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Rival Concepts of Courage: MacIntyrean Enquiry

Abstract

Aristotle's thoughts about courage in Nicomachean Ethics *remain the most common topic of discussion about the virtue. However, if Alasdair MacIntyre's enquiry of virtues is applied, we start to wonder if we have only fragments of that ancient concept of courage in liberal societies today. The images of courage change. We can talk about Aristotelian insights and tell stories about medieval knights, but current tradition and its prominent moral characters shape our comprehension and exercise of virtues. A MacIntyrean threefold approach to virtue with respect to a) practice, b) narrative unity of life and c) tradition reveals two rival concepts of courage: the virtue of courage of excellence and the virtue of courage of efficiency. Which one we will cheer for and which one will prevail depends upon the kind of courage we will employ and adopt as our second, habitual nature.*

Keywords

Alasdair MacIntyre, courage, excellence, efficiency, narrative unity of life, practice, tradition

1. Introduction

When he published the book *After Virtue* in 1981, Alasdair MacIntyre announced the revival of virtue ethics. The title of his masterpiece was chosen carefully, to forewarn two vital messages: I) we live in "a time of oblivion after virtue", a period of human ignorance towards virtues, an era of following duties and calculating utilities, and II) readers ought to consider joining the author's new pursuit "after virtue"; they are invited to challenge their thoughts about the contemporary meaning of virtues and wonder how their exercise and expression today apply to those virtues known from the ancient times.

Our main focus in this paper is to question whether the ancient and the most known conception of courage, conceived by Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, is still part of the human narratives or a more utilitarian concept of courage has prevailed. To pursue that quest, a MacIntyrean's type of enquiry is a valuable asset. He offered us a tool – three specifically defined correlated features: a) tradition, b) narrative unity of personal life and c) practice. The concept of courage is interpreted in this paper following those three features. However, although MacIntyre's insights about virtues are a useful apparatus for grasping essential concerns in discussions about courage, in this paper his thoughts are used only as a foundation, something similar to Wittgenstein's ladder, to rise further into cognition and possibly into practical self-conversion.

Among three relevant features to understand virtue, the concept of *tradition* needs to be explained first, for its significant impact on perspective, understanding and interpretation of the lives for the members of tradition. As such, each tradition offers a unique framework for the development of virtues (see

MacIntyre 1990, p. 5; 2002, p. 210) and at the same time gives more or less successful concepts of those virtues. MacIntyre believes that David Hume's moral philosophy tainted liberal traditions and impaired teleological concepts of virtues. Hume's metaethical theory was translated to normative ethics of emotivism and utilitarianism prevalent in language and behaviour of modern liberal societies today (MacIntyre 2007). The Aristotelian tradition (either Aristotle's, Aquinas', MacIntyre's or some other version), however, stands in opposition to Humean-liberal traditions (see MacIntyre 1988, Hanvelt 2011). There are third, fourth, fifth etc. versions of the concepts of virtue under the same name – *courage*, but for this purpose, I analysed the Aristotelian and liberal concepts of courage.

Human beings are inseparable from their social mores, but only on very rare occasions, one identifies oneself with all their traditional features. Human beings need to remain unique in individuality and keep the *unity of their narratives* that they have been promulgating throughout their lives, despite possible inconsistencies with their tradition (see MacIntyre 1977a, p. 462). *Being an independent practical reasoner* (see MacIntyre 1999a, p. 117) means employing the virtue of courage to test the understanding of the set of goods that their communities presuppose for them. If they are consistent, every battle for their community becomes a personal battle. If they are inconsistent, then either their interests or those of their community must be compromised. In that sense, courage has the role of maintaining integrity while supporting personal and community's comprehensions of the relevant "goods".

If courage is a required moral disposition of each employee at the workplace, then questions are raised about the extent to which employees are willing to accept personal sacrifices for the creation of the "goods of practice". MacIntyre introduced a significant distinction between the work in *practices* and the work in *institutions*; engagement for *inner goods* (defined by the nature of practice) and *external goods*: power, fame and wealth (characteristic benefits of all institutions) (see MacIntyre 2007, p. 194). While those engaged in practice follow the standards of excellence to achieve inner goods, those engaged in achieving the external goods of the institution follow the standards of efficiency.

As every tradition has a prominent moral character which represents the model of moral conduct in the respective society, then, in MacIntyre's opinion, liberal tradition emphasises the *character of managers in institutions*. They are rational and efficient, and, as such, reflect the appropriate moral reasoning in society. Modern liberal individualistic mode of reasoning encourages bureaucratic and institutional "mode of efficiency" (see MacIntyre 1988, pp. 39–40). In these terms, managers in liberal societies today incorporate a new concept of *the courage of efficiency*.

But do managers represent an image of our heroes? Managers do endorse economic battlefields, manage the risks, protect people from economic crises and very possibly contribute to a better state of society. Are they by those deeds contemporary role models, moral idols, who dare to change or retain the streams of our social structures? Are the standards of efficiency prioritised in their deeds above the standards of excellence, because managers belong to the institutional part of an organisation, not practices? Institutions justify their existence by establishing stability and efficiency in practices and managers are making sure that the whole organisation is functioning well, and that "well" is primarily defined by "being efficient" in what they do (see Lutz

2012, p. 150). What methods are justified to "be efficient"? Could managers be considered courageous if their actions do not necessarily include noble purposes, as Aristotle required?

