one of two ways. Either, it will be a defining feature, as on the limitations-owning account - in which case, its relationship to IH is obvious. Or, it will be a causally related to IH - either as a causal consequence of another feature, an antecedent to that feature, or as the outcome of a common cause shared between it and other features of IH. Of course, on this latter view, it may be that limitations-owning could be caused by other traits that are not defining features of IH. I don't believe this is a problem for my account, however. If one believes that the defining feature of IH can still reliably cause limitations-owning, that is sufficient for my argument to work. IH would then be a reliable way of promoting the kind of friendships I am concerned with here. If there are in fact other traits that might also lead to limitations-owning, this too would be interesting and noteworthy (though the burden of argument here surely lies with whoever wishes to make this claim). Overall, then, this is an ecumenical approach, and one that I think ought to make

my argument appealing to the largest number of people, with the widest divergence of views, within this space.

I've so far argued that there is considerable agreement about the dispositions that IH people will possess. One might accept this, but have concerns about the shared methodology used by each of these accounts of IH. Specifically, barring Tanesini's approach for the moment, all the others attempt to define IH in terms of a single necessary and sufficient feature. For the limitations-owning account, this is limitations-owning. For the low concern account, it is low concern, etc.

The analysis provided earlier may cast doubt on this approach. As we saw, all of them offer reasonably plausible explanations as to why a given intellectually humble person - such as Anne Kearney, the counsellor from our example - should be classified as possessing the virtue. Each defining feature can be marshalled to explain the presence of the others. What's more, each is vulnerable to a counter-example, the deployment of counter-examples being a natural response to any theory that defines a virtue in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions.

This may leave it unclear which theory we ought to accept. While I have responded to this with an ecumenical approach - as I suggest, we need not take a stand on this in order to answer my research question - one might instead question the standard methodology altogether. Perhaps a different methodology would be better equipped to characterise the virtue, that wouldn't be vulnerable to these problems. One promising option here is family resemblance. In what follows, I lay out a brief sketch of a family resemblance account of IH, to illustrate what it would look like. This will hopefully indicate its promising potential for dealing with the concerns that one might level at the standard methodology. As I think there is good reason for one to be tempted by this approach, especially if the standard methodology is unsatisfying, I will then explain how my ecumenical approach is congenial to this one as well.

Chapter Two: Intellectual Humility as a Family Resemblance Concept

1. Introduction

The previous chapter surveyed several prominent accounts of IH. I showed where these theories diverged, as well as the significant amount of agreement between them about the virtue. In the process, we also saw that they shared a similar methodology. I argued that this methodology resulted in a dialectical stalemate that might prompt the question of whether alternative methodologies are available. This chapter attempts to answer that question with an alternative approach: the family resemblance account.

In order to motivate this further, I consider in more depth the problems with the standard methodology that I initially discussed above. I outline the family resemblance account, and I give a number of reasons for thinking it does not suffer from these same problems, and is therefore preferable. I also consider and respond to a number of objections. First, however, I will examine how the idea of family resemblance has figured in the literature on IH and humility in general so far.

1.1. IH as a Family Resemblance Concept: The Current State of the Literature

The idea that humility is a family resemblance concept has been suggested by several philosophers in humility research. Michael Austin (2018) suggests that humility is composed of a series of ‘modules’, which each modulate the expression of different features of humility. Each of these features are sufficient for the virtue; together they form a kind of ‘ideal’ version of it (Ibid: 45-48).

Likewise, Ryan Byerly (2014) has argued that there may be many versions of humility, and that it is a mistake to employ the counter-example approach to decide which is the ‘right’ one. Rather, we should examine which are good candidates for being features of humility, and then ask what the value of those features might be for a flourishing life (Ibid: 889-890).

James Kellenberger (2010) echos this view, suggesting that humility is ‘best understood as a polythetic concept,’ (Ibid: 324) where this term:

> Applies to a class that is not defined by necessary and sufficient properties; instead, its members are marked by characteristics shared by many but not all instances, rather as, in Wittgenstein's language, family resemblances may be shared (Ibid).

However, regarding *intellectual* humility (IH), only Micheal Hannon (2020) follows this approach. In noting the diversity of features associated with IH, he recommends that we ‘take this heterogeneity at face value without succumbing to the philosophical urge—perhaps an imprint of Socrates’s legacy—to find some deeper underlying unity to them all’ (Ibid: 109).

The arguments put forward for this position are brief and fairly un-substantive. In objecting to this standard methodology Kellenberger simply notes the heterogeneity of humility but provides no other argument for treating it as a family resemblance concept. While Austin offers an argument at some length for his modularity view of humility, it is unclear if it is strictly speaking a family resemblance account. Regardless, it is limited to humility in general. Byerly, likewise, does not offer an account specific to IH. Lastly, Hannon - the only philosopher to recommend treating *intellectual* humility in this way - again, merely notes the heterogeneity of the current theories as his only argument for endorsing a family resemblance approach. Thus, as yet, no philosopher has given a sustained argument for why IH is best viewed as a family resemblance concept.

An argument in favour of the family resemblance view could take two forms: negative and positive. A negative argument for family resemblance would elucidate the problems with the standard methodology, thereby motivating an alternative. A positive argument would show why family resemblance is best placed to be that alternative. I offer both in this chapter. I begin with the negative argument - the case against the standard methodology. I argue that it has four problems. Firstly, the standard methodology is inherently vulnerable to counter-examples; secondly, it inherits an explanatory burden; thirdly, it rests on problematic empirical assumptions; finally, it struggles to do justice to the heterogeneity of IH. As we’ll see, the positive argument in favour of the family resemblance account is structured around avoiding these problems.

1. The Standard Methodology Revisited

What I earlier called ‘the standard methodology’ involves a number of steps. It will be helpful to recap them here in order to then elucidate the methodology’s problems. The steps are:

1. Define IH in terms of a single feature that is both necessary and sufficient for the virtue

2. Explain other intuitive features of IH in terms of a causal relation between the defining feature and these other features

3. Critique rival theories using counter-examples

As we saw earlier, this is common to all of the accounts we considered. Note that 2. states that these theories take there to be a causal *relation* between the defining feature and the secondary one. In practice, this is taken to require the defining feature being the antecedent cause of the secondary feature - the secondary feature being a causal consequence of the defining one.

It is worth noting that this is not the only causal relation that could hold between such features. The secondary feature could be an antecedent cause of the defining feature; they could both be casual consequences of another, distinct feature. The former is an instance of efficient causation. But secondary features could also result from final causation - where the secondary feature develops as a means of cultivating the primary feature. For example, owning your limitations may be instrumental in causing you to better track the positive epistemic status of your beliefs - where this latter feature is taken to be the defining feature of IH, as it is on the doxastic account.

3. Problems with The Standard Methodology

3.1. Inherent Vulnerability to Counter-examples

The first problem with this methodology is that it makes each of the theories inherently vulnerable to counter-examples. Notice points 1 and 2. In isolating one episode as being solely constitutive of IH, one must claim that the other intuitions are, at most, casual consequences of this constitutive feature. We saw this earlier in the examples taken from the literature. Limitations-owning defenders argue that low concern is a causal consequence of limitations-owning; Low Concern defenders argue that this low concern causes one to own one’s limitations; defenders of the Interpersonal Account

argue that this causes the limitations-owning and the lack of self-privileging claimed to be defining by the other theorists; and it's always open to a defender of the Doxastic Account to argue that the proper epistemic tracking they claim is constitutive of IH would reliably produce these other dispositions.

In other words, we have a claim about what is constitutive of IH, and a claim about what this constitutive feature causes. This seems to allow us to say why a feature we intuitively thought was associated with IH was not a defining characteristic, because we can claim that whatever is defining of this virtue would reliably cause this feature. If so, it would be no surprise that the two regularly occur together.

Despite the apparent advantages, this approach also has a liability. Namely, it opens up the space for counter-examples. Notice that to claim that some feature of IH *causes* some other feature, rather than this feature helping to *constitute* IH in its own right, risks making the relationship between the two contingent. That is, unless we're meant to believe that this causal relationship is necessary. In this context, there are good reasons to believe it isn't - in the context of psychology, numerous factors will affect whether a given trait causes a particular behaviour.

As such, it's not hard to imagine cases where the cause and the effect come apart. We see this in the case of Saul, the arrogant dermatologist. He is someone who has low concern for intellectual status, but in the scenario imagined, this hasn't prevented him from having delusional beliefs about his competence as a dermatologist. The Low Concern view allows for such cases because it can only claim that not having delusional beliefs will be a reliable consequence of low concern. While true in many instances, the contingent, causal relationship allows for just these kinds of scenarios. The other theories discussed are all vulnerable to counter-examples for precisely the same reasons.

Noticing this inherent vulnerability to counter-examples should also make us question what any specific counter-example shows about a particular theory of IH. If what I have said is right, the criteria by which we judge whether a particular theory of IH is plausible cannot be whether it survives counter-examples. Given the current methodology, no account will. As such, it's not clear that any particular account's vulnerability to a specific counter-example should make us question the theory any more than we would question its rivals. Thus, counter-examples may not be the best way to determine whether an account of IH is the right one.

3.2. Empirical Problems

Thirdly, the standard methodology relies on empirically questionable assumptions, that are yet to gain empirical justification, and which would be hard to operationalise experimentally. These are considerable problems for this approach; I'll now unpack each of them in turn.

The theories discussed above all make strong claims about the nature of the intellectually humble person's psychology. All claim that such a person possesses a single feature, which *asymmetrically* causes all the other features we intuitively associate with IH. As an example, recall Priest's claim that an intellectually humble person possesses the feature of high concern for the intellectual insight of those in their intellectual community, and that this causes them to have low concern for intellectual status and to own their intellectual limitations. The causality is asymmetric here because the defining feature causes them to have both a low concern for intellectual status and entitlements, and to own their limitations; but neither of these causal consequences themselves cause or reinforce the original feature - they do not increase one's concern for the intellects of others.

Spelling this out should highlight what a strong claim this is. To vindicate it, one would need to establish:

1. That a single feature of a person's psychology causes these other diverse features; and

2. That these other features do not cause or in some way reinforce the antecedent, defining feature

1 is a strong claim, but it needn't be a counter-intuitive one. We often think that a single feature of a person can cause them to possess a variety of other features. Still, while this may not be an unlikely empirical possibility, establishing it in practice may prove challenging. Establishing causation between one feature of a person's psychology and another can be difficult enough. In this case, for empirical research to be successful, it would need to independently demonstrate that this single feature causes each of the diverse features associated with the virtue. This is a strong requirement.

2 is not only strong, but seems empirically unlikely. While we may be comfortable with the idea that one feature of a person can cause many others, this is often because we see those features as reinforcing one another, as well as reinforcing the antecedent feature. Believing in this kind of asymmetric causation, though, would be strange in

other contexts. Following the discussion of folk theories, it would be strange if low self-focus caused high other-focus; but high other-focus never reduced focus on one's self. A subscriber to the standard methodology must believe this asymmetry holds not just for a single feature, but that it ranges across all the secondary features they attribute to the virtue. If asymmetric causation strikes us as implausible in one instance - as does with high other-focus never causing low self-focus - it should seem especially implausible if it is meant to happen across a range of different features.

Claim 2 also makes establishing this psychological structure more difficult. One would need to rule out that the supposedly secondary features were not causally implicated in sustaining the existence of the original feature. Put this together with the difficulty of independently establishing that a single feature of IH could cause all the others, and the standard methodology is going to require a very intensive research programme before any of these theories can be empirically validated.

Moreover, given how strong these claims are, it should be clear why the standard methodology is insufficient to establish them. It isn't enough to point to a single case - or even several different cases - of intellectually humble people, in an effort to show that one's theory captures well the feature(s) that make(s) such a person possess IH. This is analogous to providing anecdotes to prove a statistical norm - the evidence is simply of the wrong kind. Individual cases can point us to features that are prima facie plausible for constituting IH; but the standard methodology requires much more. As we saw above, while each theory can give its own explanation of why the same case is best explained by its own defining feature, this hardly helps establish 1 - for the other, rival theories can do the same. Likewise, it gives us no reason to think that any of these features might not be being caused or reinforced by the others - that is, that the causation is not asymmetric, as the standard methodology assumes.

In sum, it would take a lot of empirical work to properly validate any one of these theories; but all of this work is yet to be done. In addition to the explanatory burden we looked at earlier, then, this methodology also requires a substantial burden of empirical validation. Given the questionable claims made by this methodology, it's unclear why this would be the most productive hypothesis to research.

One could conclude from this that the content of these various theories needs changing somewhat - perhaps we just haven't found the one right feature that causes and explains all the others. Alternatively, one might wonder whether the search is in vain, and a different methodology might be better suited to account for this range of IH-relevant features. Family resemblance may offer a compelling alternative here. Before

exploring this in more detail, however, we should consider another reason for accepting this approach. Namely, the heterogeneity of IH.

3.3. Explanatory Burden

Another problem with the methodology is that it produces an explanatory burden. As we've seen, in seizing on a single trait as being defining of IH, one must then explain why all other intuitive features are causal consequences of this primary feature. Each of the four theories do this. Low concern, Limitations-owning, the Interpersonal Account and, to a degree, the kind of epistemic tracking that defines the Doxastic Account, all seize on traits that seem like reasonably intuitive features of IH. And they are. The issue, however, is thinking that one of these alone must do all the explanatory work. Insofar as we can find something intuitively right about each of these theories, this gives a prima facie reason for thinking that, intuitively, IH is a virtue that has multiple features. Given this, it's unclear why we should take on the further work of explaining why these apparently intuitive features are deceptive, being merely causal consequences of what actually constitutes IH.

In attempting to do this, the explanatory burden they take on is a heavy one. However, one might think that positing only a single necessary and sufficient feature to define a virtue at least means that our account will be simple. This is true in one way, but not in another. Our account will be simple in that it will be ontologically parsimonious - assuming that IH is only constituted by one feature. But this simplicity is arguably undermined by this very explanatory burden one inherits as a result. Here, I'm reminded of a similar point well-made by Bernard Williams regarding utilitarianism which, recall, attempts to derive all moral obligations from a single principle:

> It is a good idea to make the minimal assumption, one that gives the most economical explanation, but this is not necessarily the same as an assumption of the minimal. The most effective set of assumptions need not be the shortest… The fact that utilitarianism starts out with so little luggage provides no presumption *at all* in its favour. The question can only be whether it has enough luggage for the journey it must make (Williams, 105-106).

Thus, much in the same way, I suggest that the most economical number of features for doing justice to the virtue of IH need not be the shortest. What matters is whether it has enough 'luggage' to account straightforwardly for the many intuitions we have about the virtue. The fact that IH is often regarded as involving a heterogeneous set of dispositions gives us further reason to question whether a single feature will do.

3.4. The Heterogeneity of IH

Another impetus for this kind of account would be the heterogeneous nature of IH. I've said that the standard accounts agree on many of the features an intellectually humble person will possess. While this is true, one might worry that these features are going to be hard to assimilate into an overall theory that attempts to define the virtue in terms of a single feature. Indeed, we've arguably seen evidence of this in the disagreements between the standard accounts. One way of characterising the problem is in terms of IH having heterogenous content. The features cited as defining of IH all look intuitively plausible (hence the disagreement); the problem is that they are heterogeneous, and thus hard to consolidate into a single feature.

This becomes most apparent when we break the features down into their more fine-grained constituents. In addition to telling us about the overall feature (e.g. limitations-owning, low concern etc.) these accounts also tell us about more specific dispositions out of which this higher level feature is composed. Limitations-owning, as we saw earlier, for example, can be broken down into the following, complex depositional profile:

> *Cognitive responses* - Intellectually humble people 'tend to believe that they have those limitations when they come to mind…accept that they have them, and believe of the negative outcomes of their limitations that they are due to those limitations' (Ibid: 9).
>
> *Behavioural responses* - Intellectually humble people 'tend to admit their limitations to others, avoid pretense, defer to others, draw inferences more hesitantly, seek more information, and consider counter-evidence judiciously' (Ibid: 9).
>
> *Motivatonal responses* - 'In owning his intellectual limitations, the person with IH is disposed to care about them and take them seriously, in accordance with what the context demands' (Ibid: 10).
>
> *Affective responses* - 'The person with IH is disposed to regret, but not be hostile about, her limitations, and more generally, to affectively respond to her limitations as the context demands' (Ibid: 10).

Likewise, low concern for intellectual status is a general feature that inspires a number of specific dispositions. Thus, an intellectually humble person will have an unusually low concern for:

> The kind of self-importance that accrues to persons who are viewed by their intellectual communities as talented, accomplished, and skilled, especially where such concern is muted or sidelined by intrinsic intellectual concerns—in particular, the concern for knowledge (Ibid: 250).

Further, they will have low concern for 'intellectual domination'. That is, the need to leave 'the stamp of one's mind on disciples, one's field, and future intellectual generations' (Ibid). Finally, it consists in the 'disposition not to make unwarranted intellectual entitlement claims on the basis of one's (supposed) superiority or excellence, out of either a concern for self-exaltation, or some other vicious concern, or no vicious concern at all' (Ibid: 250-251).

For the interpersonal account, the following features are cited. The intellectually humble:

- Rarely demand special intellectual treatment, even when deserving.
- Often refuse special intellectual treatment, even when deserving.
- tend to take complaints and criticisms seriously, even when the criticizers are not authority figures and even when the criticism is rude.
- tend to take the ideas (which are not always complaints) of others seriously, even the ideas of intellectual inferiors.

While there is some overlap here, the features also show some heterogeneity. This is noted by others elsewhere. As Tanesini (2018b) acknowledges:

> Even a cursory glance at the behaviours and at the cognitive, conative and emotional states that are generally taken to be characteristic of humility reveals them to be a heterogeneous bunch (Ibid: 401).

She uses this as justification for defining IH in terms of two features rather than one; and Michael Hannon (2020) uses it to justify a family resemblance approach. So, is Hannon right? Could a family resemblance approach capture this any better? Well, as we'll see when I come to addressing each of the problems the standard methodology faces, I think so. First, let's consider the details of the family resemblance account.

4. Family Resemblance: The Details

Of course, family resemblance can mean different things. One question for anyone taking this approach concerns what the 'resemblance' with regard to IH is. One option

would be to say that *features* associated with IH resemble *one another* in some important respect. Thus, perhaps limitations-owning, low concern for intellectual status, high concern for the intellects of others etc. all share a common feature, such as a lack of egotism, for example. However, this route looks dangerously close to the commitment of the standard methodology, that of looking for a single feature that must be common to them all. As such, it is likely to inherit all the same problems. An alternative, and the approach I favour, is to say that intellectually humble *people* resemble one another. This takes a little explaining.

Consider people you take to be intellectually humble. What are they like? You might cite a number of features of them, some of which align with the characteristics identified by the philosophical accounts we've discussed. Some may show an unusually low concern for intellectual status. Others might excel at owning their intellectual limitations. And some may take an unusually keen interest in the intellects of others. Indeed, some people you identify as having this virtue may do more than one of these; like Anne Kearney, the counsellor from our previous example, they may do all of them. They might possess some of these traits more than others: perhaps their limitations-owning abilities are second to none, while their level of concern for intellectual status is not particularly noteworthy. Still, you may rightly be inclined to say that each of them possess the virtue of IH.

In other words, reflection may reveal that there is a substantial amount of similarity among them, as well as important differences. Crucially, this needn't be because they all share any necessary features in common with one another. Indeed, this combination of similarity and difference extends naturally from the heterogeneity of features associated with IH. If these features are both numerous and importantly different from one another, it makes sense that one may possess some and not others, and be called intellectually humble despite some features of the virtue not being constituents of their character.

To put this more formally, we can borrow from anthropologist Rodney Needham's work (1975). Irzik and Nola do this when helpfully summarising his 'polythetic' approach to family resemblance (2010: 594-595). As they illustrate:

> Consider a set of four characteristics {A, B, C, D}. Then one could imagine four individual items which share some three of these characteristics taken together such as (A&B&C) or (B&C&D) or (A&B&D) or (A&C&D); that is, the various family resemblances are represented as four disjuncts of conjunctions of three properties chosen from the original set of characteristics. This example of a polythetic model of family resemblances can be generalised as follows. Consider any set S of n characteristics; then any individual is a member of the family if and

only if it has all of the n characteristics of S, or any (n - 1) conjunction of characteristics of S, or any (n - 2) conjunction of characteristics of S, or any (n - 3) conjunction of characteristics of S, and so on.

As this model indicates, having only four characteristics can result in a wide variety of character-types when these are distributed in different combinations across different people. When we consider the many features of IH outlined by the different accounts - and the diverse ways these may coalesce in specific people - it should be unsurprising if the standard methodology is unable to capture this complexity.

A further question for the family resemblance approach is going to be how stringent the requirements should be for possession of this virtue. We can imagine a spectrum of views here. If one did not want to make the requirements for possessing IH too strong - perhaps because doing so would rule out people we intuitively want to say possess the virtue - one might claim that only a few of any of those traits were necessary in order for someone to be counted as intellectually humble.

Alternatively, one might want a more stringent account. If one worried that, on the former view, too many people would be granted as having IH, when in fact they merely demonstrated IH-like behaviour, one could stipulate that a person must have all but one or two of the features on the list to be counted as intellectually humble. And clearly, many intermediate views would be possible along this spectrum.

Such views could be made more complex by an appeal to the idea that virtues come in degrees. One might possess some features of IH, but not others, or possess one feature to a high degree, but another to a much lesser extent. After all, cultivating virtues is a process, something which acknowledges that a person can possess a virtue more or less fully at one time compared to another.

This might bear on the family resemblance view in a couple of ways. One might think that only possessing some of the features and not others, is acceptable provided one has successfully engrained the former features such that they can truly be seen as excellences of character. Alternatively, one might think one needs to possess all these features to a minimal degree, but that not all of them need to be perfected in this way. One could also give pride of place to some of these features over others, claiming that certain dispositions were of primary importance and held more weight in determining whether someone truly possessed IH. As such, two features could be possessed to the same degree, but the possession of one of those features could count more strongly towards them possessing the virtue.

One could also have a two tier approach, seeing single features as sufficient for the *ascription* of IH to a person, but viewing some or all features as jointly necessary for the virtue in its perfected form. Along these lines, Michael Austin (2018: 45-48) has argued that humility is a virtue that results from several different 'modules' - distinct cognitive, emotional and motivational dispositions that cluster together to form the total virtue. While all of these modules are jointly necessary for the perfected form of the virtue, any one is sufficient for an attribution of humility to a given person (Ibid). One could take a similar approach when giving a family resemblance account of IH, arguing that a single feature is sufficient for the ascription of IH to its possessor, but that some or all of the other features were jointly necessary for the individual to possess 'perfect' IH.

In the space of possible versions of the family resemblance account, then, all of these are available. My aim here is not to argue for any one as correct, but rather to give a basic outline of the terrain, in the hope that doing so will leave fertile ground for others to explore and develop.

This is a brief sketch of the account. However, one way of illustrating it further would be to show how it does not suffer from the same problems of the standard methodology. Doing so will also demonstrate the account's many advantages.

4.1. Capturing the Heterogeneity of IH

Heterogeneity has often been used as a major reason for thinking that a concept is best thought of along family resemblance lines, and I believe the same applies to the virtue of IH. Consider Wittgenstein's discussion of games, in which he spells out this concept (Wittgenstein, 1973). He first notes the variety of games - 'board-games, card-games, ball-games, olympic-games and so on' (Ibid: 31, 66). He then observes the manifold differences between them:

> Look for example at board-games with their multifarious relationships. Now pass to card-games; here you may find correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out and others appear. When we pass next to ball-games much that is common is retained but much is lost - Are they all amusing? Compare chess with naughts and crosses. Or is there always winning and loosing, or competition between players? Think of patience (Ibid: 31-32, 66).

It is from this heterogeneity among the features we call 'games' - the 'complicated network of similarities crisscrossing and over-lapping' (Ibid: 32, 66) - that Wittgenstein concludes the following: 'I know no better term to characterise these similarities than 'family resemblances'' (Ibid: 32, 67). This heterogeneity is similar to what we observed

above about IH. Even if we think that some of these aspects can be reduced to more general features, no one of those looks sufficient to capture the many other aspects attributed to the virtue. As with games, when we move through these features, ‘many common features drop out and others appear’. While the standard methodology struggles to capture this, the family resemblance view seems well-placed to do so.

4.2. Dissolving the Explanatory Burden

I argued that the standard methodology caused each theory that employed it to assume an explanatory burden. This resulted from the commitment to IH having only one necessary and sufficient condition. Namely, they had to explain why the features intuitively associated with IH, and which might otherwise be seen as defining, were at most secondary causal consequences of the virtue’s defining characteristic. This suffered from two problems. Firstly, providing these explanations required a certain amount of intellectual labour. Secondly, as no one of these explanations offered in favour of a particular theory was clearly superior to any explanation offered in favour of a rival one, these explanations failed to advance the dialectic.

The family resemblance approach does not have this methodological commitment - it does not see IH as being defined by a single necessary and sufficient condition. Indeed, it eschews necessary and sufficient conditions altogether. As such, it does not take on the explanatory burden that is assumed by the other theories. Features that might otherwise be defining of a particular person’s possession of IH need not be explained away, treated as at best secondary consequences of what is in fact their defining characteristic. Instead, it can treat such cases at face value. For instance, if we are right to ascribe intellectual humility to a person, with a good explanation for this being that they have low concern for intellectual entitlements, the family resemblance approach can say that it is in fact this that makes them intellectually humble. Such a response is not available to those using the standard methodology, who see IH as being defined by something other than this low concern. As we saw, it must be that low concern is a consequence of something else - be that high concern for others’ intellects, limitations-owning, or some other feature.

This is an advantage of this approach. It avoids the intellectual labour inherited by all the standard theories. It eschews the stalemate in the dialectic, engendered by the equally plausible explanations offered by all sides. And it does justice to our intuitions about particular cases. If we want to say that a person is intellectually humble because they own their limitations, for instance, we can say exactly this. At no point do we need to claim that such appearances are deceptive, the causal consequence of what is really at the heart of IH.

Still, one might wonder whether there is an alternative way of formulating the standard methodology such that it is not vulnerable to this burden. Perhaps it could be restructured, such that features we intuitively see as IH relevant need not be explained away as causal consequences. If so, such a view might avoid this criticism.

One way of doing this would be to claim that these ‘secondary' features were not causal *consequences*, but rather, common *causes* of whichever feature each of these theorists see as defining. This would be another way of explaining why intellectually humble people possess these features, in addition to the feature that’s defining of the virtue. If, for example, low concern for intellectual status, high concern for the intellects of others, and the proper epistemic tracking of one’s doxastic states collectively caused one to possess limitation-owning, and this feature was singled out as being defining of IH, this would naturally explain why intellectually humble people share all these features, while retaining the claim that only one is actually the defining characteristic. Would this be an improvement?

I don’t think so. For one thing, one might think this robs the methodology of an intuitively appealing feature. That is, that it could give us a *foundational* account of what IH is. While it could concede that many background factors will conspire to inculcate and sustain this part of a person’s psychology, it could claim that its chosen feature nonetheless gets at the *bedrock* of the virtue. In this sense, it has the appeal of many reductive theories, which aim to reduce a phenomenon to a single cause - it is elegant and intuitively satisfying.

The same may not be able to be said in favour of this alternative. On this account, no longer is IH the central feature, from which all other associated features follow. Instead, this single feature is produced by a messy causal web of other distinct features. As such, the elegance and intuitive satisfaction of having a theory in which a single feature creates the bedrock of the virtue, with causal power over all other relevant features, is gone. In its absence, we might wonder what advantage of such a reductive theory - one that reduces IH to a single feature - remains.

Furthermore, the other features that collectively cause IH on this view are themselves good candidates for being constituents of the virtue. This is illustrated by the fact that such features - low concern for intellectual status, high concern for the intellects of others, proper tracking of one’s doxastic states etc. - have all been independently proposed as accounts of what IH is. The defender of this approach would therefore need to explain why these other features, though associated with IH and readily thought of as defining it (at least by some) are fit only to cause the defining feature, rather than help constitute the virtue itself. If so, it then looks like such a theorist has just inherited

the explanatory burden all over again, albeit with an argument of a slightly different structure.

4.3. Diminished Vulnerability to Counter-examples

In considering the theories above, it became clear that each of them is vulnerable to a counter-example. As I argued, this is not incidental; rather, it is a consequence of the methodology. Treating non-defining characteristics of a virtue as causal consequences of it opens up a contingent relationship between the defining feature and its secondary consequence - one that, by being contingent, may not hold in any given instance. When this causal relationship fails, we get a counter-example.

The purpose of these counter-examples is to show that a feature purported to be necessary or sufficient is not in fact an accurate one. In what follows, I discuss both counter-examples that aim to show that a given feature is not sufficient for IH, and those that aim to show that it is not necessary. While the family resemblance view will deal with these cases in different ways, I hope to demonstrate that it has successful responses to both.

As we have seen, a family resemblance theory does not require attributing a single necessary and sufficient condition to IH as a means of defining it. Rather, this approach will claim that what makes a person intellectually humble can vary from case to case, with any given example sharing some features of prior cases, but also possessing important differences. Drawing on the previous theories, we might say that a person may be intellectually humble in virtue of having low concern for intellectual status; or for successfully owning their intellectual limitations; or for having high concern for the intellects of others and giving one's self no special intellectual entitlements. While none of these characteristics is necessary - a person need not be denied the possession of this virtue in lacking any one of them - each may play a role in making the person possess this virtue.

Making this shift of methodology therefore drains counter-examples of their dialectical force. When a theory no longer claims to be presenting necessary and sufficient conditions for its definition, the rationale for offering a counter-example, that might otherwise defeat one of these conditions, disappears. After all, it's compatible with the family resemblance account that an intellectually humble person may not possess a given feature that's characteristic of virtue and yet remain intellectually humble.

To see how this works in practice, let's look at a case that aims to show that a supposed feature of IH is not *sufficient* for the virtue. Consider Professor P, who has a low concern

for intellectual entitlements, but who is also very defensive about his intellectual flaws. This example is taken to show that low concern is insufficient for IH, as it is compatible with someone whose intellectual defensiveness makes them fall short of possessing IH. As such, the argument goes, low concern is simply the wrong feature to seize on to explain what IH is.

The family resemblance account would claim that such a response is premature. The fact that low concern cannot guarantee that an ascription of IH will be appropriate in a given example - perhaps because other features of the person, such as their intellectual defensiveness, militate against this - does not show that it is not a significant characteristic of IH in general. It just shows that, in a particular case in which other conflicting factors are present, low concern is insufficient for establishing a given person as intellectually humble. This may be true in this example, but this doesn't show that it would be true elsewhere, in which these other competing factors were not present.

The above concerns counter-examples that target sufficient conditions. But a similar argument could be made against the claim that a given feature of IH is *necessary* for the virtue. The fact that we wouldn't call a particular person intellectually humble if they lacked a certain feature does not show that that feature is necessary. It may simply show that that is the only feature of them that suggests that they have the virtue at all.

To illustrate, imagine a person who is very good at owning their intellectual limitations, but shows neither an especially virtuous or vicious level of concern for the intellects of others, or for their own intellectual status, or for any other feature relevant for IH. It is true to say of them that, if they lacked their limitations-owning abilities, we would not call them intellectually humble. This doesn't show that limitations owning is a necessary feature of IH in general, however; someone who possessed every other feature of the virtue, but possessed neither a particularly vicious nor a particularly virtuous level of limitations-owning would surely still count as having IH.

One might worry that this robs theorists of a central means of moving the dialectic forward. After all, a theory being subject to a successful counter-example is usually a reason to doubt the theory or else improve it so that it is no longer vulnerable in this way. While this might generally be the case, the argument does not hold with regard to the IH debate. As we saw above, all of the theories are subject to a counter-example, and no one of them seems more damning to any given theory than any other. Thus, whatever dialectical force counter-examples might have in other debates, they do not possess it here.

Moreover, the fact that it is the methodology itself that makes all theories that use it vulnerable means that vulnerability to a counter-example does not tell us anything

significant about any one theory in particular. Rather, it tells us that counter-examples are not helpful dialectical tools to use when employing this methodology. As such, dispensing with them may be an important step forward in IH research, not a step backward.

4.4. Avoiding Empirical Problems

As we saw, the standard methodology must make a number of empirical assumptions that are contentious. Specifically, it must claim that the single feature defining IH asymmetrically causes the other, associated features; and that these features do not cause or in some way reinforce the antecedent defining feature. This is, as I have suggested above, a questionable claim. The family resemblance account does not need to commit to this. It can remain open to a variety of different causal arrangements of the individual features. Doing so counts once more in its favour, over that of the standard methodology.

5. The Attitudinal Account of IH: An Alternative?

The aforementioned accounts define IH in terms of a single feature. As I suggested earlier, the heterogeneous nature of IH may cast doubt about whether one lone feature can capture this complexity. Noticing this heterogeneity is part of what motivates Tanesini (2018b) to define IH in terms of two necessary and jointly sufficient features rather than one. Her view, then, amounts to another alternative to the standard methodology. I consider it briefly here, to show how it could be incorporated into the family resemblance account. I also indicate how anyone independently sympathetic to her view has reasons for thinking that limitations-owning would remain a feature of IH on this conception.

In many ways, we may read her account as an attempt to combine those features put forward as defining by Low Concern and Limitations-owning. IH, on her view, consists in being modest about intellectual successes (similar to low concern); and being accepting of intellectual limitations (similar limitations-owning).

> Humility has two dimensions. It concerns both successes and limitations. The ignorance-based accounts [such as low concern] have focused on successes to the detriment of acknowledging limitations. The accuracy-based accounts [such as limitations owning] have faced the opposite problem (Ibid: 408).

Thus, her account aims to better capture the heterogeneity of IH by defining it in terms of both of these features. Further, her account differs by defining IH as an *attitude* rather

than a set of dispositions. Thus, there are two facets to her view that differentiate it from the standard methodology I critique above. I will briefly consider both now.

Firstly, I should say that I'm very friendly to the suggestion that IH should be defined in terms of more than one feature; indeed, I take this to be a strong motivation for the family resemblance account. I question whether these two features alone can do justice to all our intuitions about the virtue. However, I take it that the two features Tanesini regards as central to the virtue can be easily incorporated into a family resemblance account. Indeed, I think she does offer some good reason for thinking so: as has been argued, the limitations-owning account can suffer for not offering an explanation of how the person who owns their limitations would properly relate to their strengths (Tanesini, 2018b; Church, 2017).

What about Tanesini's attempt to define IH in terms of attitudes? I believe it is not necessary to settle this question here, for two reasons. Firstly, as we have seen from the several prominent accounts already considered, understanding IH as a cluster of dispositions is a common assumption in the literature. Thus, to the extent that I am trying to base my future arguments on an account of IH that is amenable to the largest number of views, treating IH as a cluster of dispositions seems a safe assumption. Tanesini's attitudinal view is, by contrast, an outlier.

But what about those who are attracted to the attitudinal account? Firstly, I can imagine that Whitcomb et al. could tell a similar causal story about the relationship between attitudes and the kind of dispositions that other accounts associate with IH. Firstly, one of the things that defines attitudes is their affective component. Attitudes express the way we feel about things - in this case, the ways we feel about our strengths and limitations. This should not be too hard to make sense of on other alternative accounts. The limitations-owning account specifically discusses the kind of affective dispositions expected to result from owning one's limitations:

> In owning her intellectual limitations, the person with IH is disposed to regret, but not be hostile about, her limitations, and more generally, to affectively respond to her limitations as the context demands (Whitcomb et al, 2017: 518).

Further:

> IH reduces feelings of anxiety and insecurity about one's own intellectual limitations (Ibid: 523).

This sounds a lot like having an accepting attitude towards one's limitations. If so, there are two things we could say: firstly, it's plausible to think that owning your limitations

would cause an accepting attitude towards them. Secondly, having an accepting attitude towards your limitations might make you better at owning them. Thus, for those attracted to the standard methodology, there are clear causal pathways for addressing the role of attitudes in the virtue of IH.

Arguably though, the family resemblance view fares even better here. I believe it allows for a kind of pluralism with regard to the kind of things that will characterise the psychology of the intellectually humble person. There need be no reason to rule out the intellectually humble possessing the kind of attitudes that Tanesini describes, and again, we might think that having accepting attitudes towards ones limitations and modesty about one's strengths would be relatively likely for someone who also possessed some of the other cognitive, behavioural and affective disposition discussed above.

Thus, while discussion of the attitudes of the intellectually humble will not play a major role in the argument of the thesis, I see no reason why someone sympathetic to this understanding couldn't find a place for it within the family resemblance account I develop here. Before we move on to the other topics relevant for the thesis, however, let's consider one final way of conceiving of IH. This version comes to us based on the interesting results of an empirical study into the psychology of IH.

5. Conclusion to This Chapter and Part One

As should be clear, this chapter has been somewhat exploratory - I have considered a variety of different ways that one could conceptualise a family resemblance view of the virtue, that differ in important respects from the standard methodology. However, there remains an important takeaway. My thesis argues that the limitations-owning aspect of IH can be especially good at promoting friendships between members of different social groups. One aim of this chapter is to show that limitations-owning will likely remain a facet of IH, however it is conceived. For those who directly support the limitations-owning account, it is a defining feature. For the other views that use the standard methodology, it is often taken to be a causal consequence of the defining feature.

While not all the views in this area suggest this, I have shown how they could. I have also suggested that they should take this approach, if only to make their own account have similar explanatory power to the others. On the family resemblance view I have recommended, limitations-owning is a feature that, at the very least, counts in favour of calling someone intellectually humble, and which we could also say is sufficient for it (this will depend on exactly which version of the family resemblance account one wishes to adopt).

In what follows, I will use IH and limitations-owning interchangeably. This is not to suggest that every view will regard these as synonymous - as we have seen, they don't. But rather, it is to suggest that IH will typically involve limitations-owning, and because this is the feature of IH that I think shows particular promise when it comes to dealing with the problems likely to arise in friendships between members of different social groups.

Section Two

Chapter Three: Critiquing Aristotle's Notion of Virtue Friendship

1. Introduction to the Next Two Chapters

The last two chapters focused on the virtue of intellectual humility. Specifically, they provided an overview of the existing literature, a survey of the problems with the methodology used in that literature, and a number of alternate ways one could conceive of intellectual humility - particularly along family resemblance lines. This was necessary in order to establish what is meant by the term in later discussions of intellectual humility's role in promoting friendship between people of different social identities. However, before we can answer that question, we also need an understanding of friendship. In particular, the kind of close friendships that I have in mind, which I think intellectual humility can help promote. This is the subject of the next two chapters.

Both chapters take Aristotle's work on friendship as their starting point. To some extent, this is inevitable: Aristotle is surely the biggest name to ever write about friendship within the western philosophical tradition. The friendship literature within academic philosophy is not exactly vast, but all the same, focus on Aristotle occupies a disproportionately large position within it.

