DOGARA ISHAYA MANOMI

Virtue Ethics in the Letter to Titus

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe

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Dogara Ishaya Manomi

Virtue Ethics in the Letter to Titus

An Inter-disciplinary Study

Kontexte und Normen neutestamentlicher Ethik / Contexts and Norms of New Testament Ethics

Volume XII

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Dedication

First to Barsheba, my beloved wife, and our children Ambaam, Ambiim, and Annika-Ambaamirah, for their endless love and sacrifices for my sake. Second, to my beloved parents, Rev. Ishaya and Mrs. Rhodah Manomi, for sacrificing their comfort to give us the formal education that they were not privileged to have. Above all, this book is dedicated to the triune God – the source and goal of my intellect, knowledge, and everything – whom I am learning daily to love with all my heart, soul, and mind.

Acknowledgments

This book is a slightly revised version of my doctoral dissertation titled *Exegethics: A Virtue-ethical Reading of the Letter to Titus: An Inter-disciplinary Interaction between Biblical Ethics and Virtue Ethics Theory using the "Exegethics" Methodology, which was undertaken, submitted, and defended at the Faculty of Protestant Theology, Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany (2016–2019).*

"It takes a whole village to raise a child" (African proverb). This proverb expresses the process and product of my doctoral study, which has resulted in this book. Looking at the number of people who have contributed to the success of my stay and research in Mainz, I see myself as a child that the whole "village" is raising. Time and space may not allow me to mention all, but a few names, to whom I am deeply indebted, need to be mentioned here for the key roles they have played through it all. Suffice it to say, nevertheless, that I (and none of these people mentioned below) am responsible for any mistakes, errors, or any kind of shortcomings in this book.

I owe a great debt of gratitude for the success of this research to my primary supervisor, Prof. Dr. Ruben Zimmermann. His commitment to high academic excellence has raised the bar very high for me and has challenged me to work harder and aim higher. His vast knowledge, patient guidance, probing questions, and stimulating insight related to biblical exegesis, biblical ethics, philosophical ethics, and contemporary interpretation and application of biblical ethics, among others, have all been deployed in challenging me to ensure that my inter-disciplinary dissertation meets the standards of biblical exegesis, ethics, and hermeneutics respectively. Beyond academics, his personal virtues evident in his lifestyle of humility, generosity, transparency, commitment to my general well-being and that of my family, and his Christian commitment combined with academic excellence have and will continue to serve as a model to me. Long before I started applying for doctoral studies, I had prayed that God should give me such a supervisor. And Prof. Dr. Zimmermann is the answer to that prayer.

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Jos (Nigeria), November 2020

Dogara Ishaya Manomi

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List of Abbreviations

The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines (2nd Edition) was consulted. Other abbreviations are listed below.

ATR African Traditional Religion

CC Church Council

COCIN Church of Christ in Nations

EABS European Association of Biblical Studies EKD Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland

ET English Translation²
GCC General Church Council

Int'l International

JGU Johannes Gutenberg-University

LCC Local Church Council

LXX Septuagint

NIV New International Version
NKJV New King James Version
NRSV New Revised Standard Version

NT New Testament OT Old Testament

P. I. W. C. Pentecost International Worship Center

PCC Provincial Church Council

PE Pastoral Epistles

RCC Regional Church Council
RSV Revised Standard Version
SBL Society of Biblical Literature
SMD Studentenmission in Deutschland

TCNN Theological College of Northern Nigeria

TETFund Tertiary Education Trustfund

UK United Kingdom

USA United States of America

¹ The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines, 2nd ed. (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014).

² Thanks is due Jacob Cerone for translating most of the German sentences into English while copy-editing the manuscript for publication. Noteworthy, however, is that these translations are provided only to aid understanding for readers who may not know any German.

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Chapter 1

Description of Concepts and Methodology

1.1 Authorship of the Letter to Titus: Hermeneutical and Methodological Implications

It is helpful, before describing the premises, concepts, and methodology of this book, to mention that I am aware of the long debated yet persistent question of authorship regarding the letters to Timothy and Titus, commonly known as the Pastoral Epistles (PE), the Pastoral Letters, or the Pastorals (used interchangeably throughout this research). However, in this research, the authorship debate is intentionally avoided for the following three reasons.