Aristotelian virtue ethics seems to find its place, although with a wide range of variations, in different traditions: the ancient Greek, Islamic World, Judaism, High Middle Ages in Christian Europe, etc. Is there then a place for Aristotelian concepts of virtues in liberal societies? Could the desire to achieve excellence overcome the need to prioritise efficiency? Are the Aristotelian and liberal tradition incommensurable, as MacIntyre claims (MacIntyre 1988, 1999b, 2007)? MacIntyre regards justice, honesty, intellectual virtues, courage and some others (after the book *After Virtue* first published in 1981, he apostrophised additional virtues such as patriotism (MacIntyre 1984), mercy (MacIntyre 1999a), and the virtue of acknowledged dependence (MacIntyre 1999b) as crucial virtues for every tradition and their practice). Unlike extensive analyses of other virtues, although repeatedly mentioned, the virtue of courage does not keep MacIntyre's attention for more than several paragraphs in various texts. On the other hand, he does recognise courage as an authentic virtue needed to sustain that what is considered *good in tradition*, *good in practice* and *good in personal life*. Therefore, the pursuit of the answers about courage brings also new insights into MacIntyre's conception of virtuous character and moral development.

2. Tradition and Courage

Every tradition has its conception of virtues dependent upon the moral schema of respective communities. To overlook the influence of moral tradition is an ignorant standpoint since history, modern narratives and events in any given community are inevitably part of each personal narrative.

"For the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity. I am born with a past; and to try to cut myself off from that past, in the individualist mode, is to deform my present relationships. The possession of historical identity and the possession of a social identity coincide." (MacIntyre 2007, p. 221)

The tradition is of a moral uniqueness of all community members because all people are moulded by their inheritance, laws, debts and liabilities of their tribe, nation, city, family. The nation is most often the starting point, but not necessarily the endpoint – because that "does not entail that the self has to accept the moral limitations of the particularity of those forms of community" (MacIntyre 2007, p. 221). Unlike the knowledge of numbers, algorithms and other mathematical principles where it is irrelevant from whom we learned them, the content of moral standpoints gains deeper understanding once the background influence has been revealed. Only in accordance with the epistemological apparatus inherited in specific traditional can moral statements be understood, and only there could they receive moral evaluation (see MacIntyre 1997). Each tradition has a different catalogue of virtues, but MacIntyre believes that there is a particular list of virtues that are crucial for any tradition to keep it alive and for it to survive.

"Lack of justice, lack of truthfulness, lack of courage, lack of the relevant intellectual virtues – these corrupt traditions, just as they do those institutions and practices which derive their life from the traditions of which they are the contemporary embodiments." (MacIntyre 2007, p. 223)

To keep the crucial feature of the liveliness of a living tradition, the virtue of courage needs to be employed. Courage keeps tradition prepared and tense to enable always new and better ways of living.

"A living tradition then is a historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition." (MacIntyre 2007, p. 240)

Courage supports the existence of tradition but also must support the opportunity to have a conflict in that tradition, again for that tradition to stay vital. A courageous attitude allows changes or abandonments of previously purposeless forms of action and accepts novelties and innovations, or, on the other hand, when needed, it supports traditional ways of living against pointless and inconsistent novelties. Traditions that suppress conflicts and give members completely autonomous freedom of choice have a side effect supporting the rise of authoritative characters grounded on purely subjective reasons. Without the participation of other members in conflicts, those communities lead by requirements of the authority lose prerequisites for the development of the virtues conceptualised by Aristotle and Aristotelians. To build a stable tradition, members need to take a bold stance in facing both internal and external conflicts with other traditions.

In most cases, a conflict of rival traditions can reveal a significant weakness, incompetence or inconsistency of their tradition, which members themselves were not able to perceive (MacIntyre 1990). Therefore, encountering another tradition can result in different definitions of goods of practice, the common good, the notion of virtue, it can even end in a reconstruction of a tradition or even its abandonment. To undertake such an encounter in a completely unbiased manner, even at the risk of the collapse of the existing tradition, and to have the humility to accept ideas from others, takes an Aristotelian kind of courage.

Courage is not only the starting point of a tradition but an element of a dynamic, living tradition. Living traditions give their members the potential to have a conflict, but they also have an opportunity to go above the pure feeling of dynamics, because they give a possibility to resolve a conflict. A long-lasting tradition can resolve difficult situations. In a way, all communities sometimes fail to achieve that goal, but communities of liberal individualism have a special kind of barrier in the final level of resolving the conflict.

Societies with the inability to handle conflicts require from their members to choose between two alternatives: follow the authority or become an authority. Furthermore, in societies where there is no agreement upon common goods, the authority's directives are grounded on its subjective preferences. And, in Aristotelian perspective, we ought to find the middle between those two extremes, both vices, "being a follower" and "being a leader without logos understandable to others in society". Courageous rationality, for Aristotelians, however, is not based upon such exclusive disjunction, the battle for either mine or your good, but instead care for the good of the community, thus achieving the best results for the individual and the community as a whole.