Aristotle's work on the topic is certainly illuminating. However, as I'll argue, it leaves a good deal out. In particular, I suggest that Aristotle's conception of close friendship, and those accounts inspired by it, is overly moralised. And his focus on the value of friends for promoting virtue leaves the more prudential aspects of friendship overlooked. This is significant. As I argue here, there is much to be said about how friendship can be good for us in ways that are not best captured by talk of virtues - or, at the very least, the narrower class of virtues Aristotle typically has in mind.

The first of these two chapters deals with the question of what close friends ought to properly value in one another. Aristotle argues that the most superior friendships value one another's virtues. While I don't contest this picture, I do seek to augment it. Close

friends can value one another's virtues; indeed, it's good if they do, both morally and, often, prudentially. But there is much more they can rightly value besides this. This chapter attempts to spell out what some of these things are. It also attempts to account for their value in prudential, rather than purely moral terms. The sense of why valuing these non-moral features is good is therefore justified in terms of their role in self-esteem and wellbeing, rather than a distinctively moral kind of improvement, such as through the cultivation of virtue.

This is relevant to the larger aims of the thesis. Ultimately, this research is concerned with friendships between people of different backgrounds, with a special focus on those friendships between privileged and marginalised group members. Thus, as will become apparent, some of the features of our friends included in the discussion are those that have a particularly close relationship to the identities of marginalised people. As I suggest, departing from Aristotle's view in order to focus on a wider range of features which our friends can rightly value, allows us to see this.

The second of these two chapters on friendship explores the ways that friends can cause us to develop in ways that are prudentially valuable. Thus, it runs with Aristotle's idea that friendship can help us gain self-knowledge and cultivate our character, but the content of this development is rather different. Friends help us develop, not just through the cultivation of virtue, but also through providing a positive lens through which to evaluate our personality. Friends appreciate our many features, in all their particularity, and this can inspire us to recognise these features and value them ourselves. Doing so can promote self-acceptance, and self-esteem. These are primarily prudential rather than moral goods.

Close friendship is also characterised by mutual self-disclosure and emotional support. Such a relationship involves each party telling the other things about themselves that are of significance to them; where appropriate, the other will respond by providing emotional support. This process develops trust and intimacy in the relationship. Once again, it also promotes the self-esteem of the participants. This is a kind of self-development, but one we can best make sense of in prudential rather than strictly moral terms.

By the end of these two chapters then, we will have an understanding of what kinds of friendship I have in mind when considering the role of intellectual humility, and the features these relationships typically include. We will also see how this conception departs from Aristotle in important ways. In order to understand the significance of this, we must first turn to Aristotle and his important contribution to the philosophical study of friendship.

1.1. Introduction to This Chapter

In writing about friendship, it's customary to follow Aristotle in distinguishing between three different kinds of friends. These are: friends of utility, friends of pleasure, and friends of virtue (sometimes called 'friends of character' or 'character friendship'). Each differs from the other with regard to how one values one's friend. My friends of utility are valued only because they are useful to me - in enhancing my social standing or furthering my political aims, for example. Friends of pleasure are those valued only because they are enjoyable for me to spend time with - they might be amusing, witty, or tell compelling anecdotes. What both of these relationships have in common is that the person is not valued for their own sake, for who they are in themselves.

These relationships are contrasted with friendships of virtue. In these relationships, one values one's friend because of their virtuous character, including both their moral and intellectual virtues. Unlike one's ability to provide pleasure or benefit - a contingent, changeable feature - one's virtue is a central, enduring part of who one is. As such, friends who value one another for their virtues value each other in themselves, for who they are.

It may be natural to think that these categories reflect friendship as we ordinarily think of it. However, several philosophers have raised similar concerns about this account. Central to these concerns is that, in one way or another, Aristotle's view fails to accord with the concept of close (or 'true', 'good', 'real' or 'best') friendships as we typically understand them. These friendships - the kind shared between the moral but not perfectly virtuous - are based not only on recognition and admiration of one's virtues, but of a lot more besides.

I agree wholeheartedly with this. However, when directed at Aristotle's view, these existing critiques generally consist of descriptive observations of the form 'we don't think of friendship the way Aristotle did'. While true, this neglects the fact that Aristotle conceived of his project not as a descriptive one but a normative one. The purpose of my argument then is to give some normative and evaluative weight to these descriptive claims. In short, I suggest not only that our current friendship practices do not accord with Aristotle's, but that these practices are *good*, they preserve something of value and we are right to practise friendship in these ways, valuing things besides our friend's virtues.

In order to do this, I dissect which features of personality are left unacknowledged by Aristotle's view, thereby rendering his account incomplete. I argue that these remaining features can represent significant aspects of who one is, undermining Aristotle's claim

that to value another in themselves must be to value only their virtues. As such, we are right to value these non-virtuous[7] features in our truest of friends. Doing so, I argue, promotes self-esteem and self-acceptance, both valuable in their own right and valuable *for the friendship*. Moreover, they help undermine forms of oppression which fail to value or actively denigrate some of these non-virtuous features.

This chapter proceeds as follows. I begin by explaining how I think about accounting for friendship in the abstract. These are general thoughts about the methodologies we might use when thinking about how to offer an account for what friendship is. Following this, I then move to the specifics of the argument in this chapter. I begin by outlining Aristotle's concept of virtue friendship, defined in contrast to those friendships of pleasure or utility.

Following this, I suggest that valuing non-virtuous features of our friends contributes to their self-esteem. I then outline a handful of those features not discussed by Aristotle but which we rightly value in our close friends. The features I describe are not meant to be exhaustive, nor are they meant to be the *most* defining characteristics of a person. If anything, I have chosen these features because they are not necessarily essential and are thus at risk of being trivialised. My aim here is to show that even these - seemingly trivial - characteristics can help form part of who we are, and are thus rightly valued by our friends. If even these features can be rightly valued by our friend, this seems the strongest case against Aristotle's claim that only the virtues are important. These features, I suggest, are not best construed as either moral or non-moral virtues (though I address this concern in more detail later). Rather, in what follows, I consider the following (non-exhaustive) set of non-virtuous features:

- Aesthetic features
- Idiosyncratic habits
- Intellectual or moral deficiencies of virtue
- Interpersonal styles (such as one's communication style)

I argue that while none of these are best viewed as virtues in any sense, all can rightly be valued in another when that other is a close friend.

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[7] 'Non-virtuous' is a non-ideal term. As I use it here I take it to mean 'features of a person that cannot be reduced to their virtues'. While this can include their vices, I intend it much more broadly than this.

I consider four objections to this account. The first is that even if valuing another's non-virtuous features indicates acceptance of them, such features are comparatively trivial when compared to our moral or intellectual virtues. As such, valuing them will do little to promote our friend's sense of self-acceptance or self-esteem. I argue against this by considering cases in which such features are marginalised due to social stigma or disliked by the individual themselves because of their upbringing or environment, but for non-prejudicial reasons. I suggest that, in light of how much these seemingly trivial features can be denigrated, valuing them can have great restorative power. Further, considering them can highlight the way in which otherwise trivial features can have a significant place in a person's character as a whole, that reflects who they are.

The second objection is that we value these features only because they give us pleasure, and thus do not indicate any deeper regard or acceptance of the other. I suggest that in many cases, this will get the causality the wrong way round. Very often, we gain pleasure from our friend's non-virtuous features because we antecedently value our friend, and this casts their non-virtuous features in a positive light.

The third objection is that these features are in fact reducible to virtues. As such, my line of argument cannot represent a real challenge to Aristotle's account, for it can in fact be folded into his view. I offer two responses to this. The first argues that the features I'm concerned with are too fine grained to be captured in terms of virtue. The second, more conciliatory approach, is to concede that this objection may be right; but nonetheless, to suggest that the kind of virtues necessary to capture these features would have to a broader variety than those Aristotle is concerned with. Further, as many of the points I make here are not made by Aristotle or his interpreters, they represent a novel and informative contribution, regardless of whether they could be made consistent with his account.

The final objection concerns a worry about fetishising. Part of the argument I make suggests that valuing marginalised features of your friend can be valuable, and may help to repair the ill effects that denigration of these features can have on their self-esteem. One might naturally be concerned about fetishing in this context. After all, what it means to 'value' a marginalised feature of someone can be ambiguous; and many oppressed groups can surely attest to being 'valued' in ways that are objectifying or tokenistic. I suggest that, while this fear is a very legitimate one, it turns on how we understand the valuing taking place. As I argue, when understood in the appropriate way, the concern about fetishising need not undermine the kind of valuing I am arguing for (though we should of course remain vigilant regarding exactly what we are doing when we value marginalised features of oppressed groups).

This, then, will be the argument for the current chapter. I will follow this with a discussion of self-development which, following similar lines, will attempt to broaden the ways in which friends can help us develop as people. Before any of that, however, let me make a few general remarks about how I think about friendship.

2. Accounting For Friendship

In giving an account of friendship there are two distinctions one needs to make to frame the analysis. The first is the scope of those friendships one wishes to consider. On the one hand, the definition could be intended to apply to all relationships to which we apply the term. This would include work friends, drinking buddies, as well as the deeper and more personal relationships which we label close or good or real friends. On the other hand, one could be intending to give an account of some subset of those many and varied relationships captured by this broad term, circumscribing the analysis so that it focuses only on, for example, friends of pleasure or those friendships that take place exclusively within the workplace.

The second distinction is whether one aims to give necessary and sufficient conditions for the friendship one is discussing, or whether one only intends to bring out its salient features. The former approach is stricter, and suggests firm demarcation between the relationship under analysis and others that might appear superficially similar. The latter implies the boundaries between this type of relationship and others are fuzzy, such that one need not provide firm differentiation to talk about it coherently. Salient features can be shared across relationships, while nonetheless remaining most notable in those relationships of a certain kind. This is most naturally motivated by a family resemblance view of friendship, which doesn't conceive of friendship, or different subsets of friendship, to have boundaries discrete enough to be defined by necessary and sufficient conditions (Digeser, 2021; Lebowitz, 2018: 113-114).

These two methodological concerns can overlap and come apart. One might think that friendships in general, regardless of their specific character, all have some feature(s) in common, that can be captured by necessary and sufficient condition(s). Alternatively, one might doubt this about friendship overall, but maintain that there are necessary and sufficient conditions that define the specific type/subset of friendships in which one is interested, that sharply distinguish it from others.

It is unclear whether anyone has attempted to provide necessary and sufficient conditions meant to capture every form that friendship can take. As Helm (2023) points out, while there are rival accounts, with different conditions claimed to be necessary and sufficient, it is often unclear whether they are talking about friendship in general or some

specific type of friendship; and, if the latter, whether the conditions under discussion are shared by each of the accounts. In other words, it's unclear whether all authors are really talking about the same thing.

My own view is that one cannot provide necessary and sufficient conditions either for friendship in general, or specific forms of friendship. In the case of the former, this is because the different forms of friendships differ so much in their various features that any set of necessary and sufficient is either going to be so broad as to encompass relationships that aren't actually friendships; or not broad enough, such that some genuine friendships are excluded. In the case of the latter, this is because the boundaries between different forms of friendship are too fuzzy to admit of sharp demarcation, except perhaps by sheer stipulation.

However, this does not mean that there are not salient features of specific forms of friendship that can be talked about coherently. Many close friendships, for instance, involve mutual confiding and self-disclosure. Yet this doesn't need to be a necessary or sufficient feature of close friendships in order to be worth talking about. It is enough to recognise that these features play an important contributory role in making the friendship what it is - a close one. To the extent that we want to understand what makes close friendships close, talking about their different features in this way may be the best we can do to better understand these relationships. It may also remain highly informative and worthwhile (at any rate, that is the hope!)

As such, my account will be focused on friendships that are especially close or intimate, where what makes them so is that they typically (not always, or to the same extent) possess certain features. These are:

- Mutual valuing of the other in a holistic way (which includes valuing their non-virtuous features), which tends to promote the other's self-esteem (Nehamas, 2016; Lintott, 2013; Telfer, 1970/1971; Lebowtiz, 2018)

- Mutual self-disclosure about matters of importance to the friends (Thomas, 1987; Cocking and Kennett, 1998)

- Mutual providing of emotional support (Annis, 1987; Nehamas, 2016)

- Mutual facilitation of one another's self-development, which also tends to promotes their self-esteem (Cocking and Kennett, 1998; Rubin, 1985: 49-50)

Close friendships, I suggest, typically include these things. Indeed, the extent to which they do is part of what makes them the close, intimate relationships that they are. Why

focus on this form of friendship, and these features of it? I think this has a lot to do with the general question of the thesis. In order to consider how intellectual humility might facilitate friendship between people of different social identities, it makes sense to think about the ways these friendships can have immensely positive consequences when they go right - as well as negative consequences when they go wrong. In other words, how can intellectual humility help us when the stakes are at their highest?

It's reasonable to think that what increases the stakes is the level of intimacy between the participants. If you are a close friend (rather than, say, a casual acquaintance), someone on whom I depend for emotional support, with whom I self-disclose, whom I value and who values me in a holistic manner, and who stands in a position to have a significant effect on my self-esteem, then the stakes are especially high: how you behave has significant potential to impact my wellbeing. You can help me develop in ways that are prudentially good for me. You can also frustrate this development, thereby harming me. The closeness of the friendship often increases the potency of your actions towards me in my eyes. It may therefore hurt all the more when you don't take my testimony seriously, do not provide the emotional support I have reason to expect, frustrate my development and undermine my self-esteem.

There's also a natural connection here between these established values of close friendship and various concerns raised in the literature on social epistemology, feminist philosophy, and critical philosophy of race. As we've seen from the examples of styles of speech associated with African American women, or gender non-conforming styles of dress among non-binary people, being oppressed often leads to aesthetic features of your identity being disregarded or degraded. The holistic appreciation that friends are meant to have of one another can lend itself to correcting for this injustice. Not having their testimony given the credibility it deserves is something that marginalised individuals experience regularly (Fricker, 2007) - unfortunately, even from their friends (we will see this in more detail when we consider the literature on microaggressions). It thus undermines the ability for friends to comfortably self-disclose. Being marginalised can also result in not receiving the emotional support one deserves - as we'll see from examples in later chapters. Finally, marginalisation can, over time, gnaw away at one's sense of self-esteem and self-worth (Tanesini, 2018a, 2021; Battaley, 2021; W.E.B. Dubois, 1990; Fanon, 2001; Cesaire, 2000). This often results from not being valued in the right kind of holistic way - but rather, valued only as a stereotype or as an 'object in a category' (Zheng, 2016: 408).

Yet, equally, the close, intimate nature of these friendships holds the potential for immense good. The fact that close friends do self-disclose about issues of importance, that they do provide one another with emotional support, and that they do value one

another holistically, in a way that can promote one another's self-esteem, can significantly combat some of the indignities of oppression (Friedman, 1987; Rubin, 1985). While it cannot undo the wounds caused by marginalisation, the best of these friendships may go some way towards helping them heal. This seems reason enough to wonder what might facilitate such a friendship. As I will argue in later chapters, intellectual humility can be instrumental in preserving and promoting these valuable features of friendship. First, however, we turn to what those features are.

The majority of this chapter and the next is concerned with how friends ought to value one another and how this valuing affects their development. As I suggest, friends ought to value one another in a holistic way, that takes account not just of their virtuous features, but also their non-virtuous ones. This manner of valuing also facilitates a kind of self-development that is prudentially good for the friend, in that it promotes their self-esteem and improves the friendship as a friendship. Further, I will also consider the roles of self-disclosure and emotional support in close friendship - something that will be of particular importance when we come to the chapters on how differences in social identities can risk undermining these goods. This, too, I suggest, can be immensely important for the self-esteem and self-development of the friend. Before we can explore these issues, we must first grapple with how friendship has been conceptualised by Aristotle.

3. Introducing Aristotle's View

First, let's consider Aristotle's understanding of the three different forms of friendship: friends of pleasure, utility and virtue (Aristotle, 2009: NE 1156a, 1157). Friends of pleasure are valued because they are enjoyable to spend time with. Such friendships may be characterised by common interests, such as watching or playing sports, discussing a mutually beloved TV drama, or, if the two are work friends, talking about their days at the office. Importantly, though, when the common interest fades, the friendship will usually dissipate with it, unless the friends can find something else over which to bond.

Friends of utility are valued because they are useful to one another. Two politicians may enjoy such a friendship, having positive regard for each other based on the knowledge that the influence and power of each will be useful for the other's ambition. As before, these relationships will typically fizzle out if the other's influence is no longer required or if the other can no longer supply it. Aristotle views these as inferior forms of friendship because of this fickle or contingent nature (Ibid: 1156a25).

These instrumental relationships are both in contrast to friendships of virtue. The common understanding is that a friendship of virtue is one in which the main foundation for the relationship is an appreciation for the virtues of one's friend. What distinguishes these different forms of friendship is not the mere presence of these features, but whether they form the basis and central motivation for the relationship, or whether they are a favourable side-effect (Ibid: 1156b13–17). Your kindness, for example, may make you apt for exploitation for another's private ends, yet a friendship developed on this basis would not be a virtue friendship as Aristotle understands it. Equally, while friends of virtue can be both pleasurable and beneficial to one another, this is not what drives the relationship. Rather, as Cooper (1977) puts it, what 'attracts and binds' the friends to one another is the 'recognition of the other's moral goodness' (Ibid: 623). Likewise, Lorraine Pangle (2003) suggests that for Aristotle, friends of virtue 'love each other for themselves, cherishing each other for their characters and not for some incidental benefit that they provide each other' (Ibid: 43).

Mere recognition and appreciation of another's goodness, however, is insufficient for friendship. These friends must share mutually acknowledged love or affection for one another, choosing to send time in each other's company. As Aristotle (1982) says in Eudemian Ethics, 'the primary sort of friendship, that among good persons, requires mutual affection (antiphilia) and mutual choice (antiprohairesis) with regard to one another' (EE I237a3off.). To be friends of virtue, they need to interact with one another in a deep, on-going way. Indeed, 'to have intimate friends…is to have interwoven in one's life, in an ubiquitous way, persons toward whom and with whom one can most fully and continuously express one's goodness' (Sherman, 1987: 595). Thus, these relationships are characterised by shared, virtuous activity.

3.1. Existing Criticisms of Aristotle's View

It's common to think that these categories reflect our own, pre-theoretical understanding of friendship. Translating these forms of the relationship into modern vernacular, for instance, Valerie Tiberius (2018) designates friendships of utility, pleasure and virtue respectively as 'contacts', 'drinking buddies' and 'real friends' (Ibid: 141). However, as I'll argue, we should not be so quick to assume that what Aristotle means by friends of virtue captures everything we value - and are right to value - in a true friend.

I'm not the first to remain unconvinced that Aristotle's view here naturally reflects our own, common sense understanding. Several philosophers have raised concerns about his characterisation of virtue friendship. White (1999) suggests that, insofar as the Aristotelian account aims to give a descriptive account of our own friendship practices, it seems false. This is because:

> We choose our friends on the basis of shared interests, mutual enjoyment, and compatibility. We may also share some excellence in virtue, but this is not necessarily the case. Two bad people, like Leopold and Loeb, may still be friends with each other. If it is held that such a relationship does not constitute a friendship in the best sense, then this would seem to be a stipulation that arises from an *a priori* account of friendship which is not supported by our own intuitions (Ibid: 80)

Strictly speaking, Aristotle's account is not about the basis on which we choose our friend, but on which we value them (Cooper, 1977). However, White is right to acknowledge that Aristotle's understanding of friendship is not generally supported by our intuitions.

Alexander Nehamas (2016) raises similar objections:

> Although we can agree that friends love one another for features they admire, we need not think that these features must be only the virtues of morality or even the broader range Aristotle had in mind. Your sense of humour may well be crucial to our friendship, although for Aristotle it is an accidental feature of your personality and could only lead to a pleasure-philia; the same is true of your taste in music, books, clothes and who knows what else (Ibid: 26).

And finally, Sheila Lintott (2013) concurs:

> Contra Aristotle, we can form true friendships not only based on virtue; more so, we like our friends for who they are as people, for their character, which includes not only virtues but also their vices (Ibid: 252).

While these observations are surely correct, they fail to acknowledge a crucial distinctive between what we might call a descriptive account and a normative account of friendship[8].

Following the way these terms are typically used in other areas of philosophy, we can think of this distinction like this: a descriptive account aims only to describe how we - twenty first century humans - practice friendship. It's the kind of account an anthropologist might give upon observing our friendships as if for the first time. Importantly, such an account would include a description of the kind of duties those of us who practise it *think* are essential parts of the relationship, as well as the virtues we

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[8] Strictly speaking, it may not be conceptually possible to give a purely descriptive account of friendship as the term itself could be considered a thick concept. This is noted by White, 1999; and Alfano, 2016.

believe are required to live up to these demands. It would not be normative, however, as it would stake no claim about whether these duties were the right ones - whether we ought to be practising friendship in this way. To settle this, we would need a normative account of friendship. This would tell us not how our friendships are, but how they ought to be.

In the passages quoted above, the authors point to descriptive facts about how we practise friendship to indicate problems with Aristotle's account. Yet if Aristotle's account is aiming at a normative vision for the relationship - one which, as normative ideals sometimes do, comes into conflict with our standard practices - it's not clear why we should view friendship as we happen to practise them as necessarily superior to those that Aristotle would recommend. To clarify this, we need an argument that explains why our standard practices preserve something good, which would be lost if we all began practising friendship in accordance with Aristotle's revised version.

Given this, I aim to build on the remarks offered above with an argument for why we are right to practise friendship as we do, valuing our friends not only for their virtuous features, but for their non-virtuous ones as well. Valuing our friends in this way is important for two reasons. Firstly, it is instrumentally valuable as it promotes our friend's self-esteem. Secondly, it is intrinsically valuable; as I'll argue, being accepted for who one is is itself also a good, in addition to any of its positive consequences.

4. The Valuing of Valuing Non-virtuous Features in Friends

I'm going to argue that there are two ways in which valuing our friends' non-virtuous features promotes their wellbeing. The first is that it does so instrumentally, by promoting something else that helps constitute wellbeing: self-esteem. The second is that it does so intrinsically. These features are part of who the person is; being accepted for who we are is a good and something friends provide by valuing our non-virtuous features. Relatedly, I believe it is also good for the friendship - that is, to the extent that friends value one another in this way, it makes the friendship better as a friendship. I'll argue for each of these in turn.

4.1. Instrumental Value: Promoting Self-esteem

That friends esteem and appraise one another is obvious. One philosopher who mentions it is David Annis (1987). As he points out:

> The core elements of friendship - liking, sharing, altruistic caring, and trust - all foster self-esteem. Knowing that another person likes us, wants to be with us, is concerned about our welfare for our own sake, and deems us trustworthy promotes the belief that we are a person of importance (Ibid: 350-351)

Leibowitz (2018) considers the communication of mutual valuing of one another in friendship as the *central, necessary* feature that defines the relationship. Though I'm sceptical of this account, I do believe that friends valuing one another and communicating this to each other is a significant feature. Good friends value and accept us for who we are. The idea that friends value one another for the friends themselves, and not simply for what the friends can do for each other, is an intuitive thought, and one Aristotle was right to highlight. However, one question is: what does this valuing consist of?

On the Aristotelian account, we value our friends because we value their virtues. But this seems an overly narrow conception of what is good for us to value in the other. If we consider what it is about friendship that would promote self-esteem, it surely is more than merely being valued for our virtuous character; we want our friends to value us for who we are. As I'll suggest, contra Aristotle, this includes more than just our virtues. Descriptively, we *do* value more than this in our friends. Normatively, it seems we are *right* to, for doing so promotes their self-esteem.

There is an ambiguity to clear up here before we proceed. One obvious way one could fail to be a true friend is by failing to value the friend themselves, only valuing their virtues as virtues in the abstract, regardless of their particular instantiation in a specific person. But there need be no reason why a friend could not value the other for the particular constellation of virtues arranged as they are, in their particular way. As Sherman (1987) points out, two friends could share the same virtues, but have them directed towards different ends. Moreover, even in the perfectly virtuous, one virtue may predominate over the others. As such, even perfectly virtuous people, possessing the unity of virtues, are still going to be substantially different from one another (Ibid). It follows that, in admiring the virtues of one's friend need not require admiring them in the abstract, but valuing the person in whom they come together in a unique collage.

Even with this qualification, however, we may worry that merely valuing one's friend for their virtues would be to fail to value them in their totality. And this seems important for promoting self-esteem. The knowledge that we are liked and appreciated by those we like and appreciate, as we are in the best of friendships, can promote a reflexive sense of our own value, as refracted to us through another's eyes. Moreover, the fact that our friend holds even our morally or intellectually neutral, and sometimes regrettable,

features with high regard or affection contributes to the sense that they value us ‘in our totality’, not simply those that would make us praiseworthy from an objective perspective.

4.2. Intrinsic Value: Social Acceptance as an Intrinsic Good

I’ve argued that friends value one another’s non-virtuous features. Doing so is good, I suggest, because it promotes self-esteem. As self-esteem looks both intrinsically and instrumentally valuable, valuing these features has derivative value. While I think this argument has some merit, it also has limitations. It fails, for instance, to establish friendship’s distinctive value: even if the claim that this relationship promotes self-esteem is true, it is surely true of other relationships, as well as other projects, which we could engage in instead (Sofronieva, 2020). While friendship could be a preferred means of promoting self-esteem, this would only succeed in establishing friendship’s instrumental final value. Something has instrumental final value when it is the preferred means to a certain end. Lewbowitz (2018) illustrates this with the example of swimming as a preferred means of exercise. It may only be valued as a means for maintaining one’s health; but this is consistent with it being the preferred means over others which, while as effective, do not have the distinctive character of swimming. If the friendship was valued for its instrumental final value, then self-esteem would remain the ultimate goal; its value would be distinctive only in being a preferential means to satisfying this other end.

Surely, though, we want to say friendship means more than this. As Aristotle says, we would not want to live without friendship ‘even if we had all other goods’ (II5a5-6). This observation is not explained by friendship having only an instrumental value that could be satisfied by these other goods, and the appeal to instrumental final value still seems insufficient. A better explanation is that there is intrinsic value to having this relationship in which both parties value one another for their own sake.

Given this, we can ask what kind of mutual valuing need be present for friendship to have this distinctively valuable character. Could it be achieved, as, on the Aristotelian account, it must, by friends only valuing one another’s virtuous traits? This seems doubtful. For one, we want our friend’s valuation of us to be one we ourselves would largely endorse if it were presented to us. While we might enjoy hearing that our friend values our kindness, courage and compassion, it may dismay us to hear that they were ambivalent about every other feature of us that is not virtuous in nature. This seems especially concerning in the kind of cases I consider below. As I’ll argue, some

seemingly trivial features of our personality, such as how we dress or talk, have their origins in deep facts about who we are. In having no positive regard for these traits, such a friend seems unable to properly affirm us in our totality.

Of course, if both friends are perfect in virtue, they may not retain this desire and both be content to have their value regarded strictly in virtue-terms. There are two problems with this, however. The first is that it seems like a kind of relationship highly unlike those that the rest of us enjoy. These folks appear a little too much like Susan Wolf's moral saints, and invite us to side with her proclamation that, if there are such people, 'I'm glad that neither I nor those about whom I care most are among them' (Wolf, 1982: 419).

More seriously, we may even wonder how well they could know one another at all. Some features may only be recognisable in others if we already value them. The virtuous person's radar - though well-attuned to all manner of morally and intellectually admirable features - may be numb to those idiosyncrasies that give a person their distinctive charm. If so, such a person seems not to be in as deep a friendship with the other as first thought; for on this reading, they do not even really know who the person is, in the intimate manner characteristic of close friendship.

4.3. Valuing These Features Makes The Friendship Better As a Friendship

So far, I've suggested that friends valuing one another's non-virtuous features is instrumentally valuable because it promotes their self-esteem; and intrinsically valuable, because doing so is part of what it means to accept them for who they are, and social acceptance has intrinsic value. A final suggestion is that valuing the friend's non-virtuous features makes it better *as a friendship*. That is, it is not just better for the person whose features are being valued; rather, being valued in this way by a friend makes the relationship a better kind of friendship.

To see this, we can consult Thomas Fuchs' (2018) 'Working Test for Wellbeing'. On this account, if we want to know if a feature of life contributes to wellbeing, we can ask whether it would be appropriate to feel compassion for someone whose life lacked that feature. If it does, then this looks like a plausible candidate for being a feature of a flourishing life. Applying this to friendship, we can consider the person who is highly virtuous, and whose many close friends value them, but only because of their virtuous traits. Their non-virtuous features remain quite disregarded, not necessarily out of disdain, but mere indifference - perhaps, as in the case above, they've barely noticed them.

It seems appropriate to feel at least some compassion for this individual. They have friends who may well be close in other respects, but it seems like something important is missing from their life, which this feeling of compassion tracks. We might rightly wonder if they really know what true friendship is like. What's more, this feeling remains appropriate even if we imagine that the person in question has high self-esteem, and thus isn't missing out on any boost in self-worth which being valued for their non-virtuous traits might provide. Thus, assuming this feeling of appropriateness isn't tracking some other instrumentally valuable feature of this kind of positive valuation, this argument contributes positively to the claim that being valued by our friends for our non-virtuous traits makes the friendship better as a friendship. It brings the relationship closer to what our normative conception of what a close friendship ought to be like.

5. Valuable Non-virtuous Features

I've spoken of 'non-virtuous features' so far. But what are these features? Importantly, I don't mean to refer to non-moral virtues, such as intellectual humility or a proper sense of humour. Both could be valued on an Aristotelian account. Rather, I mean a variety of traits, dispositions, and, to a limited extent, vices, as well as what David Novitz (1991) refers to as 'aesthetic qualities of character', that are not themselves moral or intellectual virtues, but still track reasonably reliable dispositions to think, feel, desire, and act in various ways. To understand this, let's consider these features in more detail.

Firstly, consider the many examples of aesthetic features that Norwitz gives: 'We speak of a person as balanced, ebullient, effervescent, scintillating, lively, dull, dazzling, distorted, ungainly, tortured, serene, dynamic, bold, colourless, beautiful or ugly' (Ibid: 207). We might also include Susan Wolf's (1982) examples of non-moral features which we rightly value in friends: 'Katharine Hepburn's grace, Paul Newman's "cool"' or the 'high-spirited passionate nature of Natasha Rostov' (Ibid: 422). Finally, consider examples given in the George Gershwin (Gershwin, 1937) tune 'They Can't Take That Away From Me', in which the singer explains the many things that will keep him loving his beloved: 'The way you hold your knife…The way you wear your hat, the way you sip your tea…the way your smile just beams, the way you sing off-key'.

These features describe not only how a person looks, but also how they comport themselves, how they move about in the world and, in doing so, how they express something of who they are. None of these seem to have anything in themselves to do with morality, nor do they describe moral or intellectual virtues. Importantly, they need not necessarily be in opposition to such virtues - rather, virtue is simply not the right concept with which to understand them. Yet there seems nothing wrong, and even something valuable, in esteeming these traits in our closest of friends, in addition to

their moral and intellectual virtues. To think this cannot be so is to artificially truncate what we can value in our friends, in a way that is at odds with how we typically view our friend's personality. After all, our perception of our closest friends does not usually segment into virtuous and non-virtuous features, with us deciding on reflection we ought only value the virtuous ones.

We can add to the list various idiosyncratic habits, themselves also not virtues, which may nonetheless be treated with affection and acceptance by close friends. The comedic actor Robert Webb (2017) gives a few examples:

> What's the thing about you that you don't mind being teased about? The thing that makes your friends take the piss but which you privately hope is endearing. Maybe you do a certain face whenever you look in the mirror. Maybe you blow the crumbs off a biscuit before dunking it in tea. Maybe you buy clothes in one colour which you don't even like that much (Ibid: 283-284).

These examples are wholly irrelevant to one's moral or intellectual character, and too fine-grained to ever be regarded as virtues in any case. As Webb lists these examples, though, we can surely picture close friends of our own, with their equivalent peccadilloes. We may well notice not only affection for these features, but a sense that they matter - in some way difficult to describe - in determining who our friend is as a person (Nehamas, 2016).

In addition, though, there are also features of our friends that could be worth esteeming even if they are (to some limited extent) at odds with objectively valuable moral or intellectual virtues. In the case of intellectual virtues, Webb offers, as a personal example, his poor sense of direction:

> Me, I just get lost. I get lost frequently and with distinction. I don't just get lost when walking or driving - I get lost on trains. I can go to the loo on a train and take ten minutes to find my seat again. I haven't got lost on an escalator yet, but it's only a matter of time (Webb, 2017: 284).

A disposition to get lost seems like an intellectual deficiency, lacking as it is in epistemic accuracy. But as Webb describes it, it's not hard to see how such a habit would be endearing, especially to a close friend who already had deep affection for the man.

Nehamas (2016) echos this point:

> Not only do we love our friends despite their shortcomings but, sometimes, we love them because of them: think of the self-importance or forgetfulness that makes your friend so dear to you and so irritating to everyone else (Ibid: 27).

Self-importance seems morally vicious, while forgetfulness looks like an intellectual deficiency. But though these may be obstacles to perfectly moral or epistemic conduct, they need not be to close friendship. The point here is not simply that we can have close friendships with those that are not perfectly virtuous. As noted earlier, Aristotle's account of friendships of virtue can be taken to apply not only to the most perfect in virtue, but also to those with certain moral flaws. Rather, as Nehamas recognises, these features are not only *not obstacles* to friendship: they can be part of what we value in our friend. Sheila Lintott (2013) summarises this point well:

> The mixture of virtues and vices, habits and peeves, likes and dislikes, as they intermingle in a friend result in a distinctive and unique individual whom we love for being just as they are (Ibid: 252).

Once again, this is not only descriptively true; there's good reason to think that such valuing is normative. After all, a person who is forgetful or self-important could well be irritating to all who are not their friends (and at times, admittedly, even to those who are). And being such a person could itself be difficult, especially if one finds it challenging to improve on such traits. Other things being equal, it seems a valuable thing that such a person has people in their life who do not regard these blemishes as straightforward faults. This might have instrumental value: paradoxically, perhaps the acceptance and affection a friend has for their traits would make it easier to improve them. But equally, being valued and accepted for these traits could be intrinsically good in itself. After all, while friends can promote positive character change in one another, it is also important to acknowledge that we do not form friendships merely for moral or intellectual edification. Our friends promote our self-esteem by valuing many dimensions of ourselves, not just our morally or intellectually favourable features.

5.1. The Limits: What Ought we Not Value in Our Friends?

I've so far discussed ways in which friends value features of one another which, on the whole, seem relatively benign. We might wonder what the limits of this are. While a minor degree of self-importance, lack of direction, or forgetfulness seem relatively harmless, surely morality sets constraints on what we can rightly value in our friends. Whether one agrees with Cocking and Kennett (2000) that 'a good friend will help you

move a body', presumably, one ought not value a friend's disposition to wantonly murder others!

It may be difficult to draw a bright line between those minor deficiencies we can rightly value in our friends, and those features we ought not; some will be in a grey area. But a few considerations can be helpful here. One is the distinction between a deficiency and a vice. It seems likely that it will be less morally problematic to value a deficiency - someone being slightly tactless, say - than to value someone having the vice of cruelty. Another is the context in which the deficiency usually arises. Some contexts are more benign than others: getting lost when trying to find one's seat on a train is one thing; getting lost when piloting an airliner is another. This exposes the fact that valuing some deficiency is not the same as denying its effects or encouraging your friend to put themselves in situations in which it makes themselves and others vulnerable to severe consequences. Your friend's disorganisation may be endearing enough, but that doesn't mean you ought encourage them to take on highly demanding job within the NHS, where this deficiency puts the wellbeing of others at risk.

Finally, we should distinguish between valuing someone because of a trait and valuing them in spite of it. Both are important features of friendship. While the minor deficiencies discussed look like the sort that can be valued in our friends, others are those that we ought not value, even while still holding our friend in high regard. Consider a friend who has an impulsive (or intemperate, to use the Aristotelian terminology) personality. This impulsivity is strong and pervasive enough that it can be properly called a vice; it produces negative consequences for them and others in many areas of their life.

We would presumably be doing something wrong in valuing this trait, but not necessarily doing so if we valued them in spite of it (it would be a very firm line to say that the impulsive necessarily do not deserve friends). Indeed, just as valuing the more minor non-virtuous features served the function of promoting self-esteem, this may do so too, albeit in a different way. While the former communicates to one's friend that those specific features are not something they ought to feel negatively about, the latter may communicate that, despite their many faults, the friend is not irredeemable. This can even be put across when we express negative reactive attitudes towards such a friend. Such sentiments, as Victoria McGeer (2012) puts it, say to the recipient that:

> We don't despair of them as moral agents…We hold them accountable to an ideal of moral agency because we think them capable of living up to that ideal. So reactive attitudes communicate a positive message even in their most negative guise – even in the guise of anger, resentment, indignation…[they say] to the recipients that we see them as individuals who are capable of

> understanding and living up to the norms that make for moral community (Ibid: 303).

In other words, our positive evaluations of our friend's more minor vices can serve their self-esteem in prudentially valuable ways; while our negative evaluations of their more major flaws can enhance their agency, instilling the understanding that they are capable of being better. There are, as Kristjan Kristjansson (2020) argues, moral constraints on who we ought to form close friendships; indeed, some people's characters make them constitutionally unable to form the kinds of intimate friendships I am interested in here (e.g. those totally lacking in compassion or honesty). But as Kristjansson says, while this may constrain who we can befriend, it also underdetermines it. What remains is a wide range of morally acceptable people, and it will often be their aesthetic features that determine who from this range we choose to befriend (Ibid: 212).

6. What This View Illuminates

Noticing the value of this kind of affirmation helps us recognise other facts about friendship. For one, it is not a purely meritocratic institution. If it was, and we valued our friends only for their moral and intellectual virtues, encountering new people who possessed such virtues to much greater degrees would give us a strong reason to consider investing our energies in forming new friendships with them, and leaving the old one behind (Kristjansson, 2020: 202-205). As Elijia Milgram (1987) notes:

> If the friend's virtue provides the reason for the friendship, it would seem that one has identical reason to love all virtuous persons, or, if this is not possible, to replace one's virtuous friends with still more virtuous persons…Why does one (appropriately) love one virtuous acquaintance rather than another? And why can one not simply replace a virtuous friend with some other, equally virtuous person? (Ibid: 363).

The considerations examined here suggest a partial answer for why we should not 'trade up' when a person of greater moral or intellectual cultivation comes along. If we value our current friends in part for those features that are neutral or even negative with respect to virtue, and this esteem for such traits often arises out of our long-standing affection for them, then there are features of our current friends which cannot be substituted for the (objectively superior) features of potential new friends.