First, it plays little or no role in my text-based virtue-ethical reading of the letter to Titus.² Second, it has been thoroughly investigated and succinctly argued over a long period of time and by scholars from both sides of the debate: for or against Paul's authorship.³ In my opinion, the authorship debate has been

¹ According to Percy N. Harrison (*The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* [Milford: Oxford University Press, 1921], 13, citing Zahn, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* [Deichert, 1906], 447), the use of the term "pastoral" in connection with the letters to Timothy and Titus traces back to Thomas Aquinas (1274) and D. N. Berdot (1703). But its modern use as a technical term for the three letters is traced to a series of lectures by Paul Anton, delivered at the University of Halle, Germany, between 1726–1727, and edited by J. A. Maier in 1753–1755 under the title *Exegetische Abhandlung der Pastoral-Briefe Pauli an Timotheum und Titum*. Similarly, Frances Young affirms that the term "Pastoral Epistles" in reference to the three letters to Titus and Timothy seems to have originated from Paul Anton in 1726–1727 (*The Theology of the Pastoral Letters*, New Testament Theology [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 1). They are generally designated with this title because of their character as letters addressed to two 'pastors' in relation to shepherding their churches.

² Rather than distract the reader with the controversial authorship question, I prefer that the reader first reads the content of this research before reflecting on whether my virtue-ethical reading of the text aligns it more with the so-called authentic Pauline letters or not. In this way, the reader is given the chance to make a decision about authorship based on the content of this research, rather than stating a position on authorship upfront.

³ For elaborate discussions of the authorship from both sides of the debate, see, among many others, Lewis R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986). Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006). Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Helenized Christians*, vol. 1 (Downers Grove and Nottingham: IVP Academic and Apollos, 2006). Luke Timothy Johnson, *Letters to Paul's Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, New Testament in Context (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), and many others, including the arguments for a possibility of Luke's

over-flooded⁴ with contrasting views such that it is not enough for one to just hold to an opinion, but to argue it extensively. Embarking on such an extensive (historical-critical) authorship debate would detract attention from focusing on the exegetical analysis of the content of the selected text: the letter to Titus.⁵ Since the authorship debate is still controversial, taking a position in a study whose focus is not to address this question has the potential of distracting the reader away from the content of my virtue-ethical analysis and into trying to agree or disagree with my position on authorship, thereby betraying the purpose of the research. Third, taking and defending such a position on the authorship would unnecessarily necessitate space and time beyond what is appropriate for a doctoral research project that is not primarily addressing the authorship question.

Based on the above-mentioned reasons, this research prefers to take a neutral position regarding authorship. Where it is important or necessary, it refers simply to the "author," referring to an implied historical author (be it Paul or a pseudonymous Paul), intentionally pushing the authorship debate to the background. Even when referring to other scholarly works that have taken a position in favor of or against Paul's authorship, this research prefers to refer to the "author" for consistency. In this way, the present research respects the claims of the text without necessarily affirming or rejecting Paul's authorship.

Nevertheless, not engaging in the authorship debate implies that the letter to Titus is read "on its own terms," respecting its own (historical) claims – from Paul to Titus in Crete (Titus 1:1–5; 3:12–15), written probably around 63–65AD.⁶ Whether written by the authentic Paul or a pseudonymous Paul, the text seeks to situate itself within the first century and among the first group of believers in Crete (cf. Titus 1:1–5; 3:12–15). Dislodging the text out of this premise and period (to a second century period after Paul) could constitute more of a hinderance than an aid to understanding its theological-ethical orientation. The

authorship of the PE, see e.g. Stephen G. Wilson, *Luke and the Pastoral Epistles* (London: SPCK, 1979).

⁴ Jermo Van Nes similarly expresses concern regarding how the study of the PE has been mainly characterized by the authorship debate. See Jermo van Nes, "On the Origin of the Pastorals' Authenticity Criticism: A "New" Perspective," https://www.academia.edu/22917002/. 02. May 2018 and Van Nes, "On the Origin of the Pastorals' Authenticity Criticism: A 'New Perspective'," *New Testament Studies* 62 (2016): 315–320.

⁵ See Alfred A. Genade, *Persuading the Cretans: A Text-Generated Persuasive Analysis of the Letter to Titus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 1, see also n. 1. Genade adopts a similar approach in his study of the letter to Titus, arguing specifically that "the identity of the author is of little consequence to the analysis performed" in his text-generated persuasive analysis of the letter to Titus. One of the reasons he does not engage in the authorship debate, just like this study, is that the authorship question has been thoroughly investigated from all sides of the debate, but at the expense of deeper analysis of the text in its own rights as an individual text. Hence, Genade regards the letter to Titus as having "its own *voice* and can stand on its own" (emphasis in italics original).