In one particular paragraph, MacIntyre offers us his very rare but unique thoughts about courage, where he emphasises the importance of care in defining this virtue. He says:

"We hold courage to be a virtue because the care and concern for individuals, communities and causes which is so crucial to so much in practices require the existence of such a virtue. If someone says that he cares for some individual, community or cause, but is unwilling to risk

harm or danger on his, her or its own behalf, he puts in question the genuineness of his care and concern. Courage, the capacity to risk harm or danger to oneself, has its role in human life because of this connection with care and concern. This is not to say that a man cannot genuinely care and also be a coward. It is in part to say that a man who genuinely cares and has not the capacity for risking harm or danger has to define himself, both to himself and to others, like a coward." (MacIntyre 2007, p. 192)

Courage is expressed as a practical answer to a true concern and care for others in society, habituated and galvanised in its tradition. An expression of that kind of spontaneous courage is possible only in societies where spontaneous "net of giving and receiving goods" (MacIntyre's frequent expression in the book *Dependent Rational Animals*) is communicated. Courage does not involve a precise calculation of transactions between received and given goods (MacIntyre 1999b, Knight 1998). The courageous standpoint acknowledges MacIntyre's insight that those from whom we receive are rarely those to whom we give back. This is why we talk about the intertwined net, not a transaction of goods. It is a transcultural phenomenon that we care and protect our descendants, but not necessarily our parents, although in most cases, parents taught us what it means to devote and fight for others unselfishly. Courage is the test for someone's real concern without calculation of one's benefit. It is a practical, not theoretical answer.

According to MacIntyre's classic book *Dependent Rational Animals*, there are two prerequisites to establish a community that supports the development of a virtuous character. Those are: *acknowledgment of dependence upon others* and allowing people to be *independent practical reasoners*. Since the virtue of courage, as mentioned before, in the book *After Virtue*, is an essential virtue to develop a moral character in any tradition, those two requirements would impact the fundamental understanding of the Aristotelian concept of courage too. Being independent in reasoning but always being aware of interdependence in one's community are essential features for a courageous attitude. There are no independent heroes, individuals above the community. Courageous people might outgrow the limitation of their tradition by reasoning differently, meaning not following the universal rule of society (either laws or customs) but reasoning by their conscious desires. In those situations, where a community deviates from preserving the essential values, it is up to courageous people to achieve a return back to where values support caring for others. In the emerged conflicts in society, courageous people are taking a bold stand despite the dangers of going against the current streams of thoughts. Kant utters the demand:

"*Sapere aude*! Have the courage to make use of your own understanding!" (Kant 8:35, p. 17)

At the same time, courageous actions will be approved and admired only if the people recognise true care and concern for maintaining that net of goods between interdependent members of society. Dependence is the animal state of every human being, from the beginning of our life, through childhood, old age, illness, weakness, pregnancy, and vulnerable states of maturity. We are dependent upon others in all of these periods. Encouraging the development of courage, the community allows being vulnerable and safe at the same time (MacIntyre 1999b). When individuals are vulnerable and unable to protect themselves, others are not only obliged but willing to do so. Joseph Pieper, in the book *Four Cardinal Virtues*, says that angels could not be considered to be brave creatures because they are not supposed to be vulnerable. Without

the potential of being weak, there is no potential of being brave. And only a caring community can enable us to be both in different periods of our life.

However, the most challenging part of developing Aristotelian concepts of courage is in proper recognition of a common good. The promotion of tolerance in any tradition does not help in this regard, especially in those communities that promote a belief that tolerance is possible only in the context of a relativistic worldview. There, all of the conceptions of good are not just respected, the attitude required by tolerance, but are equally valued, the attitude required by relativism (see Macan 2012, pp. 5–8). And that has an enormously strong impact on the epistemic attitude of contemporary man and their agency. Why would anybody risk their own life for the sake of some concept of a "good" purpose, which could be interpreted in many other ways? Why would I stick with one good when another is just as good and much easier to handle?

Even though the purpose of tolerance is to prevent violence towards minorities and accept that there are different concepts of good, it does not include acceptance of intolerant and illiberal attitudes (see Berkowitz 2000, p. 16). Marking those limits is a positive aspect of the liberal standpoint that does give some directions of what is right or wrong. But, as MacIntyre suggests, once the discussion about common goods is avoided, liberalism legitimates manipulation (MacIntyre 1988) and supports *rivalry* and *passivity* even more. They both stand in opposition to the Aristotelian comprehension of courage. In a liberal society, rivals must fight for their own choices and impose their own goals. Those goals do not have to be selfish, but in the process of manipulation, they have to be neither rational nor straightforward for followers. Liberalism also supports another extreme to courage, and that is the passivity of those who have to accept the goals of mighty authorities. Followers follow the goals chosen by others. In countries without a joint vision of good, one necessarily needs to accept the goals based on a consensus as a result of a joint agreement or agreed passivity, and liberalism does not assume only occasional passivity. The beliefs of the others could also be my beliefs, but there is no guarantee, and this is why the subtle attitude "against the good of the other" is always present in liberal conscience, whereas Aristotle's conception of courage always involves a good purpose for all members of society, what might "be good for all of us". In the state of passivity there are no exercises of prudence, deliberation about conditions, the best means for the cause, there is the only indulgence of somebody else's choices. Giving consent to the choices of others affects the development of an unstable moral character, accustomed to the role one is temporarily playing, continuously changing masks of different characters. Regarding the criticism of moral judgments in bureaucratic liberalism, in the article "Corporate Modernity and Moral Judgment" MacIntyre says:

"But I do want to insist on the importance of seeing contemporary social life as a theatre with a set of joining stages upon which a number of very different moral philosophical dramas are being acted out, the actors are required to switch from stage to stage, from character to character. Often with astonishing rapidity." (MacIntyre 1979)

If one accommodates one's role according to the worldview of a particular situation and in the name of the tolerance towards other people's exclusive sense of good, it affects one's possibility of developing a courageous attitude. Tolerance is the process of deliberation, not passive acceptance. Tolerance towards any sense of good impacts negatively in two ways: first, it prevents

conflicts that could bring out the arguments and agreements about what is good for society, and second, it negatively affects man's motivation. A person is not prepared for brave actions if the concepts of the good of the others are no less good than the good of my judgment, particularly if those concepts do not require a "fight mode".

3. Narrative Unity and Courage

People are expected to act in accordance with not only concepts of "good" in society but also those concepts prescribed at the workplace. Job positions require acceptance of pre-set goals in the workplace and finding a balance between personally and professionally chosen goals (see Muirhead 2004, p. 165). Having two separate sets of goals, private and professional, can impact the development of a relativist approach in moral evaluation. If the goals at work do not represent a person's private concept of good, professional conduct is not driven by inner motivation. Therefore, it is difficult to engage and develop a courageous character at work. To talk about the possession of one virtue is possible if it appears to be an inherent feature of one's character (see Lippitt 2007, p. 18), not split spheres of character accustomed by temporary circumstances.

Virtues, for MacIntyre, require a "concept of a self whose unity resides in the unity of a narrative which links birth to life to death as narrative beginning to middle to end" (MacIntyre 2007, p. 204). It is a defence mechanism for self-preservation (see MacIntyre 1987, p. 35). To keep just one character in all life's narratives creating one story, and not to rent your character to make chapters of all different books with different genres, the courage of the main character is needed. For the moral character to stand firm against a multitude of alternatives and to have an opportunity to say "No.", courage is required. Although each person needs to perform various functions daily, there is no reason to be disloyal to oneself. Apprehending what should be the proper answer for each situation does not mean that the moral character ought to let the fear incite compliance. Telos of one's own story indicates which goals take priority over the implied goals of an unexpected situation. In that sense, the brave quest for that telos is engaged as a) a pursuit of what it is and what else could be a good life, b) what it means to be my life and c) pursuit of the best means towards a good life despite all the obstacles (see MacIntyre 2007, p. 219). Judgment is understandable only through past experience and future assumptions about one's own life. Examining what comprises a good life for a human being presupposes the acceptance of past experience and future uncertainty. That examination is a real test for a person's bravery as finding the middle in approaching one's own experience and uncertainty without being unduly cautious or taking unnecessary risks.

Since courage is a feature of one's character, not confined to only one or two roles in life, if a person withdraws from resolving conflicts, they become less true to themselves. One can occasionally react as a coward, but experiences of one's life will indicate if one is brave or not. Some authors believe that there are no brave characters, just brave actions, "courage as a virtue is primarily a property of individual actions" (Walton 1986, p. 13). But if the person consistently reacts as a coward in a variety of situations, we can assume that a person has not developed a character that habitually provides courageous actions. The desire to preserve the narrative unity of life, to tell the story of

one character, necessary involves occasional inner conflicts, while ignorance of those conflicts suggests a lack of self-consciousness. Although aware of different possible solutions to a problem, the coward will tend to take the easiest path. Consequently, their lack of courage impoverishes the person's epistemological potential.

In the article "Recovery of Moral Agency", MacIntyre argued that a virtuous character could not be developed unless a person possesses a narrative unity of life. He analysed the community of the American Marine forces and their eleven weeks of the training programme. After the training, Marines were prepared to confront physical danger, and they learned the values of American culture which they defend and which, in extreme cases, they are willing to die for. They understand the final, higher goal beyond the immediate battle, but their training still lacks one thing, which is the relationship between American values, the Marines' practices and their life experiences.

"What marine training doesn't provide is the discipline of reflection upon what part each of these types of activities should play in an overall human life – that is a reflection upon a wider range of goods, upon how these goods relate to one another." (MacIntyre 1999a, p. 129)

Steadiness in brave judgement is derived from stories not only about national values and inner goods of the Marines' practices, but also those known only to the Marines, from their early childhood, youth, from stories of their families and friends, all of those stories that supported their decision to become a Marine. If those stories are left out, there is an inner division of private and professional spheres of life (military, in this case).

Soldiers who function satisfactorily within the needs of a war environment, but without moral commitment to that war are functioning purely at a professional level. They deny their conscience, developed upon their narratives. When military action is contrary to the individual's moral code, that action may still be undertaken, in the name of duty or foreseen benefits. However, if it is not in accordance with the individual's beliefs, it is not a trait of personal virtue of courage, since it lacks its moral reasoning. Then again, moral reasoning is possible only in the context of a personal narrative of life.