This is reinforced by the particularity of friendship, the fact that we value our friend for who they are in themselves. Many people can possess virtue, and to a higher degree than my current friend. But no-one possesses quite the same set of virtues, vices,

interpersonal mannerisms, and eccentricities, to the same degree and intermingled in the same way, as this particular friend. As such, ‘trading up’ is not only not ethical or practical, it is not strictly speaking possible. For the considerations here undermine any straightforwardly objective hierarchy that could rank some potential’s friend’s character against that of one’s current friend.

Further, recognising these non-virtuous features of character allows us to see the aesthetic aspect to our choice of friends. A major motivation for friendship is the fact that we like our friend. And as Elizabeth Telfer (1970/1971) and others (Nehamas, 2016; Kristjansson, 2020; Lintott, 2013) have observed, liking a friend is ‘a quasi-aesthetic attitude, roughly specifiable as 'finding a person to one's taste’’ (Telfer: 226). Taste, importantly, is a highly subjective matter, one that:

> Depends partly on such things as his physical appearance, mannerisms, voice and speech, and style of life; partly on his traits of character, moral and other. The relative importance of these features as a basis for liking obviously depends on the liker (Ibid).

As with aesthetics, it can be very hard to say what it is about friends precisely that makes us appreciate them, extending a level of acceptance and positive regard we do not generally offer to others[9] (Lintott 2013). As Nehamas puzzles ‘how is it that when I say why I love [my friend], no matter how much I say, I always feel I have left the most important thing unspoken?’ (2016: 28) There is something ineffable or intangible about the reasons for holding our friend - and not some other person with roughly similar features - in the positive regard typical of this relationship. The point is not that we cannot say anything about what our friends are like and why we value them; rather, even after we have detailed this, we feel that our affection cannot be reduced to such features. If it cannot be reduced even to those features of our friends we can readily identify, specifying it in terms of virtues seems to artificially truncate this understanding further.

I’ve so far outlined various non-virtuous features that we can rightly value in our friends. We can value their aesthetic qualities of character, their idiosyncratic habits, along with various moral and intellectual deficiencies. As such features represent a heterogeneous bunch, one might wonder if anything unifies them. While I don’t think anything unifies all of them, we can see both these aesthetic qualities - of communication, style,

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[9] The relationship between friendship and aesthetics has been pursued in various ways in the literature. Lintott (2013) explores an analogy between the two. Avramenko (2008) considers the way in which our taste in friends is partly an aesthetic matter, interpreting Nietzsche’s claim that friendship is ‘groundless’ along these lines (see also Nehamas, 2016: 183-185). Finally, Noel Carroll (2002) explores how friendship can promote aesthetic appreciation.

mannerism, comportment - as well as various idiosyncratic habits, as all being features of embodiment. All of them characterise how we live in our bodies and move through the world, and would be impossible to specify without reference to this. That such features should be valued in our close friendships should be no surprise: after all, we are embodied creatures. It seems only natural that our sensibilities regarding who we choose and maintain friendships with would incorporate this fundamental characteristic. As such, our views of what can properly be valued in our friendships ought to reflect this.

One might also wonder exactly what normative claim is being made here. Given the positive value of esteeming these traits in our friends, are we therefore obligated to value our friend's non-virtuous features? We can think of this question in two ways. If we are asking whether we ought to value every non-virtuous feature, the answer looks to be a straightforward 'no'. As your friend, I am not doing anything wrong by not valuing the face you always make when you look in the mirror or the way you blow crumbs of a biscuit before dunking it in tea. If we want to know whether valuing some collection of non-virtuous traits would be necessary, there, the answer looks more like a 'yes'. In this sense, it is an imperfect duty.

To see this, consider a close friendship in which one of the participants never valued any non-virtuous feature of the other in this way. Such a case is difficult to imagine at two levels. At the descriptive level, it seems hard to reconcile this as a psychological state that someone could consistently have towards another, while nonetheless rightfully maintaining that they are a close friend. While this could be the case for short-periods - when the friendship is 'on the rocks' - it is hard to know what to make of someone who never had these positive attitudes (Annis, 1987). We would presumably wonder whether the person truly understood what a close friendship involved, or whether some other feature of their psychology (such as deep, ongoing anhedonia) prevented them from having this appreciation of their friend to begin with.

At the normative level, we might wonder whether the person could really be considered a *good* friend, failing to value the other in this way. Nonetheless, this does not mean that appreciation of some specific non-virtuous feature of the other person is required for the relationship to be a close friendship. As with appreciating art, while I need a general aesthetic sensibility towards aesthetic features of artworks in order to properly value them, it may not be a requirement that I value *this* specific feature of this specific artwork in order to value it appropriately. With these two issues clarified, we can now turn to objections.

7. Objections

One might have four objections to the argument I have put forward so far. The first is that even if one conceded that valuing such features did partly constitute an acceptance of the other's personality, this would do little to promote goods such as self-esteem. This argument would claim that, as these features are relatively trivial when compared to our moral or intellectual virtues, being valued on this basis would not - or ought not - mean much to us.

The second objection is that these features are not non-virtuous features at all: ultimately, they reduce to virtues (if, perhaps, virtues which Aristotle did not discuss directly). As such, there is no tension between Aristotle's account and my own. The third objection is that these features are only valued because they give us pleasure. As such, valuing them is not an expression of our acceptance of the other; it is just an indication of what we happen to find pleasurable in them. Finally, one could argue that valuing marginalised features of oppressed groups (as I suggest can be valuable for combating oppression) is in fact fetishising. Thus, to the contrary of my argument, it will in fact reinforce oppressive forms of valuing.

I believe a satisfying case can be made against all of these objections. To make it, however, we should consider features different in kind from those discussed so far. As yet, we've examined only those features that are evaluatively neutral, or examples of moral or intellectual deficiencies. Let's now consider those features that are evaluatively good in some way, but which are socially marginalised. Doing so will highlight how important these valuing practices within friendship can be for our self-esteem, as well as undermine the idea that it is the pleasure we take in such features that causes us to value them.

7.1. Objection 1: Valuing These Features Contributes Little to Our Self-esteem

One may agree with what I have argued, but claim that it doesn't go very far. While there could be some value in affirming and accepting the non-virtuous features of our friends, one might argue that doing so is relatively minimal when it comes to positively impacting their self-esteem. This is because these features themselves are fairly trivial. I'll argue, however, that in the right circumstances, accepting and valuing non-virtuous features of the other can be instrumental in promoting a sense of their worth. This is most salient in cases where the given feature is socially marginalised.

As an example, consider dress sense. While it is not a requirement of friendship that friends value one another's choice in clothes, there are certain circumstances in which doing so may impact the quality of the relationship. Think of a nonbinary person, for whom their choice of clothing is one means to express their marginalised gender identity. To be a true friend, I ought to value such a person for who they are in themselves, including valuing and affirming the gender with which they identify, and their freedom to do so. As clothing is one means by which this is expressed, I ought to value the fact that they choose to wear clothes that express who they are, rather than what may be socially prescribed. Importantly, it may be especially valuable for them if I value not just the fact that they choose to wear those clothes, but that I see the outfits themselves as having aesthetic value.

Likewise, consider one's communication style. While I don't have to value this in my friend, there may be circumstances in which it is especially valuable if I do. Continuing with the idea of marginalisation, consider certain communication styles marginalised by dominant, white culture. Take African-American women's speech communities (AAWSC). As Tempest Henning (2018) describes:

> Some linguistic practices within AAWSC include lewd or indecorous language, signifying, culturally toned diminutives (i.e., girl, sistah (sic), child, honey, bitch, simultaneous speech, and talking with attitude (TWA), while nonlinguistic practices include side-eye, cut-eye, various hand gestures, 'edge,' and suck-teeth…These practices are at times meant to emphasis the content of speech, replace words directly, highlight various affective states, and can be seen as acts of resistance (Ibid: 203).

While this communication style allows one to be highly expressive, such that one might be robbed of important communicative abilities without it, it is also socially denigrated: 'stereotypes and media representations of AAWSC practices often render us as sassy, dismissive, copping an attitude, ghetto, or straight up hood rats' (Ibid). Given this hostile social context, valuing this form of marginalised communication in one's friend may be especially important, signalling that one is in alliance with them in their resistance to dominant social norms. In valuing it, rather than simply not denigrating it, one indicates that this style is not merely a difference to be tolerated, but one to be actively esteemed. There is value in such practices, and esteeming their manifestation in my friend's interpersonal style may support them in taking pride in such features.

Of course, it matters what this valuing consists of. A familiar distinction here is that between honouring and promoting a value. One can promote the value of peace by waging the war to end all wars, not being peaceable one's self, but ensuring the world is

ultimately a war-free zone. This would promote, but not honour, the value of peacefulness. To honour it would be to refuse to fight in any wars, knowing that this may result in less peace overall than may have occurred if one had waged war against the war mongers.

The kind of valuing most appropriate here is likely to be the value of honouring these stigmatised features. Unless one is also a member of these marginalised groups, it would usually be inappropriate to try and promote wearing clothing at odds with the gender identity one was assigned, or talking in the way characteristic of AAWSC one's self. Doing so would likely seem inauthentic and self-conscious, and may actively undermine the meaning of those gestures for those who are part of the relevant group.

This practice of valuing stigmatised features is particularly important in friendship for a couple of reasons. Receiving this affirmation from *friends* specifically may be particularly important because we often care deeply about what our friends think of us. This is highlighted by the especially negative consequences of marginalised people not being accepted by their friends. As we'll see later, empirical evidence suggests that the fact that someone is our friend can make the experience of microaggressions more severe. Microaggressions towards trans people are experienced as more upsetting when they emanate from one's friends compared to others, for example (Galupo, M. P., Henise, S. B., & Davis, K. S. 2014). Thus, the value of friends affirming features of us that are marginalised can be seen as the inverse of what happens when they denigrate such features. Given how much we care that friends accept important aspects of our identity, valuing marginalised aesthetic features of our friends may go some way to indicating this acceptance.

Moreover, unlike proscribed familial relationships, friendship is chosen. This matters in the nonbinary example, as many nonbinary individuals are disowned by their families of origin - relationships in which a lack of acceptance could not be more apparent. Likewise, the African-American women's families of origin may sometimes themselves be hostile to such communicative styles, attempting to inculcate the idea that one must adopt the expressive norms of white culture if one wants to be taken seriously within it. In both cases, the problematic lack of choice in one's family of origin is foregrounded.

In contrast, friendship's voluntary nature allows for the possibility for alliances of mutual acceptance and affirmation, even in an otherwise hostile social context[10]. Thus,

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[10] Indeed, empirical evidence has also noted that the friends of trans people often end up taking on the roles typically ascribed to counsellors or family members, due to this support being unavailable from their families of origin or health care system (Galupo, M. P., Bauerband, L. A., Gonzalez, K. A., Hagen, D. B., Hether, S. D., & Krum, T. E. (2014).

friendship holds great promise for being a kind of safe haven for marginalised groups, as has been noted by Friedman (1987), Rubin (1985) and Nehamas (2016). As such, valuing my friend's dress sense or marginalised communicative style is one way in which I can realise this important potential in friendship. Yet, dress sense or interpersonal expression - even in a context as consequential as this - is not a virtue of my friend, moral or otherwise.

One may object to this last claim. Perhaps these features, while not virtues in themselves, nonetheless are manifestations of them. I consider, and respond to, this objection below.

7.2. Objection 2: These Features Reduce to Virtues

I've argued that Aristotle's view of a good, close friendship as being one in which the friends value only one another's virtues for their own sake, is not sufficiently comprehensive. This is because we have normative reasons to value our close friends based on features of them besides their virtues. One way of objecting to this, therefore, would be to argue that these features actually are, or reduce to, virtues. If so, Aristotle's view could account for these features perfectly well. Perhaps, the objection would go, it's merely a matter of how we describe the features under discussion.

Take the example of gender non-conforming clothing. I've said that we can rightly value this in our friends and there can be good reason for doing so. This is because it promotes their self-esteem and combats the oppression they may experience as a result of adopting clothing styles that are socially marginalised. But are we really valuing their dress sense in any distinct way, or merely valuing a specific manifestation of a more general trait?

After all, choosing to adopt or persist with a practice that is socially marginalised, and will earn one social disapproval, can be challenging. It can take virtues - courage likely being chief among them. So perhaps what seems like the valuing of a specific feature is really just the valuing of a broader virtue: the virtue of moral courage. As this is a virtue, one perfectly at home in Aristotle's picture of what friends can rightly value in one another, this example is no longer a threat to his account.

I believe this may be some truth to the claim that part of what we value when we esteem our friend for wearing gender non-conforming clothing is their courage. However, I think it is insufficient to capture all that is going on here. It does take courage to do this and often our appraisals of our friend will be sensitive to this. However, I think moral courage

is too abstract and broad to explain why it is our friend's dress sense specifically that we value.

After all, many things take courage that have nothing to do with aesthetic choices such as one's choice in clothing. If it was courage alone that mattered, a friend could express this in a whole variety of domains that have nothing to do with aesthetics. But this wouldn't capture exactly what it is we value in our friends. Talking in terms of moral courage invokes only the character traits required to behave as they do, but says nothing about the content of their behaviour. When I value my friend's non-confirming dress sense, I am valuing the dress sense itself, as a distinct, valuable and interesting stylistic choice, expressive of a distinct aesthetic sensibility. Moral courage simply doesn't reach far enough into the specific behaviour and sensibilities that are being valued, and as such, does not properly characterise it.

One might think this only shows that moral virtues are not of the right kind to capture cases like this. If these cases have a distinctively aesthetic aspect, perhaps it is aesthetic virtues that will best do the job. Maybe the virtue that underlies one's clothing style is not moral courage but aesthetic courage. Maybe this is what we're really valuing in our friend in cases like these.

I think this objection suffers similar problems. As argued, aesthetic courage, while it can be important for aesthetic value, is not sufficient. One can be aesthetically courageous - bucking various aesthetic fads for instance - and still fail to realise aesthetic value. These objections help clarify the kind of valuing that is appropriate in the friendship cases. The friend who values their friend's dress sense does not do so merely from the position of wanting to celebrate them merely for being different. After all, one can be different, and buck aesthetic trends, simply by dressing terribly, and in a way that fails to realise any aesthetic value whatsoever. A common remark made towards people who wear clothing that is comically lacking in aesthetic taste is 'I wish I had your courage'. As should be obvious, this is no compliment. Even if one genuinely wishes to celebrate the aesthetic courage required to wear something awful, this is very obviously different from celebrating someone for pioneering a clothing style which, while marginalised, is of genuine aesthetic value. In order to do this, one's judgement must be sensitive to the aesthetic value of the particular style on display. As aesthetic courage is insufficient for aesthetic value, valuing this feature is not sufficient to do this.

The argument so far has been that features such as dress sense are too complex to be reduced to a single virtue, whether moral or aesthetic. However, other features highlighted may be too simple to be discussed as manifestations of virtue. Recall some of the moral fine-grained examples given earlier. Sometimes we like the particular facial

expression our friends do when they look in the mirror. Or the way they always blow crums of a biscuit before dunking it in tea. We value how our friend holds a knife, sips their tea, or wears a hat. These seem too fine-grained to be the product of a virtue, appearing more like stand-alone dispositions that do not reach sufficiently far back into the individual's psychology to be manifestations of virtue.

The overall objection was that these non-virtuous features are too trivial for our friend's valuing of them to really promote our self-esteem. The response has been that some of these features are expressive of deeper parts of our identity, such that accepting and affirming them can importantly contribute towards our self-esteem. Further, it is particularly valuable when friends do this, because of the general power that our friend's affirmation or denigration of us can have. However, one might contend that this kind of valuing of marginalised features is fetishising, and as such, would not only not combat oppression, but risk reinforcing it.

7.3. Objection 3: Valuing Marginalised Features is Fetishising

One could agree that oppressed people often suffer the injustice of having aesthetic features of their marginalised identity devalued by the society they are in. However, they may object that attempting to positively value such features is going to be counter-productive. This is because, rather than undermining this oppression (the supposed aim of this approach), this is going to reinforce this oppression by another means: fetishisation. The phenomenon of marginalised aesthetic features being fetishised is hardly rare or novel, and as such, we have particular reason to worry about it.

I'm very sympathetic to this objection, and I think it gives us good reason to be reflective regarding exactly what kind of valuing is required and how it is to be communicated. When esteeming another's marginalised aesthetic features, there are many ways to go wrong, and fetishising is indeed a major one.

Consider, by analogy, the way that marginalised aesthetic features are 'valued' in sexual contexts. Robin Zheng discusses the phenomenon of 'yellow fever', a commonly expressed sexual preference white men have for asian women. Such attitudes are harmful to asian/american women (she focuses primarily on the US context) for a number of reasons. Most notably for our purposes is the claim that fetishising is wrong partly because it treats those targeted for fetishisation as fungible:

> The racial depersonalization inherent in yellow fever threatens Asian/American women with doubts as to whether they are or can be loved as individuals rather than as objects in a category (Zheng, 2016: 408).

This in particular should worry us in the context of friendship because friendship is taken by many to be a paradigmatic case of a relationship in which the participants should be regarded as non-fungible - that is, not replaceable by others without a loss of value (Helm, 2023). Friends should emphatically *not* be objects in a category.

I think we can avoid this worry if we clarify the kind of appreciation we should strive for in these contexts. The idea is not to appreciate marginalised features of one's friends insofar as they conform to some imposed stereotype. For example, appreciating the campness of a gay man on the basis that his campness makes him an 'exemplar' of what a gay man is like, interchangeable with others like him. Rather, it is about appreciating someone for who they are, in the highly particular way this is expressed. We must appreciate others 'on their own terms' (Hernandez, 2021: 621). This carries with it the recognition that there are a huge variety of ways that one can exhibit a marginalised feature of their identity. There are many ways to be gender-nonconforming in one's style of dress and presentation, for instance. What matters in friendship is how *this* person expresses it[11].

Of course, this expression will often be in dialogue with *some* standards - there are norms within subcultures of marginalisation about styles of dress or presentation. But that doesn't make an individual's particular engagement with those styles interchangeable with others. By analogy with aesthetics in other areas: I can appreciate how one song engages and plays with the norms of a given genre, without thereby viewing it as interchangeable with other songs of that genre, which also make use of similar conventions. What matters is how this song in particular does it. Of course, talk of appreciation may raise another worry: maybe the only reason we value these features at all is because they give us pleasure.

7.4. Objection 4: These Features are Valued Because They Give Us Pleasure

When introducing the idea of non-virtuous features of character, I used several examples: of one's penchant for getting lost, one's idiosyncratic habits, one's

[11] A similar approach, emphasising particularity and authenticity, is taken with regard to sexual fetishising by Lintott and Irvin (2016). Hernandez's (2021) discussion of gender-affirmation being a form of loving-attention (informed by Murdoch, 1970) is also relevant here.

aesthetically pleasing style of comportment. All these features seem naturally like those that many of us could find amusing or pleasing in some way. Thus, one could concede that we value such features in our close friends.

But, one may object, this is only because such features give us pleasure. The amusement I experience from my friend's self-importance, forgetfulness or lack of direction can all be valuable to me as forms of pleasure. As such, it's not clear that my valuing them has anything to do with valuing the person themselves for who they are. Indeed, this in itself would be no different from the more superficial relationship I enjoy with a friend of pleasure. Pointing to such features, therefore, will do little to undermine Aristotle's account (recall that friendship of pleasure is, on his view, a deficient form of friendships of virtue).

This objection could surely be right for those features in certain contexts. It is certainly possible that another's aesthetic features of character, or their moral or intellectual vices, are valued by me only because they are enjoyable to behold. But we should be careful not to get the causality backwards here. As Butler (1726/1991) pointed out, certain things bring us pleasure only because we antecedently value them. It is because I value my friend's welfare, that hearing of their happiness is pleasurable to me. Hearing of the happiness of a tyrant, or even a stranger to whom I had no connection, may produce no such response, because I have no antecedent investment in the other.

Likewise, some features described earlier may only come to be esteem-able to me precisely because they are qualities of my friend, for whom I already feel great affection. David Novitz (1991) acknowledges this point in his discussion of the aesthetics of character, when he reflects on how our view of another's character impacts our perception of their physical attributes. He notes that:

> Hitler was an ugly and distorted man, not so much because of his face, but because of his nature and the life that he led. Even though it is difficult to look at Hitler's face and think it handsome, his features were more regular, his nose neater, his smile more formally correct than the later Gandhi's. And yet, people often look at Gandhi's toothless smile (or at photographs of it) and think it beautiful. No doubt they think this because they like and admire him[12] (Ibid: 207).

Novitz's point is that our perception of another's physical appearance is very often invested and embellished with our knowledge of their character. While Novitz is concerned with how moral qualities impact our appreciation of one's physical appearance, I believe something similar applies to the non-virtuous (even vicious)

[12] Of course, not everyone likes or admires Gandhi - see Orwell, for a critique.

qualities that we perceive in our friend's personality. That is, non-virtuous traits which strike us as odd, eccentric or grating when present in a stranger - just as Gandhi's toothless smile might look ugly to one who had no knowledge of his character - may take on a new shape or hue in light of the familiarity and affection typical of friendship. As with appreciating a painting, with time we may find that certain incongruous elements come to 'have their place' once we can apprehend the friend in greater depth[13].

As such, in many cases it will be wrong to claim that we value such features only because they give us pleasure. What seems just as often the case is that such features give us pleasure because we value the person who possesses them, and perceive that value refracted through the many - and seemingly trivial - features of their character. This manner of valuing can often only come about because of the enduring bond of affection between the two friends.

To see this, consider the examples of people from marginalised backgrounds. Take the nonbinary person who chooses to express their gender identity through their clothing. We can imagine certain cases in which their style of dress may have seemed incongruous or even threatening to a cis-gendered person who had not previously encountered someone with this gender identity and/or had imbibed transphobic attitudes from their surrounding environment. Once they developed a close friendship with such a person, developing affection and esteem for them characteristic of that relationship, their perception of the other's choice of clothing may change. They may come to regard it as not only acceptable, but beautiful, as an inseparable part of the person they have come to know and cherish. Something analogous could surely take place between an African-American woman who adopts the communication style described earlier, and a white person who has previously imbibed a denigrating, prejudicial attitude towards that style, perhaps without even realising. In both cases, these traits cannot be said to give one pleasure independent of the relationship one shares with the other, as it is only through this relationship that one comes to regard them as valuable.

The above provides particularly pronounced cases in which our friend's affirmation of an otherwise moral and/or intellectually irrelevant feature of us, takes on special value for the relationship. But that it is good for friends to value our non-moral features remains the case even when those features do not make us subject to oppression. For one, we may feel negatively about ourselves for reasons that are not the result of pervasive societal norms, but for ones much more localised to our environment. If we were bullied

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[13] This view has much in common with vision accounts of love, such as Iris Murdoch's (1970), and her example of the mother who first regards her son's daughter in-law with snobbish disdain; but through loving attention, comes to regard her mannerisms as unpretentious and appealing.

over a certain feature that made us stand out at school, or subject to severe criticism from a parent, having the targeted feature affirmed by a friend may have important, restorative value. And even if there is no history of social disapproval, social acceptance is surely a deeply human need, one that can be met in ways both big and small. Thus, we shouldn't trivialise the impact of having friends accept and esteem even features of ourselves of which we feel ambivalent or to which we hadn't given much thought.

The sociologist and psychotherapist Lillian Rubin (1985) confirms the value of this acceptance in her empirical work. In summarising what she learned from three hundred interviews with people from different backgrounds in the US about the role of friendship in their lives, she reflects the following:

> As adults, most people find a place in their lives among friends where, as [the participants] said frequently in one way or another, they can believe they count, where they can be accepted for the qualities they hold dear, can be validated for those they hope to develop. Through these relationships with friends, the pain of the past has been softened…Each positive experience with a new friend brings with it the courage to take the next step, to develop a new part of self, a new view of some of the old parts (Ibid: 49-50).

This brings us to the question of how it is that friends bring about new parts of ourselves or novel perspectives on our existing features - how it engenders self-knowledge. Aristotle is known for his view that friendships of virtue facilitate this kind of self-understanding; as I'll argue, however, in widening the scope of what friends can appropriately value in one another, we can have a more comprehensive sense of the self-insight they can reveal, and the novel aspects of our personality they can help us develop.

8. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that we should widen the scope of what close friends can rightly value in one another. I began by introducing Aristotle's account of friendship, noting its pervasive influence on friendship scholarship. I then acknowledged existing criticisms of his account of virtue friendship. As I argued, all suffered from merely noting the discrepancy between Aristotle's normative vision of friendship and our current friendship practices. This, I argued, was insufficient to fully undermine the normative dimension of his account.

Thus, in this chapter, I aimed to give normative reasons for thinking that many of our current friendship practices are good. These practices involve valuing things besides

our friends' virtues: their aesthetic features, idiosyncrasies, and even some (limited) moral or epistemic vices. I noted that this may help us avoid certain existing problems that Aristotle's view already faces, such as the worry about fungibility.

I then argued that valuing our friend's non-virtuous features is valuable for a few reasons. It can be intrinsically valuable in that it represents a way of accepting your friend for who they are, and accepting someone for who they are has intrinsic value. It can be instrumentally valuable because doing so can promote their self-esteem and, when the feature is marginalised, can help combat oppression. While I leave it open that such valuing practices could be incorporated into an Aristotelian account of friendship, I have expressed scepticism about this approach.

As mentioned above, departing from Aristotle's account opens up the space to consider how friends may promote one another's self-knowledge and self-development of non-virtuous features, and how this can be prudentially (rather than morally) valuable. It is to this subject that we turn now.

Chapter Four: Friendship and Self-knowledge: Critiquing the 'Other Self' Doctrine

1. Introduction

We've seen that friendships of virtue for Aristotle involve a relationship in which the participants value one another primarily for their virtues. This is the basis or foundational motivation for the friendship. I then criticised this view, arguing that we rightly value more than virtues in our friends: other features, such as their idiosyncrasies, aesthetics of character and even some moral or intellectual deficiencies can be properly valued between close friends. We are right to do this because it promotes self-esteem, can combat oppression, and because the social acceptance that constitutes it is intrinsically valuable. Further, this kind of valuing makes the friendship better *as a friendship*.

In this section, I explore how expanding what we can rightly value in friends enriches our understanding of how friendship can promote self-knowledge and self-development. I begin by outlining Aristotle's view that in virtue friendship, the participants are 'alike in virtue' and thus are 'another self' in one another's eyes. As I suggest, while there are several different ways philosophers have interpreted this idea, all are similar in believing that, for Aristotle, the type of self-knowledge and development facilitated by the relationship is moral in character.

Given this, I engage with a prominent critique of this overall view offered by Cocking and Kennett (1998). While I agree with their own views on how friendship can promote self-knowledge and development, insofar as it is meant to take aim at the Aristotelian account, they fail to adequately highlight a crucial premise in their own argument. Namely, that there are valuable sources of self-knowledge and development acquired through close friendship, which pertain not to our moral or intellectual virtues, but to our non-virtuous features. This idea helps us make the most sense of their examples of the kind of knowledge and development that close friendship can promote.

I go on to explore the various types of features of our personality about which close friends can provide self-knowledge. I also consider a major way that self-knowledge is acquired through friendship: self-disclosure. Given this, I consider Thomas' influential account of self-disclosure in friendship. I argue that the view fails to take account of the role of emotional support. This is important for understanding both how friends help us

develop and how they promote our self-esteem. In keeping with the previous sections, the overall case is that Aristotle's account leaves much of value undiscussed. To see this, let's first consider his notion that a friend is 'another self'. This is important for understanding the ways in which friends can facilitate self-knowledge and personal growth.

Examining this is important for the wider aims of the thesis. Establishing the range of ways that friendship can be prudentially valuable allows us to recognise quite how consequential it is when these relationships go well - or don't. As such, this sets the stage for the significant role for intellectual humility. If these relationships have this valuable potential, one that risks being undermined by differences in social identity, then we have especially strong reasons for being interested in any virtue that might preserve these friendships and their valuable features.

2. Friends as Other Selves

The idea that in virtue friendship one's friend is 'another self' has received a fair amount of attention, and different philosophers understand this in different ways. For Cooper (1977), a friend being 'alike in virtue' is akin to the other being similar to oneself in a fundamental respect. Drawing on the Magna Moralia, a text that is attributed (by some) to Aristotle, he argues that such a person acts as a 'human mirror' - a being whose character reflects one's own. As such, one can learn about one's own virtues through one's intimate knowledge of one's friend's character. Such a practice is liable to yield better - if not perfect - results when contrasted to mere introspection. As Aristotle notes, we are much better at perceiving the characters of others than our own (Ibid).

Mavis Biss (2011) disputes the mirror view, arguing that a friend is better thought of as a 'partner in moral perception'. They are 'another self' in the sense that they share the virtuous outlook of the other, but do not share precisely the same sensitivity to moral particulars that the other enjoys. This combination of similarity and difference allows for self-knowledge and productive moral growth, as the two friends, sharing an overall moral outlook, can learn from the differences in their specific habitual responses to new morally valanced situations. Contra Cooper, then, self-knowledge can come just as much from difference as similarity of character; what's more, the friend does not fulfil the mere passive role of the mirror, but the active role of fellow participant in moral life (Ibid).

We should note one commonality between these two accounts of self-knowledge and development as it is promoted through virtue friendship. While they believe these goods are facilitated in different ways, both agree that what is facilitated is moral or intellectual

in character. Virtue friendship gives us knowledge of our virtues, as well as the opportunity to develop our moral outlook. This is significant. Much like the previous sections, I will argue that this fixation on the moral domain - a natural inheritance of Aristotle's own - can obscure the ways in which close friendship can promote knowledge and development of the self in non-virtuous ways. To see this, we should consider an opposing view, from Cocking and Kennett (1998). While I broadly agree with their arguments, I believe we can improve and expand on them by making the knowledge and development of non-virtuous features more salient in the account. Likewise, considering how friends promote development of a positive perception of non-virtuous qualities will also aid our understanding. Finally, we should consider the processes involved in this: how friends engage in mutual self-disclosure and provide one another with emotional support.

In their paper 'Friendship and the Self' Cocking and Kennett ((1998) 'C&K' from here on) express their dissatisfaction with Aristotle's account of the ways in which friendship provides self-knowledge. Following Cooper's interpretation outlined above, they label this account 'the mirror view'. According to this, a friend is a mirror in the sense that they share a similarly virtuous character. Knowledge of one's friend character, then, can yield knowledge of one's own: like a mirror, they cast back a reflection of what one is like. C&K have three criticisms of this account:

1. It misrepresents the self that is known as static, rather than dynamic and ever changing

2. It misrepresents the role of the friend in disclosing knowledge of one's character, viewing it in overly passive - rather than active - terms

3. It views similarity rather than contrast as the main source of this self-knowledge

Against points 1 and 2, they point out that friends do not passively reflect one another, as a mirror does, but rather actively direct each other to try new things, and interpret (rather than merely mirror) one another's character, personality and even appearance. They give several examples that helpfully illustrate what they have in mind here. In support of point 3, they point out that objective contrast between characters can be just as illuminating as similarity - a friend who is highly cautious might bring my own recklessness into sharp relief, for example (Ibid:).

To illustrate the ways in which friends interpret and shape, rather than merely reflect, who one is, they say the following:

> When I look in the mirror I get for the thousandth time an objective presentation of the size and shape of my nose. But my friend tells me that my nose is cute, or commanding, or aristocratic, or reminds her of Karl Malden, and this can be much more powerful than the mirror image in shaping the way I think about my nose, and myself (Ibid: 512).

As they go on to argue, this reinforces point 1 - for these interpretations don't merely offer knowledge of a static character, but change one's self-concept. They further demonstrate this with the example of John, who has a predilection for believing doggedly that he is right. His friend July highlights this in their interaction, making salient to him what he previously did not recognise. As a result, the feature is not only disclosed, but is from then on realised differently - this time, with a healthy dose of irony and humour that allows him to take himself less seriously. This process changes not only John's behaviour, but how he conceives of himself (Ibid: 505).

Finally, to illustrate the kind of active direction they have in mind, they give the case of a friend who invites another to the ballet. With no sense of obligation, but rather, with an active desire to participate in something the friend values, they go along; by the end, they discover a new found love of the art form. This counts as a case of direction on the part of the former friend, because the latter would never have attended but for their friend's encouragement and their own investment in the other's interests.

One thing to notice is that two of the four examples are to do with knowledge or development that is not moral (at least as far as the Aristotelian account is concerned). Rather it is aesthetic or prudential. Developing a taste for ballet need not make me a morally better person; but it may enhance my aesthetic appreciation of art, and thereby, enrich my life.

Likewise, reconceiving of my nose as beautiful (rather than, say, too big) may change how I view myself - perhaps as attractive rather than ugly - but it does not highlight to me any virtues of my character. The benefit of this seems to be more a matter of enhancing my self-concept and self-esteem (again, the value of this is prudential rather than moral). Thus, the non-virtuous features discussed in the last chapter seem especially germain to this discussion, in a way that moral features don't.

Though they do not connect these examples with their desire to dissent from Aristotle's arguably moralistic focus, they do object to it elsewhere in the paper:

> The drawing that takes place in friendship need have nothing to do with character improvement, as parents despairing over their adolescent children's friendships

> will readily attest. To suppose that it must, is to adopt a highly moralized notion of friendship which is at odds with ordinary experience (C&K, 1998: 514).

These remarks fit well with my own argument of the previous sections. What I believe my own argument can add to this is a more robust development of why valuing these non-virtuous features can be important. As I pointed out, and as the nose example illustrates, features of our embodiment such as this - that might be regarded as trivial - can nonetheless figure in our self-concept. Changing our evaluation of those features can thus have powerful prudential consequences.

Further, depending on which interpretation of Aristotle we follow, some of C&K's arguments may be less undermining of Aristotle's account and less distinctively original. While they utilise Cooper's interpretation of Aristotle - the so called 'mirror view' - which they criticise for presenting an overly static view of the self, and for ignoring the role that contrasts can play in self-knowledge, these arguments are less apt when applied to Biss. On her account, a friend is a 'partner in moral perception', one whose sometimes differing perspective on the particulars of moral situations can yield novel insight and development of one's virtues. Thus, even on an Aristotelian account, a dynamic, evolving self, which stands in contrast to that of one's friend, can be valuable in promoting these ends. The variable that would then make C&K's view distinctive from Aristotle's would not be these aspects (which Biss' account could potentially incorporate) but its focus on the knowledge and development of non-virtuous features of the self. For this, we need a better understanding of why valuing these features can be valuable. This is what the previous chapter attempted to provide. With it in hand, and with the help of C&K's discussion of 'interpretation' and 'direction' in friendship, we can consider in more detail the ways in which this relationship distinctively facilitates the knowledge and development of these non-virtuous features, often to valuable ends.

Finally, we should note that C&K seem to be arguing for a particularly strong claim about these processes of direction and interpretation, which we need not endorse. According to them, these are not only valuable, common features of close friendship. Rather, they are necessary and sufficient features of all friendship. This is of course a much more stringent claim. The idea that there are necessary and sufficient conditions at all has been criticised by both Digeser (2021) and Lebowtiz (2018: 113-114), while the notion that C&K's account provides sufficient features of friendship is disputed by Keller (2004: 341) Thus, while I view their account as an important jumping off point, taken on its own, it risks being undermined by more recent interpretations of Aristotle and as making unnecessarily strong claims about the role of these processes in friendship.

3. Self-Knowledge, Self-Development and Self-Disclosure: Moving Away from Aristotle

Though self-knowledge and self-development often occur together (as C&K often illustrate in their examples) it can be helpful to treat them separately, before considering how they interact. I will first discuss self-knowledge, then the ways in which this knowledge can promote self-development, before considering forms of self-development that aren't directly caused by the acquisition of self-knowledge. Finally, I consider how self-disclosure and emotional support within friendship can be means to both self-knowledge and self-development.

3.1. Self-knowledge

In considering how friends promote self-knowledge, we should distinguish the different kinds of features of our personality about which they can provide knowledge, and the different kinds of evaluations they can make about them. Regarding facts, we can exclude here knowledge of descriptive matters to which we have easy epistemic access. A friend could measure and inform me of my height, for instance, but nothing about this knowledge depends on our relationship.

More important are those descriptive facts to which our epistemic access is less forthcoming. Consider non-evaluative facts about our personality. How extraverted are you, for instance? This may be hard to judge without the contact of a close relationship such as a friendship, with someone who's differing level of extraversion can be illuminatingly compared with your own.

Then there are evaluative judgements. As C&K suggest, it's in this area where our friends may have special insight, and who's views we may be inclined to privilege. Some judgements may involve thin moral concepts, such as our friends believing that we are 'a good person'. Others may involve positive evaluations of traits that are themselves purely descriptive. A person may be high in need for cognition, for instance - one's disposition to enjoy thinking deeply about abstract matters - but view this negatively, having internalised the message that they 'just think too much'. Here a friend's verbal assurance that they value this trait can work to correct this negative self-evaluation. In this sense, they not only gain knowledge that they have this feature, but also learn of how their friend regards it. In the process, they learn about how they themselves can regard it as well. The friend high in need for cognition may learn that they need not feel ashamed of this trait, learning to see the value in it. In the process, they can value themselves more highly.

This concerns evaluations of non-evaluative traits. Evaluative judgements proper are likely to involve thick concepts. These can be moral - we may view our friend as courageous or kind, for example - but many will be aesthetic as well. While it may be hard to define what it is to be cool, graceful, or stylish, we often feel we know it when we see it, and many of us see it in our friends. Concepts such as this are more obviously socially constructed than notions of courage, and can be highly subjective. As such, both the descriptive and evaluative aspect of these thick concepts can be unstable. Descriptively, different people will see different features of personality and appearance as contributing to someone's being cool, for example. Evaluatively, depending on one's social circle, it may not be the case that being cool is a positive characteristic. This can be exploited by friends to affirm traits that usually earn one social disapproval in wider society. Consider this scene in the coming-of-age film Donnie Darko. The main protagonist, Donnie, is talking to his soon-to-be girlfriend, Gretchen. Donnie is by most accounts a fairly strange individual; prior to the interaction that follows, he inquires excitedly about Gretchen's father's emotional problems, as well as over-shares about his own, and in general displays an intensity that could certainly rub others the wrong way. Gretchen reacts to this as follows:

> Gretchen: You're weird.
>
> Donnie: Sorry.
>
> Gretchen: (Smiling) No, that was a compliment.
>
> (Kelly, 2001: 30:04)

While Gretchen presumably agrees that Donnie has many of the characteristics of someone who is weird, she does not think that being weird is itself bad. Thus, she is implicitly inviting Donnie into a subculture, perhaps shared only by the two of them, in which evaluative terms don't have the same meaning that they do for the wider social circle, where Donnie generally struggles to gain acceptance. This communicates to him that, at least within the bounds of their friendship, he need not suppress or feel ashamed about his more eccentric qualities.