⁶ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Commentary on 1–2 Timothy & Titus*, Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation (Nashville: Holman, 2017), 295.

hermeneutical and methodological implication of respecting the claims of the text without necessarily affirming or rejecting Paul's authorship to this research is that the research focuses more on the text as a theological-ethical resource for early believers in Christ, in its inter-textual relations with other texts within the Corpus Paulinum, than focusing on its inter-textual relation with texts produced by Christians from the second century onward, especially those produced by the early church fathers.

1.2 Locating the Premises of the Research

1.2.1 Inter-disciplinary Premise

This research is located within an inter-disciplinary premise between biblical studies and virtue ethics theory. A major methodological criticism against biblical ethicists is that "their ethical claims either have no direct and sustained reference to or are not built upon any major ethical theories." This study, therefore, employs virtue ethics theory as the hermeneutical framework on which its ethical claims stand. Similarly, N. T. Wright observes that just as most writers on NT ethics pay little attention to the concept of virtue despite the significant presence of the concept in the NT, so also most recent writings on virtue ethics pay little attention to the NT. This study hopes, therefore, to contribute to bridging this gap by engaging extensively in a focused virtue-ethical exegesis of Titus.

Moreover, based on the observation that many biblical scholars are beginning to use a virtue approach as a hermeneutical tool, Lucas Chan has even argued that there is an "emerging consensus" among biblical ethicists and moral theologians regarding the appropriation of virtue theory as the most appropriate hermeneutical tool for such an inter-disciplinary interaction. This study, therefore, joins this conversation and contributes to the novel attempts by biblical scholars to build bridges between biblical studies and virtue ethics.

⁷ Lucas Chan, *Biblical Ethics in the 21st Century: Developments, Emerging Consensus, and Future Directions* (New York: Paulist Press, 2013), 29. While Chan directs this criticism especially to some of the leading biblical ethicists like Richard B. Hays, Frank J. Matera, Sandra M. Schneiders, and Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah, it is a criticism that applies to many more scholars.

⁸ Tom Wright, *Virtue Reborn* (London: SPCK, 2010), 246. It is noteworthy that Wright's book is not only an excellent go-to for practical application of virtue theory in every day Christian living, but also useful for academic purposes. The book is intended for popular audiences rather than for academics only.

⁹ See Chan, *Biblical Ethics in the 21st Century*, 52–74. Throughout the book, Chan gives concrete examples of how biblical theologians and Christian ethicists are beginning to engage each other's works or expressing the need for such an inter-disciplinary engagement. Chan hopes that such cooperation will go beyond bridge-building to integration and dialogue.

¹⁰ For example, Daniel J. Harrington and James F. Keenan, *Paul and Virtue Ethics: Building Bridges between NT Studies and Moral Theology* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publ.,

However, both the text selected and the methodology applied in this research mark a significant difference and a new approach compared to other scholarly works in this inter-disciplinary field of research. While other scholars have focused largely on selected themes and short passages from biblical texts, ¹¹ this research takes the whole letter to Titus into focus. This makes the approach of this book more text-based and exegetical than most previous works in this field.

Regarding methodology, none of the previous virtue-ethical interpretations of Scripture has applied the methodology used in this research. It could even be argued that until now, there has not been a comprehensive methodology for reading a biblical text virtue-ethically. Hence, this study seeks to fill this methodological gap using the *exegethics* methodology, being an adapted version of "implicit ethics" – a comprehensive methodology for reading biblical texts ethically.

Moreover, the previous works on virtue ethics in the New Testament have concentrated mostly on the Gospels, ¹² Paul's undisputed letters, and Johannine literature, almost entirely neglecting the Pastoral Epistles. Even Harrington and Keenan, whose works have made significant contribution to this novel interdisciplinary conversation, ¹³ only have a very brief discussion on the PE. Surprisingly, they do not identify any correlation between virtue ethics and the Pastorals, apart from the connection of the Pastorals with Paul's authentic letters. They argue, therefore, that disconnecting the Pastorals from Paul's authentic letters would lead to an appeal to the ethics of the Pastorals as "legalistic, cultural Christianity without theological depth." Their conclusion implies that the PE depend on the authentic Pauline letters and cannot be read virtue-ethically on their own.