Although courage is the virtue that is mostly associated with the military and soldiers because they are willing to give their life to achieve a common good, all other kinds of employment require a bold standpoint. To preserve one's narrative unity of life, what is needed is the courage of the individual members, being ready to step into active discussion and reinterpret understandings of their working community. For example, when a scientist realises "A", and other members of the community accept "non-A", in the name of his integrity, and at the same time for the overall good of the community, the scientist needs to cause a conflict and clash with the stale concepts of his tradition. If the scientist, as a member of the community with the same tradition, could understand the truth or value of the novelties, either from their reflection or from the influence of the other tradition, the other members may also come to the same conclusion. Science, by the description of the job, requires a scientist to develop the virtue of courage and stand boldly by the scientific results. Although courage is the virtue of distinct social nature (in Aristotelian view), it does not have to be in harmony with or support traditional understandings.

Furthermore, the scientist must willingly engage themselves in the stages of a severe epistemological crisis at first with no clear idea, working perhaps on intuition with no guarantee of success, but sometimes achieving a

breakthrough that will provide the answers.[1] A bold determination is needed. Inspired by truthfulness as the fundamental assumption of epistemological research, the scientist pursues research goals despite the fear that dangers and obstacles on an unpredictable path could leave him stuck in a state of uncertainty and irrationality.

"The brave man, on the other hand, has the opposite disposition; for confidence is the mark of a hopeful disposition." (NE 1116a1)

Even though sometimes his claims, contradicting those of others, finally turn out to be false, the old statements can be confirmed in the broader context of the views of the other community members. Since the purpose of the brave quest is to investigate, reinterpret and approach the purpose of our engagements, the victory of one or another member of the community is irrelevant. What is relevant is to keep integrity by being brave.

4. Practice and Courage

In the teleological approach to the moral life, a person's first step is to identify telos. The easiest path to that recognition is the insight of the goods aspired to in all the different practices in one's tradition. This is MacIntyre's definition of practice:

"Any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions to the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended." (MacIntyre 2007, p. 187)

But what are the *inner goods* of promoted practices, and what are the *standards of excellence* in those practices? Although the inner good of fishing anywhere in the world is to catch the required quantity of fish, the standards of fishing and the way tradition is promoted in Indonesia, Croatia, and Tanzania differ. The inner goods of practice are satisfactory benefits for the society, rather than following abstractly chosen rules of society, rules which practices need to accept later on. The common goods of society are derived from goods already incorporated in practices (see Lutz 2012). New rules can improve the standards of the practices, but only if they follow the natural relation between the work in practice and its aim. Contrary, unreasonably following the rules can lead to the impractical, the false image of practice; moreover, it can fortify the fanatical kind of courage based on an abstract ideological principle without many relations to reality (see MacIntyre 1982, pp. 99–107). Whenever the goal of the battle is not apparent, a person engaged in the practice is more open to manipulation. Soldiers who witnessed a sudden enemy attack on their country, where civil objects were destroyed, and random people killed, are more likely to recognise the need to act bravely.

On the other hand, if the soldiers' commanders are trying to convince their subordinates according to the government's and media's propaganda that there are immediate threats in a faraway country, soldiers can independently

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The best description of that brave mental journey is in David Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* I, IV.

and rationally question that statement only when they are there, at the faraway battlefield. By then, their courageous attitude can be killed, literally, all due to the wicked manipulation using a threatened, unexperienced abstract good. Therefore, the good needs to be recognised by the participants of the practice. Otherwise, manipulation of a courageous attitude could be used for the questionable intent of the authorities.

To avoid victims among the troops of brave participants of practice, a justification of actions can be sought in: a) comparison between the goods of that exact work practice and the goods of that kind of practice; b) deliberation about the excellence of that practice and its standards; c) possibility to develop virtuous character; d) compatibility of goals with their personal lives. Independent reasoning, although always somehow dependent upon the worldview of one's tradition and local community standards that are part of a person's life story fortifies belief in the value of the goal worth fighting for. Only when one's reasoning has acknowledged the purpose of the rough path can the participants develop the virtue of courage based on their moral authenticity.

Courage is not always expressed in terms of practice, but it does develop in practices; therefore, there are many teachers of courage. As Geach noticed, babies are brought in the world with the courage of their mothers (Geach 1974), but the mothers need not be the best teachers of courage because of their native instinct to protect. School teachers could educate courage based on duties and rules, the courage that can persist in what is expected from a child as a disciple. On the other hand, a person needs to be trained in resistance to unquestionable rules. In life, a person encounters many teachers of courage and participates in different ranges of practices, first understanding the logos of courage in simple and then in more complex situations. Exercises of prudence through recognition of the best means to the good purposes is an important task that needs to follow exercises in the virtue of courage. Spiritual strength (Lat. *fortitudo*), physical and mental training gradually progress if one puts oneself constantly in front of internal and external obstacles to achieving goals. People are born with different characters, which is very noticeable by looking at different babies' determination to get desired objects, though a lot of innate qualities can be transformed and become temporary features of one period of life. Parents can have a tremendous impact on how the virtue of courage will be developed from the early ages of life. It is much easier to look after a fearful toddler than the one who wants to explore everything. Gradual training of courage in almost every activity from the period of crawling holds consequences for the cognitive and proactive efforts further in life.