This so far concerns ways in which friends provide verbal feedback about our personality. But what friends do can be just as important as what they say. Consider the person high in need for cognition, but who views this trait negatively. Their friend may undermine this negative judgement by saying that they value the trait. But they may also do this by, for instance, actively engaging with the thoughts of the other, asking them questions about which they believe they will have special insight, and signalling how the

other's thoughts impact and alter their own. This helps communicate that this trait is highly prized, and can help reduce the individuals need to hide or denigrate this trait.

Following C&K, contrasting personalities may well be relevant here. The person lower in this trait may come to see the value in reflecting deeply about things. The latter may learn from their friend that there is an alternative to being lost in thought - stopping to smell the roses, say, rather than immediately speculating about their precise species and genus. Once again, these are non-virtuous features of personality, and the self-development they engender is prudentially, rather than morally, valuable.

3.2. Self-knowledge Exclusive to Friendship?

This provides some insight into the ways that friends facilitate self-knowledge. However, one might raise a concern here. While one might agree that friends can be sufficient sources of self-knowledge, one might wonder if friends are necessary or non-substitutional for any of this. After all, we surely learn about ourselves through many types of relationships, notable comparisons here being familial relationships and those we might forge with a therapist. As such, we might wonder whether there is any type of knowledge for which we should give friendship pride of place. Let's first consider the epistemic reasons we might have to see friendship as providing distinct forms of knowledge. We then examine some non-epistemic reasons that justify a desire to experience this at the hands of friends rather than anybody else, even those that might be suitably placed to offer the same goods.

Firstly, there are kinds of knowledge we cannot gain in the absence of our friendships. An obvious example here is this: what kinds of friends we are. As Digeser (2021) points out, we can see the ways that we 'do' friendship as expressive of who we are. As such, we learn something about ourselves from seeing how it is that we behave, think and feel in friendship, as well as through the feedback our friends provide. What's more, friendship is a highly distinctive type of relationship. It is voluntarily chosen, lacks a legal or institutional framework, is anarchical, and is the least structured by social expectations compared to any other type of relationships we engage (Thomas, 1987). Friendship is not so much characterised by what friends do as how they go about doing it, by its 'adverbial conditions' (Digeser, 2021: 7-23). An important adverb here being that friendship proceeds 'recreationally'. It lacks any pre-defined goal, allowing for much creativity and deviation from societal conventions.

It stands to reason that what we learn in this context would be novel, as the way we experience ourselves in friendship is unlikely to be realised in any other relationship that lacks these distinctive features. Given this, while a therapist might be able to predict

something about the kind of friend we would be based solely on that relationship, it's unlikely they could tell us everything there is to know. Indeed, in the absence of any friendships, we would be deprived of a significant reservoir of experiences from which the therapist could learn about us. Likewise, familial relationships lack this free-form nature, with roles being pre-defined and enforcing an inherent difference in authority between caregivers and children - one which, despite our many best efforts, can remain even into adulthood (Thomas, 1987).

Moreover, we should clarify the types of knowledge available from intimate relationships such as these. Friendship, familial relationships and therapy involve receiving feedback on our personality that is propositional in nature: in each we are explicitly told many facts about how the other perceives us. Some of this information is not delivered explicitly - laughter, for instance, implicitly communicates that our friend finds us funny - but could be formulated in propositional terms.

But there is also the more intangible, phenomenological aspect to these relationships. It *feels* like something to be in the company of a therapist or a family member or a friend. And this general 'feel' differs depending on the type of relationship. How we feel from context to context is informed by the norms of the relationship. As mentioned, friendship is recreational, lacking a predefined goal, in a way that therapy cannot be. And in both the psychotherapeutic and familial relationship, there is an imbalance of power and authority. As Thomas (1987) notes 'there is the presumption that children should defer to the authoritative assessments [of their] parents…Parents generally take this presumption for granted; children spend a lifetime calling it into question' (Ibid: 222). In other words, in friendship we are acquainted with a distinctive experience of ourselves, and this knowledge by acquaintance is unlikely to be acquired through other relationships that are not underwritten by the same norms. This experience of ourselves gives us knowledge of what we are like in this context, which in turn can inform us of the kind of novel ways of being that are possible for us.

These are epistemic reasons we might look to friends for self-knowledge. But there are surely non-epistemic reasons to value gaining this insight *from friendship* rather than anywhere else. For one, we don't just want to know what we're like as a person: we want our friends to know this too. Thus, when they can tell us something insightful about ourselves, they not only provide us with useful information, but alert us to the intimacy of the relationship, the fact that they know us in the way close friends are supposed to. Of course, while we also want this in our familial and psychotherapeutic relationships, neither would be a substitute for having it in friendship. Having one's family know one intimately does not obviate the need to be known by one's friends.

Finally, we care not only about gaining knowledge but about gaining it through a particular means. Friendship can be a deeply fulfilling relationship in its own right, and learning about ourselves is surely part of that. Thus, even considering its purely instrumental value as a source of knowledge, we have reason to preferentially value it above other sources. For example, even if a battery of psychological tests could tell us everything we would learn from a friendship, put simply, it wouldn't be as fun, nor would the process contribute to our flourishing to the same extent and in the same way.

3.3. Self-development

I've so far discussed how friendship facilitates self-knowledge, and the epistemic and non-epistemic reasons we have for desiring it. In particular, I've argued that there are forms of self-knowledge which friends are especially well-positioned to provide given the unique features that this relationship possesses. We can now consider how friendship promotes self-development. I begin by differentiating self-development from mere self-change; I then consider the ways that gaining self-knowledge from friendship in the ways discussed, can lead to self-development. Finally, I consider how friendship can promote development of the self without necessarily doing so by providing self-knowledge. While the two are often related, they can come apart.

In discussing self-development, it's important to distinguish it from self-change. While self-change is merely descriptive (we can change in ways that are good, bad or neutral from an evaluative perspective) self-development often implies a stronger, normative component; indeed, this is how I will use the term here. Thus, to talk of friends promoting self-development is to say that friends do something good for us when they facilitate this change. Why the change they inspire is good will depend on the form of development. Though I have deliberately eschewed talk of moral or intellectual virtues in the discussion so far, certainly friends can promote these goods. They can also help us cultivate aesthetic virtues, such as in developing our appreciation for a new art form. As mentioned, friends might promote features of our psychology such as our self-esteem or self-acceptance, which are good in their own right. The precise forms of development friends can encourage are too numerous to list here, but giving a few examples will indicate how this process happens. First, however, we should understand the relationship between the kind of prudential values that friends encourage, and the virtues that Aristotle takes them to promote.

To be sure, friendship can lead us to change in ways that are not normative. As Nehamas (2016) points out, to be a friend to someone is, inherently, to open one's self up to being influenced by the other. There is, ultimately, a kind of vulnerability that comes with this; and we do not always know exactly how friends will shape us in

advance. The kind of non-normative change friends can inspire will often involve causing us to develop character vices. The effect of another's vice will differ depending on the vice. Some vices will cause the same vice to develop in the other. If one friend has an uncaring mentality towards those in need, a friend who is influenced by this disposition may quite easily become uncaring themselves. In other cases, some vices may inspire the opposing vice. An arrogant person, in requiring obedience to their own judgement from those close to them, may cause their friend to develop servility. Alternatively, new vices may develop in the friend, which are neither the same vice, nor the opposing one. When faced with an arrogant friend, the other may become unkind to the friend in an attempt to 'knock them down a peg'. These changes would be examples of self-change, but not of self-development.

Likewise, friends can make us more virtuous, and when they do, this is normative, a form of self-development. But there are other ways in which friends can change us in ways that are normative, which do not reduce to making us more virtuous. The support we get from friends allows us to develop in ways that are prudentially valuable, in addition to any moral or intellectual value they might have. Of course, prudential and moral value interact in interesting ways. In morally favourable circumstances, becoming more virtuous will be good for one prudentially. Likewise, being virtuous will often facilitate behaving in ways that redound to one's benefit in the long run (e.g. being temperate will be good for one's health).

Equally, the two can come apart. In corrupted environments, virtues could make one worse off. Within a prison, kindness may make one vulnerable to abuse; epistemic conscientiousness may cause one to lose favour among one's conspiratorially-minded community. Indeed, work on epistemically corrupting environments supports this idea (Kidd, Chubb, Forstenzer, 2021; Kidd, 2018). Finally, prudential goods, such as feeling positively about one's self, may make the development of virtues easier. It may be hard to have the mental bandwidth to step outside one's self, as is often necessary for virtues such as kindness and generosity, if one is clinically depressed, for instance.

While wellbeing can be a tricky concept, with lots of competing definitions, one view that may be helpful for this discussion is Valerie Tiberius' (2018) view of wellbeing as 'value fulfilment over time'. Hers is particularly noteworthy, as she explicitly applies it to issues of how friends can promote one another's wellbeing.

Tiberius helpfully identifies a common phenomenon: that there is often a gap between the values we have and the values that would be good for us. By 'good for us', Tiberius' does not have in mind some objective list of preordained values. Rather, values are something that we develop over time that can be seen as more or less appropriate for

us. Our values can be ultimate (intrinsic) or instrumental (i.e. means to fulfil other values). Their appropriateness will be determined by a number of factors, including:

- How sustainable they are over the long term
- How consistent they are with our other values (e.g. does fulfilling this value significantly threaten the fulfilment of some other values)
- How fitting they are to our psychological makeup
- How likely they are to be fulfilled (Ibid)

For example, certain values - such as excessive drinking - may not be sustainable over time, either because of one's circumstances (the habit is prohibitively expensive) or because they conflict with other values, such as one's health or relationships. Other values, such as being a successful Hollywood actor, may not be realistic given one's level of talent or lack of opportunity for pursuit.

Our friends can promote our wellbeing, Tiberius argues, by helping us better fulfil our values. They can do this a number of ways. They can help us choose better instrumental means to fulfilling our ultimate values, they can encourage us to change the standards of success for fulfilling an ultimate value, they can encourage us to change our ultimate values.

The self-knowledge friends provide is relevant to this in a number of ways. I said in the section on self-knowledge that friends can promote a sense of what is possible for us. Through their evaluative attitudes towards various features of our personality, we come to learn that we need not feel ashamed of them - indeed, that we feel properly proud of them. This is relevant to wellbeing in the sense already identified - that of promoting self-esteem - but it has broader implications. As Tiberius suggests, one way our values can be inappropriate for us is if they conflict with enduring features of our psychology. One reason we may adopt such conflicting values is because we settle for the values we think we ought to have; the kind of values appropriate for the person we think we ought to be. In such cases, we believe that the person we should be would not have these deep psychological features that conflict with the values we have. As such, it is the features believed to be the problem, not the values.

In some instances, this will be the case. An impulsive person, who also values commitment to their partner, may be better off reigning in their impulses for causal sex, to ensure that they remain faithful. But often, our negative evaluations of our traits are misplaced. When there is nothing wrong with a given feature, it often does not serve our

wellbeing to adopt values that strongly conflict with it. A person who loves to create art, but believes this disposition is frivolous and instead trains as an accountant, could be choosing to adopt a value that is inappropriate for them. In cases like this, it is the negative evaluation of the disposition towards art that motivates the adoption of inappropriate values. By encouraging positive evaluations of such traits, friends can undermine this motivation. After all, if there is nothing wrong with being a lover of art, why not adopt values that honour it?

Friends come to know us very well. And this knowledge of our personality can be helpful in providing us with insight into what we ourselves are really like. We can learn of the features which (rightly or wrongly) we take ourselves to have. We can recognise the attitudes we have towards those features. And, through the encouragement of friends, we can be brought to question whether those assessments are fair or accurate. Further, this knowledge and these changes in evaluative perspective can promote a valuable kind of self-development. In the best friendships, our friends help usher out of us a host of qualities, affirm them, and in doing so, help us affirm them too. As a consequence, we may have more confidence to act in closer accordance with those relatively fixed features of our temperament. We may feel empowered to embrace those values that are appropriate to the personal natures that friends have encouraged us to affirm. In doing so, we can better fulfil our values and, at least on a conception like Tiberius', have greater wellbeing.

One process by which this self-knowledge and development often takes place is through self-disclosure. Close friends tell each other important information about themselves; in the process, they learn not only about the other, but about themselves as well. Self-disclosure can also be a vehicle for affirmation of many aspects of the self. When I self-disclose about my various hopes or anxieties, the things I favour, regret or disregard about myself, it gives my friend the opportunity to affirm those good features about which I am doubtful, and (when necessary) present those less favourable traits in a more charitable light. This is part of what makes a friend emotionally supportive. With this in mind, we can now consider the roles that self-disclosure and emotional support play in friendship, especially as this relates to self-knowledge and self-development.

4. Self-disclosure and Emotional Support

The importance of self-disclosure in friendship has been highlighted by Laurence Thomas (1987). Indeed, he has produced the most prominent paper on the topic. He marks out self-disclosure as central to cementing intimacy in the relationship. While I agree that self-disclosure is important for intimacy between friends, I will argue that Thomas' account puts excessive focus on the content of what is disclosed, rather than the reasons and motivations that friends typically have for disclosing. These often

involve looking for emotional support from our friends. Thomas' neglect of these factors, and focus solely on the content of what is disclosed, leads to erroneous conclusions about what is and isn't necessary for such intimacy. It also neglects the role of emotional support which is, arguably, just as important when it comes to intimacy in close friendship.

Further, I argue that Thomas' account is incomplete, in that it fails to recognise the way the content of what is disclosed evolves through the process of the disclosure itself. Part of the value of friendship is that it allows a context to explore thoughts and feelings that are not fully formed, and may only become crystallised through conversation with the friend. Moreover, his account ignores the role the friend plays in supporting this process. While Thomas notes the importance of trust for self-disclosure, his remarks centre mainly on the friend 'keeping our secrets'. This follows naturally from his view of self-disclosure in friendship as one in which we primarily disclose 'private information', which we would not want non-friends to know about. However, not disclosing personal information to others is only part of how friends best support the process of disclosure; listening, offering empathy and emotional support are often just as important. Even if Thomas would agree with this, these facets are left out of his analysis.

4.1. Thomas' Account

Thomas' account of self-disclosure in friendship begins with a distinction between public and private information (1987). Public information is 'information which anyone can obtain about us if only she would watch what we do and listen to what we say as we go about performing our various social roles' (Ibid: 223). Private information is 'guarded information about our life, that is, information the dissemination of which matters considerably to us' (Ibid). Central to his argument is the claim that the intimacy in friendship is cemented by the sharing of private information. Essentially, what cements intimacy in friendship is the fact that information shared is of a particular nature - it is private. As such, it is not information to which just anyone can have access. Unlike public information, it is not visible 'from the outside'. By self-disclosing this type of private information about ourselves to our friends, we therefore put them in a privileged position, making them privy to facts about ourselves that most people do not and often cannot know (Ibid).

This cements intimacy by fostering trust between the two parties (Ibid). By disclosing private information, the speaker demonstrates that they trust the friend not to disclose this to others, thereby protecting the speaker's privacy. By living up to this implied promise, the friend shows themselves to be worthy of this trust. Because deep friendships must be mutual, the friend will respond in kind, thus showing that the trust is reciprocated. What's more, as a consequence of this, friends grow to have 'commanding perspectives' on one another's lives. Self-disclosure in friendship promotes deep knowledge and understanding of one another, giving the friends an epistemic privilege regarding each other's characters, motivations, values and desires. As such, they are well-poised to offer good advice (Ibid).

This view seems to make sense of certain aspects of self-disclosure in friendship. Friends often do tell one another things they don't tell non-friends. Much of this information is personal, and therefore information that they may want to keep private. By not sharing this information, trust is cemented. Further, the sharing of this information surely does tell us a lot about our friends, which can provide us with a commanding perspective on their lives. And this may explain why we often put more stock in the advice of friends rather than non-friends.

However, I believe Thomas' account suffers here from focusing too much on the content of what is disclosed (or not) and not enough on the motivations for this disclosure and reasonable expectations we have of how our friends ought to respond. This is best illustrated when we consider self-disclosure of private information outside of friendship.

4.2. Motivations for Disclosure and Expectations About How Friends Should Respond

This focus on motivations for disclosure, and expectations about how a friend ought to respond, allows us to explain a number of features of friendship, while at the same time, not having to commit to specific claims Thomas makes, which seem implausible. For instance, Thomas argues that we demonstrate that we trust our friends by sharing with them private information, which we do not willingly share with others (Thomas, 1987). As a result, he claims that:

> If we are public about virtually everything in our lives, then we are left with little that can serve as a basis for intimate trust. We have very few, if any, resources left, whereby we can convey to another that we regard him as someone in whom we can have intimate trust (Ibid: 224).

This seems to imply that discussing something publicly robs or undermines the topic of its potential for establishing intimacy between friends. The discussion of having 'few resources left' suggests that each private subject discussed publicly reduces the possibility of that allowing for intimacy in our friendships. This seems implausible, especially when we consider the different ways in which we can 'be public' about what are taken to be private matters.

Take mental health. A person's mental health is taken to be a form of private information about them. Whether or not someone is taking antidepressants, for example, is not something that just anyone has a right to know. It's also true that a person's struggles with their mental health may be something that they choose to disclose to their friends (rather than non-friends) and that in doing so may help cement the intimacy in the relationship. However, it is not clear that the mere unavailability of this information to non-friends is what fosters the intimacy within friendship; nor is it clear that making this information public would thereby undermine its capacity for facilitating intimacy in friendship.

To see this, let's consider a group of people known for being particularly willing to disclose private information to the public - comedians. In his comedy special 'Cold Lasagne Hate Myself 1999' (Acaster, 2020), comedian James Acaster discloses much about his mental health. He talks candidly about having suicidal thoughts, for example, as well as what it was like to be in an emotionally abusive relationship with a previous agent. It's clear that this content is intended to be sincere, and is corroborated by what Acaster has said in interviews about his personal life. It is odd to think that by disclosing this information publicly, he has thereby undermined its ability to facilitate intimacy in his friendships. This is for a number of reasons, all of which relate back to the motivations of disclosing to friends and the expectations we have about how they ought to respond.

The content of what we disclose is not all that matters for determining its role in producing intimacy. While Acaster's disclosure about his mental health issues may allow the audience to feel they know him better, it does not produce the intimacy typical of friendship. This is best explained by context: Acaster is telling us this information as part of a comedy special. This affects his motivations for the disclosure and his expectations about how we might respond. While we are not necessarily meant to find the facts he discloses funny in themselves, they are disclosed as part of a performance, created to entertain. This motivation is different from disclosure that occurs in friendship. We often disclose personal information about our mental health not to entertain our friends, but to help them understand us and to seek their emotional support. In the comedy special, Acaster observes that audience members often misunderstand the impetus for his disclosure on stage, responding to it much in the way a friend would do:

> Sometimes people worry about me in the show because they're overly empathetic. It's nice of them but they don't need to and it kind of ruins the show for them. Look, anything I've told you about tonight on stage, I've dealt with it, I've processed it, that's why I'm telling you. The fact I'm telling you lets you know it's fine now. Because - and don't take this badly - you lot are *never* going to be the *first* people I come to (Ibid: 40:00-40:24).

Here, Acaster is indicating the different roles and expectations that surround the different contexts in which self-disclosure takes place. Disclosure of otherwise private information to an audience in the context of a comedy show has very different motivations and aims to solicit very different responses, to disclosure of the same information to one's friends. He also highlights that when this distinction isn't understood, the show doesn't land for the audience members in the way it is intended.

We see this discussed by other comedians who are public about their mental health. In her show 'Does My Mum Loom Big In This?' comedian Arabella Weir talks at length about the neurosis she experiences as an adult because of her relationship with her mother. Here is what she said about the show's reception:

> What's happened with my show now, because I talk about my dysfunctional childhood in the first bit, is I've had a number of women come up to me and say 'I *really* think you need a hug!' And it's awful because I'm thinking 'Yes - but not from *you!*' (Gamble, Acaster, 2020: 37:43-37:56).

This illustrates the different expectations regarding how hearers of this information should respond based on the context in which it is disclosed. Hugging a friend who tells you about their mental health problems in a one to one conversation is likely to be an appropriate response. Hugging a stranger who has disclosed this information about their mental health as part of a comedy show is unlikely to be an inappropriate response. Laughter at a comedy show about a comedian's struggles with their mental health will usually be fitting; laughter at a friend describing those same struggles will typically not be. Disclosing this in the context of friendship invites the friend to offer emotional support, something which, as Acaster and Weir points out, is often unnecessary and unwanted in the former context.

This helps us understand why Thomas' view seems strained. Acaster and Weir don't undermine the capacity for their self-disclosure about mental health in friendship to engender intimacy, by disclosing these same matters in the context of a comedy show. This is because the two forms of disclosure are performed in different contexts, with different motives, with the expectation of different responses, where those expectations are justified by different norms. The intimacy is engendered not simply by the content of what is disclosed, but by the fact that friends offer emotional support which is both wanted and rightfully expected, while it is usually not wanted or expected in the context of a comedy show.

Further, we should note the potentially conservative implications of Thomas' proposal. If his view is correct, we have a strong reason to avoid being too public about personal information, such as our mental health. On this view, doing so will undermine our ability to cement intimacy in our friendships. Though likely unintentional, if this view was widely acted on, it could end up reinforcing social stigma and conservative values[14], of the 'buttoned down, stiff upper lip, silent generation' variety. Greater numbers of people being open about their mental illness, for example, is often cited as helping to make the subject more culturally acceptable to talk about, reducing social stigma and allowing greater numbers of people suffering from these problems to seek treatment. If Thomas' is right, such individuals do so at potential cost to the intimacy in their friendships. They would therefore have a significant reason to avoid doing this. Not only does this seem implausible - it is not clear that we have such a reason to keep such topics private if we

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[14] Reiman makes a related point about how intimacy in sex is characterised. We might try and see this intimacy as emerging on the basis of exclusivity - sexual intimacy is engendered partly by the fact that sexual partners see one another naked, something that non-sexual partners do not tend to experience. He notes, however, that this view ends up endorsing conservative values regarding sex. Those who have casual sex, for example, must thereby be undermining their ability to experience intimacy in sex. This is not only controversial empirically, but implies a value judgement about certain non-traditional forms of sex (propagating this attitude would likely hurt both those who have casual sex recreationally, as well as sex workers).

choose not to - but following this would likely end up reinforcing social stigma. Of course, one can endorse conservative values, but these values are contentious and arguably implicated in a variety of harms. Other things being equal, it is better to avoid building contentious and arguably harmful commitments into a theory where it can be avoided.

Ignoring the expectations and motivations for the disclosure also causes Thomas to make questionable claims regarding who is in a position to give advice. According to Thomas, it is the fact that friends share so much private information with one another that they are, therefore, well positioned to advise each other. This follows from the commanding perspective that the friends gain through this on-going self-disclosure. On this view, a friend's right to issue advice to us is grounded in purely epistemic terms:

> If things go as they should, our accepting of another's advice is contingent upon our believing that he is in the position to give us advice. While various factors determine this, one of the most important of them is the amount of information the person has about our lives. So, to be very public about our lives is, by the very nature of things, to put ourselves in the position to receive advice from anyone who is frequently within the sound of our voice. Accordingly, we would not have much reason to accept a friend's advice over the advice of anyone else, save that we generally thought that the friend offered the more sound advice. But, then, the determining factor in our accepting his advice would not be the friendship, but rather our favorable assessment of the soundness of his advice in comparison to that of others (Thomas, 1987: 224).

This ignores three things. Firstly, that part of the reason we might be friends with someone may well be that they have a strong track record of offering very sound advice. If I only pursued friendships with those who gave sound advice then the fact that someone was my friend would, other things being equal, give me a good reason to take their advice seriously, sometimes more seriously than I would the advice of others.

Secondly, it assumes that the reason we have for taking advice is purely epistemic in nature. Whether I put myself in the position to receive advice from someone is based purely on the information about myself I make them privy to. According to Thomas, by being public about facts of my private life, if other (non-friends) respond by giving advice, it means that I have to take that advice in the same spirit as I would if it were issued by a friend.

But again, this just doesn't seem right. Recall fans of Acaster or Weir's stand-up shows. They presumably have a lot of information about the problems these comedians experience regarding their mental health. We could presume (or if necessary, stipulate) that these fans might have some very good advice to give them; maybe they have experienced similar issues themselves. All the same, the reaction that Weir has would still seem justified: even when we are in need of support and even if someone might have advice which, epistemically, is well-informed, it still matters what that person's

normative standing is. This is not a question of whether the advice is good epistemically, but whether it is appropriate for them to give it.

Indeed, so often in life, we object to advice not because it is bad but because it is offered inappropriately, because it isn't the other's place to give advice, because, as we say, they 'have no right to'. Think of the hypocrite who (quite correctly) advises others against the behaviour they consistently indulge. Or the person who has wronged us who offers thoroughly lucid prescriptions against treating others poorly. These people may, in some epistemic sense, say the right things. They just have no normative standing to say them to us.

This normative aspect to the issue is often hard to notice because it often goes hand in hand with an epistemic one. As it happens, those who know the most about our situations are often friends and loved ones. They are also the ones we are most likely to view as having the appropriate moral standing to give us advice. But at most this only shows that this epistemic aspect is necessary, not sufficient, for us to take the advice seriously. Ignoring the fact that someone is a friend with whom we already have an established relationship causes us to overlook the ways that advice giving is not a purely epistemic exercise. It matters who the advice is coming from not just for epistemic reasons, but also for moral ones. We allow friends to give us advice partly because we have invited them into a relationship in which we make ourselves vulnerable to their assessments of our situation. While the information a friend knows about us is clearly relevant, we would not feel that a stranger who happened on the same information would have equal right to offer advice. That is simply not how this works.

The third issue with Thomas' presentation of this is the framing of self-disclosure in friendship as being one in which a friend offers a personal problem and the other responds with advice. This certainly happens, and does constitute an important part of the relationship. But this is not all that friends do that is of value in this context. This introduces another issue with Thomas' view: it presents an overly passive view of how self-disclosure in friendship operates. This is something I explore in the next section.

4.3. Self-disclosure as an Active Process

The picture of self-disclosure we gain from Thomas often risks representing it as a purely passive process. A friend has a problem, a desire, an emotion, etc. which they are aware of. They disclose this to the friend by stating what it is. The friend responds by using their commanding perspective on the friends' life - established through extensive self-disclosure from the other - by giving sound advice. While this is surely how some interactions between friends occur, this picture leaves a lot out. Firstly, it assumes a passivity on the part of the friend disclosing. On this view, the friend already has the information they wish to disclose fully formed in their head; the process of disclosing it makes no difference to the information disclosed. Secondly, the friend who

receives this disclosure doesn't do anything to facilitate it. The information is disclosed fully by the friend, the other responds merely by giving advice.

Both aspects of this picture misrepresent valuable processes that occur during self-disclosure in friendship. The first is on the part of the friend offering the disclosure. In practice, we often don't know what we wish to disclose to our friends until we start talking. Consider all the times you have been feeling a certain emotion, and not known exactly what it is or what is its cause, until you have the opportunity to talk about it in-depth with a friend. Equally, consider the times you haven't even known what emotion you are experiencing until a conversation with a friend helps you pinpoint it.

The idea that we are not incorrigible spectators on our mental lives has been well-documented (see for instance, Hayrbon, 2008). Our thoughts and emotions are not always transparent to us. As Daniel Haybron quips: 'anyone wanting to know how happy I am would best consult my wife, as I am often the last to know' (Ibid: 215). Likewise, our friends can often tell what we are feeling based not on what we say, but on our tone of voice or body language. This again points to how focusing on the content of speech is often a poor guide to how intimacy is cemented. Indeed, the content, taken in itself, can be misleading. When asked how they are, a friend may talk about anything but how they are feeling, appearing desperate to avoid the subject. A perceptive friend will often pick up on this, noting that perhaps the friend is struggling in some way, and may do their best to gently approach the issue as seems appropriate. What is true of emotions is also true of thoughts. As Emerson said, a friend is someone with whom I can 'think aloud' (Emerson, 1842/2009: 175). As we have surely all found at various times, the process of discussing what one's thoughts are is clarifying, and allows vague and amorphous ideas to crystallise into something more concrete.

This describes how the process of disclosure affects what is disclosed, often in epistemically positive ways. These conversations can be instrumental in coming to understand things about ourselves in ways we otherwise would not. However, the role of the friend on the receiving end of this disclosure is not passive either. While they may give advice, this is far from all they do in order to cement intimacy. Most fundamentally, friends listen to us. Though this can seem a passive process, it can often involve a number of active decisions on the listener's part. A good listener must resist the urge to interrupt, to go off on tangents, to centre the conversation on themselves, or to offer advice before they have taken the time to fully understand the other's testimony. A good friend ought to demonstrate empathy, being broadly sympathetic to their friend's perspective. They must also marshal specific knowledge about their friend's needs and desires. What does this specific friend find comforting? What would they want to hear in response to their disclosure? These are not always easy questions to answer and they can take care and consideration on the part of the listener.

Some of this behaviour on the part of the listener is affective and some is epistemic. The two interact in interesting ways. A friend who wishes to support another in their process of self-disclosure has to marshal a number of different epistemic resources in the service of respecting and/or promoting the friend's wellbeing. They have to understand

certain propositions about how the friend is feeling. Dialogue with a friend also involves gaining knowledge by acquaintance. The friend who intuits that the other is upset by hearing it in their tone of voice is sensitive to knowledge that is not being presented in propositional form. This also involves know-how. Some people are clearly better at attuning themselves to these kinds of details, and this difference often reflects a difference in one's skills at knowing how to do this effectively.

A good friend will often need to not only know how to do these things, but how to indicate this to the other. A good listener, for example, is not just someone who, through their listening skills, is able to absorb the information being disclosed. Rather, they also communicate to the friend that they are listening and have taken on the information being given to them. More generally, it is often not enough to care about a friend, one must show one cares, often in a whole variety of explicit and implicit ways.

This kind of listening and emotional support impacts the friend who is disclosing and can alter what they disclose. A friend who feels they are not being listened to is unlikely to disclose in as much detail as one who feels their friend is really listening. When disclosing information that makes us feel vulnerable, we are often acutely sensitive to the hearer's responses, and liable to avoid disclosing too much if we feel they are not responding appropriately (Think back to 'testimonial smothering', as detailed by Dotson,). We may not show as much emotion, instead choosing to coldly report facts of how we are feeling. We may be quick to change the subject, and thus, not disclose for as long. In other words, there is a dynamic interaction between the speaker and the hearer that affects the content of what is said. Thomas' analysis, insofar as it focuses only on content itself and not what enables the disclosure, fails to acknowledge this.

These last few sections have highlighted the importance of self-disclosure, going beyond the account given by Thomas. Here, I have aimed to clarify the role of the motivations and expectations in friendship that affect why the disclosure is offered and how it is to be received. Naturally, this led to a discussion of emotional support. Disclosure and emotional support work in a dynamic manner that allows us to learn much about our thoughts and emotions.

5. Conclusion to Part Two

This chapter and the last have explored how we can make sense of the value of friendship in non-moral terms. I have argued that friends value non-virtuous features of one another. I discussed how they can promote self-knowledge regarding these features, and how they can facilitate self-development by affirming them. Much of this happens in the context of self-disclosure, which friends respond to by providing emotional support. It is through this process that we often become aware of our non-virtuous features (in addition to our virtuous ones). Likewise, good friends respond to such disclosure by providing emotional support - in the form of empathy, comforting gestures, and affirmative words and actions. Doing so promotes self-esteem. In coming to understand ourselves better in friendship, and feeling empowered by the relationship to affirm ourselves, we can more easily take on values that are appropriate for us given our psychology. Doing so can thereby help us realise greater wellbeing.

Part Three
Chapter Five: The Overall Argument: Epistemic Humility can Promote Goods of Friendship Between People of Different Social Identities

1. Introduction

The previous chapters have laid out two key concepts: the virtue of epistemic humility and the goods of close friendship. Both will figure heavily in the chapters to come. The overall argument of the following chapters in this section is that differences in social identity, and the surrounding context of oppression, can create obstacles to the goods of friendship; and epistemic humility can help the friends overcome those obstacles and preserve those goods. This chapter outlines some other important concepts that will figure in this argument.

I discuss what I mean by 'social identity' and 'oppression'. While the answers I give are not meant to be definitive or exhaustive of all that one could mean by these terms, hopefully they give an indication of what is meant by them in this context. Indeed, as we'll see, much of the thesis uses paradigmatic cases of social identities and examples of oppression that should be uncontentious.

Differences in social identity and the surrounding context of oppression can undermine the goods of close friendship. This is particularly the case when one friend has a privileged social identity while the other has a marginalised one. I give a number of arguments for why we should care about this. These fall into negative and positive arguments. On the negative side, it is a sociological fact that most friendships end up being homogeneous - that is, constituted by people of the same or similar social identities (genders, races, classes etc.). We should worry about this because it is implicated in perpetuating a number of moral, social and epistemic ills. On the positive side, diverse friendships can combat this, with there being a number of reasons to think that these? relationships are beneficial for our moral, social and epistemic development.

Thus, we have good reason to be interested in what can be done to promote these friendships. Epistemic humility, I suggest, is an important part of the story.

I also briefly address some objections to this general line of argument. I consider the structural critique - the idea that pursuing virtue is too piecemeal and individualistic to effectively combat the problems I identify. I also take note of a critique often levelled at identity politics, and whether my argument is vulnerable to it (spoiler: I don't think it is). Finally, I consider an initial concern about whether humility conceived of as a *virtue* is distinctively necessary for the promotion of these goods in friendship. One could argue that mere continence is sufficient and can accomplish the same outcomes. I address this concern too. First, though, it's important to make the scope of the argument clear by clarifying what it is I am not claiming.

2. The Role of Different Social Identities in Friendship: What I'm Not Claiming

This chapter claims that differences in social identity *can* cause testimonial exchanges to fail and thereby undermine goods of close friendship. This is important to note for two reasons. The first is that I am not claiming that differences in social identity *necessarily* or *always* lead to these negative outcomes. If that was the case, there would be little hope for friendships of this kind - testimonial exchanges would be destined always to fail, simply because of these identity-based differences. I take it to be fairly obvious that this is false. Clearly, friends of different social identities do have productive dialogue about their experiences of oppression, which do lead to greater understanding. Indeed, if this was not possible, my thesis would be totally misconceived: developing the virtue of intellectual humility could never lead to any improvements in these interactions because the sheer differences in social identity in themselves would make this impossible.

As such, this is not my claim. These testimonial exchanges fail not merely because of these differences in social identity, but because of a failure to respond to those differences - and to the other's testimony - appropriately, in a manner that, I will argue, is characteristic of the intellectually humble person. In other words, these exchanges fail because one or both parties are doing something that is causing them to fail: they are perpetrating epistemic injustice. If they did not do this, these exchanges would more successfully transfer knowledge and better fulfil the goods of friendship[15]. This is not to

[15] Of course, this is not to say that the perpetration of epistemic injustice is the only thing that affects whether they are successful. I readily acknowledge that, even in the absence of epistemic injustice, these interactions could be unsuccessful for other reasons.

say that challenging these dynamics is easy: it is not. And there may be occasions where, for the individuals involved, little progress can be made. However, my argument claims that, often, there is reasonable margin for change here and epistemic humility can help facilitate that change. It can make these interactions have more chance of success.

It is also important to say that many interactions between friends of different backgrounds can proceed without much reference to these differences. Friendships succeed partly because the participants recognise what they have in common as much as what makes them different. To say that we should recognise such differences is not to say that we should reify, overemphasise, or become self-consciously fixated on them. But, as we will see, differences in the social identities of friends can and do make a difference to how those friendships go, particularly when issues surrounding oppression and privilege arise. Being able to recognise this is essential to addressing it as and when it is necessary.

The second point to make is that while these differences in social identity can be *a* cause of these goods of friendship being undermined, they are not the *only* cause. Partly this is because social identity is not the only way in which friends can differ; there are many other differences between people that can make friendships challenging, causing the goods of friendship I outlined earlier to be undermined. This is evident from the fact that friendships between people of the same - or very similar - social identities can still be beset by other problems. Sometimes friendships may suffer from the participants being too similar. However, I think there is good reason for focusing on these differences in particular, which I outline below.

2.2. Why Care About Identity in Friendship?

> *'I have friends who are aristocrats, I have friends who are upper class, I have friends who are working class…well…not 'working' class'.*
>
> *Rishi Sunak*
>
> *(Gill, 2022)*
>
> *'These days all my black friends have loads of white friends. And all my white friends have one black friend'.*
>
> *Chris Rock*
>
> *(Ingraham, 2014)*

If this is so, if friendships can be undercut by all manner of different factors, one might ask why I choose to focus on differences in social identity at all? Why not just focus on differences of any sort that are liable to undermine the goods of friendship?

There are two responses to this. The first is that, practically, it simply isn't possible to discuss in detail all the various differences that could cause these problems in friendships. Any attempt to make such a discussion more specific would presumably be vulnerable to the same objection. For example, another non-identity based difference between people is their level of extraversion, as measured by the big five personality test. People differ on this, with some being closer to the introverted end of the spectrum, while others being more the opposite. I take it to be quite plausible that this could cause problems in friendships, jeopardising some of the same goods of the relationship. While I could focus on this, one could then ask why I was focusing on this difference rather than another. The answer would be the same: some level of specificity is necessary in order to make any project manageable and illuminating.

But there is a deeper answer to this concern too. While there are many ways of making the project specific in its aims, I think differences in social identity are especially important for a number of reasons, and thus particularly worthy of study.

As many sociologists have observed, our friendships tend to be homogenous. We tend to socialise, and form close friendships with, people who are like us: those who share our class, race, gender identity, sexual orientation etc. (Vincent, Neal, Iqbal, 2018; Spencer, Pahl, 2006). There are two related questions to ask about this: why might this be bad? And why might diverse friendships be especially good?[16] We can mean a number of things here by good and bad, and as we'll see, the effects of this homogeneity range from the social, political, moral and the epistemic. As Sheila Lintott (2015) argues, we should be worried about friendships being largely homogenous for several reasons.

The homogenous nature of most friendships reproduces inequality in a number of ways. Friendship is *partial*; friends give each other things they do not give to non-friends. These can be immaterial things: time, emotional support, validation etc. They can also be material things: money, a job, a place to stay. As a result, if our friendships are homogenous, this ensures that these (often scarce) goods remain within the same social strata, rather than being distributed more equitably across society (Ibid).

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[16] One might think that the positive effects of diverse friendships just are the inverse of the negative effects of homogeneous friendships. While this may be true in practice, it's not necessarily so. For example, homogeneous friendships may be bad because they perpetuate inequality, but this doesn't necessarily mean that diverse friendships would improve inequality; they may have no impact on it one way or the other.