^{2010).} Daniel Harrington and James F. Keenan. Jesus and Virtue Ethics: Building Bridges Between NT Studies and Moral Theology (Lanham: Sheed and Ward, 2002).

¹¹ For example, Harrington and Keenan's *Paul and Virtue Ethics* and *Jesus and Virtue Ethics*. Chan also criticizes biblical and theological ethicists, e. g. Richard A. Burridge, Allen Verhey, etc., arguing that their study of NT ethics does not contain enough exegetical material (*Biblical Ethics in the 21st Century*, 59, 66). This study seeks, therefore, to be as intensively exegetical as possible.

¹² For a recent work on a virtue-ethical interpretation of the Beatitudes in the Gospels, see William C. Mattison III, *The Sermon on the Mount and Moral Theology: A Virtue Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

¹³ Harrington and Keenan, *Paul and Virtue Ethics*. Harrington and Keenan, *Jesus and Virtue Ethics*.

¹⁴ Harrington and Keenan, *Paul and Virtue Ethics*, 117. By describing the ethics of the Pastorals as "legalistic, cultural Christianity without theological depth," Harrington and Keenan imply that the ethical perspective of the PE is deontological. Conversely, this research argues that the ethical perspective of Titus is not legalistic nor cultural, but virtue-ethical. Moreover, the text is not "without theological depth," as they argue. Instead, the linguistic elements, theological motifs, and ethical norms are rich in content and they converge together to construct a virtue approach to ethics.

On the contrary, this study, considering Titus as an individual text, contends that the ethical perspective of Titus can be interpreted and described as a virtue-ethical perspective. The linguistic elements, theological motifs, and ethical norms embedded in the text are rich in meaning and together they (re)present an ethic of character or virtue that is not "legalistic, cultural Christianity without theological depth," as posited by Harrington and Keenan. If the present study successfully proves its hypothesis and argues its points, then it could dispel Harrington and Keenan's conclusion regarding virtue in the PE. Moreover, it would demonstrate that not only the PE as a corpus, but each of the letters independently can be read virtue-ethically.

Another inter-disciplinary context of this book is the attention it gives to African biblical hermeneutics in chapter four. The findings of this research, namely, the virtue-ethical perspectives of Titus, will be appropriated into an African context. In this process, African ethics in its ethnological frame and African biblical hermeneutics as independent fields of research¹⁵ are engaged in an inter-disciplinary interaction with virtue ethics and biblical ethics. Nonetheless, the main inter-disciplinary character of this book is most evident in the virtue-ethical analyses of Titus in chapter three, the main chapter of the study.

1.2.2 Inter-cultural Premise

The historical background and contemporary form of virtue ethics have been greatly shaped by Western culture. Therefore, Western cultural concepts have dominated discussions on virtue ethics among biblical ethicists. Recently, however, there have been attempts to bring other cultural perspectives to the table. However, while scholarly discussions on virtue ethics have been robust in the West and some considerable efforts are being made from Asian perspectives, African ethics and its virtue-ethical concepts have not been given much attention.

This study, therefore, locates itself in an inter-cultural context by engaging in cultural analysis, trying to understand the conceptions of virtue in some African cultures in comparison to the conceptions of virtue in Western cultures and in biblical texts.

¹⁵ Thaddeus Metz, "The Virtue of African Ethics," in *The Handbook of Virtue Ethics*, ed. Stan Van Hooft et al. (Durham: Acumen, 2014), 276. Metz notes that African ethics as a professional field of research emerged around the 1960s.

¹⁶ Such as by Chan's perspective as an Asian scholar (*Biblical Ethics in the 21st Century*).

¹⁷ Metz, "The Virtue of African Ethics," 276. Metz laments that while scholarly discussion on virtue ethics is fairly robust in the Western world, little attention is given to African virtue ethics.

1.3 Virtue Ethics

In an inter-disciplinary study of this nature, one between virtue ethics and biblical ethics,¹⁸ it is helpful to describe and demarcate the concept of virtue such research employs, largely because of the various accounts of virtue available and the different aspects each account emphasizes.¹⁹ In addition, the historical dimensions of the virtue approach to ethics, the modifications it has undergone, and the nuances it has gained or lost over time necessitate such a conceptual delineation. It is also noteworthy that in order to keep the focus on virtue ethics and not dabble into the arguments about the differences between ethics and morality, between virtue and character, and between virtue theory and virtue ethics, these terms will be used interchangeably.