Exercising independent rationality, the one that at more mature stages of life examines initial, simple instructions of teachers, is more complicated than just following the rules of authority, exercising rationality stripped off own insights and desires (Kohlberg 1981). Therefore, teachers of the courage of excellence have a much more demanding task to achieve than the teachers of the courage of efficiency. Goals of efficiency are clearly described by authority, unlike the goals of excellence. Excellence is an indefinite term. To employ the courage of efficiency, a person needs to be equally persistent and determined to implement the prescribed rules, but this practice does not necessarily provoke the development of independent rationality. Followers of the courage of efficiency have a lesser degree of protection from the deception about the value of goals and sacrifices. The courage of efficiency and the courage of excellence differ primarily by the purpose of their goals, to become efficient

in finalising the project or to be excellent in the process. Although the extent of the brave sacrifice can have an equally dramatic result, only those with the installed courage of efficiency expect reciprocal benefits in return, some kind of recognition. While the pursuit of excellence is the best reward for the courage of excellence, for the courage of efficiency, an employee expects power, fame or enrichment.

5. The Courage of Excellence and Courage of Efficiency

Calculated bravery offers something to receive something in return. *Do ut des*! It is a reciprocal transaction. If a top-level fundraising manager in a charity organisation requires a high-level salary as an exclusive condition for employment, their motivation is in receiving external reciprocal goods, as the condition is defined without relation to the meaning of the organisation's battlefields (see Grant 2007, pp. 393–417). If their exclusive requirements for employment are down to the working environment, then their motives to work for the company are not in achieving the purpose of the company. A manager, the person who deals with the institutional level of an organisation, developed the courage of efficiency because their goal is to resolve all difficulties in order to receive something efficiently. A volunteer in a charity organisation, the person who is engaged in providing good practice in the same organisation, can develop the courage of excellence because they care for goods of the practice. Primary care to achieve the inner goods of charity, which explain the rationale of the existence of the whole organisation, is followed by a desire to achieve excellent standards of practice.

Dedication to the inner goods, however, is neither absolute nor exclusive, since external goods can be desired by the person driven by achieving excellence. The fundamental difference is that external goods do not represent the criterion of courageous action. When they do, the action not only runs the risk of not being able to finalise itself but also runs the risk of relativising inner goods of practices, adjusting them to receive external goods, which can be achieved by various forms of actions, virtuous and vicious. The courage of excellence and courage of efficiency differ by their ultimate goal, but the goals are not mutually exclusive. If one seeks excellence, one desires to be efficient in achieving the highest level of performance. Also, to be efficient, one needs to reach a certain level of quality, although that criterion may be reduced to the minimum. As long as someone can hold up and confront the dangers in order to achieve the goal, and the goal is reached and absolved in a given period of time, despite all the obstacles, the person who manages to achieve the goal is considered to be brave. To MacIntyre and other Aristotelians, such kind of courage would categorise as pure skill, rather than virtue.

Out of MacIntyre's four prominent characters typical for liberal societies (the psychotherapist, the aesthete, the manager and the conservative), special attention and criticism are given to the character of the manager (MacIntyre 2007). Since the manager is the most expressive in their action, dealing with risks and trying to achieve certain goals for the working community, this character is the best model to recognise the kind of courage that has been promoted by bureaucratic liberalism (see Lee 2006, pp. 113–124). Prominent characters of society are moral ideals, the type of virtues that they develop are spread among other members of society (see Macedo 1990, p. 271). In the description of managerial work, it is required to manage processes, resources and

risks to achieve efficiency in the implementation of project objectives (see Dobson 2008, p. 71). Managers are trying to minimise the risks before they even start to act toward the goal, they are trying to transform the obstacles to have less dangerous, neutral or even positive qualities on the way to pursuing the goal (see Shimell 2002, pp. 101–104). The ideal situation is reaching the goal without obstacles. That is rationality in action. Not needing to react to dangers is good; not every situation requires a bold manner. But, problems arise when there is no moral evaluation of the goal itself.

Managers are thorough in methods of risk management to recognise and reduce the risks. They build their authority upon the risk assessment, done through tables and charts in which they have to include many unpredictable data based upon subjective presumptions. Final statistical models point out more or less accurate results, and the main result is building confidence to act towards desired goals. This procedure, though, leads to a loss of awareness of the real existence of risk. Aristotelian courage is not rushing into the danger, but it does involve consciously engaging in the risk despite the presence of obstacles. MacIntyre criticises the rational foundation of managerial knowledge represented as a scientific method of cost-benefit analysis grounded on utilitarian ethics and subjective presumption (MacIntyre 1977b, 1979, 2007). The result is the obedience of the employees to managerial authority based upon their subjective preferences. To preserve managerial authority, power and control, it is not a rare occasion that in many companies today discussion about the goods of the practice is not desirable. Thus, the character of the manager is trying to be as much as effective and if need be manipulative to achieve certain goals, while moral debates between employees are not time-consuming and possibly a great obstacle towards an efficient achievement. If there is no dialogue, there are no conflicts. If there is no possibility of conceptual conflicts, there are no sound arguments and no improvement of the standards of excellence, no moral character development of employees.