Friendship also *justifies* partiality. To the extent that we may be biased towards people who share our social identity, and against those who do not, the partiality of friendship may tend to obscure this. As Lintott suggests, 'because he's my friend' often functions as an appropriate justification for partial treatment, while 'because he's white' does not. Yet if one ends up only befriending white people, then this may justify partiality to people of that race under a more innocuous guise (Ibid; this is echoed by Sara Goering, 2003).

Friendship can also be a source of moral growth, but as Friendman (1987) notes, it is going to limit the moral transformation it can cause if the friendship is homogenous. To the extent that we form friendships with people of similar social identities that inhabit similar moral worlds, there will be less opportunity for differences in perspective to call one another's moral commitments into question, or inspire the fostering of new ones (Ibid).

Friends also learn from one another. Yet if our friendship groups are homogenous, there is less that is new to be learned. This affects both what we can learn about our friend, but also what we can learn about ourselves - friendship being a powerful route to self-knowledge (Lintott, 2015).

There is also the issue of epistemic partiality, discussed below. Friendship biases us towards forming positive beliefs about our friends, and away from negative beliefs (evidence that might justify negative beliefs, for example, will more easily be rationalised and explained away) (Stroud, 2006; Keller, 2004). If our friendship groups are homogenous, we are more likely to form positive beliefs about people like us, whether or not they are justified. This may make it easier to believe good things about those who share our identity, thereby making negative beliefs about those that don't will be harder to challenge. This can then result in the development of epistemic vices, such as: arrogance, closed-mindedness, and laziness, for example (Lintott, 2015; Medina, 2013).

Thus, on the one hand friendships between people of different social identities possess a lot of positive potential to enrich our lives and challenge unjust social hierarchies. They are also relatively uncommon, and their rarity may be implicated in reinforcing a number of moral, social and epistemic ills. As such, thinking about the relationship between friendship and justice highlights the importance of forming friendships with those who are of a different social identity. Also, it naturally raises questions about what can be done to make such friendships more likely.

There are many answers to this, and Lintott canvases a number in her paper. My thesis focuses on just one: how the epistemic virtue of epistemic humility can help friends of different social identities overcome obstacles to some major goods of friendship, with particular focus on the kinds of epistemic exchanges that are important within the

relationship. This is obviously limited, and one might argue, vulnerable to a structural critique. I will consider this in the next section.

3. Initial Objection: The Structural Critique

This thesis argues that forms of ignorance and bias that become salient in friendships between people of different social identities can create obstacles to central goods of friendship. It further argues that intellectual humility can help both friends, especially those with privileged social identities, overcome these obstacles. This is important, I claim, because such friendships are valuable in a number of distinctive ways, and because homogenous friendships risk contributing to the ills mentioned above.

One might think this argument is vulnerable to a structural critique. This critique would claim that the development of individual virtue, however ardent or sincere, is ultimately going to be ineffective at overcoming the obstacles to close friendship that I identify. This is because it is too individualistic to take account of the structural causes of oppression. If we want to weed out the prejudices and biases that end up damaging our friendships, we ought to start much further upstream. To the extent that people have such biases because of the society they're in, society itself needs to change.

Indeed, virtue-based approaches to political problems have been criticised for this reason. As Whitcomb et al. note, epistemic humility can be limited when it comes to engaging with people who have morally or epistemically erroneous beliefs (in so-called 'contexts of disparity'), with structural changes sometimes being more important:

> Social structures—such as laws against slavery, or integrated educational systems, or social media content feed algorithms reducing the spread of false information—are plausibly at least sometimes more important when it comes to contexts of disparity than are any virtues, humility included. Our efforts should, at least sometimes, focus on this.
>
> (Whitcomb et al, 2021: 73).

Benjamin Sherman echos this point:

> Virtue theory is committed to focusing on virtues and vices—usually *individual* virtues and vices—as the centre of moral life. But harms can be caused through social structures and historical situations that cannot be improved merely by individuals becoming more virtuous—but which can be improved through structural change without anyone becoming more virtuous (Sherman, 2016).

Whitcomb et al. and Sherman are right: there are material problems that are not the result of any single individual lacking in virtue (in this case, in intellectual humility), and will not be directly solved by anyone becoming less biased, or more virtuous. Equally, it is social structures that can make interpersonal experiences of prejudice all the more significant (Akala, 2018: 16).

These criticisms help highlight what epistemic humility can and cannot do. We should be humble, even about epistemic humility's prospects for bringing about decisive change. They also help clarify the scope of my project. Epistemic humility will not 'fix' all the problems that constitute oppression. No part of this thesis claims that it can. I am concerned with ignorance and bias, and how intellectual humility can help to combat them, but I do not think that ignorance and bias are the only things that cause or constitute oppression, nor that these things themselves only require epistemic humility to be overcome. They don't. Humility helps, but it has its limits.

Given this, it is also important to note that suggesting one cultivate humility is therefore not an alternative to fixing unjust social structures, or being content with the outcomes they produce. One might worry that focusing on individual virtue is to counsel quietism regarding these wider structural issues. This is not without precedent. As Liam Kofi Bright (2023) observes, much contemporary talk - amongst white liberals in the US on the topic of racism, for example - does explicitly admonish against working for any kind of structural change, in favour of working on oneself:

> Sometimes, as in this quote from a number of people running a racial etiquette workshop aimed at white women, it can be made quite explicit that material change is not sought (Bright, 2023: 207):
>
> 'The actual work is for you to deconstruct the things within you: whiteness,' Rao said. 'Whiteness harms people of color, but worry about yourself. Stop worrying about us — that's paternalistic, too.'
>
> Bond echoed this sentiment: 'This idea that we, as white people, need to go out and make these big external actions — that's just white supremacy,' she said. 'This internal work is the hard work; it's the work that never ends.' (Fischer, 2021 cited in Bright, 2023)

This problem arises elsewhere - for example, in Robin DiAngelo's highly successful book 'White Fragility', and has equally been criticised for neglecting any structural aspects to racism (Robinson, 2021).

I believe these sentiments are problematic because, ultimately, they remove any responsibility on white Americans (who, as Bright documents, benefit materially from structural racism) for addressing the structural features. Certainly, nothing I argue for here is premised on this: I do not claim that individuals need work to become more virtuous *at the expense of* addressing structural change.

This is also not to say that structural changes cannot make the surrounding contexts in which friendships arise more hospitable to the formation of these relationships between people of different social identities. One initial obstacle that epistemic humility cannot address, but which can be addressed structurally, is the extent to which social stratification prevents people of different social backgrounds meeting each other. This gives us yet another reason for striving for a more egalitarian society, in addition to the many others.

Further, as Lintott, and Ethan Lieb suggest, we can structure spaces that foster the formation of friendship:

> We could design our cities and towns with friendship in mind. We might use well-placed public spaces to encourage people to gather and converse, and we might incentivize foot traffic. . . . Suburban sprawl might also be targeted for reform to help promote friendship" (Leib 2011: 81, cited in Lintott, 2015).

While all this is important, we should remember that, once friends with different social identities meet, they still need to interact for a friendship to be sustained, and how that interaction goes may depend on how the friends respond to issues related to differences in identity (particularly when these are made salient). Contrast the two following examples.

In 'Why I Am No Longer Talking To White People About Race' Reni Eddo Lodge (2018), a black British woman, describes an encounter with a white British woman when they were both students. Lodge describes taking a module on the British involvement with the slave trade, something which profoundly affected her perspective. The same could not be said for her friend:

> My outlook began to change drastically. My friend, on the other hand, stuck around for a couple of tutorials before dropping out of the class altogether. 'It's just not for me,' she said. Her words didn't sit well with me. Now I understand why. I resented the fact that she seemed to feel that this section of British history was in no way relevant to her. She was indifferent to the facts. Perhaps to her, the accounts didn't seem real or urgent or pertinent to the way we live now. I don't know what she thought, because I didn't have the vocabulary to raise it with

> her at the time. But I know now that I was resentful of her because I felt that her whiteness allowed her to be disinterested in Britain's violent history, to close her eyes and walk away. To me, this didn't seem like information you could opt out from learning (Lodge, 2018: 1-2).

Needless to say, the two of them did not become friends[17].

Contrast this to the example from chapter one:

> My friendship with Anne Kearney was just beginning when I first read her book on counselling and class. Although I saw its great importance in terms of class and power, as a black woman I found the assertions that class was considerably more important than race hard to swallow, as this did not tie in with my own experience of race and racism or those of people I knew. I was also concerned that, although the book stated the importance of middle class counsellors positioning themselves in relation to class, Anne hadn't positioned herself as a white woman in relation to race. I didn't know Anne well at the time, so I braced myself for a difficult conversation; it was important to raise this with her and, as an academic, I had engaged in many such discussions with others and had been met with resistance and defensiveness.
>
> Anne's response was totally different. She was truly remarkable in her willingness to acknowledge that the class-over-race perspective was flawed and to rethink those aspects of the book…At one point in the conversation, I said that she was allowed to defend her position. Her response was 'Not if it's indefensible,' and my respect and admiration for her were sealed. It was clear that, although she was disappointed in herself for not getting it right first time, her only concerns were not to perpetuate misconceptions about race and to 'undertake to educate herself', as she put it, in order to raise her awareness and bring this to her work with non-white clients. She said she was excited to be learning something new and that she wanted to be challenged. The depth of her understanding took my breath away (Kearney, Proctor, 2018)

While the specific issues in these examples are different, they both concern how friends with privileged social identities respond to issues and challenges from people whose identities are marginalised. One responds as though issues of (historical) racism do not concern her. The other, by acknowledging their immense importance. The difference this makes is pretty paramount. As I argue, the fact that the latter represents an exemplar of intellectual humility is no accident. Whatever else may be true, when two people of different social identities meet, the character of those people can make all the

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[17] This is not to say that responding appropriately in these situations is *all* that is necessary for such friendships to flourish. Lodge notes in the book that the two of them were thrown together more by fear of loneliness than anything else. However, it is pretty clear that, if a successful friendship was possible, interactions like this make it much less likely.

difference to how the friendship proceeds - or doesn't. Humility has its limits, but it helps. Given the importance that identity makes in these examples, it is now worth asking 'what is a social identity?' We turn to that now.

3.2. Social Identity and Oppression

Discussing social identity naturally raises a question: what is a social identity? One might ask the further question: why believe there is such a thing at all?

Plainly, social identities must exist in some important sense. If you believe that oppression happens - that racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia etc. - take place in our world, you believe in some concept of a social identity. If social identities didn't exist in any sense, then it would be impossible to understand these forms of oppression. That is because they rely on singling some people out for differential treatment on the basis of some (real or perceived) differences about them which are ascribed social importance. It is exactly these differences of social significance that constitute social identities.

There are paradigmatic examples of social identities. These include being a woman, being gay, being black, being working class. While individuals with these social identities are typically subject to oppressive treatment on the basis of their identity, being subject to oppression is not a necessary feature of a social identity. This is because other features that do not make one subject to oppression are also part of one's social identity. In many cases, they may be identities on the basis of which one is privileged (i.e. not subject to oppression, and benefiting from various enablements that the oppressed are not afforded). Being a man, being heterosexual, being white, middle or upper class would be examples of these.

To have a certain social identity is to be part of a social group. What does it mean to be part of a social group? There have been many answers to this question, but one influential account comes from Katharine Jenkins. She argues that to be a member of a social group is to be subject to certain enablements and constraints (Jenkins, 2020). Her view is especially helpful for our purposes, because, as she argues, it highlights a feature common to many divergent accounts of social groups and other related phenomena (e.g. Searle, 1996, 2011; Asta, 2018; Calvert, 1998; Greif and Kingston, 2011; Mallon, 2016).

To see this, consider the following example, a famous quote by Silvia Plath:

> Yes, my consuming desire is to mingle with road crews, sailors and soldiers, barroom regulars—to be a part of a scene, anonymous, listening, recording—all

> this is spoiled by the fact that I am a girl, a female always supposedly in danger of assault and battery. My consuming interest in men and their lives is often misconstrued as a desire to seduce them, or as an invitation to intimacy (Plath, 2001: 77).

This passage - written in Plath's personal journal - vividly articulates the ways that her identity as a woman structures the way others relate to her. It is structured in these ways by norms. Plath can reliably predict how members of other social groups - men, for instance - will treat her, based on these norms. And as Jenkins' account would suggest, these norms enable and constrain. Being a man enables one to engage in the activities Plath describes, anonymously and without fear of assault. It enables them to express interest in the lives of other men without this necessarily being viewed as an attempt to seduce them. Being a woman, by contrast, restricts one's access to these experiences, forcing even those who yearn to do them to view them as frustratingly out of reach.

This concerns one dimension of oppression: gender. But others can affect what one is enabled to do or constrained from doing. Another axis of oppression is race, and norms around this can enable and constrain in similar ways. Consider some ways that white privilege can enable white Americans (including white women) in the US to go about their business unmolested, that would not be the case for Americans who aren't white. Peggy McIntosh (1989) enumerates just some of these:

> I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions that I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographic location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can tell, my African American coworkers, friends, and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place and time of work cannot count on most of these conditions.
>
> 1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
>
> 2. I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.
>
> 3. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.

> 4. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
>
> 5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed (Ibid: 2).

These are each examples of enablements structured by norms around race and whiteness. Intersectionality is also relevant here. Different features of one's social identity intersect to determine the extent and character of the oppression one experiences. As Jenkins (2020) describes, intersectionality amounts to three claims: firstly, oppression is non-additive. That is, we cannot learn about what it means to be oppressed across two axes at the same time, by merely studying what it is to be oppressed by each of those axes individually. Being oppressed by virtue of being a black woman, for example, is not just to be oppressed in the ways that white women are, and oppressed in the way that black men are. There are particular stereotypes that correspond to this group specifically, that are not applied to either black men or white women. Secondly, oppression is non-separable. We cannot separate our analysis of what it means to be oppressed as a black woman in terms of racial oppression and gendered oppression. Finally, different axes of oppression are cross-constitutional: each is partly defined by other axes (2023: 66). As Jenkins says 'gender could not be what it is if race did not exist, and race could not be what it is if gender did not exist' (2023: 66).

To sum up, then: this chapter will examine how differences in social identity risk undermining certain goods of friendship. Social identities exist and, whatever is true of them, we can helpfully view them in terms of how they subject different identities to norms that enable and constrain in different ways. Those social groups I am most concerned with are those that dictate whether one will be oppressed or privileged. The framework above should also help illuminate what is going on in the cases of epistemic injustice within friendship that I consider later.

For instance, I consider the example of a working-class university student who, when testifying to his experience of the difference class makes at university, is met with unjust doubt and incredulity. This is a constraint that he experiences on the basis of his working-class identity. Alice, the upper-middle class student who regards him in this sceptical manner, will not experience this same reaction from others when she makes similar testimony on the basis of her class identity (though she may be regarded with due scepticism in other contexts on the basis of being a woman). Indeed, there are contexts where, as an upper-class white woman, she will be enabled where Brian, working class white man, will be constrained. My argument will rely on paradigmatic

examples of oppression and privilege like this, that should be uncontentious, but can be helpfully understood through the enablements and constraints framework.

3.3. The Identity Politics Critique

Thus, this thesis also uses social identity as a central concept. One might worry about this concept's association with identity politics. Identity politics is contentious and not without its detractors (Heyes, 2020). However, I do not believe the concerns raised about identity politics are especially relevant to my concerns in this thesis.

A major critique of identity politics is that it is counterproductive in the political domain. So the argument goes, there are things which many people, particularly those on the left, want to achieve, such as better employment conditions for workers, through various means, like collective bargaining. This action requires a coalition of people of various different social identities around common material interests. The problem with identity politics, from this perspective, is that it places the focus on the interests of specific (increasingly segmented) social groups that might otherwise make up this larger collective. This exclusive focus on the interests of a minority undercuts the logic of collective action, relying as it does on the greater majority of workers allying against a much smaller group of elite, powerful owners.

This critique may be quite plausible when applied to the domain of political activism. But can it be suitably applied to more intimate contexts such as close friendships between different social identities? I don't think so. To see this, consider these remarks by Fredie DeBoer, a critic of identity politics, who sums up this concern regarding the problems with the concept:

> It's made people unwilling to countenance the idea of being in coalition…with someone that you just don't like. Someone you would never hang out with, someone you don't want to come visit your home; but someone who you can use their vote, you can use their ability to strike, you can use their ability to fundraise, and the two of you can find mutual power according to your shared best interests (Burgis, 2023, August, 15: 128.15).

This may show that focusing on identity is a poor strategy for coalition-building. It does not show that it is unimportant when it comes to understanding and addressing problems arising due to differences in social identity within friendship. Liking may not be necessary for successful activism, but it is arguably a defining feature of friendship (Thomas, 1987; Annis, 1987). It makes sense to say that it may be important to engage in collective action with people you would not choose to hang out with otherwise. It

makes no sense in friendship: in friendship, there is no 'otherwise'. If we're friends, it is surely because we enjoy another's company (Thomas, 1987).

This highlights a more general distinction between friendship and activism. One might think that, to the extent that interpersonal issues matter in activism, it is for instrumental reasons. One could take Deboer's point to be that getting on with one another is only necessary to the extent that it allows different groups to work together to agitate for political change - and perhaps, it isn't even all that necessary. The same is not true in friendship. Having on-going, fulfilling interactions with your friends isn't an instrumental means to achieving something else - it is an intrinsic part of being in a friendship.

Further, the character of our friends clearly matters in friendship in a way it need not matter when addressing structural problems. Consider the vice chancellor of a university. They may have many positive character traits. Or they may not. But arguably, the choices they make regarding, say, legislation around staff pay and working conditions are likely to be far more determined by the system they are in - the wider structures of the educational system - than their personal attributes. Thus, caring about the system seems more appropriate and effectual, than caring about their personal virtues and vices. The same is not true in friendship.

Here, it will be useful to return to Aristotle's distinction between friendships of pleasure, utility and virtue. These different categories constitute the basis on which the friends are valued. While I have been critical of the idea that virtue is the *only* thing we can intrinsically value in a close friendship, I still agree that the distinction between valuing a friend intrinsically versus instrumentally is an important matter. A friendship formed solely for activism would presumably count as a friendship of utility. In this case, it may well be that whether the two friends like each other in any deep way is not necessary for the friendship to continue. Rather, they must merely continue to be useful conduits *for activism*.

Yet this is not the case in the kind of close friendships with which I am concerned. In close friendship, I take it we don't just want our friends to make the right choices, we want them to be the right kinds of people, to have the right character. Thus, whatever might be said about the relative insignificance of virtue when it comes to activism or structural change cannot be easily transferred to friendship. It matters what our friends are like and, as I'll argue, it can matter significantly whether they are intellectually humble.

This is also not to say that friendship has no relevance to activism. Even if the liking required for friendship is not necessary for activism, it can be a significant motivator for political engagement. Having a friend for whom one feels deep concern, hearing about

the oppression they experience, can provide a psychological connection to the reality of oppression that may be hard to achieve in the absence of the friendship. This may motivate political activism (Goering, 2003; Lugones, Spellman, 1983: 576).

Further, we should remember that activism is not the only form of political resistance. As Todd May argues, the kind of behaviour and, ultimately, character that deep friendship requires and encourages us to develop, are in opposition to those required by contemporary neoliberalism. While neoliberalism encourages us to act only as entrepreneurs or consumers - and to assess the value of others according to these goals - friendship requires a more holistic valuing of the whole person, that instinctively repels this reductive perspective (May, 2012).

Whatever else might be true, if the arguments of the next chapter are correct, differences in social identity pose a threat to important features of friendship, and the empirical evidence supports this. Focusing on social identity allows us to illuminate these problems and intellectual humility can go some way to helping us address them. Why then is the virtue of intellectual humility - as opposed to something less demanding - necessary in this context?

3.4. The Virtue of Humility Versus Mere Continence

Another initial objection may be regarding why humility *the virtue* is necessary to promote these important goods in friendship. Why couldn't someone whose level of humility reached mere continence be sufficient? To illustrate the difference, consider the following.

If we take one's level of intellectual humility to be on a spectrum, we can consider a number of character types. We have the fully epistemically humble person, who has realised all important dimensions of the virtue and has them firmly entrenched in her character. Assuming virtue comes in degrees, we also have the person who has less than fully realised version of humility, but has still developed it firmly enough for it to be called a virtue. Then, we have the person who falls further from the ideal: the 'merely continent' person. This is the individual who strives to be epistemically humble…but isn't quite there yet. As such, epistemic humility for them will not be a matter of exemplifying the ideally humble reactions. Affectively, they may lack eagerness and receptivity to engage with others when doing so exposes their limitations, for example. Cognitively, they may be slower to recognise what their limitations are. In general, we can expect them to demonstrate more resistance to this process than for the person who has the virtue proper. The merely continent person, then, will have to engage with their current dispositions as they find them, even as they may pull them in different directions.

There is still significant scope for the humble ideal to make a positive difference in the continent person's interactions. In disagreements in friendship regarding challenging topics - such as those about race or class, for example - this ideal may help guide the continent person on how to behave. If they are confronted with their limitations, they may *feel* defensive, but this doesn't necessitate *getting* defensive - that is, expressing that feeling unthinkingly in their communication. How could they avoid this?

Well, they recognise that the epistemically humble person values epistemic goods. They realise that defensiveness is one obstacle to attaining these goods. They might know from past experience, or be able to imagine, that defensiveness generally makes others shut down or become similarly antagonistic; both of these will prevent them getting the kind of knowledge they value having, because it is important for their friendship. As they cannot avoid feeling these feelings, they may instead employ strategies of mitigation. In the context of the interaction, this may mean, stopping before they speak, gathering their thoughts, taking a deep breath. In general, having a moment to process what the emotions they are experiencing is likely to make their reactions less visceral and impulsive.

Of course, sometimes this won't be possible. But the next best thing might be to acknowledge one's reaction. If they are willing to stay in the conversation a bit longer, recognising its potential value for epistemic goods, they might be able to reflect on previous, defensive remarks. If they are able to take a step back from their initial defensiveness, they may be able to recognise that it was unwarranted. Acknowledging this may do a lot to break an unproductive dynamic.

If this is right, it suggests some real benefits of epistemic humility, even when full realisation of the virtue remains only an aspiration. Mere continence, in these contexts, may make an important difference. If so, why would full epistemic humility be necessary or worth striving for? Can't mere continence get us most of the way there?

Well, most, but not all. And the difference that remains certainly still matters for the quality of the interactions. It isn't fun to have to engage with someone who is defensive; such an experience is likely all too familiar to members of marginalised groups, and having to endure it from their friends in particular is likely to be especially frustrating. If defensiveness from one's friend is inevitable then a friend who acknowledges and regrets it is likely to be preferable to one who doesn't. Perhaps it would prove refreshing. But a friend who can hear you express how you feel and *not* respond with defensiveness is surely the ideal. Even if the insights you want your friend to understand do eventually get communicated, it is hardly going to feel rewarding if getting there involves an uphill battle. And the battle itself may prove emotionally taxing

enough as to be not worth fighting - however willing your friend is to acknowledge their counter-productive reactions. Continence is better than nothing, but full humility is better than both.

Conclusion

This chapter surveyed a number of initial objections to the overall argument I will be making in the chapter that follows. I have hopefully made it clear what I'm not claiming - that identity based differences necessarily or only cause problems for the valuable features of friendship, nor that intellectual humility is the only solution. I have suggested a number of reasons for caring about social identity within friendship, both negative - homogenous friendships seem complicit in a number of social, moral and epistemic ills; and positive - diverse friendships stand to foster a number of social, moral and epistemic goods. I have given a brief account of what a social identity is and its relation to oppression. I have assessed and rejected applying the identity politics critique to the domain of close friendship. And I have argued that it is the virtue of intellectual humility, rather than mere continence, that it is best to strive for when aiming to address the problems that differences in social identity can create for friendship. These have been preliminary objections for an argument that is to be given in the next chapter. The question that now remains is surely 'how do differences in social identity undermine the goods of friendship - of self-disclosure, emotional support and epistemic self-confidence?' This is the subject of the chapter to come.

Chapter Six: How Differences in Social Identities can Create Obstacles to Close Friendship

1. Introduction

The previous chapter examined the nature of social identities, oppression, and considered some objections to the general argument of the thesis. This chapter examines how differences in social identities, particularly between members of privileged and marginalised social groups, can create obstacles to the goods of close friendship. There are two general ways this can happen.

Differences in social identity between friends can create ignorance about one another's life experiences. This is especially likely in cases where one friend has experiences related to a marginalised aspect of their identity that is not shared by the other friend. As I'll suggest, marginalisation can often involve not having one's experiences widely represented or understood (or, misrepresented and misunderstood). Further, as we'll see when considering standpoint theory, when it comes to oppression, what we have and have not experienced can make a real difference to what we can know. Thus, the friend who is not marginalised in that respect is likely to be ignorant of those experiences. While this, in itself, need not pose a barrier to the goods of close friendship, provided it can be appropriately addressed, other features of the friend can work against addressing it. This ignorance will be much more challenging to the friendship if it is combined with prejudice, or when that ignorance becomes wilful and resistant to edification.

Prejudice acts as another obstacle to the goods of close friendship. In particular, this chapter will take 'identity prejudice' as a central concept, because it is this kind of prejudice that is most relevant when it comes to friendships between people of different social identities. Identity prejudice is especially important when we consider epistemic injustice, as this prejudice is often taken to be an essential feature of the phenomenon (Fricker, 2007). There are a number of different forms that epistemic injustice can take; this chapter discusses many of them, and shows how they interlink, working to reinforce one another. In the process, we'll see how it can sustain the kind of ignorance mentioned above. All of this works to ensnare the marginalised person, and to undermine the goods of the friendship.

This chapter is concerned with epistemic injustice in *friendship*. One might wonder whether the fact that the injustice takes place within this specific relational context affects the wrong that takes place. I argue that it does. Specifically, being epistemically unjust to one's friends is distinctively bad. To say that it is *distinctively* bad is to say that the fact that two people in the interaction are friends is relevant to judging the badness of the epistemic injustice. In general, if we can explain all that is bad about an injustice in friendship without reference to the fact that the participants are friends, then friendship does not make the injustice distinctively bad. Yet as I argue, as regards to epistemic injustice, it does.

To say that this injustice is distinctively bad is similar to saying that it is especially bad; however, there are important caveats here. *Especially* bad implies a comparison with other relationships. Thus, whether epistemic injustice is especially bad depends on what we are comparing it to. In many cases, the injustice taking place within friendship will make it worse than if it takes place between strangers, for example. But equally, being on the receiving end of this treatment from a judge, medical professional or educator could make it worse than experiencing this from a friend, depending on the specific circumstances and their effects. What matters for the distinctiveness claim is just that it is the features of friendship I discussed in previous chapters, and go on to discuss below, that are what are figuring in the badness of the injustice in this context[18].

I begin with this as a guiding intuition, and go on to explain what it is that justifies it. I appeal to the goods of friendship described in the previous chapter to explain this. I start by exploring this initial intuition. I will then go on to consider objections, before giving more detailed examples of epistemic injustice in friendship. These examples serve two purposes. The first is to show how different kinds of epistemic injustice can interact; the second is to illustrate how they undermine the goods of friendship.

In the process, then, we'll arrive at an explanation for exactly why epistemic injustice is distinctively bad in the context of friendship. That is, because epistemic injustice undermines the ability of the marginalised friend to engage in self-disclosure; it undermines the perpetrating friend's ability to offer emotional support; and it undermines the marginalised friend's epistemic self-confidence, which can see as a component of their general self-esteem (Tanesini, 2018a; Kidd, 2015). As we have seen, these are all central elements to close friendship. As epistemic injustice is motivated by prejudice, this will also indicate how prejudice undermines the goods of friendship. The examples will also demonstrate how ignorance - particularly in the form of wilful hermeneutical

[18] I thank Luca Barlassina for pointing this out to me in the Q&A at The University of Sheffield's Graduate Seminar.

ignorance, as well as disrespect for the marginalised friend's epistemic standpoint - undermines these goods as well.

2. Why is Epistemic Injustice In Friendship Distinctively Bad?: The Initial Intuition

This chapter takes as its starting point the intuition that it is distinctively bad to be epistemically unjust to one's friends. However bad it might be to be epistemically unjust to non-friends, we cannot explain what is distinctively bad about epistemic injustice in friendship, without appealing to the specific relationship shared by the participants.

First, though, let's consider whether we do in fact feel such an intuition. To do so, take the following example. In Simone De Bevouir's memoir, she relays the experience of talking through her philosophical ideas with her then friend[19] Jean Paul Sartre:

> Day after day, and all day long I measured myself against Sartre, and in our discussions I was simply not in his class. One morning in the Luxembourg Gardens, near the Medici fountain, I outlined for him the pluralist morality which I had fashioned to justify the people I liked but did not wish to resemble: he ripped it to shreds. I was attached to it, because it allowed me to take my heart as the arbiter of good and evil; I struggled with him for three hours. In the end I had to admit I was beaten; besides, I had realized, in the course of our discussion, that many of my opinions were based only on prejudice, bad faith or thoughtlessness, that my reasoning was shaky and my ideas confused. '*I'm no longer sure what I think, or even if I think at all*,' I noted, completely thrown (De Beauvoir, 1959: 344, italics added).

While it is difficult to verify the quality of her specific ideas here, it seems unlikely that someone of her intellectual calibre - an already exceptional philosopher - would have ideas that should be dismissed in the way she comes to dismiss them as a result of her interaction with Sartre. She goes as far as to cite this conversation as a major turning point, causing her to realise that philosophy wasn't for her and she should focus on writing novels instead (Ibid). As Fricker reflects, while this may have been the right choice all things considered, 'it will not have been because her ideas about good and evil 'were based only on prejudice, bad faith, or thoughtlessness', her reasoning 'shaky'

[19] It is unclear to me exactly how close their friendship was, nor whether they were lovers at the time. While this would likely make a difference to our judgements about these matters, I will bracket them here for simplicity's sake and assume, for the argument, that they were reasonably close friends.

and ideas ‘confused’’ (Fricker, 2007: 51). From what’s described, it appears that Sartre beat her down, and caused her to lose faith in her philosophical abilities. While constructive criticism is surely beneficial for philosophy, it does not seem that his remarks were all that constructive, and in fact went a fair way to undermining her confidence as a philosopher.

Fricker does not mention the relational context in which this takes place. Yet I think it’s relevant to note here that Sartre and De Bevouir were friends at the time. Intuitively, this seems to make the case described worse. For contrast, imagine if Sartre was not a friend - just a fellow classmate who engages her in a discussion after a seminar they had together. While behaviour of this sort would still very much be bad, it does not feel nearly as bad as it does when we know the two have an on-going friendship.

This is reflected in the advice that another friend might give De Beauvoir if she relayed this experience. If the perpetrator of this injustice was a mere classmate, such a friend might advise her to forget it, ignore him, and move on. But, if the person knew that Sartre was a friend of De Beauvoir’s, this advice looks crude and insufficient. Something more nuanced is required. It is not just that it is harder to forget or ignore one’s friends - because one’s life is intertwined with theirs in a way it isn’t with a classmate. It is harder precisely because we (rightfully) expect more of our friends than we do of non-friends. The question is, what justifies this expectation? What follows will attempt to answer this. However, first, I begin with some general background to the epistemic injustice research.

2.1. Existing Research on Epistemic Injustice

Existing research on epistemic injustice could be described as generally attempting to answer four questions: what kinds of epistemic injustice are there? Which social groups are victim to them? What kinds of social groups/institutions are responsible for perpetrating them? And what should be done to address these injustices? Answering the first question requires identifying a novel kind of epistemic injustice and showing how it is distinct from those forms already discussed in the literature. An example of this would be Whitcomb and Dembroff’s paper on ‘content-focused epistemic injustice’ (2023) in which they introduce the concept and show how it is related to, but differs from, existing kinds of epistemic injustice.

Answering the second question involves identifying a social group and illustrating the epistemic injustice they face. For instance, Hevi Carel and Ian Kidd (2014) argue that patients often experience testimonial injustice from the healthcare system; Tareeq Jalloh

(2022) argues that young black drill artists experience epistemic injustice from the legal system. Answering the third question requires looking at who is perpetrating the injustice. In the examples just mentioned, it is doctors, and law-enforcement.

Answering the final question involves considering various remedies to specific forms of epistemic injustice. This could involve the development of virtues such as testimonial and hermeneutical justice (Fricker, 2007); developing appropriate 'epistemic toolkits' for doctors (Carel, Kidd, 2014); or ameliorating epistemic injustice via appropriate education (Battaly, 2023).

While all of significant value, this research generally does not examine the relationship that the perpetrator has to the victim. As Ji-young Lee puts it

> Social epistemologists have tended to consider social epistemic exchange at rather abstract dyadic levels (e.g. between a speaker and hearer)... [P]articularized cares of agents in an epistemic group, and the specific nature of members' relationships with each other, are underanalysed in the social epistemology literature (Lee, 2022: 545)

When the relationship between the speaker and the hearer is discussed, it is usually with reference to their institutional roles - e.g. doctors being unjust to patients. There are exceptions to this picture - the literature on epistemic partiality in friendship is one (Keller, 2004; Stroud, 2006). And while Lee's paper does examine epistemic injustice in friendship, she argues that epistemic norms in friendship may make us more vulnerable to this injustice, and less able to recognise it. This is an important point, and one I touch on later. However, she does not discuss why friendship being the context makes epistemic injustice distinctively bad. As such, this question has not been considered in the literature thus far. This chapter will attempt to provide an answer. First, I consider some initial objections.

One initial objection might go as follows. Even if it is true that it is distinctively bad to be epistemically unjust to a friend than a non-friend, this may not say anything specific about epistemic injustice in itself. Perhaps it is just the case that anything it is bad to do to a non-friend, it is distinctively bad to do to a friend. If so, the argument would go, then there is nothing especially interesting about the particular badness of epistemic injustice in friendship. I believe both of these claims are mistaken.

Firstly, it is not the case that everything it is bad to do to a non-friend is distinctively bad to do to a friend. To see this, consider teasing. Clearly, there are forms of teasing that it is permissible to do to a friend, that it would not be permissible to do to a non-friend. What's more, the reasons why this is the case are interesting and tell us some insightful

things about the nature of friendship. Friends trust each other. They have mutually acknowledged affection for one another. And they know each other very well. Thus, when one friend teases another, the other, being aware of the long-standing and often communicated affection between them, can be confident that the teasing is not motivated by anything malicious. The fact that the friend knows the other so well means that they know which features of the friend are fair-game as far as teasing is concerned, and which the friend is sensitive about and should therefore be avoided[20] (this knowledge also means that, as teasing goes, a friend is likely to be especially good at it!). Thus, for this general claim to be right, it would have to be that teasing is not only not permissible in friendship, but distinctively bad when it is done to a friend. Yet in many cases, the opposite is in fact true.

Further, even if it were true that anything it is bad to do to a non-friend, it is distinctively bad to do to a friend, that would not necessarily mean that asking why a specific action was distinctively bad in friendship would be an uninteresting question. After all, being a good friend requires that we live up to many different norms of friendship at once. When we do something that is distinctively bad to do to a friend, we may appeal to many different norms to explain what makes it so, depending on what the infraction is.

For example, it is bad to engage in maliciou gossip, but it is distinctively bad to gossip about one's friend. Why? If there was only one norm that one had to live up to to be a good friend, answering any question like this would be easy and uninteresting, for we could appeal to that same norm regardless of what the question was.

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[20] Indeed, such jokes at one's friend's expense may not only be permissible, but may help promote valuable features of friendship, such as self-knowledge and development. Consider this example from Cocking and Kennett's (1998) paper on how friend's interpret one another's personality:
'Judy teasingly points out to John how he always likes to be right. John has never noticed this about himself; however, now that Judy has pointed it out to him he recognizes and accepts that this is indeed a feature of his character. Seeing himself through Judy's eyes changes his view of himself. But beyond making salient an existing trait of character, the close friend's interpretation of the character trait or foible can have an impact on how that trait continues to be realized. Within the friendship John's liking to be right may become a running joke which structures how the friends relate to each other. John continues to insist that he is right; however, his insistences are now for the most part treated lightheartedly and take on a selfconsciously ironic tone. And John may be led by Judy's recognition and interpretation of his foibles to more generally take himself less seriously. Thus, John's character and his self-conception are also, in part, drawn, or shaped, by his friend's interpretations of him' (Ibid: 505). The positive role for humour in aiding self-knowledge in friendship has been discussed by Gordon, 2014.

That is not how friendship works, however. The main reason it is distinctively bad to gossip about friends is because friends have a special duty to be loyal to one another, one that is typically stronger than any duty of loyalty to non-friends. And what makes gossiping about a friend distinctively bad is different to what makes epistemic injustice distinctively bad. As I'll argue, for this we need appeal not to loyalty, but to the importance of being a reliable confidant, providing emotional support to our friend, and promoting their confidence when it is knocked back.

Another objection is as follows. One might initially think that appealing to specific norms of friendship is unnecessary to explain what is so wrong with epistemic injustice in friendship. Perhaps being on the receiving end of this treatment from *friends* is experienced as especially hurtful. If so, we have a purely psychological explanation for what makes this behaviour distinctively problematic in friendship. You shouldn't do this because, other things being equal, it's wrong to hurt people, and being someone's friend means you have particular power to hurt them. You therefore have a special responsibility not to.

The problem with this simple explanation is that, if true, it would deliver the wrong results. Our behaviour can often be more hurtful when directed at friends than at non-friends, but this does not in itself show that that behaviour is wrong. Consider the following case. Tim is a close friend of Sophie's. Because they are close friends, Tim expects emotional support from Sophie - and a lot of it! As Tim is quite emotionally unstable, he requires this support very frequently. He calls Sophie at every hour of the day and night wanting to talk over all his problems, expecting her to drop whatever she is doing so she can listen attentively and offer careful advice. He is constantly showing up at her house unannounced, saying that he is lonely and needs company. He is, to put it mildly, a very high-maintenance friend. In fact, he makes so many demands on Sophie, and so consistently ignores any boundaries she tries to set, that she eventually decides that the best thing she can do is end the friendship. When she explains this to Tim, he is disappointed. He feels especially hurt to be experiencing rejection like this - and from a friend of all people!

It is distinctively upsetting to Tim that he should be let down like this, by a friend in whom he placed so much trust. Yet despite this, Sophie need not have behaved badly to Tim. There need be nothing she has done wrong, or that makes her a bad friend. Tim is hurt, we might say, not by Sophie's behaviour, but by his own unrealistic expectations of her as a friend.

Consider another case. Jessica has a friend, Alice, who treats her terribly. Alice constantly undermines her, though just occasionally, she throws her a compliment.

Jessica does not feel upset by this behaviour - on the contrary, she is just grateful for the company. She never had any friends at school, and her last friend in adulthood was far, far worse than Alice. Jessica isn't hurt by Alice's behaviour, but that doesn't mean Alice isn't being a bad friend. It is Jessica's low expectations that inoculate her against feeling hurt, not Alice's bad behaviour.