This unit of the research describes virtue ethics under seven headings, albeit briefly: general description of virtue ethics; historical dimensions of virtue ethics; neo-Aristotelian or contemporary virtue ethics; virtue ethics in NT ethics and current Christian ethics; characteristics of virtue ethics; the working definition of virtue ethics this research employs; and the methodological framework of the research.

While I shall discuss more precisely what contemporary virtue ethics means and how it is neo-Aristotelian below, suffice it to mention now that this study adopts the neo-Aristotelian concept of virtue, popularly known as virtue ethics theory, in its contemporary form in the Western²⁰ world. Virtue ethics, in this

¹⁸ In regard to the term "ethics" itself, Victor Paul Furnish rightly argues that ethics refers or applies to the "special consideration of the nature, forms, principles, and goals of 'right' or 'good' conduct" (*Theology and Ethics in Paul* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1968], 209). The ethicist does not inquire into norms only but also makes inquiries into the subject and object of ethical action (actor or agent, and receiver respectively). Furnish goes further to argue that by this definition, Paul himself does not deal with ethics in a systematic, deliberate and self-conscious way as a modern ethicist would. Hence, it is inappropriate to speak of Pauline ethics in a sense of Paul's own self-conscious, systematic and critical analysis of the grounds, motives, forms and goals of Christian conduct. Furnish then contends that Pauline ethics refers, instead, to the study of the "theological convictions which underlie Paul's concrete exhortations and instructions and, second, of the way those convictions shape his responses to practical questions of conduct."

Since the PE are normally considered as belonging to the "Pauline" tradition directly or indirectly, this research agrees with Furnish's definition of ethics and his description of the concept and the tasks of studying Pauline ethics. The authorship argument of the letter to Titus, however, is not pursued in this research, as explained above.

¹⁹ For example, different scholars are committed to studying virtue ethics as it relates to different aspects such as classical virtues, contemporary virtue ethics, the natural virtues, theological virtues, intellectual virtues, Platonic virtues, Aristotelian virtues, Augustinian virtues, Thomistic virtues, and so on. For different types of virtue, see Robin W. Lovin, *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties, and Virtues* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), 185–208.

²⁰ Even though I am an African, it becomes necessary to employ the Western account of virtue ethics because Africa has not, yet, articulated a concept of virtue that is sensitive to its contextual issues. Understanding the concept of virtue in the Western world becomes, there-

construal and as conceived in this study, has five major characteristics that shape and demarcate it. This account of virtue and the five characteristics²¹ discussed below are adopted in this study for the following reasons. First, they are comprehensive. They simultaneously capture, express, and represent both the main classical and contemporary concepts of virtue as an ethical theory. Second, they are a collection and summary of the main features of the theory as expressed by the leading proponents, both in secular philosophy and moral theology.²² Third, some biblical theologians and Christian ethicists have provided a model by using these characteristics as hermeneutical tools for building bridges between virtue ethics and biblical studies.

However, as noted above, none of the scholars has attempted an extensive virtue-ethical analysis of the letter to Titus or the PE. Moreover, none of them commits to analyzing virtue-ethical characteristics at a whole text level, as this study seeks to do with the text of Titus. This, therefore, leaves a research gap that the present research seeks to fill. The methodology and the text selected are new to the current research on virtue ethics in biblical literature. In addition, this research considers some aspects of virtue ethics that are often neglected, such as the sources and symbols of character, which will be included in the working definition of virtue ethics below, and in the appropriation into an African context in chapter four.

This research analyzes and identifies the presence of the concepts of virtue as represented by these characteristics in three aspects of the letter to Titus, namely, the linguistic elements, theological motifs, and ethical norms. These three aspects are analyzed under a fivefold methodological grid comprising the linguistic form (intra-textual, inter-textual, and extra-textual levels); moral agents; ethical argumentation; history of tradition; and range of application of the selected ethical norms respectively.²³

1.3.1 General Description of Virtue Ethics

a) Virtue(s): Description

For an accountable description of virtue ethics as an ethical theory, it is helpful to describe or define the term "virtue" itself, starting with Aristotle. In the *Nicho*-

fore, a starting point for other parts of the world to articulate their own virtue ethics that pays attention to their distinctives. Part of this research moves in this direction by seeking to appropriate the concept of virtue into an African context.

²¹ Here, we rely heavily on Chan's summary of the characteristics and dimensions of virtue ethics as construed in the Western world (See Chan, *Biblical Ethics in the 21st Century*, 83–84). However, we add "particularity" to the characteristics, which Chan does not mention.