The person in such a work ambience is invited to make a decision either to become an authority and impose their subjective preferences or to accept manipulation by others. Even if the initial intention of the manager, in the environment without discussions, is not manipulation, because they can be convinced in the goods chosen by their preferences, it is a consequence for others. Two colleagues do not have the same virtue of courage if the only one recognises the goal as something good. Not all managers can choose the goals they accept because the freedom of choice depends upon the personal character and the managerial level in institutional hierarchy. As is the case with all employees hierarchically subordinated to that manger, one fights for something chosen by others. Employing that kind of courage in the Aristotelian perspective is not just rash or foolish; it is truly unwise.

Still, that is the one-sided perspective of managerial work. Each member of the organisation needs to, if not share and care, then at least think about the goods that all participants of an organisation, institution and practice, are achieving. Managers have a function to maintain practices supplying them with external goods such as money, so the people in practices could focus on the goods of that practice (see Beadle 2008, pp. 679–690). Managers supply the fuel that keeps them going. If that is so, then managers, as chief executives of institutions in charge of external goods, cannot lose from their sight the importance of inner goods of practice. Even though personally not involved in the creation of the organisation's products, managers could stay humble

and acknowledge that the rationale of business lines within the practice. If the institutions and practices operate as a compact entity, then the manager's role is to protect the practice against corruptive powers that promise easy earnings and reduce the excellence of practices. If both practice and institution recognise the priority of inner goods, then it is possible to start the discussion about those goods and approach them as a whole working community.

Ron Beadle presented five years' longitudinal qualitative research among the managers in UK circuses that that kind of ideal life is not utopian (Beadle 2013). He noticed that circus managers stayed in their positions even in periods when it was very difficult for circuses to survive, believing in what the circus has to offer made them stay, even without financial rewards. Furthermore, they did not just recognise achieving a successful business as paramount but admitted that working in circuses is their way of life. Managers here focused on the goods of practice which become good for their personal life story. The Aristotelian understanding of courage reveals an action to achieve a particular good which supports the good for life as a whole. If courage is being developed in more than just one sphere of life, it becomes a habitual feature of character, reinforced by continual training in various practices. In that sense, to exercise the courage of excellence at work, a manager needs to act by inner motivation desiring good that they are not in charge of. The external good as a salary is a consequence of the goods created in practice.

"What then is the good of each? Surely that for whose sake everything else is done." (NE 1097a15)

In the Aristotelian worldview, *consequence* could not be simply translated into *the purpose* of an action. Therefore, goods created in practice are the purpose of the manager's work, while salary is a consequence of the organisation's effort to achieve that purpose.

We can summarise at least four epistemological prerequisites for people working as managers to switch their minds (and exercises) from the virtue of courage of efficiency towards the Aristotelian courage of excellence, by:

1. Recognising the goods of practice as goods for the local community;
2. Discussing standards of excellence with the participants of the practice;
3. Recognising the priority of the goods of the practice over the external goods, despite its responsibilities and roles;
4. Recognising that what is good for the practice is good for themselves.

In doing so, the courageous person does not need to be motivated by fear or failure, a vision of honour, power, glory, wealth, excessive confidence in their ability calculating costs and benefits, or ignorance and passion. Passion is the desirable squire of courage if it is not the only source of action. Structures and outcomes can strongly influence which kind of courage participants of an organisation choose to employ.

6. Conclusion

For Alasdair MacIntyre, the virtue of courage is one of the vital virtues that need to be developed in an adult character. While he dedicated articles and a vast volume of books to other fundamental virtues, he referred to the virtue of courage only in several paragraphs. Still, his sound method to re-discover

the current meaning and exercises of any virtue, as well as his few, but unique remarks about courage, give us unrevealed insights into this virtue.

Aristotelian-MacIntyrean teleological concept of the virtue of courage represents one concept of courage among others in other moral traditions, and it has been interpreted here by three features – practice, narrative unity of life and tradition. Each of those features provides guidelines that the brave person ought to follow to achieve/reach/accomplish/glorify/give a legacy to certain kinds of goods. Courage is the way and test of respecting any kind of understanding of good. Despite the fears, harms and distresses that the courageous person is always confronted with, they do not withdraw from their desires to accomplish goods of tradition, goods of practice and goods for their personal life.

Courage is the key virtue for sustaining social cohesion since it as an explicit act of "true care and concern for others" (MacIntyre 2007, p. 155). At the same time, MacIntyre highlights that the liberal tradition and its "promoters of ethics of emotivism" subdue the Aristotelian concept of virtue to the skill, to the ability to achieve aimed efficiency (*Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*). Since relativism in liberal communities imposes that there is no universally understood concept of good and no faith in discussions and resolving conflicts about common goods, there is common compliance to universal rules. Courageous actions depend upon prescribed goals, not personally comprehended aims of action! This is why we are daily, mostly at the workplace, confronted with the trained virtues whose main aim is to achieve prescribed goals, the courage of efficiency efficiently. However, teleological concepts of courage are still present in local communities focused on goods of the practices and standards of excellence, rather than reciprocal rewards. Therefore, we can talk about two concepts of courage, the virtue of courage of excellence and the virtue of courage of efficiency.