We all have expectations of our friends: they can be unjustly high, like Tim's, or unjustly low, like Jessica's. What we want are those expectations we are justified in having. As such, we need to explain what justifies the claim that epistemic injustice is especially bad in friendship, without merely appealing to how such injustices might make one feel. The point here is not that the emotional consequences of this injustice are irrelevant - far from it. Rather, the point is that such reactive attitudes - of anger, resentment, disappointment etc. - are justified, and we need an account that explains why. That is what this chapter aims to provide.

The next objection relies on a distinction that Fricker makes between primary and secondary harms. While the primary harms of epistemic injustice are epistemic in nature, the secondary harms are not - they might instead be broader, affecting one's ability to receive welfare payments, for example (Fricker, 2007: 150-152).

One might utilise this distinction as follows: the epistemic harm of epistemic injustice remains the same regardless of who perpetrates it. One is always harmed as a knower. Thus, it's not clear why the person who harms you being a friend makes a fundamental difference: the kind of harm is the same. Moreover, epistemic harm is the kind of harm we should care most about - it is what makes this form of injustice uniquely problematic, and of special interest to philosophers.

My response is as follows. Even if the secondary harms are non-epistemic, this does not mean they are unimportant. Indeed, presumably one of the reasons we care about epistemic injustice in the first place is because the secondary harms that follow from it can be quite so consequential. Consider some examples in the literature. In healthcare, epistemic injustice often means patients do not get life-saving treatment (Carel, Kidd, 2014). In courts of law, epistemic injustice against black male drill artists contributes to this group being incarcerated at disproportionately high rates, continuing cycles of racialised policing (Jollah, 2022). Clearly then, when it comes to non-epistemic harms, the stakes remain high.

I would argue that the same is true in friendships. Though not all of the damage done when one perpetrates epistemic injustice against a friend is epistemic in nature, it is still significant. Good friendship is a vital part of a flourishing life, and we all need friends in whom we can confide, depend on for emotional support, and who boost our confidence

when it is knocked. As I argue, perpetrating epistemic injustice in friendship undermines each of these goods.

3. Some Examples of Epistemic Injustice in Friendship

This section provides some examples of how differences in social identity - particularly between members of privileged and marginalised groups - can undermine the goods of friendship discussed previously. It focuses on how these differences can lead to forms of ignorance and bias which themselves result in epistemic injustice. This then leads the goods of friendship to be undermined.

For example, consider the way that class differences can affect friendship. The novel Starter For Ten gives a helpful case study. The book is a coming-of-age story and satire of the British class system. Set in 1980s Britain, it focuses on Brian, a student from a working class background in his very first term of university. The narrative depicts his strained friendship-cum-romance with Alice Harbinson, another student from an upper middle class family. During the Christmas break, he visits her at her parent's home. The two of them endure an awkward dinner with her parents, strained by obvious class differences between Brian and the Harbinsons. Afterwards, Alice enquires about this:

> Alice: 'You were…strange. Like you thought you had something to prove'.
>
> Brian: 'Sorry, I get a bit nervous. Especially around posh peo…'
>
> Alice: 'Oh, please…' she snaps.
>
> Brian: 'What?'
>
> Alice: 'Don't start with that crap, Brian. "Posh" - what a *ridiculous* word. What is "posh" anyway? That stuff's all in your head, it's completely meaningless. Christ, I hate this obsession with *class*, especially at this place [university]. You can barely say "hello" to someone before they're getting all prolier-than-thou, and telling you there dad's a one-eyed chimney sweep with rickets, and how they've still got an outside loo, or have never been on a plane or whatever, all that dubious *crap* most of which is usually lies anyway, and I'm thinking why are you telling me this? Am I supposed to feel *guilty*?'
>
> (Nicholls, 2014: 199).

Next, consider this example from Aubrey Gordon's book 'What We Don't Talk About When We Talk About Fat' (Gordon, 2020). As Gordon states, she is fat, weighing 342 pounds and wearing a women's size 26 (US sizing). At one point, she describes the degrading experience of being on an aeroplane sat next to a clearly disgruntled man who repeatedly asks to change seats so he does not have to sit next to her. This climaxes in him actively harassing her by my making fatphobic comments about her body. She then describes telling a friend about this exchange:

> I tell a friend about the man on the plane. The way he looked at me. The way he treated me. His clear, naked revulsion at my body, at having to be near me. "All because I'm fat," I say.
>
> "Oh my God, no!" My friend cuts in. "You're not fat, you're beautiful!"
>
> I tell her the rest of the story. She asks why I bought a middle seat. I tell her I didn't. She asks why I provoked him. I tell her I didn't. She says she finds it hard to believe. I tell her it's true. Her voice becomes clipped, irritated.
>
> "I guess if you hate it so much, you should just loose weight".
>
> (Gordon, 2020: 36)

In both of these cases we see examples of epistemic injustice that undermine the goods of friendship discussed before. In order to show the nuances of how these different injustices interact, I will now analyse both cases in detail.

3.1. Examples of Ignorance in the Brian-Alice Case

Alice commits epistemic injustice against Brian. While this is motivated by bias, we can also see Alice's response as being informed by a kind of identity-related ignorance. Here, the notion of an epistemic standpoint is helpful.

An epistemic standpoint determines what one is likely to know based on their social identity. Certain (privileged) epistemic standpoints make one especially ignorant of the standpoints of others who are marginalised. This is for two reasons. As Medina (2013: 34) points out, there are some things that members of privileged groups 'do not need to know'. There are also things that the privileged 'need not to know'.

As regards not needing to know, this is where we don't know something simply because we don't need to. As a man, I may not need to know the steps a woman would take to avoid being sexually assaulted when taking my route from work when it is dark and she is alone. I may come to know this, because women tell me, but I did not need to. The personal stakes for me, regarding my safety, do not depend on me knowing this.

Then there is active ignorance. This is a matter of 'needing *not* to know'. There are some things which, as a man, I may not only not need to know, but need not to know. It's not just that I happen not to know something, because it wasn't personally important for me to learn it; rather, I may need not to know it in order to avoid epistemic friction. For example, perhaps recognising the implicit danger that most women live with and take for granted would challenge some deeply-held belief. I might have to revise my conception of the world as a basically egalitarian arrangement, where misogyny is a thing of the past. I might have to question why it should be that I am spared this injustice when others are not. This creates epistemic friction: a disparity between how I take the world to be, and how it actually is (Medina, 2013: 27-89)**.**

Further, the friction is generated in part by an affective dimension: revising these beliefs is hard precisely because they often play an important role in many privileged peoples' psychology. The world being an egalitarian and generally meritocratic place helps justify the sense that my successes are mine alone. The arbitrariness of injustice calls this into question. Thus, this makes this ignorance active: it has an often desperate need to preserve itself, even against all odds. As we saw from the discussion of microaggressions, it seems many would rather doubt the competence of their own friend's testimony, than believe they live in a world in which their friend could be summarily victimised just because of their social identity (Medina, 2013).

We see this affective resistance in the Brian-Alice example. Alice not only doesn't know how her upper class family may appear to a working class person of her age; she may also *need* not to know. More broadly, the injustice of class inequality may be something she has to exert significant psychological energy to avoid confronting. We see this in the way she attempts to rationalise it, and the intense emotional reaction she displays when these rationalisations are challenged.

We see this also in the Aubrey Gordon case. Gordon's friend doesn't need to know about the kind of fatphobic harassment that fat people experience when trying to do simple things like take a seat on an aeroplane. Again, regarding the unequal and unjust ways that fat people are treated in contrast to skinny people, it may be that her friend 'needs not to know'. These realities confront her with the fact that her skinniness arbitrarily exempts her from harassment from others; in order to justify this, she must

regard this behaviour as in some way having been brought on by the fat person themselves. Thus, after she attempts to provide a number of victim-blaming excuses for the behaviour (e.g. asking Gordon why she 'provoked' the stranger who harassed her); finally, as she says 'maybe you should just lose weight'. This, in many ways, being a final protest from someone who may need not to know that harassment can take place, without any justification, and that she is exempt from it, just because she is skinny.

3.2. Examples of Epistemic Injustice in the Brian-Alice Case

As we'll see in analysing both of these interactions, various forms of epistemic injustice are at play here. Drawing on research in this area can help us understand exactly what it is that is going wrong. The exchange between Brian and Alice in the novel, for instance, is marked by a number of refusals on Alice's part, which align with some of the forms of epistemic injustice discussed in the literature.

Alice engages in testimonial injustice. This occurs when a speaker is not given the credibility they deserve because of a prejudice against the speaker's identity. Fricker (2007) illustrates this with the case of Tom Robinson from the novel To Kill A Mockingbird. Robinson, a black man in the South of the US, is accused of raping a white woman. While all the evidence points to Robinson being innocent, the all-white jury declare him guilty. The jury's prejudice against black men - in particular, their inability to imagine a black man feeling sorry for a white woman, a sentiment Robinson expresses - causes the jury to give his (objectively credible) testimony greatly reduced credibility. They insist, against all the evidence, that he raped the victim. In doing so, they commit testimonial injustice (Ibid).

Alice perpetrates this when she insists that any class differences Brian takes himself to have observed - and judged as significant - are 'all in his head' and 'completely meaningless'. Rather than giving Brian's testimony enough credibility to consider whether what he is saying might be true, and might illuminate things she has not appreciated, she dismisses it out of hand. We cannot know whether Alice does so out of prejudice against working class people (and after all, she is a fictional character), but that is taken to be the implication in the story. It seems clear that Brian deserves more credibility than she gives him here, it is highly likely that a prejudice against him as a working class person is the reason.

We also see examples of wilful hermeneutical ignorance. To understand this, we first need to understand hermeneutical injustice. This occurs when a person is unable to understand and/or communicate about their experience of oppression due to a lack of conceptual resources (Fricker, 2007; Goetze, 2018). As Toole (2019) describes, one consequence of oppression is that the concepts necessary for recognising how oppression functions often haven't been created - that is, until those suffering the oppression decide to create them for themselves. This is due to injustices in how the socio-epistemic world functions. As Fricker and others (Collins, 2009) have pointed out, usually it is the dominantly-situated who create the concepts which receive wide dissemination and uptake. Their dominant position allows this process to take place smoothly. However, because of their social location, the concepts they develop best reflect their own experiences. Because they do not generally experience oppression, these concepts are poor tools for understanding how oppression functions. This results in a hermeneutical lacuna: an area of oppression which happens frequently, but for which there is no correct concept with which to identify it (Fricker, 2007; Collins, 2009**;** Toole, 2019).

Hermeneutical injustice can still take place, however, even after the necessary concepts have been created. Even when a concept exists, those who do not experience the oppression can refuse to use the concept or accept it as legitimate. For instance, consider Dembroff and Whitcomb's (2023) example of Fox News presenter Bill o'Riley mocking the concept of 'heteronormativity'. This concept describes the ways that heterosexual forms of life are seen as normal and prescribed, while anything that deviates from this is seen as aberrant. Before this concept existed, queer people faced problems articulating this wide-ranging phenomenon. However, even once the concept has been created, refusal to use or see it as legitimate can create problems for communication: if the hearer does not accept the concept, a speaker is likely to struggle to communicate with it.

We see this in the example. Alice not only denies that class - or poshness - makes a difference, but denies the concept of being posh is itself intelligible, stating that it is 'completely meaningless'. This hampers Brian's abilities to express his thoughts, arguably contributing to an unjust credibility deficit. The fact that she does not accept the concept of poshness undermines any attempt Brian might make to articulate himself using this concept. If poshness as a concept is spurious, then any testimony that utilises it must be too, and therefore given little epistemic credibility. Here, then, testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice interact (Fricker, 2007; Dembroff and Whitcomb, 2023). Yet the concept is a valuable hermeneutical resource, one that might allow Brian

to elucidate styles of conduct and life that often correlate with socioeconomic status and which, for this reason, he finds unfamiliar and intimidating.

Relatedly, we also see an example of content-focused epistemic injustice. This occurs when one lowers the credibility one attributes to a piece of testimony because of what that testimony is about or the social group with which the content of the testimony is associated. Dembroff and Whitcomb (2023) give the example a conversation had between Lord Henry and Dorian Grey, in Oscar Wilde's 'A Picture of Dorian Grey':

> Henry: Who are you in love with?
>
> Dorian: Her name is Sibyl Vane.
>
> Henry: Never heard of her.
>
> Dorian: No one has. People will some day, however. She is a genius.
>
> Henry: My dear boy, no woman is a genius. Women are a decorative sex. They never have anything to say, but they say it charmingly. Women represent the triumph of matter over mind.
>
> (Wilde, 1908: 65)

As Dembroff and Whitcomb point out, Lord Henry rejects Dorian's assertion that Sibyl is a genius because of her social identity - she is a woman and is thus, in Henry's eyes, incapable of being a genius. However, this is not a standard case of testimonial injustice. It is not the identity of the speaker that causes Henry to give their testimony reduced credibility. Rather, it is what Dorian's testimony is about. It's the fact that Dorian (a man) is making an assertion about the intellectual abilities of a woman that causes Henry to dismiss it. The rejection of his testimony happens on the basis of content, not on the basis of the social identity of the speaker (2023: 4-5).

Alice is sceptical of the content of what is being discussed as much as she is the trustworthiness of the speaker. This is indicated by her dubiousness about the focus that class receives at university in general, even by people whom she suspects are not themselves from working class backgrounds. This concern is not specifically with the identity of the testifier but with the content of the testimony.

Finally, we see Alice also fails to interpret the meaning of Brian's testimony accurately. To best understand this, we need to understand discursive injustice. We've so far looked at how prejudice affects the ways in which testimony is received when one

occupies a marginalised social identity. People with such identities are given reduced credibility in communication. But there are other ways that bias can figure into one's response to another's testimony when the speaker is from a marginalised background. These affect not only the credibility we assign to the testimony; they also affect the way we perceive the speech act the other is attempting to perform.

We not only say things with speech, we do things with it. We assert, refuse, order, command, reject, endorse etc. However, when we do this, we are not always understood: the action we perform does not receive the correct interpretation and, as a result, the right kind of uptake. Sometimes, the speaker's social identity prevents them from being given the correct uptake. Consider the act of ordering. Ordering is distinct from other speech acts, such as requesting. One can accept or reject a request without changing the speech act performed. Orders are not like this. Provided the orderer has the right authority to do so, orders are the kind of speech act that one is meant to follow, not to accept or reject (Kukla, 2014)[21]. Thus, much hinges on whether the speaker is granted this authority by the listener - that, it practically treated as though such authority was in effect.

For example, if the hearer has a prejudice against viewing women as credible authority figures, they will likely fail to give a female boss's orders the correct uptake. Her orders may become requests for favours, which the hearer can happily refuse. If they chose to grant them, they will expect the kind of gratitude fitting for one doing another a favour, rather than following an order (Kukla, 2014: 445-448).

That's discursive injustice, and we see it in the Brian-Alice example. Brian is attempting to explain why he was feeling nervous around Alice's family. As class differences are responsible for the change in him, he naturally brings up the subject of class. However, Alice is incapable of hearing this in the way it is intended. Brian is not trying to flaunt his working class credentials, nor trying to make Alice feel guilty about her privileged status. Yet this is the speech act she most naturally assumes that Brian and others must be attempting to perform. Alice's defensiveness means she cannot hear Brian out and understand the point he is driving at.

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[21] There's debate about whether speech acts need to receive the correct uptake in order to count as the speech act they were intended to be. This doesn't matter for the example I use here, but does matter in cases where the speech act concerns giving or withholding consent. See Bianchi, 2020, for this argument.

3.3. Examples of Epistemic Injustice in the Aubrey Gordon Case

In this example, Gordon is telling a friend about a highly distressing encounter. The friend can be said to perpetrate a number of epistemic injustices against Gordon, that frustrate both communication around this incident, and the support that Gordon both needs and deserves.

Firstly, we should note how a kind of hermeneutical injustice leads to a discursive injustice during this exchange. That is, when Gordon asserts that she is fat, and her friend counters with “You’re not fat, you’re beautiful!”. The miscommunication arises here partly because Gordon and her friend are using different conceptions of fatness - different hermeneutical resources that serve different functions. To make sense of the friend’s interjection, we must assume that she takes fat to be a thick concept (if you pardon the pun!), with evaluative as well as descriptive content. To be fat, on this view, is necessarily to not be beautiful. This makes sense if one assumes that ‘fat’ is negatively evaluative, denoting something ugly.

Gordon has a different conception. As she notes at the start of the book, she is perfectly comfortable describing herself as fat - for she sees this as a purely descriptive term. Descriptively, peoples’ bodies differ and the term ‘fatness’ simply allows us to pick out one way in which they do. Thus, being fat and being beautiful are not in contradiction. The friend’s comment, on this conception, makes no sense.

What’s more, Gordon makes clear that there are very good reasons for rejecting the evaluatively-loaded conception of fatness that her friend uses here, and adopting her purely descriptive one. We need to be able to talk about how some people are fatter than others and the distinct challenges they face within society in virtue of being fat. We can’t do this if we don’t have a term for it. In the process, we also need to avoid reinforcing the negative aesthetic and moral judgements that are taken to go along with being fat. We can’t do that if our concept of fatness has these evaluations built into it. Fatness as a descriptive term, then, is a valuable hermeneutical resource for fat people like Gordon, and for anyone who shares the goals of fat justice which at which she aims. When that hermeneutical resource is not shared - as it isn’t between her and her friend - miscommunication, and frustration, is likely to arise.

This lack of shared hermeneutical resources also leads to discursive injustice. When she says that she was mistreated by the man on the plane just because she is fat,

Gordon is attempting to perform one speech act. Her friend takes her to perform another. Gordon is trying to assert that she is fat and explain that this is the cause of her mistreatment. However, as her friend can only view fatness as evaluatively-loaded, she immediately assumes that Gordon must be putting herself down, making an aesthetically negative evaluation of her body. Thus, she responds by denying that Gordon is fat and insisting that she is beautiful. Of course, if Gordon were trying to do this, this may be an appropriate response from a friend. We can certainly imagine that her friend was intending to be supportive here. But clearly, intending to support someone and actually being supportive are two different things. On the contrary, her friend's remark serves only to underscore that fatness is unattractive and undesirable. At the same time, it ignores the real issue that Gordon is trying to communicate: harassment against fat people.

We also see testimonial injustice. This is most explicit when Gordon's friend says she finds the story hard to believe. It is not clear what the friend's reasons for this are or if they even give any. But clearly, as the events took place and Gordon was the primary witness of them, there seems no good epistemic reason to doubt her testimony, especially given the context of pervasive fatphobia in which we know these events to have occurred.

Testimonial injustice is enacted more implicitly in the friend's other questions. Asking why she bought the middle seat and why she provoked the man on the plane - when Gordon did not claim to have done either - suggests a dissatisfaction with Gordon's telling of the events. Rather than take Gordon's word that this was a straightforward instance of fatphobia, her friend assumes that this cannot be all there is to it. And the most natural way of resisting this conclusion is to assume that Gordon herself must have done something to cause this 'unprovoked' harassment. While we cannot prove that this disbelief is motivated by a prejudice against fat people like Gordon, this does seem like a reasonable explanation. Again, given that there is no good epistemic reason to doubt Gordon's testimony, this scepticism has to be motivated by something non-epistemic, and fatphobia is hardly a farfetched prejudice given that Gordon is fat and fatphobia is pervasive. Thus, this looks like a case of testimonial injustice.

That said, this does not preclude Gordon also being the victim of content-focused epistemic injustice here. As I suggest above, those who testify about their experiences of oppression are often met with testimonial injustice. Over time, this will also lead those who have not experienced this oppression to be sceptical of the subject matter altogether. If we refuse to believe the one group of people to whom this oppression happens, we are left with little reason to believe the second-hand reporting of these

events from speakers who are not members of the targeted group themselves. As such, it is likely that Gordon's skinny friend would be sceptical not just about the testimony of fat people when they discuss this kind of harassment, but also about the testimony of anyone - including other skinny people - who might try and discuss it too. Thus, this may also play a role in leading her friend to doubt testimony with this content when it comes from a fat person too.

Having analysed the forms of epistemic injustice that take place in these two examples, we can now consider how this would undermine the three valuable features of friendship. Close friends, as we have seen, promote one another's epistemic confidence, create conditions in which self-disclosure can take place, and provide one another with emotional support. Epistemic injustice in friendship undermines each of these.

3.4. Harms to Brian's and Gordon's Epistemic Confidence

Alice wrongs Brian during their interaction. But, as with the De Beauvoir example, it seems like the fact that they are friends makes this wrong distinctively bad. While no-one ought to react to another's testimony in this way, we can see that reacting to a friend's in this manner is particularly wrong. Again, if we feel this intuition, it is because we recognise that one of the valuable norms of friendship is to regulate the confidence of one's friend, and that this applies to the epistemic domain as well. As we saw in the chapters on friendship, good friends promote one another's self-esteem by positively evaluating their features. Regarding epistemic self-confidence, this can be promoted by the more dominant friend taking the marginalised friend's word seriously, giving it the credibility it deserves.

Remember that epistemic injustice targets one specifically in their capacity as a knower, and being subject to it is liable to undermine a person's epistemic confidence. Indeed, at its most severe, this treatment can become a kind of gaslighting, a phenomenon known for undermining the victim's confidence in their own perceptions of the world[22]. Just as it would not be right for Alice to denigrate Brian's appearance, for example, given the harm this would do to his general confidence, it is wrong for her to damage his epistemic confidence. Thus, insofar as friends should not unduly undermine one's epistemic confidence, and should actively promote it where necessary, Alice is failing

[22] While argues Abramson (2014) that gaslighting is not a distinctively epistemic phenomenon, I am persuaded by Spear's (2023) arguments that it is.

Brian here. If she valued Brian's epistemic standpoint, his unique knowledge of his own experience at university, and his competence at discussing these things, this would promote his epistemic self-confidence. It would also make her a better friend to Brian.

We can say the same about the Aubrey Gordon example. The fact that her friend persistently doubts her testimony is liable to make Gordon doubt it herself. Indeed, it takes a lot to hold firm to one's own conviction that one's judgments are justified, in the face of persistent and pervasive doubt. And as Gordon documents throughout the book, maintaining this defiant posture can be exhausting.

The dismissal of Brian and Gordon's perspective is also especially frustrating when we consider their marginalised epistemic standpoint. The issues that many fat people face are often dismissed by wider society. As is the oppression facing working class people. Thus, dismissal of their testimony reinforces society's ignorance about the problems facing members of these marginalised groups. At the same time, it robs the hearers (friends of Brian and Gordon) the opportunity to learn about an aspect of social experience that they are not well-positioned to know about themselves, without this kind of testimony. This ignorance may also be a good example of both 'not needing to know' and 'needing not to know' about the injustices that one does not face oneself.

The idea that experiencing epistemic injustice can harm one's epistemic confidence is not new. We saw it, for example, in the Simone De Beauvoir example ('I am unsure what I think - or that I think at all'). Experiencing this repeatedly can result in the development of certain epistemic vices, notably, epistemic servility.

The vice of epistemic servility has been conceptualised in a number of ways. Following the limitations-owning account of intellectual humility, Whitcomb et al argue that it consists of 'over-owning' one's epistemic limitations. Whereas the epistemically humble have an accurate sense of their limitations, the servile consistently overestimate them. The idea that servility can develop in response to oppression has been argued by Alesandra Tanesini (2018a; 2021); that it can result specifically from epistemic injustice has been argued by Heather Battaly (2023). Put succinctly, if people - including one's own friends - consistently and unduly question your epistemic judgement, you may come to unduly question it yourself. As Tanesini points out, this has been noted historically by critics of colonialism (Dubois, 1990; Fanon, 2001; Cesaire, 2000). As W. E. B. Dubois says regarding racism:

> The facing of so vast a prejudice could not but bring the inevitable self-questioning, self-disparagement, and lowering of ideals which ever accompany repression and breed in an atmosphere of contempt and hate (1990: 13).

The self-questioning described highlights the distinctively epistemic effect that oppression - including and perhaps especially, epistemic injustice - can cause. The self-disparagement is consistent with Tanesini's view that the servile will have negative attitudes towards their own epistemic abilities (Tanesini: 2018a; 2021). Likewise, Battaly argues that, in addition to an excess of humility, the servile will be deficient in proper pride in their epistemic capacities and accomplishments (Battaly, 2021). The lowering of ideals may manifest in one doubting one's own abilities and thus not expecting to be taken seriously when one testifies. One may come to expect far less from one's friends than one ought, morally, to be able to. We see this below in what Aubrey Gordon concludes on the basis of interactions like the one with her friend, and later, in the discussion of microaggressions in friendships, wherein trans people come to expect microaggressions from their cis, straight friends because they 'don't know any better'.

Thus, while I have only considered singular examples of epistemic injustice in friendship, it is worth considering the harm that consistently being on the receiving end of such scepticism can cause. A friend who repeatedly fails to take your (highly credible) testimony seriously could well contribute to entrenching the vice of epistemic intellectual servility. This would not just be bad itself (because it is a vice) but also indicate something distinctively bad about the friendship. If friends are meant to sure-up one another's self-esteem - including their epistemic self-confidence - when it is unduly knocked, then such a friend would be failing significantly here.

3.5. Failure of Mutual Self-Disclosure

We saw in the chapter on friendship that one thing required by the relationship is mutual self-disclosure. This cements intimacy and builds trust in the relationship. Insofar as epistemic injustice damages one's ability to self-disclose, it harms this important facet of the relationship. This can happen in a number of ways.

The first is intrapersonal. The individual who is subject to the injustice - for instance, Brian - may start to doubt his own interpretation of the events under discussion. Maybe class differences aren't such a big deal after all; maybe he is making too much of it; perhaps it really is 'all in his head'. Such thoughts could seem much more plausible to someone in Brian's position after this exchange.

Of course the injustice here is that such an interpretation would be wrong: the salience of class differences that he is exposed to have a huge impact on Brian, something he would still be experiencing implicitly even if intellectually, he doubted this interpretation. This would affect Brian's self-disclosure inasmuch as it compromises the very thing he might otherwise disclose. Brian would still be experiencing the alienation of being working class in a largely middle class environment, he would just not feel quite able to put his finger on where this alienation was coming from. As such, he would be less able to communicate about it, and his attempts would risk being hampered by inarticulacy as he struggled to express something he did not fully understand. Thus, the process of self-disclosure would be frustrated before it could even get off the ground.

Further, even if Brian's own interpretation remained intact in his head, being subject to these epistemic injustices could still prevent him from disclosing what he knows. In this case, he would not doubt the importance that class differences make to his experience of university, but he might self-censor, engaging in pre-emptive testimonial injustice. That is, his knowledge that he would not be given the credibility he deserves would cause him to hold back from testifying altogether, or opt only to offer testimony that he thinks is congenial to his audience - in this case, to Alice (Dotson, 2011; Lee, 2021; Fricker, 2007: 130).

Indeed, we see this take place within the very same interaction. The exchange ultimately robs him of his standing to challenge Alice's testimony. Though he initially offers some pushback, the conversation about class concludes with the following interaction:

> Alice: Sorry, just letting off steam.
>
> Brian: No, it's fine. I sort of agree with you. In places.
>
> (Nicholls, 2014: 201)

It's clear from the noncommittal nature of his words and short sentences that this is not the case. And this is further reinforced by his internal monologue. When he first meets her family he is introduced to their two dogs, named 'Mingus' and 'Coltrane'[23], and learns that they are fed pasta rather than dog food. This is initially a humorous indication of a class difference between Brian and Alice. But it takes on a sour character

[23] I take it that naming one's dogs after famous jazz musicians (Chalres Mingus and John Coltrane) is also meant to be a sign of class differences, indicating an awareness and comfort with this knowledge or 'cultural capital'.

when, after Alice's rant, he says to himself 'all I can think about is Mingus and Coltrane eating bowls of pasta' (Nicholls, 2014: 201). Despite her insistence that class is meaningless, her words have only made Brian fixate on the class differences all the more.

Thus, the epistemic injustice that takes place here harms Brian's ability to self-disclose not just because it might undermine his confidence in what he knows, but also because it undermines his trust that what he knows will be properly received by Alice. Proper reception here encompasses a number of things: he has to trust that she will give him the credibility he deserves, rather than perpetrating testimonial injustice. He has to trust that she will give the content of the testimony the credibility it deserves, and not assume that conversations about class are merely an irritating preoccupation of university students. He has to trust that she will see the concepts he will employ as legitimate, and will not perpetrate willful hermeneutical injustice. And he has to trust that she will interpret his speech acts correctly, and not perpetrate discursive injustice. Alice fails to do each of these, and this curtails Brian's ability to disclose about this subject. Despite being obviously unsatisfied with how Alice has responded, he drops the subject and never brings it up again. This also affects the mutuality of the relationship. As we have seen, to truly cement intimacy, such disclosure needs to be mutual. But Alice's response to Brian's testimony creates an asymmetry in the relationship. Part of what we disclose about ourselves in friendship is our emotions - both explicitly by stating what we are feeling, and implicitly by showing it through our tone of voice, gestures etc. While Brian does express some of his frustration to Alice during the interaction, it is largely Alice who feels most able to rant about her own feelings and experiences. Alice's half-hearted apology, in which she claims to be 'just letting off steam' is particularly ironic in the context. It's clear to the reader at this point in the novel that if anyone has anything to get off their chest on the subject of class, it's Brian. And yet it's Alice's grievances that get the most airtime within the conversation. This feels particularly unjust given the nature of her frustrations. However irritating it might be to feel that other students are

attempting to illegitimately claim a working class identity for themselves[24], this is not the same as being genuinely subject to the injustice of class prejudice, as Brian is. Even if there was an appropriate time and place for this frustration of hers to be raised, a suitably perceptive friend ought to recognise that this interaction was not it.

Something similar occurs in the Aubrey Gordon example. Her friend's responses would also damage mutual self-disclosure in the friendship. It is clear from Gordon's comments about the incident that she finds such interactions with friends and others deeply frustrating. The fact that the two of them cannot even share the same concept of fatness - crucial to the discussion - substantially hampers her ability to communicate her experience. It would be natural to conclude that these conversations are not worth having.

3.6. Failure of Emotional Support

As we saw, friends not only disclose much about themselves, in doing so, they also seek emotional support[25]. Thus, failures of mutual self-disclosure are likely to lead to failures of friends to be emotionally supportive. For example, though the novel catalogues a number of ways that his class negatively affects his experience at university, Brian never discusses these with Alice, despite her ostensibly being a close friend, with whom he seeks a romantic relationship. Thus, insofar as Brian might need

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[24] The issue of students pretending to be from backgrounds that are more working class than they actually are is a real phenomenon. David Nicholls, the author of Starter For Ten, has stated that the book is largely autobiographical (Nicholls, 2006**),** and has recalled in an article reflecting on his time at university that this was a common occurrence: 'class consciousness was running rampant on campuses in the mid-1980s, where many students took great care to advertise their working-class credentials, even if they were entirely fraudulent - the "cock-er-ney" son of the barrister, the surgeon's daughter in dungarees' (Ibid). There are discussions related to this in the feminist epistemology literature. Liebow, N., & Ades, R., L., (2022) discuss the phenomenon of relatively privileged people claiming to know what it's like to experience oppression have been discussed by . 'Epistemic tourism' is another related phenomenon (Bowman, 2020).
However, while this phenomenon is real, we should also note the source of Alice's frustrations here. Giving the impression that one is from a marginalised background when one isn't is a kind of injustice, and one that ought to be criticised. But that does not seem to be Alice's concern. She is understandably irritated by students being disingenuous, but the main issue for her seems to be that students should not be so obsessed with class in the first place because 'it's completely meaningless'. On her view, they shouldn't pretend to be working class partly because class differences don't matter anyway. This is very different from a contention that Brian might justifiably have, that such students are trying to get the social cache of being from a working class background, without ever experiencing the actual injustice and deprivation that often goes along with it.

[25] This is not to say that disclosure is the only way friends seek emotional support. A friend might request that a recent troubling event not be discussed, and that the other simply provide pleasant company as a distraction. This too is another way emotional support can be provided.

support with the alienating nature of this experience, he loses Alice as a friend in whom he could otherwise confide. Likewise, Alice loses out on important information about what it is like to be Brian. While good friends are meant to have some significant degree of knowledge about each other's experience of the world, Alice is unable to gain this from Brian, because of her own refusal to hear and understand his testimony. This also affects the mutuality in the friendship. As we have seen, friendship requires mutual self-disclosure, but this mutuality is robbed from Brian. While Alice is free to 'let off steam' by ranting about other students' 'obsession' with class, Brian is not afforded the same liberty, despite having ample reason to be angry about how he is treated on the basis of his class.

Likewise, in the Gordon example, there is a significant failure of emotional support due to the perpetration of epistemic injustice. It is clear that what Gordon most needs is for her friend to take her own testimony at face-value, accept that the harassment took place and was due to Gordon being fat, and fully acknowledge that such behaviour was wrong and should not have happened. She could have also shown Gordon emotional support by allowing her to talk openly about her feelings around the incident, providing an affirming ear.

However, this is prevented by epistemic injustice. In order to support her with this experience, her friend has to believe that the experience took place. She also has to view this experience in the terms that Gordon provides: one of harassment. Testimonial injustice prevents her from recognising this. She also has to recognise, as Gordon's own testimony suggests, that the experience was not Gordon's fault and she is not to blame for it. Failure to do this reinforces the kind of victim-blaming that fat people are regularly subject to, and which she critiques throughout her book.

The takeaway from this interaction and others for Gordon is deep and significant. As she summarises after this incident 'This, then, is my life as a fat person…it is no one's responsibility to hear me. It is no one's responsibility to care for my body' (Gordon, 2021: 37). Again, what seems significant here is the use of the word 'no one'. This underscores the profound loneliness and sense of social isolation that comes with being fat in a fatphobic society. What is implicit here, based on the interaction described with her friend, is 'no one - not even my friends'.

4. Epistemic Injustice, Microaggressions and Friendship

I've so far given two examples of how epistemic injustice can play out in friendship. But one might doubt how pervasive this phenomenon is. Indeed, given all the ways that epistemic injustice undermines the goods of friendship, one might expect (or at least, hope) that this would be a rare occurrence. If it is, one might question whether it deserves this much attention.

Unfortunately, empirical evidence suggests this is not the case. Rather, epistemic injustice in friendship is a far more common, everyday occurrence than one might think. To see this, let's consider some relevant empirical research.

While there has not been much direct empirical investigation into the phenomenon of epistemic injustice in friendship, there has been research into the perpetration of microaggressions in this relationship. This is significant: as many have noted, microaggressions can take many forms, some of which line up with the kinds of epistemic injustice I discuss above (Botswick, Hequembourg, 2014).

Microaggressions have been theorised in a number of ways, but the following should act as a helpful definition for our purposes:

> Microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults toward people who are not classified within the "normative" standard. Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with people who differ from themselves (Johnson, Johnson, 2019: 1)

An example of a microaggression would be asking a racial minority in Britain where they are 'really from', with the implication that they cannot claim to be British because they are not white, even if they were born and raised in the country. This can communicate hostility insofar as it suggests that only white people belong in the country and can consider themselves to be 'truly' British. We will see other examples below.

In the literature, microaggressions are part of the 'minority stress' framework. This is the idea that repeated, daily experiences of prejudice and discrimination add additional stress to one's experience of life (Meyer 2003). These experiences are thought to explain poorer mental and physical health outcomes for members of minority groups.

For example, they are taken to explain why there are worse outcomes on these measures for sexual minorities (Lick, Durso, and Johnson, 2013).

Not all microaggressions will count as epistemic injustice. For example, the man who made a show of looking visibly uncomfortable when sat next to Aubrey Gordon on the plane can be said to be performing a microaggression. However, there may not have been anything *epistemically* unjust about this in itself. Yet many forms that microaggressions can take will count as forms of epistemic injustice.

Botswick and Hequembourg (2014) argue that some forms of microaggressions can be conceived of in this way. Many microaggressions involve the denial or dismissal of the victim's testimony. In their study of microaggressions against bisexual women, they found that many of the participants of the focus-groups they created reported having their identities as bisexual women questioned or denied by others. This amounts to testimonial injustice insofar as it is a refusal to give due credibility to the testimony of such women, who assert that they are bisexual. It amounts to hermeneutical injustice insofar as these denials were underwritten by the assumption that bisexuality was not a legitimate identity for a woman to claim. Importantly, friends were not exempt from this. To give one representative example (there are many similar ones in the paper):

> Despite having known Chris for at least five years, her friend insisted on viewing Chris's same-sex relationship as evidence of a 'new' (read: 'lesbian') identity. Her friend's insistence on this new identity claim was counter to Chris's openness about having identified as bisexual since early adulthood. Consequently, when introducing Chris to others, the friend essentially rewrote Chris's own identity-related testimony so that it more readily conformed to the larger monosexual[26] paradigm:
>
> [Chris described] Oh, 'This is my friend, Chris, she just came out.' Like that, you know, like, [despite having known me for] five years, [my friend would say] 'She just came out last year.'
>
> 'No, actually, I came out [as bisexual] when I was 20.'
>
> 'No, no, she just came out last year.'
>
> 'No, I came out when I was 20...' (Ibid: 494)

[26] In the same paper, they discuss 'the prevailing monosexual paradigm, wherein sexual identity and orientation (and gender) are reified within a binary system that valorises supposedly stable either/or sexual identity positions of gay/lesbian (juxtaposed with heterosexual)' (Botswick, Hequembourg (2014: 489).

As the authors also document, some microaggressions against bisexual women amount not to denials of their identity as such, but to confusion around what being bisexual even means. Many participants reported being met with confusion about their identity, and having to enact considerable labour to make themselves understood. Such efforts were often not successful (Ibid).

Moreover, patterns of denial, dismal or unjust questioning have been found to be commonly experienced by other members of the LGBTQ community - including lesbian, gay and trans people (Nadal et al., 2016, 2011; Galupo et al., 2014, 2011).. Again, friends are not immune from perpetrating this behaviour. As one gay man reported:

> I recently had a friend say to me, “How do you know you are gay, is it just because you’ve just never slept with a woman? Maybe you are not really gay?” (Plat, Lenzen, 2013: 1023).

This is made more complex when the victim of microaggressions occupies multiple intersecting identities. A study of LGBT people of colour found they often had to deal with microaggressions that were racially charged, as well as homophobic (Balsam, et al., 2011). Once again, the perpetrators included friends.

Evidence examining the experience of other minorities also found that they experienced microaggressions at the hands of friends. Research on the experiences of Asian Americans reported that:

> Most of the racial microagressions that occurred came from peers, neighbors, *friends* or authority figures. It disturbed them that personal or respected acquaintances could make such insensitive or hurtful remarks (Sue et al., 2007: 78, emphasis added).