²² Chan mentions most of them, while a few points are added here (*Biblical Ethics in the 21st Century*, 83–84).

²³ See the section on methodology below for an explanation of these models.

machean Ethics, Aristotle regards ἀρετή "virtue or excellence" as a characteristic or character trait that enables anything to perform its function well. In relation to humans, a virtue is that characteristic or character trait which makes a person good, and which enables a person to perform his function well.²⁴ In relation to moral virtues, which will be the focus of our study, as opposed to intellectual virtues, Aristotle regards moral virtue as concerned with dispositions, emotions, and actions which aims at the median between excess and deficiency (in German: "Übermaß und Mangel"²⁵), which both "miss the mark." Virtue is, therefore, the mean, ²⁶ meaning "that which is equidistant from each of the extremes ... which is neither too much nor too little."²⁷ Thus, virtue, or a virtuous person always aims at the mean. Particularly, moral virtue, unlike intellectual virtue, is the one that must always aim at the mean because it is the one concerned with passions, desires, and actions, which are the non-rational aspects of humans that can have excess, defect, and the mean.²⁸ In a broader sense, Aristotle regards virtue or excellence as a "characteristic involving choice, and that consists in observing the mean relative to us, a mean which is defined by rational principle, such as a man of practical wisdom would use to determine it."29

Following Aristotle, Alasdyre MacIntyre, who is widely regarded as one of the (if not the) most influential contemporary virtue ethicists, defines virtues as moral qualities "the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices." Similarly, Daniel Russell

²⁴ Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics II 5–6*, translated by Martin Ostwald (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1962), 41.

²⁵ Or, according to Horn, the median between "Zuwenig" ("too little") and "Zuviel" ("too much"), which he describes as the "Mesotes-Lehre" (Mesotes's teaching). According to Horn, "die Tapferkeit etwa liegt zwischen der Freiheit und der Tollkühnheit, die Besonnenheit zwischen der Empfindungslosigkeit und der Zügellosigkeit, die Freigiebigkeit zwischen Verschwendung und Geiz" (ET: "bravery, for example, lies between freedom and recklessness, prudence between insensitivity and licentiousness, generosity between waste and stinginess."). And all of these medians are determined in each specific situation through the activity of prudence or wisdom (German: Klugheit). Friedrich W. Horn, "'Tugend' als ethische Norm in Antike und Christentum: Tugend und Tugendbegriff in griechisch-hellenistischer Philosophie, biblischer, jüdischer und frühchristlicher Theologie," in *Ethische Normen des frühen Christentums: Gut – Leben – Leib – Tugend*, ed. Friedrich W. Horn, Ulrich Volp, and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 313, Kontexte und Normen neutestamentlicher Ethik 4 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 387.

²⁶ The "mean" in Aristotelian ethics refers to the moderate position or the middle ground between two extremes, e.g. excess and lack. See Primavesi and Rapp, *Aristoteles*, 101.

²⁷ Nichomachean Ethics II:1106:25–35.

²⁸ Nichomachean Ethics II:1106b, The Works of Aristotle, translated into English under the editorship of W. D. Ross (London: Oxford University Press, 1915). The "mean" in Aristotelian terms means the moderate position or middle ground between too much and too little.

²⁹ Nichomachean Ethics II:5–6.

³⁰ Alasdaire MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth, 1985), 191, cited in Daniel Statman, "Introduction to Virtue Ethics," in *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, ed. Daniel Statman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 1–41, here 15. See also MacIntyre, "The Nature of the Virtues," in *Virtue Ethics*, ed. Stephen Darwall (Malden, MA: Blackwell,

notes that from ancient to contemporary conceptions of virtue ethics, virtues are regarded as "those character traits that are essential to living a fulfilling human life, a life in which one both cares about the right things and has the wisdom and skill to act intelligently about those things." Julia Annas also regards virtues as "dispositions with an affective aspect, involving the emotions, and an intellectual aspect, involving the development of practical reasoning." The virtues are to some extent states in which a person is, on which basis one could be said to be courageous, kind, generous, just, loving, and the like. Philippa Foot notes that, in the moral sense of the word, as inspired by Aristotle and Aquinas, a virtue is virtuous when it is beneficial to its possessor and others, if it involves the "goodness of the will," and if it functions as a corrective to human passions and temptations that are harmful.