Many of these occurrences likely had an epistemic dimension - the study documents how microaggressions often involved denying the reality of racism against this group, and therefore (implicitly or explicitly) undermining the individual's own testimony of racism (Ibid). Naturally, this would also make it harder to assert that one had experienced racism when one knows one is dealing with an unsympathetic audience (Dotson, 2011).

The quote above points to another theme in this literature: those subject to these experiences of microaggressions often find them most distressing when perpetrated by friends. A study examining ableist microaggressions - in which participants, many disabled, were presented with scenarios in which these took place - found that

'vignettes where family and friends committed microaggressions were rated as most harmful' (Conover et al., 2021: 571).

This is reinforced by another study referenced earlier. Regarding microaggressions against trans people:

> The majority of participants agreed that microaggressions…are more upsetting when they occur within a friendship versus another context (72.7–96.5%)' (Galupo, et al., 2014: 465).

Another metastudy considered microaggressions against people with mental illness. It noted that friends are often perpetrators; one respondent reported on the misuse of mental illness terminology, saying 'I even have friends say it…they're like "But oh man, they were so bipolar"' (Peters et al., 2016: 100). The use of the phrase '*even* friends' is telling.

Evidence suggests that feelings of alienation can often result from microaggressions (Gonzales, 2015). And experiencing them from friends does seem to result in alienation in the relationship (Nadal, 2011; Balsam, 2011: 166). Microaggressions affect the closeness the victim feels to the friend who has committed them. The study mentioned earlier of trans peoples' experiences of microaggressions in friendship found that 'the majority of participants agreed that microaggressions impact how close they feel to their friends (73.8–92.0%)' (Galupo, et al., 2014: 465).

We expect more from our friends, and the arguments of the previous sections go some way to explaining why. We rightly depend on them as confidants, providers of emotional support, and for a healthy sense of self-esteem. It's not hard to see how microaggressions like this would undermine these goods in the relationship. Thus, the arguments I have given can help explain why experiencing this behaviour from friends is especially hurtful. It also justifies why victims of this behaviour ought to expect more from their friends.

One might wonder how the social identity of the perpetrator of these microaggressions changes things. The picture of this that emerges is complex. Evidence suggests that microaggressions might be most likely to be perpetrated by those who are not of one's social identity. For example, the study on microaggressions experienced by trans people from their friends found that:

> The frequency of microaggressions significantly differed across identity of friend, with effect sizes ranging from medium to large. In all cases, microaggressions

> were most likely to occur with cisgender heterosexual friends, followed by cisgender LGBTQ friends, and then trans* friends (Galupo, 2014: 465).

This supports one of the main claims of this chapter: that differences in social identity - particularly where one friend occupies a privileged identity and the other is marginalised - are likely to produce cases of epistemic injustice.

If this is true, it should not be surprising that marginalised individuals seeking refuge from the experience of microaggressions typically turn to friends who are members of their own social group. A study examining the experiences of black women found that they regularly lent on other black women with whom they shared a close friendship, to cope with the experience of microaggressions from elsewhere (Davis, 2019)[27].

That said, we should also note that friendships between members of the same or similar social group were not immune from experiencing microaggressions. Indeed, that same study considering trans people found microaggressions to be most hurtful when perpetrated by members of their own social group, LGBTQ people (Galupo, 2014). And the study of bisexual women found that microaggressions that implied rejection from this community were a consistent theme in their experiences (Botswick, Hequembourg, 2014: 497).

However, these findings do not undermine the claim that differences in social identity are especially likely to produce these problems; further, it does not show that microaggressions perpetrated by members of a dominant social identity are acceptable. Firstly, they still seem to be most frequent from members of social groups who are least similar to their own. And they still remain a source of frustration to those who experience them.

What's more, we should note the reasons that microaggressions are experienced as more hurtful when they are perpetrated by one's own group. The typical explanation is that the perpetrator 'should have known better', given their similarly oppressed social identity (Galupo, 2014). As one transman, describing their experience of transphobic microaggressions from their bisexual, polyamorous friend put it 'if any of my friends "got" it, I'd expected [*sic*] it to be her!" (Galupo, 2014: 465).

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[27] It may also be that affirmation from a social group that is constituted by multiple different identities - such as the LGBTQ community - is especially important for signalling inclusion: 'microaffirmations from LGBT friends may be associated with more positive health outcomes as they may increase bisexual individuals' involvement with the community, which would allow greater access to LGBT social networks and resources' (Salim, Flanders, Robinson, 2019: 344)

This contrasts to how participants in this study felt about microaggressions from cisgender, heterosexual friends:

> Microaggressions were often discussed as evidence of an insurmountable gap between trans* existence and the larger system of gender that cis-gender heterosexual friends were seen as unable or unwilling to bridge. With cisgender heterosexual friends, participants were most likely to have given up pointing out microaggressions opting instead for self-preservation. Regarding how she reacted to a microaggression, one participant noted, "I don't react anymore." Another explained, "I don't feel as though I would be able to convince anyone . . . so I choose avoidance instead. It makes me feel guilty and bad about myself, because all the microaggressions make me angry, but I remain passive." One participant summed up the general sentiment by saying, "I just feel like my feelings are a bother to most cis people." (Ibid: 468).

Thus, the especially strong sense of disappointment in friends within one's social group reflects the lower expectations that victims have for those outside it. Those who experience microaggressions from friends not of their social group do so with such numbing regularity that they come to expect no better. This is surely a depressing conclusion, one that points to just how pervasive the problem in these friendships is.

In other words, just because microaggressions from these other, dominant social groups are not perceived to be as hurtful, that does not mean they are any less wrong. We can be wronged, even if we don't experience such wrongs as hurting us[28]. If anything, this goes to show how unjust social arrangements, if they persist for long enough, can make us inured to their wrongful consequences.

I mentioned earlier that repeatedly experiencing epistemic injustice can undermine one's confidence in one's own epistemic capacities, and that, overtime, this may inculcate the vice of epistemic servility. This is consistent with the ways microaggressions can undermine one's trust in one's interpretation of events. The fact that victims of microaggressions often feel they cannot address the phenomenon can leave them questioning whether it actually happened. Further, if they do attempt to address it, they often find that the perpetrators deny or dismiss the event. As many have noted, this often leads to self-questioning and unjustified self-doubt (Sabia, 2017; Gomez, 2022).

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[28] Indeed, we may not experience some wrongs at all. Thomas Nagel (2012: 4) gives the example of having one's gossip about one behind one's back. This can be wrong, even if we never find out, and our positive experience of the friendship remains unchanged by the betrayal (4).

4.1. Epistemic Partiality and Letting Microaggressions Slide

While these concerns around microaggressions undermining one's epistemic self-confidence seem to be a problem with addressing this behaviour in general, there's some reason for thinking that this may be especially pronounced in friendship. This is because of the potentially different epistemic practices we often employ in this relationship. Epistemic partiality is highly relevant here.

Epistemic partiality occurs when our relationship to a given person causes us to interpret evidence about them differently, purely because we share that relationship. That is, it is not that the relationship gives us any special *epistemic* reason for this difference in interpretation. Thus, in friendship, I may give my friend the benefit of the doubt *just because* they are my friend, and not for any special epistemic reason (Keller, 2004; Stroud, 2006). Of course, we can doubt both whether we do employ different practices, whether these originate from sheer partiality, and whether these practices are justified.

Thus debate about the existence of epistemic partiality is contentious. However, assume for the sake of argument that at least the descriptive side of the story is true. That is, that we are more epistemically charitable to our friends by default. If so, then we have particular reason for thinking microaggressions may be distinctively hard to address when they take place within friendship.

Indeed, as Lee (2021) argues, it may make epistemic injustice more likely to occur unnoticed in friendship. This is because we are at once 'both too epistemically receptive towards our loved ones, and at the same time too impervious to their epistemic behaviours, as well as susceptible to be deceived or exploited by them' (Lee, 2021: 548-549). Thus, the extra authority we give to our friend's word (the 'commanding perspective' highlighted by Thomas, 1987) may make us more likely to believe them than we ought to be when they deny or dismiss that they have committed a microaggression. As a result, we will be less likely to notice this dismissal as an instance of epistemic injustice. Any suspicions of such unjust behaviour may be easier to quell: they wouldn't do that, *they're my friend*.

This is not to say that friendship can't give us extra epistemic reason to doubt that our friends may harbour prejudice that in turn motivates epistemic injustice. The point is that our epistemic partiality towards our friend may make us additionally charitable to our friend's word, over and above what is merited on purely epistemic grounds. If so, we have another worry when it comes to addressing microaggressions within friendship:

not just that confronting the perpetrator may be challenging, but that the victim may be prevented from even noticing that they *are* a victim, because of their relationship to the perpetrator.

5. Conclusion

Earlier sections of this chapter provided a detailed analysis of epistemic injustice within friendship. I appealed to particular valuable features of the relationship to explain why the perpetration of these injustices intuitively is distinctively wrong in this context. Following on from this, the empirical literature allows us to add a number of helpful insights.

Firstly, the specific examples I consider are not one-off aberrations. Far from being isolated incidents, this research suggests that epistemic injustice in the form of microaggressions are common and pervasive. Secondly, friends are not exempt from perpetrating them. Thirdly, they do not only occur for a single marginalised group. Rather, if we take the various different cases together, we can see that they occur for people of all kinds of different marginalised identities - people who are working class, fat, LGBTQ, a person of colour, disabled, and for people with mental illnesses, as well as people with multiple intersecting identities, such as black women and black LGBTQ people. Finally, while they were perceived as most hurtful when committed by friends of one's own social group, this may be because they are most expected and normalised when they come from friends who are outside it.

How do these empirical findings relate to the arguments of the previous sections of the chapter? I believe the arguments of previous sections can explain why microaggressions of this sort in friendships can be distinctively bad - as well as, often, being especially bad when contrasted to their effects in other relationships. Good friends provide emotional support, are reliable confidants, and promote their friend's self-esteem, especially when it is unduly threatened. Committing epistemically unjust microaggressions involves failing to live up to these norms of good friendship and preserving these goods. Thus, friends who do this are being bad friends.

<u>Conclusion to Part Three</u>

This part of the thesis consisted of two chapters. Chapter Five argued that there are a number epistemic, social and moral problems that follow from homogeneity in friendship. This is especially problematic because most peoples' friendships tend to be rather homogenous. I then anticipated a number of objections one might have towards the overall argument of the thesis.

Chapter Six has explored what can go wrong when people form friendships that are not homogenous - that is, friendships between people of different social identities. As I've suggested, this can result in ignorance or bias on the part of the more privileged friend, who does not share the marginalised feature of the friend's identity. When the friends interact, this can result in the more privileged friend committing epistemic injustice. We saw the negative consequences of this in the examination of the empirical literature on microaggressions. As I argued, this undermines the goods of friendship discussed in earlier chapters. It makes the marginalised friend less able to engage in self-disclosure; to receive emotional support; and it undermines their epistemic confidence.

This, then, is the problem. The final part of the thesis considers how intellectual humility can help alleviate this problem. Specifically, how the behaviours reflective of this virtue are likely to make friends less likely to commit epistemic injustice, less likely to have unproductive emotional responses (such as getting defensive), and better at correcting for their own ignorance. When they do respond in these unjust or counter-productive ways, intellectual humility allows them to respond to this in a salutary manner, by taking responsibility for the consequences of their limitations. It is this subject that we turn to now.

Part Four
Chapter Seven: How Epistemic Humility Can Combat Ignorance and Bias in Friendship

1. Introduction

We've seen how differences in social identity - particularly where one friend occupies a dominant position and the other is marginalised - can create epistemic limitations which act as obstacles to important features of close friendship. These obstacles consist in prejudices that lead to the perpetration of epistemic injustice. These injustices can be testimonial, discursive, content-focused or instances of wilful hermeneutical injustice. They also consist of problematic ignorance. Often the privileged friend will not share the marginalised friend's epistemic standpoint. Part of the reasons for this is that their privilege has exempted them from needing to know about the kinds of oppression their friend experiences; and may have inculcated beliefs and attitudes (e.g. regarding society as fundamentally just) that mean they need not to know, in order for these beliefs and attitudes to be maintained. These limitations act as obstacles to the goods of self-disclosure, emotional support and the promotion of one another's epistemic self-confidence, as well as to one's ability to appropriately perceive and value the other's aeshetic features.

This chapter argues that epistemic humility offers some positive potential to ameliorate these problems. Utilising some of the features of the virtue identified in the first chapter, it shows how these can help privileged friends to overcome or mitigate these obstacles. To see this, we'll consider the testimonial exchanges examined in the last chapter, and ask how features of epistemic humility might help these interactions - and ultimately, these friendships - go better.

I begin by outlining what 'owning one's limitations' is meant to look like in theory, following Whitcomb et al's account. I then apply the cognitive, affective, motivational and behavioural dispositions described in this view, to the various obstacles to close friendship discussed in the previous chapter. I structure this in the following way. These problems can be naturally thought of as resulting partly from ignorance and partly from bias. As such, I consider how intellectual humility would help us address these two components, beginning first with ignorance and then going on to examine bias.

I also consider how the virtue of intellectual humility would manifest temporally. That is, how the intellectually humble would respond before, during, and after the epistemic exchanges between friends I am interested in. As I suggest, we can think of the intellectually humble person as having three types of strategies for owning their limitations in regard to these exchanges. The first I call 'preventative, future-focused'. This regards how the humble person would relate to their limitations prior to the interaction in which they become salient. Thus, it is future-focused in that it preempts any epistemic injustice that their ignorance or bias might cause in the future. It is preventative insofar as the actions taken are likely to prevent such injustices from being committed.

The second is 'preventative, present-focused'. This concerns how the intellectually humble person conducts themselves during the interaction(s). It is present-focused in that it regards how they comport themselves while the interaction is taking place. It is preventative in that their intellectually humble dispositions are intended to prevent one's ignorance or bias from 'getting the better of them' in the moment and committing epistemic injustice.

The third is 'retrospective, reparative'. This concerns how the intellectually humble relate to the interaction after it has happened. In particular, I suggest that intellectual humility will inspire them to reflect on their conduct and, where necessary, consider what they did well and what they could have done better. If they have committed epistemic injustice, and can recognise this (if only in retrospect), then they will acknowledge it to themselves and, if appropriate, to the other person. It may be that some amends need to be made as a consequence. With this in mind, I briefly discuss the extent to which intellectual humility may motivate one to recognise and apologise for committing injustices of this kind, as well as what would make such an apology successful. While I do not think this virtue alone is sufficient to fully motivate this response, I do think it plays an important contributory role.

Finally, I consider some objections. The first is whether intellectual humility is strictly necessary for one to possess and exercise these dispositions in these contexts. Could the vice of intellectual servility not produce the same favourable tendencies with similarly positive results? This question is especially notable given how intellectual humility and servility share some traits in common and can be easily confused (Battaly, 2021).

I argue that this objection is mistaken. Close analysis reveals that the intellectually humble will behave in ways that are epistemically and interpersonally better than those inspired by servility. Intellectual servility, in the kinds of exchanges I am interested in,

can often cause the hearer to believe the wrong things; when it causes them to believe the right things, it does so for the wrong reasons. The same is not true for intellectual humility. This is why it is this virtue (rather than the vice of servility) we should recommend for dealing with these types of scenarios.

The second objection argues that the examples I have chosen are cases where the presence of prejudice and ignorance are fairly obvious and easy to spot. They are also cases where it is pretty obvious that the friend is in the wrong and it is clear what the right response from the friend should look like. But many scenarios will not be as clear cut as this.

I agree with the spirit of this objection; in response, I consider a more ambiguous example, where it is not clear whether the speaker has experienced the oppressive mistreatment they might claim (indeed, in the example, even the speaker themselves is unsure). I respond by arguing that, even in these cases, intellectual humility is still likely to inspire an affirming response from such a person's friend.

Before we consider these objections, however, let's first recall what 'owning one's limitations' is meant to involve. Then, we can consider how these dispositions would be applied by the intellectually humble person in the testimonial exchanges we looked at in the last chapter.

1.1 Owning Our Limitations: A Recap

One thing the epistemically humble do is own their epistemic limitations. This is important, because epistemic limitations play a major role in why these exchanges between friends fail. Our limitations consist in a wide array of different facets, but two salient ones are ignorance and bias. As we've seen, these conversations suffer because the hearer is ignorant of the other's oppression, may be motivated to remain ignorant, and may be biased in ways that cause them to unduly doubt or misinterpret what they are being told. If these are limitations, what would 'owning' them look like? Whitcomb et al. (2015) expand on the notion of limitation-owning helpfully:

> Cognitive responses: in owning her intellectual limitations, the person with IH is disposed to believe and accept that she has the limitations that she does, and to believe that the negative outcomes of her limitations are due to her limitations (Ibid: 9).

> Behavioural responses: in owning her intellectual limitations, the person with IH is disposed to admit them to others, and more generally, to act as the context demands (Ibid: 9-10).
>
> Motivational responses: in owning his intellectual limitations, the person with IH is disposed to care about them and take them seriously, in accordance with what the context demands (Ibid: 10).
>
> Affective responses: in owning her intellectual limitations, the person with IH is disposed to regret, but not be hostile about, her limitations, and more generally, to affectively respond to her limitations as the context demands (Ibid: 10).

These help us see the range of responses the intellectually humble person would likely exhibit. It also helps us recognise what those who lack this virtue are doing wrong.

2. Limitations in Action: Returning to the Brian-Alice Example

This is what limitations-owning, in a broad sense, involves. One way to understand it more concretely is if we briefly consider how one of our central protagonists - Alice Harbinson - fails to own her limitations in her conversation with Brian, and what she could have done differently. We can then consider, in more detail, how the intellectually humble person would respond to both their ignorance and their biases temporally, in future-focused, present-focused, and retrospective ways.

Recall that Alice commits a number of epistemic injustices against Brian. She dismisses him as a competent testifier regarding class differences, along with concepts like ‘poshness’ which he uses to express it. She misinterprets his testimony as him trying to make her feel guilty. And, in general, she dismisses the content of the testimony as well, disregarding the importance of class altogether. In so doing, one reason we might say Alice does not respond appropriately to Brian is because she lacks the correct cognitive responses detailed above: she does not own her limitations at the cognitive level. Further, even if she could recognise and admit that she has the relevant class-biases, for example, she would not regard them *as limitations* - as dispositions that are epistemically problematic. What are these limitations?

Well, there is her ignorance of quite how different the experience of working class students like Brian is to hers. Arguably, this ignorance informs her dismissing of this reality, as well as concepts (such as ‘poshness’) that help articulate it. Then, there are the biases that motivate the particular kinds of epistemic injustice we identified. Alice

likely has a bias that causes her to unduly deflate the credibility she attributes to speakers from working class backgrounds - at least when discussing issues of class and politics. This motivates testimonial injustice. She also seems to have a bias against speakers who view class as important, even if they themselves are not working class. This is likely a cause of content-focused epistemic injustice. Finally, she has a bias that inclines her to misinterpret the kinds of speech acts that those who discuss the importance of class are trying to perform - rather than trying to inform, or express how they are feeling, such speakers must be attempting to make her feel guilty. Hence, we get discursive injustice.

The appropriate cognitive responses here, then, would be to recognise that these forms of ignorance and bias exist at the cognitive level. It would also be to recognise that it is these limitations that cause her to react to Brian as she does. It would be of little help if she was willing to admit to having such limitations, but always insist that they had nothing to do with her dismissal of Brian's testimony. Attributing her behaviour to other, more innocuous but irrelevant factors, would not do.

This so far describes a purely cognitive process, and one that could take place without necessarily having any effect on her behaviour. To see this, we could imagine Alice responding in the following way. She could recognise that she has these limitations. And, she could find them deeply regrettable - perhaps they conflict with her image of herself as a good, open-minded liberal. Rather than accept that this is the case, however, this might motivate her to behave in various, epistemically vicious ways. Maybe she tries to cover up her limitations; perhaps her recognition of them causes her to deny them even more zealously in her behaviour. Thus, mere cognitive recognition is insufficient for behaving appropriately. In order to behave in accordance with the virtue, Alice would have to be willing to admit what these limitations are, and how they might be influencing her in morally and epistemically problematic ways (Whitcomb et al. 2017).

Of course, with enough patience and perseverance, perhaps Brian could eventually *make* Alice recognise and own her limitations. While this could be the case, we might worry that a whole lot of resistance on Alice's part might be inconsistent with true epistemic humility. This highlights the importance of the motivational aspect of this virtue. If truly epistemically humble, presumably Alice should not need to be dragged kicking and screaming towards these insights; rather, her behavioural dispositions would be to welcome them and be motivated to seek them out. Moreover, she would do so because she sees this process as important and takes it seriously. This relates back to our earlier discussion of why mere continence as opposed to the full-blooded virtue can be especially important.

Finally, the epistemically humble person should have the right affective response to recognising their limitations. Alice's response is one of anger. Indeed, as their debate goes on, and Brian gestures at her family's privileged social status, her defensiveness becomes palpable:

> She's sat up, stabbing the air with her finger.
>
> Alice: And anyway, it's not even *my* money, it's my *parents*' money, and it's not as if they got it from nicking people's dole or running sweatshops in Johannesburg, they worked fucking hard for what they've got, *fucking* hard…
>
> Brian: They didn't work for it *all* though, did they?
>
> Alice: What d'you mean?' she snaps.
>
> Brian: I just mean they inherited a lot, from *their* parents…
>
> Alice: And…
>
> Brian: Well, it's…privilege, isn't it?
>
> Alice: So, what, you think people should have their money buried with them when they die like in ancient Egypt? Because I would have thought that passing money on, using it to help your family, to buy them security and freedom, was just about the *only* truly worthwhile thing you can do with it.
>
> Brian: Of course it is, but I'm just saying, it's a privilege.
>
> (Nicholls, 2014: 200)

The observation Brian wants her to acknowledge is fairly straightforward: her and her family benefit from generational wealth, something it is appropriate to call privilege. Alice's body language (stabbing the air), tone of voice (snapping) and invectives, highlight her affective states in the interaction. This illustrates a kind of defensiveness and reluctance to confront one's limitations, which is once again inconsistent with the motivational component. Contrast this with how Anne Kearny, from the counselling example, (discussed in chapters One and Five) responds to criticism of her work: 'she said she was excited to be learning something new and that she wanted to be challenged' (Kearny, Proctor, 2018)**.** The contrast here is marked. There is both a motivational aspect (wanting to be challenged) and an affective one (feeling excited to be learning something new).

This so far segments how one responds in these cases in terms of the different kinds of disposition through which one's humility can manifest: cognitively, behaviourally, motivationally, and affectively. We can also consider how it might manifest temporally. I believe there are at least three ways we can consider this: preventative, future-focused; preventative, present-focused; and retrospectively, reparative.

3. Preventative, Future-focused

Alice's responses to Brian showcase a number of limitations, which she fails to own throughout the course of their interaction. The same is true of Aubrey Gordon's friend in the fatphobia example, discussed in chapter Six. But we might think that some of this could have been avoided prior to the interaction, and that there is a role for epistemic humility to play in preventing these forms of epistemic injustice from taking place to begin with. Thus, this strategy is called 'preventative, future-focused'. It is focused on owning one's limitations in a way that will prevent them from having negative consequences in the future. One of the most natural things we might try and address in order to prevent our limitations having ill effects in the future is our ignorance. I consider this first, before considering how we can address our biases in a future-focused way.

3.1. Addressing Ignorance in a Future-focused Way

Everyone's experience of oppression is going to be different, and vary based on various other intersecting identities. For example, Alice can't know what struggles Brian specifically will be facing in virtue of his working class background, and she shouldn't presume to. However, there is arguably a general ignorance Alice has about the importance of class, that she could have taken some steps to rectify in advance of their conversation.

Emphasising the importance of addressing ignorance may raise a question, however: exactly which forms of ignorance ought we to address? After all, we are ignorant of a whole range of facts and experiences; addressing each and every one seems impossible. As such, that cannot be the recommendation, and certainly not the obligation. What's more, some forms of ignorance just don't seem that problematic - either for friendship, or in general. Correcting some types of ignorance seems especially important; correcting others seem dispensable.

For example, consider curling. I know next to nothing about the sport. I know it's played on ice, I'm pretty sure something that looks a bit like a broom is involved - but beyond that, I'm pretty clueless. Every day, I get up, and I continue not to learn about curling. I read a fair bit - never about curling, though. I do not think I am doing anything morally or

epistemically wrong. I'm just not very interested in it, and this seems fine. Here, I could say 'it's just not for me'.

Yet consider the example of Reni Eddo Lodge's friend from the previous chapter. Despite them both being enrolled on a module about the British involvement in the slave trade, Lodge's friend chose to opt out. Her friend's reason? 'It's just not for me'. This case seems different from the other. It seems like Lodge ought to be more justified in taking issue with this lack of interest. If so, why?

The question of what we have reason to know about regarding injustice is a thorny problem, one for which it is difficult to give precise answers. On the one hand, we do not want to make such obligations overly demanding. Put simply, people have things to do, not to mention other obligations to meet. A view that requires they spend their days doing nothing but learning of all the injustice in the world seems excessive. Doing so may also be bad for them, prudential speaking.

Equally, we don't want to let people off the hook too easily. Some injustices are surely important enough that 'I'm busy' is going to be an insufficient excuse for not knowing about them. Medina (2013: 119-185) dubs this the 'relevance' problem: that is, how we are to determine what information about injustice is relevant for us to know about, such that we can be blameworthy for not knowing it. I agree with Medina's view that it is hard to draw sharp lines here, and we should always remain open to revising our conception of what counts as relevant to us (Ibid). However, I believe thinking about the additional reasons that friendship provides is helpful here. Whatever other reasons I might have for learning about an injustice, the fact that this is an injustice *that affects my friend* is surely among them[29].

There are two kinds of reasons operating in cases like the Eddo Lodge example. The first is a general one; the other arises from the friendship itself. Firstly, it seems like being a British citizen - a white, British citizen especially - gives one a particular reason to care about significant historical injustices that continue to have an impact on current affairs, from which one benefits, and by which others were harmed and continue to be harmed to this day. This is the case with the history of Britain's involvement with the slave-trade. It isn't the case with curling.

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[29] This applies not just to injustice, but also other, non-justice related phenomena. If my friend is a curling champion, this likely gives me some reason to learn about the sport. It may be hard for me to appreciate why it is so important to them if I remain ignorant about what it requires, for example. This will also apply to aesthetic interests (see Keller, 2004; Cocking and Kennett, 1998; and Carroll, 2002 for more on this). That said, we might think there are particular moral harms that would result from not knowing about injustice that affects my friend, versus not knowing about curling, such as me being more likely to commit epistemic injustice against them as a result of this ignorance.

The second kind of reasons are those that would arise *as a result of the friendship*. Plainly, friendship gives us reasons we don't have in the absence of the relationship. If I'm your friend, I have reasons to call you, reasons to get you a present on your birthday, reasons to care when you experience misfortune. They also give me reasons to know things, and to seek out certain kinds of knowledge. I should know your birthday; I should know (or be interested in learning) the kind of thing you might appreciate being gifted; I should be interested in understanding how your misfortunes affect you.

If I care about the friendship, I have prime facie reasons to care about anything that might jeopardise it. These are what Sandy Goldberg would call 'value-reflecting reasons' - the fact that I value the friendship gives me reasons to act in ways that preserve it (Goldberg, 2018). As we've seen, ignorance of identity-based oppression, and the ways that differences in social identity can give us different perspectives, can be a major force of disharmony for the friendship. To the extent I could anticipate this, that is a reason for me to learn more.

Further, my friendship gives me particular reasons to care about my friends, over and above whatever reasons I have to care about human beings in general. I therefore have reasons to care about the kind of things that are differentially likely to harm my friend, whether or not that harm takes place in the friendship. If my friend is black, ignorance of the slave trade harms the social group to which the friend is a member. For example, it makes it easier for the idea that racism is 'a thing of the past' to prevail, which in turn makes addressing present instances of racism (including those that result from slavery's legacy) more difficult.

Of course, this will be especially important if my friend tells me of an experience of racism - I might be less likely to commit testimonial injustice if I am aware of how pervasive racism as a phenomenon still is, given its presence in the recent past. But it also matters for understanding the climate in which the friend must live. As Iris Marion Young argues, not all racial minorities will experience being attacked on the basis of their race, for instance; but being a member of this group gives one a reason to fear this that non-members don't have. Not all women experience rape; but all have a reason to fear it, and this has far-reaching effects on their psychology (Young, 2011: 61-62).

I also may have reasons to do things that would allow me to form the kind of friendships I value having, but may not presently have. If forging friendships with people from diverse backgrounds is important to me - something which I don't think ought to be hampered by ignorance - then I have a reason to care about rectifying that ignorance. Of course, this can be a piecemeal process; but certain general kinds of knowledge may be valuable. These would include knowledge that society is structured by unjust social

arrangements that inflict burdens on some groups which are underserved, while often benefiting other groups. Such a framework need not spell out in detail all the groups that are oppressed, and the manner in which this oppression manifests. But having this as a general background would make one much less incredulous if one is informed of a marginalised group about which one was not previously aware[30].

As we saw in chapter 6, there are two ways our ignorance about injustice can manifest. Passive ignorance shows up as 'not needing to know'. Active ignorance involves 'needing *not* to know'. There are some things which, as a man, I may not only not need to know, but need not to know. It's not just that I happen not to know something, because it wasn't personally important for me to learn it, rather, I may need not to know it in order to avoid epistemic friction (Medina, 2013).

This is further cause for reflection on the intellectually humble person's part. If they are sincerely motivated to get at the truth of the matter, and to regret but not be hostile about their limitations, they may have to question what ulterior, affectively-driven motives they may have for not correcting their ignorance. They may have to engage not just with what they don't need to know, but also what they need not to know. They will need to try and understand why it might be that they need not to know it.

This so far tells us what reasons someone who has a friendship with a member of a different social group that is marginalised, has to try and correct their ignorance. I believe it is also true that the person high in the virtue of intellectual humility will be more likely to address these forms of ignorance. As they take ownership of their cognitive limitations, they are likely to be better placed to recognise these forms of ignorance, and less likely to ignore or explain them away. They are also less likely to have the strong affective resistance - characterised, for example, by hostility towards recognising one's limitations. This is especially true regarding their needing not to know about injustice. This will make the process of addressing them smoother and more likely to be successful. Finally, they are likely to be more motivated to address this ignorance, other things being equal, because they care about epistemic goods, especially those that are highly relevant to them and which intersect strongly with their values.

All of this points to the intellectually humble person being especially likely to correct their ignorance in a future-focused, preventative way. Doing so will mean less chance that

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[30] Of course, while this knowledge need not be complete or comprehensive, it should be reasonably accurate. Believing that society is structured unjustly, but believing that the primary or only victims of injustice are white men, for example, would not do (I thank an audience member whose name escapes me at the Applied Ethics Conference, held at the University of Nottingham, for raising a similar example).

they will commit epistemic injustice by, for instance, dismissing their friend's testimony through sheer ignorance of the oppression their friend is describing.

3.2. Addressing Bias in a Future-focused, Preventative Way

Addressing our ignorance in this future-focused way may have knock-on effects when it comes to addressing our biases. I take it as self-evident that these biases do not just emerge ex nihilo: they are the product of a given environment. Learning about injustices we don't face personally, and were not previously aware of, may highlight the ways in which our epistemic environment has been structured in epistemically limiting ways. It may open our eyes to the ways in which we have been 'protected' from this information. For example, a (relatively curious) middle class white person, who reads testimony of the many hostile run-ins that black, working class experience with the police, may come to reflect on why it was that they were never subject to this kind of excessive scrutiny from law enforcement when merely going about their business in public places. What privileges might have been at work in unilaterally exempting them from these experiences, without them even having to recognise it? (Bowman, 2020)

Reflecting on one's environment in this way may, for the curious, also raise questions about biases. The white, middle class person may begin to ask questions not only about why they didn't know such facts, but also, to wonder about what other misconceptions a relatively sheltered environment may have inculcated in them. Ignorance and bias are, of course, often related. Ignorance creates a vacuum in which false assumptions - in the form of stereotypes, or hostile or reductive attitudes, can flourish. It may be precisely because one never learned of how law enforcement engages (or doesn't) with people of different social identities differently, that they are able to readily accept certain prejudicial assumptions. Such a person may be more likely to believe that black working class people receive more attention from police *simply* because they commit more crime, ignoring the role played by heightened levels of scrutiny that people of these social identities receive, based on racist and classist assumptions and structures of policing[31].

These reflections on one's environment can help call one's biases into question, by undermining their apparent justification. They highlight the ways in which these beliefs

[31] This is not to say that this is the only reason. The relationship between crime, poverty and racism are obviously extremely complex. However, a good illustration of this phenomenon of selective policing concerns the drug war. Evidence suggests that while black and white people, and working and middle class people, all use illegal drugs at similar levels, racial minorities and working class people are arrested for these crimes at much higher rates (Alexander, 2019; Vitale, 2021).

may have been formed because of an absence of counter-evidence rather than the presence of good evidence. By learning about how our environments inculcate ignorance, we can become less trustful of the positive beliefs they inspire. If there is much my environment didn't tell me, then there is also good reason for being sceptical of what they did tell me, especially when these two considerations relate to the same domain. To the savvy and curious mind, it should seem no coincidence that the environment that didn't tell one about a given injustice perpetrated towards a specific social group, also propagated ideas that would make any injustice toward that group seem acceptable and deserved (and thus, no injustice at all).

Unravelling the web of ignorance and bias can be complex, demanding work (Saul, 2017). As we have seen, they often intersect. However, I believe the same reasons the intellectually humble person has for addressing their ignorance would also motivate them to address their biases. They care about the truth, particularly those truths that seem of particular significance. They also care about features of themselves that stand as obstacles to getting at the truth. The ignorance and bias that may have been inculcated in them by their environment represent two significant obstacles. In being motivated to address one, they will often be motivated to address the other.

Further, to the extent that intellectual humility prevents them from elevating their intellect above others without good reason (Roberts, Wood, 2007; Priest, 2018; Whitcomb et al, 2017), it may make them more accepting of the fact that a biased environment would quite plausibly inculcate biases in anyone within it - including them. In other words, they would not only recognise that their environment was biased; they would also see no reason to believe that they are exempt from the epistemic consequences of this fact.

As with addressing ignorance, addressing bias in this future-focused way will stand such a person in good stead when it comes to the kinds of testimonial exchanges we considered in the last chapter. This is for two reasons. Awareness and acceptance of their specific biases will allow them to be less caught off guard when these biases are activated and/or pointed out when in dialogue with their interlocutor. The lack of surprise - this not being the first they are hearing of it - may reduce their defensiveness.

Further, if they are being confronted with a bias they were not previously aware of, past reflection on other biases may also serve to make this seem less incredible or exposing. It may be much easier (both epistemically and psychologically) to believe that they can be biased in ways they hadn't realised, if they have already undergone this experience for themselves with regard to other biases.

Could the behaviours reflective of intellectual humility actually *reduce* an agent's biases? That is unclear. Empirical evidence, at the very least, suggests that mere

awareness of one's biases is not sufficient to reduce them. Further, it suggests that strategies to reduce biases, especially when self-deployed, are not very effective (Forscher, 2017).

However, becoming aware of one's biases may remain an important first step for addressing them. And the reasons given above support the idea that the intellectually humble are more likely to be motivated to seek knowledge of their biases and less defensive when confronted with them. Doing so will prove helpful when these recalcitrant biases themselves become activated in the present when in dialogue with a friend, and may also allow them to more easily acknowledge other biases they had not recognised in themselves before. Doing so makes it more likely that these interactions will proceed more easily, with less conflict or resistance.

4. Preventative, Present-focused

There are limits to the limitations we can recognise and correct for in advance of our engagement with others. Indeed, one of the challenges and benefits of diverse friendship is that they allow for us to recognise limitations we might struggle to identify otherwise. Thus, ultimately, if epistemic humility is going to help overcome these obstacles, it will also have to play some role in affecting how we engage with others in the present.

Here, we might think about how the various forms of epistemic injustice are underpinned by prejudicial reactions taking place in the moment, during the interaction. In particular, we could consider how the cognitive, behavioural, affective and motivational aspects interact.

For instance, recall discursive injustice, as discussed in Chapter Six. This occurs when a hearer misinterprets the speaker as performing a speech act that is different from the one they intended to perform because of a prejudice against the speaker's identity. We saw examples of this in both the Brian-Alice case and the fatphobia example. Alice speculates that students talking of their working-class background must be trying to make her feel guilty; Aubrey Gordon's friend presumes that Gordon must be trying to put herself down when describing herself as fat. The prejudice operating in the first case might be something like the idea that working class people are antagonistic towards those in positions of higher status, perhaps because they have a 'chip on their shoulder' about their relatively inferior position. In the Gordon case, it's a matter of viewing fatness as a moral or aesthetic defect, something so firmly built into the concept that one couldn't apply it to oneself without thereby putting oneself down.

Confronting these prejudices therefore requires a certain reflective evaluation. This can take place at the cognitive level. We can notice ourselves poised to make those judgements in the moment, and then question whether they are in fact justified, whether there might be reasons to doubt this belief. Indeed, the language used by Whitcomb et al - of being 'attentive' to our limitations - suggests as such. This need not be a mere passive awareness, but an active stance of trying to seek out, understand, and address what these limitations are.

This addresses the cognitive and motivational elements. Importantly, though, these cases will also be affectively charged. While discursive injustice is usually defined by prejudicial motives, we can also see how affective components may play a role in causing it. For instance, Alice's concern that working class students might be trying to make her feel guilty says a lot not just about her potential prejudice, but also her own anxieties around issues of class. Guilt, after all, is not a pleasant emotion to experience. If Alice senses that she benefits from a class hierarchy that is in some way unjust, this may be something she has reason to feel guilty about. Indeed, she spends a lot of the debate with Brian insisting on reasons why this class system is in fact justified. We could plausibly see this as an attempt to allay these feelings of guilt. She need not feel guilty because there is nothing fundamentally unjust about her receiving benefits - in terms of economic, social and cultural capital - that others do not.

The affective motivation behind discursive injustice shows up in other examples. The Netflix show Sex Education follows an adolescent friendship between Eric, a gay, black, Christian, working-class boy, and Otis, a straight, white, secular, middle-class boy. As Eric becomes more integrated into his queer friendship group, he begins to feel increasingly alienated from his friendship with Otis. One heated exchange about this goes as follows:

> Eric: I'm just trying to say that there's…there's parts of my life that you don't really understand…
>
> Otis [interrupts]: Like what?
>
> Eric: Well, like the fact that I'm a Christian. Or the fact that my family doesn't have as much *money* as yours. Or we don't talk about *race*, for example.
>
> Otis looks distressed.
>
> Eric: Look, I'm just trying to say that we're *very* different and we don't really talk about it.

Otis: Okay, but why are you blaming me for that?!

Eric [slowly]: I'm not *blaming* you. I'm just trying to say how I *feel*.