Joseph Kotva, a theological ethicist, similarly defines virtue as a state of character or character trait acquired over time, which contributes to the human good. The virtues, in their plurality, involve both the intellect and the will, both the rational and affective parts of the self. The virtues are the "tendencies, dispositions, and capabilities necessary to the human good, to the best kind of human life."³⁵

b) Virtue Ethics: Description

We shall now move from defining and describing the term "virtue" to describing virtue ethics as an ethical theory. Daniel Statman notes that the major distinguishing factor between virtue ethics and other ethical theories is that, in virtue ethics, "the basic judgments in ethics are judgments about character." In praise of the virtue-ethical approach, Statman argues that virtue ethics is more congenial than the deontological approach to ethics because it sufficiently recognizes the significance of people as moral agents – their differences, their subjectivity, their emotions, and their social contexts. 37

^{2003),148.} Statman and Klein argue that MacIntyre is the most influential virtue ethicist (Daniel Statman, "Introduction to Virtue Ethics," 34, n. 93 and Sherwin Klein, "Platonic Virtue Theory and Business Ethics," *Business and Professional Ethics* 8 [1989] 59–92, here 59).

³¹ Daniel C. Russell, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Virtue Ethics*, ed. Daniel Russell, Cambridge Companions to Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1–6.

³² Julia Annas, "The Virtues" in *The Morality of Happiness*, ed. Julia Annas (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

³³ Annas, "The Virtues."

³⁴ Philippa Foot, *Virtues and Vices and other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³⁵ Joseph J. Kotva, *The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1996), 38.

³⁶ Statman, "Introduction," 7 (emphasis original).

³⁷ Statman, "Introduction," 8.

Stan Van Hooft, similarly, states that "virtue ethics theorizes the characteristic states of the [moral] agent which lead to action, deeming those that lead to morally good actions or, more broadly, socially acceptable actions, to be virtues, and those that lead to unacceptable or morally bad actions as vices."38 In this way, virtue ethics looks away from the concept of moral duty and its consequences to understanding the moral life of persons, exploring motives, inner states, character and its enrichment.³⁹ The virtue of a person forms her/his quest for self-realization and connects one's reason and motivation, which determine one's actions.40 In this light, virtue is a "necessary condition both for seeing moral facts and for being a moral agent."41

Similarly, Harrington and Keenan note that virtue ethics as an ethical theory, unlike other ethical theories, is primarily concerned with the morality of "persons" more than the morality of particular "actions." ⁴² In virtue ethics, the question is not about what actions are morally permissible, but about who we are and what we should become. The tripolar questions that describe and summarize virtue ethicists' concerns are "Who are we?" "Who ought we to become?" and "How are we to get there?" Virtue ethics, therefore, is concerned with the entirety of a person's identity and character, both in personal and social life. Rules, principles, and commands are relevant in virtue ethics only to the extent that they illustrate or exemplify certain valued or disvalued inner character dispositions of persons⁴⁴ or as they help in character development.

John Christman, from a socio-political point of view, notes that virtue theory begins with the conception of the ideal human life, in which the person flourishes, i.e. enjoys the highest degree of moral happiness as the fundamental moral good.⁴⁵ In this sense, character traits or virtues are defined, which are thought to be necessary for leading this flourishing life or attaining the good life. Practices, institutions, and communities are evaluated on the basis of how they make such a development towards flourishing possible, and how they meet the demands of the virtues. 46 The greatest achievement of an individual, a community, an institution, or a state is, therefore, to ensure that people flourish and attain the good life as conceived in virtue ethics. In this socio-political construal, virtue ethics conceives human beings as "fundamentally social beings,

³⁸ Stan Van Hooft, "Introduction," in *The Handbook of Virtue Ethics*, 2–3.

³⁹ Stan Van Hooft, "Introduction," 3.

⁴⁰ Stan Van Hooft, "Virtue and Identity," in *The Handbook of Virtue Ethics*, 161. ⁴¹ Stan Van Hooft, "Virtue and Identity," 161.

⁴² Harrington and Keenan, Paul and Virtue Ethics, 3.

⁴³ Harrington and Keenan, Paul and Virtue Ethics, 3.

⁴⁴ Metz, "The Virtue of African Ethics," 395.

⁴⁵ John Christman, Social and Political Philosophy: A Contemporary Introduction (London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2002), 16.

⁴⁶ Christman, Social and Political Philosophy, 16.

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