(McClelland, D'Inella, 2023: 12:18)

This is discursive injustice. Eric is trying to say how he feels, he is performing the speech act of *expressing*; Otis, however, can only interpret this as Eric *blaming* him for the omission of these topics in their interactions. There is undoubtedly a variety of emotions that motivate this response from Otis. Understandably, he is anxious about losing a friendship he values, and that likely makes him less receptive to feedback. Ironically, this lack of receptivity can be the very thing that damages the friendship.

Discomfort around the issues Eric raises is surely another emotion that he experiences. It's presumably not an accident that it is Otis who is feeling uncomfortable when race or class are raised, given that, in terms of his social position, he benefits from being both white and middle class.

We would hope that a well-entrenched virtue of epistemic humility may mean that these feelings of defensiveness were not ones such an individual would be disposed to have. All the same, the value of epistemic humility would also reside in how one responds when one does in fact feel this way. And let's be honest, many in Otis' or Alice's situation would. While the ideal realisation of the virtue would involve the kind of eagerness to learn and understand characteristic of Anne Kearny in the counselling example, unfortunately, that is not going to be all of us, all of the time. Further, the fact that these conflicts are occuring within a friendship, rather than a professional role (like that of the counsellor), may make them even harder to address. As we see in some of the examples, these are situations where emotions run high. This is partly because we care about what our friends think about us - so much so, that we can find it particularly hard to hear that they feel we have let them down. It's no surprise that this can promote defensiveness.

Thus, the more pragmatic response should involve handling one's own defensiveness and its emotional consequences. The first thing to say is that the intellectually humble person will be motivated to do this. This is because defensiveness is, in part, a cognitive limitation. The defensive response is often going to prevent one from getting at the truth, at facts that are important for the preservation of the friendship. It is also liable to lead one towards erroneous conclusions. Defensiveness often exists to shield cherished beliefs from criticism, even - and perhaps especially - when confronted with evidence that suggests this is mistaken. The intellectually humble person, then, to the extent that they care about epistemic goods, has strong reason to manage their defensiveness so

that it minimally affects their ability to get at the truth - in this case, to understand where their friend is coming from and what might need to change about the friendship.

One might worry that this only addresses the cognitive dimension; can the affective dimension (on display in the example above) really be challenged by intellectual humility? I think there is some reason to think so. Strong emotional reactions, of the sort that defensiveness will inspire, are also impediments to understanding the friend's perspective. At minimum, therefore, the humble person has reason to reign these in where possible. Sometimes, this may just mean acknowledging the defensiveness, to themselves and, where appropriate, to the friend they are in dialogue with. In a sense, even if the intellectually humble person cannot banish their defensiveness, it may still be that they can avoid getting defensive about it! In some cases, saying 'sorry, I was getting defensive there' may go a long way. This, at least, will be the continent response; the fully humble person will likely not get defensive in the first place.

As we saw, discursive injustice can also be reinforced by willful hermeneutical injustice. Sometimes, we use concepts that contain prejudicial evaluations, such as Gordon's friend's use of the term 'fat'. Equally, sometimes we reject the testimony of others because it makes use of concepts which, while necessary for marginalised groups to express something important about their experiences, may be foreign or spurious to us, such as Alice's dismissal of Brian's testimony about 'posh' people.

Each of these cases offers an opportunity for the intellectually humble - or those aspiring to cultivate the virtue - to question their instinctive behaviour. Sometimes, this may involve questioning their own use of certain problematic concepts, or being open to having them questioned by others. Other times, it may involve questioning their instinct to dismiss concepts that are unfamiliar, of which they may be ignorant, or of which they may have uncharitable associations (recall Bill o'Reilly's total rejection of the term 'heteronormative', from Chapter Six, for example).

In friendship, it may be particularly important to understand what your friend means by a certain term and what the term does for them. What is Brian trying to direct Alice to when he says her family is posh? What does Gordon mean when she uses the term fat and might it be different from what her friend understands it to mean? Why might this term be helpful in expressing something which could be difficult to articulate otherwise? This open curiosity can be practised in the present, during the interaction, and may often help avert misunderstandings before they turn into arguments. It may also avert the friend from committing wilful hermeneutical injustice, or discursive injustice, by taking the time to understand the concepts being used and what their friend is attempting to communicate with them. At an interpersonal level, it is also a way of

showing respect for the friend's epistemic standpoint and credibility. It acknowledges that they may know something we don't, and have access to epistemic resources about which we are ignorant, or about which we have significant misconceptions.

This respect also applies to content-focused epistemic injustice. This is when we dismiss testimony because of what it is *about* - where the content pertains to or is associated with a marginalised group. While the obvious focus here is on the content, we should also examine how this relates to our judgement of our friend. Arguably, whatever we think of the particular content (e.g. the harassment of fat people or the oppression of working class students within higher education) the fact that our marginalised friend regards these issues as relevant and important should give us pause. Again, part of showing appropriate respect for their epistemic standpoint involves recognising that they may have very good reason for making the kind of claims they do. If the reasons for this are not immediately apparent, the intellectually humble person will see this as an opportunity to investigate further to try to learn more.

Finally, we come to testimonial injustice. Testimonial injustice typically results from the hearer giving the speaker *reduced* credibility. A natural way that a virtue would correct for this is by causing the hearer to *raise* their credibility attribution to the speaker to the appropriate level. That is, the level it would otherwise be at, absent the prejudice. This is part of what Fricker argues for with her virtue of testimonial justice. According to her account, while the ideal form of the virtue would cause agents to reflexively attribute the correct amount of credibility to a speaker, short of this, the virtue will cause the hearer to adjust their credibility attribution in a way that neutralises the effect of prejudice. As she suggests, while this can take place in a conscious, deliberative sort of way, over time, it can become a spontaneous habit (Fricker, 2007: 90-92).

Interestingly, I think we can see the intellectually humble person correcting for their biases in much the same way as the person with the virtue of testimonial justice. The epistemically humble person owns their limitations, and this includes their prejudices. They are attentive to the limitations they have, and the negative effects that follow from them. They are aware that prejudice is one limitation - it is, by its nature, not epistemically justified, and therefore poses an obstacle to getting epistemic goods. As such, they are motivated to correct for it.

They do this by reflecting on the credibility they are initially motivated to ascribe to a speaker, and questioning whether this is appropriate. They are wary of 'easy answers' - expedient judgements that serve to confirm this initial ascription without proper consideration of its epistemic merits. Ad hoc justifications or confabulations will themselves be subject to this reflective scrutiny. This may not be possible in the

moment. It may be unclear exactly how much credibility to attribute to the speaker, and to exactly what extent their prejudices influence their judgement. In such scenarios they will at the very least, be agonistic about exactly what credibility to give the speaker, but resolve nonetheless to listen to their testimony with an open mind. Initial impulses to question what the speaker says may be kept in check.

This tells us how the intellectually humble person will comport themselves during interactions with their friends when their epistemic limitations of ignorance and bias are salient to the conversation. However, sometimes both future-focused strategies and present-moment ones will fail us. When they do, as they would even for the humble, something else is called for.

5. Retrospective, Reparative

The previous two kinds of responses concern how we prevent our limitations from having negative effects on our friendships, in the future and in the present. But sometimes, this will not be possible. We all make mistakes, even the epistemically humble; what matters when we do is how we respond to them. The humble person, as we've seen, is one who can acknowledge and take responsibility for their limitations and their ill effects. Thus, in the context of friendship, we can see this as being part of a reparative process. Failure to own one's limitations - and the forms of epistemic injustice that can result - are not only epistemically vicious, but have the potential to damage the relationship. As Chapter six argued, when we are epistemically unjust to our friends, we let them down not just as epistemic agents, but *as friends*. Acknowledging this, and the limitations responsible, is therefore an important part of rectifying it and restoring the trust in the relationship.

What would this look like? There are a few initial things to say. The first is that not every error will necessarily require addressing in some explicit way. If you notice you did not give your friend sufficient credibility due to a prejudice, but in a way that is unlikely to be detectable by them (perhaps because you never voiced any doubt) then bringing this up only to state that you were wrong seems like it might be unnecessary. Worse still, it might be counter-productive. Having done no actual damage apparent to the friend, telling them that you did not view them as credible for prejudicial reasons may only cause harm, when no initial harm took place. In such instances, the best thing might be to simply resolve, privately, to do better in future, being more mindful of how prejudice might influence the credibility you ascribe to your friend.

In other cases, addressing the wrong caused may be necessary for the trust in the friendship to be maintained. Alice's interaction with Brian seems like a prime example.

Interestingly, Alice does attempt to address the conflict immediately after it happens, but her attempt seems half-hearted and superficial. It therefore presents a helpful contrast to how a genuinely epistemically humble person would approach such an issue:

> Alice: I mean, we're friends, aren't we? Brian - look at me. We're friends, yes?
>
> Brian: Yes, of course we're friends.
>
> Alice: Even though I'm obviously the Queen of Sheba and you're a snot-nosed chimney sweep?
>
> Brian: Absolutely.
>
> Alice: So shall we just forget the whole thing? Just forget it and move on?
>
> Brian: Forget what?
>
> Alice: The thing we've just been…Oh I see. So it's forgotten?
>
> Brian: It's forgotten.
>
> (Nicholls, 2014: 201)

Alice clearly knows enough to recognise that their dispute about the importance of class has opened a gulf between them, something that threatens their friendship. However, her response indicates she does not recognise the severity of the harm she has inflicted on Brian. To her, it is something that can be laughed off and forgotten. While the joke exaggerating their difference of class status could certainly be appropriate, even salutary, in a friendship that already enjoyed a more mature relationship to class, here it seems to underscore the problem. The joke trivialises the very differences that Brian has been arguing cannot be ignored. Alice's attempt at rectifying the damage essentially requires that the two of them agree to continue to ignore these differences going forward.

What's more, the implied threat that these differences pose to the friendship is implicit. As Brian values Alice as a friend, he is left with something of an ultimatum: he can either continue to harp on about the issue of class, and risk losing the friendship altogether, or he can keep the friendship at the cost of overlooking what he knows to be significant. This is a kind of double bind, that has been recognised as a common feature of many oppressive situations (Hirji, 2021). After all, ignoring how he is worse off in various ways because of class oppression is going to be a lot harder for him than it will be for Alice to

ignore how she benefits from class privilege. Indeed, this is something she is already deft at doing.

Brian chooses the friendship. Though he notes in the following chapter that he is still thinking about the conversation with her, illustrating that 'forgetting' it all is not something he can easily do. This illustrates the way that power dynamics between members of marginalised and privileged friends can compromise the marginalised friend's bargaining power within the friendship. Even when an attempt at rectifying the damage done by epistemic injustice is made, the terms can very easily be set by the more privileged friend.

5.1. How Epistemic Humility Makes For Better Apologies

> *'I am sorry if people feel there have been failings'*
>
> *Priti Patel*
>
> *(Parveen, 2020)*.

How could epistemic humility help make these attempts at resolution go better? One way to think about this would be to consider what makes a good apology. While not every form of redress in these instances may necessitate an apology as such, many will. Further, Mano Daneil provides some helpful reflections on what makes an apology successful. Considering this will help demonstrate how intellectual humility can contribute to the features that make apologies successful.

Good apologies successfully communicate a range of motivations, beliefs, emotions, and a commitment to future behaviours. Doxastically, the apologiser signals that they sincerely believe the wrong was first and foremost, a wrong. They believe, for example, it violated an important moral principle, that it was not virtuous, that it caused harm etc. They understand why their transgression was wrong. And they believe and acknowledge that they were causally responsible for this. As such, apologising requires taking responsibility, and is thereby inconsistent with excusing or justifying the wrong (Daniel, Noonan, 2011; Davies, 2002: 170).

The apologiser feels, and successfully communicates, a range of appropriate emotions. They feel regret, shame, are disappointed in themselves, perhaps angry at themselves for falling short of their values. Importantly, these emotions are felt about the right things. 'I regret *that you are upset*' may be a genuinely true statement about one's

emotional state. It's not a good apology, though. Instead, it would need to be that I regret *that I upset you*' (Daniel, Noonan, 2011; Tavuchis, 1991).

The apologiser also communicates certain motivations. Apologies are forward-looking as much as backward-looking; they not only aim to redress past harms, but provide assurance that similar harms won't take place in future (Daniel, Noonan, 2011; Gill, 2000: 17). The degree to which this is convincing is likely related to these other factors. If one cannot explain what was so bad about the wrong, then the victim will find it hard to trust that the perpetrator understands the depth and nature of the wrong they committed. As such, this will raise suspicions that they will not be sufficiently vigilant at ensuring they do not commit the wrong again (Daniel, Noonan, 2011).

How would epistemic humility help here? There are some straightforward answers. First, the humble recognise their epistemic limitations, and take responsibility for the consequences that flow from these limitations. Thus, to the extent that negative outcomes - including, say, the hurt feelings of a friend, result from one's epistemic limitations, the epistemically humble person will be able to recognise and freely admit this.

Now, this alone will likely not be sufficient for a good apology. An apology is typically a response to behaviour that is morally wrong, not just epistemically wrong. As epistemic humility is a purely epistemic virtue, it in itself may not lead one to recognise the moral dimension of one's mistakes. One could, for example, miscalculate a budget due to a failure to own one's mathematical limitations. However, one may not care that this results in funding cuts having to a local hospital, resulting in many more deaths. Not caring about these moral consequences is, I take it, consistent with epistemic humility.

I think this is right. And I think it means we should be cautious about exactly how much work we think epistemic humility *on its own* can really accomplish. However, there are two things to say about this: firstly, even if humility is not sufficient, that doesn't mean it isn't necessary. A person who cared about causing the deaths of many more patients, but refused to ever acknowledge their own epistemic limitations, and the role these limitations played in bringing about these negative outcomes, would not be able to take proper responsibility for their actions. Secondly, I take it we have independent reasons to be moral. Humble or not, many of us are *motivated* to be moral, and to be good friends. To the extent that intellectual humility helps us here - by, for example, taking responsibility for the role of epistemic limitations in our moral failings - it helps. It also gives us (yet more) reason to cultivate it.

Returning to the case of epistemic injustice in friendship, we can see how an apology for this mistreatment might work. The intellectually humble party, who nonetheless

wronged their friend, would have to do a number of things to apologise successfully. They would have to acknowledge that they did not give the speaker, or their testimony, or the content of their speech, or the concepts their testimony utilised, the credibility they deserved. They would acknowledge that this was, morally and epistemically, wrong and show an understanding of why. They would feel and express appropriate affective responses (regret, shame, disappointment in themselves etc.). And they would resolve to make the necessary effort to give the other's epistemic position the credibility it deserves in future. This would likely include being more attentive to the ways their limitations manifest in dialogue with their friend and making the appropriate efforts to correct for this wherever possible.

6. Intellectual Humility and Aesthetic Appreciation

In Chapter Three, I spoke about the importance of friends valuing one another's aesthetic features. As we saw, sometimes these aesthetic features are marginalised, relating to an oppressed feature of the friend's identity. Thus, one might also wonder how intellectual humility might allow someone to better appreciate these features of their friend. To see this, consider the example offered by Iris Murdoch (2014: 16-17):

> A mother, whom I shall call M, feels hostility to her daughter in-law, whom I shall call D. M finds D quite a good-hearted girl, but while not exactly common yet certainly unpolished and lacking in dignity and refinement. D is inclined to be pert and familiar, insufficiently ceremonious, brusque, sometimes positively rude, always tiresomely juvenile. M does not like D's accent or the way D dresses. M feels that her son has married beneath him.

In this example, D displays a number of behaviours which we could regard as aesthetic features of character, related as they are to how she comports herself. M's appreciation of these features is hampered by prejudice (we can imagine her having a similar attitude towards an African American woman who speaks in the vernacular that Tempest Henningn described in Chapter Three, or to a non-binary person's gender non-conforming style of dress).

Now, it may or may not be the case that this prejudice leads to erroneous beliefs - but we could see how it might. Certainly, if M assumes that her perception indicates something about how D is intending to come across - as rude, overfamiliar etc. - which could be falsified (if, in fact, she is just intending to be friendly). In any case, as prejudices of this sort generally lead to false beliefs, we can regard them as epistemic limitations, of the sort the intellectually humble person would be inspired to own.

Interestingly, Murdoch describes M doing something very much akin to 'owning' these limitations:

> …However, the M of the example is an intelligent and well-intentioned person, capable of self-criticism, capable of giving careful and just attention to an object which confronts her. M tells herself: 'I am old-fashioned and conventional. I may be prejudiced and narrow-minded. I may be snobbish. I am certainly jealous. Let me look again.' (Ibid: 17).

The result is a change in M's perception of D's aesthetic, as much as moral, features:

> Here I assume that M observes D or at least reflects deliberately about D, until gradually her vision of D alters…D is discovered to be not vulgar but refreshingly simple, not undignified but spontaneous, not noisy but gay, not tiresomely juvenile but delightfully youthful, and so on (Ibid).

It is this kind of reflective self-criticism that I believe owning one's limitations would encourage. This could happen retrospectively or in the present, in the process of apprehending the other person. Critically evaluating how one has allowed prejudice to corrupt one's aesthetic perception may also lead to taking steps to try and prevent it in the future. M appears to do all three: taking stock of her past failings, she resolves to look again without prejudice in the future. When she does so, her perception of D in the present changes. Owning one's bias, and the way it can impact one's perception, as in this case, has the potential to result in a more open-minded receptivity to the value of another's aesthetic features. This should not be too surprising: Hume (2000), for instance, spoke eloquently of the importance of attending, with humility, to aesthetic works in order to best appreciate their distinctive value. I believe intellectual humility can function similarly in these interpersonal contexts.

In summary, we've seen the problematic ways that our epistemic limitations might manifest in exchanges with friends who do not share our social identity, especially when a feature of their identity is marginalised - namely, ignorance and bias. We've also seen how we might engage with these limitations productively across different positions in time. We can address them in a future-focused, preventative way; a present-focused preventative way; and in a retrospective, reparative way. We've also seen how this would be applied to each form of epistemic injustice considered in the last chapter, as well as how we might address them when they intersect. Finally, we saw how owning one's biases can help correct one's perception of the friend's aesthetic features.

What remains now is to consider and respond to some notable objections. The first questions why epistemic humility, as opposed to servility, is necessary to elicit the kind

of cognitive, affective, motivational and behavioural dispositions which I have argued can be so crucial for responding to our limitations and their effects appropriately. The second is whether intellectual humility remains effective in more ambiguous cases - for example, when a friend discloses that they think they have experienced prejudicial behaviour, but remain uncertain.

7. Responding to Objections
7.1. Why Epistemic Humility is Better Than Epistemic Servility

Two central vices oppose epistemic humility: epistemic arrogance and epistemic servility. While it may be easy to see why epistemic arrogance would not help - but would exacerbate - the forms of epistemic injustice identified in the previous chapter, the picture is less clear cut for epistemic servility. Indeed, as some have argued, epistemic humility and servility are liable to result in somewhat similar behaviour.

This section argues that, while the epistemically servile may respond in ways that would seem appropriate, and characteristic of the humble, there are many reasons to prefer humility to servility when it comes to addressing epistemic injustice. The epistemically servile are less liable to commit epistemic injustice, but this comes at a high cost. Ultimately, servility often gets the wrong results when it comes to responding to particular kinds of testimony; when it gets the right ones, it does so for the wrong reasons.

Behaviourally, the servile person will have a lot in common with the humble. As Heather Battaly illustrates:

> Imagine that you are engaged in a discussion about political matters, on- or off-line. Though you and your interlocutor initially disagree, you are surprised and delighted to find that your interlocutor actually listens to your points, and does so without getting angry, being dismissive, or shutting down the discussion! They even admit their lack of knowledge and the weaknesses of their views, deferring to you and revising their beliefs. You count yourself lucky to have stumbled upon a humble and virtuous interlocutor in an apparent sea of arrogance and outrage. But, are you correct? Is it safe to infer that this interlocutor is virtuously humble? Or, is this inference too quick? (Battaly, 2021: 2).

Spoiler: Battaly argues that, yes, it is in fact too quick. For such a person could easily be epistemically *servile*, not epistemically humble. The fact that there can be this epistemic

uncertainty about which they are points to some similarities between the vice and virtue. So, exactly what is epistemic servility?

I considered this briefly in the discussion of how repeated exposure to epistemic injustice can cause one to develop this vice. We can examine it in more detail here. Regarding the nature of this vice, accounts differ. Some think it is a matter of how the servile person relates to their epistemic strengths (Tanesini, 2021); others think it is a matter of how one regards one's epistemic weaknesses (Whitcomb et al., 2017); for others still, it's a matter of how one regards both one's strengths and weaknesses (Battaly, 2021).

Accounts also differ on whether the manner in which one relates to strengths or weakness is doxastic or affective, as well as whether there is a conative component. For Whitcomb et al. (2017) it is a matter of over-estimating your intellectual limitations - seeing them as more severe and pervasive than they actually are. While Battaly (2021) agrees that this is a component, she also thinks that under-estimating your strengths is too. Both are doxastic: they regard what you believe about your epistemic abilities.

For others, it is about having negative feelings about one's intellectual strengths, and a desire to ingratiate oneself with powerful people (Tanesini, 2021). While this last, desiring component is necessary for Tanesini, Battaly (2021) disputes this, suggesting many motives would be consistent with the vice, and indeed, that it could exist even with the best of motivations.

While there is disagreement on these questions, I think many would agree on the kind of behaviours one would expect to see from an epistemically servile person. They will see themselves as intellectually inferior to others. As a consequence, they will defer to others' judgement and testimony on a wide range of subjects and occasions, regardless of whether doing so is epistemically justified. The humble person, by contrast, will be aware of their limitations, and eager to correct for them, in part by learning from others. But they will not automatically defer to others unless there is some good epistemic reason to do so, and will be even less likely to if there is a good epistemic reason not to. In other words, the disposition profile of these two traits differs in important ways and we can see this by considering the different responses they would give when faced with different kinds of testimony.

Why care about these differences? We want people to develop the character traits that make them good at responding appropriately to the kind of important, yet often fraught, interactions that take place between friends of different social identities. Arguably, the biggest problem in these contexts is epistemic arrogance. Alice, for example, is arrogant in her dismissal of Brian's testimony. Epistemic arrogance is also said to be especially

likely amongst the privileged, because of the messages of cognitive superiority they have absorbed from their culture (Medina, 2013). If there's a vice to be worried about, it's surely this.

The servile, by contrast, are unlikely to dismiss their friend's testimony. Believing that they are epistemically inferior to their interlocutor - including their friends - they will quite easily accept that their friend knows more about, for example, classism or fatphobia. The Battaly example makes this clear. As such, we might expect these interactions to be pretty frictionless - surely that would be a good thing?!

Well, not necessarily. If a friend from a marginalised background was *always* right, and *never* wrong about their experiences of oppression, for example, unwavering deference would be appropriate. Even if it was motivated for the wrong reasons, it might still get the right results: you would always believe your friend when they were right, and never believe them when they were wrong (in this hypothetical world, they are *never* wrong). But that is not our world, and a few examples may illustrate the contrast.

For instance, there's a scene in the sitcom Seinfeld where Jerry and Uncle Leo are talking in their local diner. Leo raises a potential experience of antisemitism. As he bites into his burger he says:

> Uncle Leo: Look at this! I told them medium-*rare*, it's *medium*!
>
> Jerry: It happens.
>
> Uncle Leo: I bet that cook is an antisemite!
>
> Jerry: He can't even see you! He has no idea who you are!
>
> Uncle Leo: They don't just *overcook* a hamburger, Jerry!
>
> (Mehlman, Gross, Ackerman, 1996: 4:12)

Uncle Leo thinks he has experienced a case of antisemitism. Jerry isn't convinced. If Jerry was epistemically servile, he would presumably take Leo's word for it, having little faith in his own capacities to discern good reasons from bad. But he doesn't. Instead, he points to highly plausible reasons for being sceptical of this testimony. The cook can't *see* Leo, he knows nothing about who Leo is - it's thus unclear how he is meant to know

that Leo is Jewish[32], and thus, why Leo should be so confident that the overcooking of his burger is motivated by antisemitism. It also doesn't seem like an inference to the best explanation. Leo says they don't just overcook a burger. But of course, they do - it happens, as Jerry says. Finally, the 'overcooking' Leo complains of is pretty negligible. If this is intended as an anti semitic statement, it would have to be a very subtle one.

In other words, Jerry has reasons for not believing Leo. The incident he cites seems better explained by more innocuous factors; and the mechanism by which Leo would be targeted for anti semitism seems quite unclear.

Believing Uncle Leo seems unjustified here. If we assume that the overcooked burger is not motivated by antisemitism, then Jerry would end up believing something false. General deference in this context, of the sort we might expect from the servile person, would be bad for Jerry, epistemically speaking. This points to a problem for epistemic servility: we get false positives about instances of oppressive injustice - believing they took place when they didn't.

This is a problem for epistemic servility. But a much bigger problem is the opposite: believing someone when they tell you something isn't an instance of oppressive injustice when it is.

Consider this example, again from the show Sex Education. Aimee and Maeve are two adolescent female friends. It is Maeve's birthday and Aimee has baked her some cupcakes, however these get squashed on her way to school. This is a result of her being sexually assaulted - when she is on the bus, a man ejaculates onto her clothes. When she recounts this to Maeve, she acts as if it's no big deal (her main concern being the stain on her jeans):

> Aimee: I was on the bus and a guy wanked on my leg.
>
> Maeve: What?
>
> Aimee: Do you think it'll stain? I love these jeans!
>
> Maeve: You have to report it.
>
> Aimee: It's fine, they were only cheap.

---

[32] This is not to say that, if he could see him, he would *know* that Leo is Jewish. Indeed, judgements of who is Jewish based on appearance are likely to be shot through with antisemitism themselves. What matters for the example, though, is just that the chef might *believe* Leo was Jewish and happen to be correct. This belief would then activate his antisemitic prejudice.

Maeve: No, you've been assaulted.

Aimee: …I think he was just lonely. Or not right in the head or something…which is weird because he was quite handsome.

Maeve: Ames, this is serious.

Aimee: It's *silly*! I'm *fine*, honestly!

Maeve: Okay, I know what I want us to do for my birthday: I want us to go to the police.

(Goodhart, Goodhart, 2021: 11:04)

Aimee says she's fine. Maeve doesn't believe her. Instead, she believes, and says, what is true: Amiee has been assaulted. If Maeve deferred to Amiee and believed her initial testimony, she would believe something false. As a consequence, she would also be far less able to support her friend. Maeve trusts her judgement, she has faith in her epistemic abilities: she knows the concept of sexual assault, she knows she knows it, and she correctly belives she can identify it when she sees it.

I believe Maeve's conviction is consistent with epistemic humility here, but it's inconsistent with epistemic servility. However willing she might be to defer to Amiee when she's given good reason to do so, she knows that now is not one of those times. The servile by contrast would likely lack the faith in their own epistemic capacities to come to this alternate conclusion, and hold firm to this conviction in the face of Aimee's protestations.

This is the crux of what epistemic humility can do for friendship that epistemic servility can't: it can make appropriate distinctions between whom to believe, when, and why. In doing so, it can make the protagonists in these examples better able to support their friends. To the extent that epistemic servility results in pervasive deference, it is liable to two problems: false positives - believing something is a case of oppressive injustice when it isn't; and (more worryingly) false negatives - believing that something isn't an instance of oppressive injustice when it is. Both of these are bad for friendship.

In the first case, if Jerry was to side with Leo's story, this would result in Leo feeling he was given more reason to view the world as a hostile place for jewish people, in a way that was not justified by the present evidence (though it could be independently justified). This would presumably be bad for Leo, inasmuch as he would then believe something false that also made his experience of the world worse, while also making

him liable to interpret yet more innocuous experiences like this one as the result of antisemitism.

Even more troublingly, if Maeve just went along with Aimee's story, she would be colluding with a highly toxic narrative: that sexual assault against teenage girls should be viewed as a normal fact of life, and that victims who make a fuss are just being silly. As we know, this could not be further from the truth. Indeed, as the series goes on, we see the damage that this experience has on Aimee's psychology. While Maeve remains a supportive presence, she could not do so if she went along with Aimee's initial insistence that she is fine. Maeve's conviction that what happened to Aimee was *wrong* helps give Aimee the ability to recognise this for herself. It is morally and epistemically fortifying. This is especially important in cases like these, because someone in Aimee's position - oppressed by forces of misogyny - may be particularly likely to doubt herself. As mentioned, oppression makes people particularly vulnerable to developing epistemic servility (Tanesini, 2018a, 2021).

This shows how epistemic servility gets us to defer, believing someone when we ought not to. But even when servility generates the right response - deferring when there is good reason to do so - it does this for the wrong reasons. If one isn't sensitive to the epistemic merits of another's testimony, then deferring to that testimony is unlikely to give one knowledge - it might only end up giving one a true belief, resulting from sheer luck.

Moreover, this disposition towards deference cuts both ways. While it may well lead the friend to defer to their oppressed friend when they ought to, it will also lead them to defer to the testimony of epistemically corrupted sources as well - to that of racists, homophobes, and misogynists for example. It's no comfort knowing that your friend will defer to your testimony as a woman when you talk about your experience of sexism in the workplace, if, in the next moment, they'll just as easily defer to Phyllis Schlafly!

Further, the experience of having one's friend defer to you is going to be very different if the friend is humble versus if they are servile. If they are humble, they will defer because they recognise, and rightly trust in, your epistemic authority. If they are servile, they will defer because they do not trust themselves. Essentially, what matters to them is not that you are in a superior epistemic position, but rather, that they are always, necessarily, in an inferior one. They have to trust others because they lack the confidence to trust themselves instead.

This is hardly reassuring if you are on the receiving end of this behaviour. Our friend's trusting and deferring to us has value because we take it to be sensitive to counter-factual considerations. If what I was saying had no epistemic merit, then my friend

wouldn't trust me. Their trust indicates that what I say does have some epistemic merit. This chain of reasoning is much less available to the person whose friend is servile. And a friend who trusted and deferred to your judgement no matter what would be a frustrating friend, not a supportive one. If friends are meant to take up a commanding perspective on our lives, as Thomas (1987) suggests, then a servile friend in many ways abnegates this responsibility.

7.2. The Humble Response to Difficult Cases

The examples of Brian-Alice example and the exchange between Aubrey Gordon and her skinny friend are illustrative of how a lack of intellectual humility can cause one to react in ways that are epistemically and morally wrong. However, these examples may seem like cases where the right response seems pretty clear, at least from the outside.

But, one might object, many cases are not like this. It is clear, for example, that the man who harassed Aubrey Gordon for being fat was in the wrong. But not all cases are as clear cut as this. Sometimes it may be genuinely ambiguous whether the marginalised person has been subject to oppressive mistreatment. Sometimes, even the marginalised person may not be sure. What role is there for the intellectually humble friend in such cases?

These issues are complex and nuanced and thinking through them may be helped by an example. I said that overcooking a burger would be a pretty subtle statement. But of course, many acts motivated by prejudice can be subtle. Consider this case from a paper by Amia Srinivasan (2020: 395-396):

> Nour, a young British woman of Arab descent, is invited to dinner at the home of a white friend from university. The host, Nour's friend's father, is polite and welcoming to Nour. He is generous with the food and wine, and asks Nour a series of questions about herself. Everyone laughs and talks amiably. As Nour comes away, however, she is unable to shake the conviction that her friend's father is racist against Arabs. But replaying the evening in her head she finds it impossible to recover just what actions on the host's part could be thought to be racist, or what would justify her belief in the host's racism. If pressed, Nour would say she 'just knows' that her host is racist. In fact the host is racist – he thinks of Arabs as inherently fanatic, dangerous and backwards – and as a result did send off subtle cues that Nour subconsciously registered and processed. It is this subconscious sensitivity that led to her belief that her host is racist.

As Srinivasan goes onto state:

> Is Nour's belief that her host is racist (epistemically) justified? I think the intuitive answer is yes. Nour's belief, after all, is the product of a sensitivity to racism, a sensitivity that allows her to dependably track whether or not the people she encounters are racist (Ibid).

What should Nour's white friend think upon being told that Nour suspects their father is racist? While Srinivasan stipulates that this intuitive judgement of racism is correct, we should keep in mind that in many cases like this, a person in Nour's position may lack confidence in their abilities to intuit whether someone else has displayed racist biases. And someone in the position of Nour's friend would likely be uncertain too. Thus, for our discussion, let's imagine that neither can be sure. As far as they're concerned, this is an open question; it leaves open the idea that Nour might be wrong, and paranoia might be an easy, if mistaken, diagnosis to reach for under these circumstances.

In assessing this, it is fruitful to contrast it to the Seinfeld example, where paranoia seems a highly plausible explanation (throughout the episode, Leo is presented as a highly paranoid individual). Jerry suggested that the cook couldn't see Uncle Leo. As such, there was no causal mechanism by which Leo's identity could have influenced how the chef cooked his burger. The same isn't true here. Nour interacted with the father for a whole evening. While there may have been no overt acts of racism from the host, the idea that subtle, racially charged messages can be transmitted in interpersonal interactions isn't controversial - consider the literature on microaggressions referenced in the previous chapter. There is a pathway by which racism could be expressed and received by Nour. There is also an explanation for how she could pick up on this when others don't. She has had a history of these encounters that have attuned her to these subtle signals.

The epistemically humble friend would be sensitive to these facts. What are the relevant limitations? Well, as mentioned, Nour's friend is white. They recognise that their being white may be epistemically relevant. They have not been attuned to these signs the way Nour is likely to have been. Thus, even if they were involved in the same interaction, this interaction will have been experienced differently, due to a difference in epistemic standpoint (Toole, 2019; McKinnon, 2015).

In other words, the friend recognises that what they are capable of discerning from these dynamics does not define the limits of what could be discerned by an appropriately attuned hearer. And while Nour may not be infallible on these matters, their identity and past experiences of racism likely make them better equipped in this regard. This helps define the shape of the friend's ignorance: in virtue of not sharing Nour's identity, they likely lack certain epistemically relevant skills.

There is also the potential for prejudice, promoting testimonial injustice. This is a more difficult case than some others considered before: the fact that Nour lacks examples of what she takes to be racism makes her testimony highly vulnerable to being dismissed out of hand.

Given this lack of evidence, I do think it would be appropriate for even a humble person to be *less* confident that racism is the explanation, than if Nour had readily accessible examples she could appeal to. It seems uncontroversial to say that less evidence should result in a lower level of credence, other things being equal.

Still, the lack of evidence may not only make prejudicial judgements more likely - as the diagnosis of racism will seem hardly incontrovertible - it may also make them harder to recognise as prejudices. The prejudicial tendency to dismiss such claims as symptoms of paranoia will seem all the more justified.

One might think that epistemic humility can do little here. In many ways, the relevant limitations seem to be as much on Nour's side as the side of the friend. Nour 'finds it impossible to recover just what actions…would justify her belief in the host's racism' (Srinivasan, 2020: 395**).** This is a limitation as much on Nour's part as on the friend's.

But owning one's limitations may nonetheless make one more understanding of the limitations of others. If one recognises one's own limitations, and is not defensive about them, this will make it easier to appreciate that others are limited too. And this will not come as a strike against their epistemic character, or a reason to necessarily think them inferior. Rather, this will be a familiar (highly relatable!) phenomenon that does not inherently make them any less epistemically competent. We may also think that the kind of dispositions caused by humility would result in a more collaborative, potentially nurturing spirit:

> IH increases a person's propensity to consider alternative ideas, to listen to the views of others, and to spend more time trying to understand someone with whom he disagrees (Whitcomb et al, 2017: 524).

Their own attentiveness to their limitations can inspire not only an interest in the ideas of others, but also, a desire to work with them to come to understand what is true.

How might this apply to the Nour example? Well, what Nour might value under these circumstances is someone to open-mindedly talk through what it might be that she picked up on that gave her the (correct) impression that the host was racist. While the example stipulates that there is nothing that she can pinpoint as a concrete instance of

racism, we can presume that many cases probably aren't going to be this cut and dry. It might be that a person like Nour *could* come to identify these features of the interaction more closely, *if* she had someone who would consider the events in detail, without prejudging the question or dismissing her testimony.

The humble person seems like exactly the sort to provide this. Throughout the course of such an interaction, like a photograph slowly developing, perhaps the picture of what happened that evening becomes clearer - there may even be a lightbulb moment where Nour happens on a crucial detail that helped settle her impression. These kinds of competing explanations could also settle the competing hypothesis more definitively. These processes may not be possible without discussion with another, and the role of trust and self-disclosure in friendship makes it an especially valuable forum in which this can take place.

Of course, this is hypothetical. While I think such an interaction could be of great value to both participants, the situation may remain as Srinivasan describes. Perhaps there is nothing Nour can appeal to. Perhaps, still, she draws a blank.

Under these circumstances, humility still matters. The humble person may not have evidence in this concrete sense, but they have Nour's word - and this surely counts for something. Indeed, given the considerations of how her belief results from a process the friend might presume to be at least somewhat reliable, it counts for something significant. Even if the ultimate response is for the friend to suspend judgement, and remain agnostic, what matters is that this is done for epistemically proper - rather than prejudicial - reasons.

8. Conclusion

The previous chapter discussed the ways that differences in social identity can, when combined with prejudice and ignorance, undermine goods of close friendship. This chapter considers how intellectual humility can address some of these problems. I have argued that the attentiveness to limitations motivated by intellectual humility looks like a good candidate for a virtue that allows individuals, especially those from privileged backgrounds, to recognise their ignorance and bias and take steps to address it. I have identified a (non-exhaustive) set of steps that they would be motivated to take and which would go some way to addressing the challenges discussed.

I divided these into different temporal categories. Some things that one can do are preemptive and forwarding-looking. These concern what we can do now, in order to undermine our committing epistemic injustice in the future. There are also things we can

do in the present. That is, during our engagement with our friends, in circumstances when we are especially likely to commit epistemic injustice. Finally, there are reparative, backward-looking ways that we can behave. These concern the things we can do to address the epistemic injustices we might have already committed in our interpersonal interactions with friends, and the harms that may have come from them.

I have also addressed two objections. The first objection asked why epistemic servility wouldn't also get us to defer appropriately to our friend's testimony. I argued that servility in these contexts produces the wrong responses; when it produces the right ones, it does so for the wrong reasons. The second concerned examples that were more ambiguous than those we had so far considered. In responding to this, I gave a more ambiguous example, and showed how - even in these cases - intellectual humility would be beneficial in getting the friend to react appropriately.

This picture is hardly complete; there are surely many other things to be said here, and details that need to be filled in with what has been said. However, I do believe this framing is a helpful one. There are things we can do to prevent ourselves from committing these injustices in the future; things we can do to prevent ourselves from committing them in the present; and ways we can address the wrongs of the past. What's more, there is strong reason for thinking that the intellectually humble would be especially well-disposed to take each of these steps. Doing so makes them more likely to preserve a number of friendship's valuable features. That, at least, is what I have tried to argue.

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