In liberal communities, the courage of efficiency is promoted by its own prominent character, the manager. They are the role models for risk management and bold strive that has been trained at workplaces. Battles for inner goods of practice (which ought to represent at the same time goods for personal life and goods for the community) have been replaced by engaging in risks in order to follow (unquestionable) rules, roles and responsibilities. The prescribed goal needs to be achieved fearlessly and efficiently, and, in that sense, courage is employed for "whatever", rather than for the best purpose. Contrary, the teleological perspective takes the understanding of the good to be the key factor for any virtue, and it is in opposition to the conquest of any aim. Questioning what a tradition understands as a good for a human being, what is good for my own life story, what are the best means to accomplish that good, and what goods need to be provided in the practices of my community is an excellent tool to test the justification of courageous efforts. From the assurance of a properly chosen goal comes the determination and strength to avoid obstacles on the way and to avoid manipulation of personal efforts. The courage of excellence needs to avoid the extremes, allowed by the courage of efficiency, to be a follower of authority grounded on subjective preferences of goals. In Aristotle's words, a brave person is motivated by the hope of achieving something noble. Reciprocal rewards are external goods, not a criterion.

Thus, obstacles to developing the courage of excellence go beyond the fact that people might be in charge of institutions which deal with external goods that could then be prioritised over goods of practice. Wherever obedience to

authority overpowers the need for discussion about the goods all participants of organisations are engaged in, the courage of efficiency of authority goes against the courage of excellence in practice. Furthermore, people are at risk of pursuing conflicting goals simultaneously in private and professional lives. And if there is no unity between narratives told by one character, not just expressed by situational masks, it is difficult to develop courage as a habitual virtue that executes courageous acts in unpredictable situations. By ignoring the values from one domain to resolve conflicts in the other, a person acts in a cowardly manner which pauperises one's epistemological pool.

We need the courage of excellence for fearless thinking. We need the courage to create a caring community which allows us to be authentic and vulnerable at the same time.

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Anita Calvert

Suparnički pojmovi hrabrosti: macintyreovsko razmatranje

Sažetak

Aristotelove misli o hrabrosti u Nikomahovoj etici *i dalje su najučestalije štivo rasprava o vrlini. Međutim, ako primijenimo razmatranje o vrlinama Alasdaira MacIntyrea, postavlja se pitanje o tome raspolažemo li u suvremenim liberalnim društvima tek fragmentima drevnog pojma hrabrosti. Slika hrabrosti izmijenila se. Možemo govoriti o aristotelovskim uvidima i pričati o srednjovječnim vitezovima, ali sadašnja su tradicija i karakter njena morala ti što oblikuju naše razumijevanje i korištenje vrlina. MacIntyreovski trostruki pristup vrlinama, uzimajući u obzir a) praksu, b) pripovjedno jedinstvo života i c) tradiciju, otkriva dva suparnička pojma hrabrosti: vrlina hrabrosti izvrsnosti i vrlinu hrabrosti učinkovitosti. Koja će prevladati ovisi o tome kakvu ćemo hrabrost usvojiti kao našu drugu prirodu navike.*

Ključne riječi

Alasdair MacIntyre, hrabrost, izvrsnost, učinkovitost, pripovjedno jedinstvo života, praksa, tradicija

Anita Calvert

**Konkurrierende Begriffe von Tapferkeit:
macintyresche Betrachtungsweise**

Zusammenfassung

Aristoteles' Gedanken über die Tapferkeit in Nikomachische Ethik *bleiben weiterhin die häufigste Stätte der Diskussion über die Tugend. Wenn wir indessen unsere Erörterung über die Tugenden bei Alasdair MacIntyre ändern, wirft sich die Frage auf, ob uns in modernen liberalen Gesellschaften nicht mehr als Fragmente des uralten Tapferkeitsbegriffs zu Gebote stehen. Das Bild von der Tapferkeit hat sich verändert. Wir können über aristotelische Einsichten und über mittelalterliche Ritter reden, aber es sind die gegenwärtige Tradition und der Charakter ihrer Moral, die unser Verständnis und unseren Gebrauch von Tugenden prägen. Die macintyresche dreifache Herangehensweise an Tugenden unter Berücksichtigung von a) Praxis, b) narrativer Einheit des Lebens und c) Tradition offenbart zwei konkurrierende Begriffe von Tapferkeit: die Tugend der Tapferkeit des Vorzüglichseins sowie die Tugend der Tapferkeit des Wirksamseins. Welcher Begriff die Oberhand gewinnt, hängt davon ab, was für eine Tapferkeit wir als unsere zweite Natur der Gewohnheit annehmen.*

Schlüsselwörter

Alasdair MacIntyre, Tapferkeit, Vorzüglichkeit, Wirksamkeit, narrative Einheit des Lebens, Praxis, Tradition

Anita Calvert

Les concepts antagonistes de courage : l'analyse macintyrienne

Résumé

Les pensées d'Aristote sur le courage dans l'Éthique à Nicomaque *constituent encore le lieu de débat le plus commun sur les vertus. Cependant, si l'on applique les considérations de Alasdair MacIntyre, se pose la question de savoir si l'on dispose, au sein des sociétés libérales contemporaines, uniquement de fragments du concept ancien de courage. L'image du courage a changé. Il est possible de parler des idées aristotéliciennes et des chevaliers du Moyen-Âge, mais c'est bien la tradition actuelle et le caractère de sa morale qui façonnent notre compréhension et l'usage des vertus. L'approche à trois niveaux de MacIntyre des vertus prenant en considération a) la pratique, b) l'unité narrative de la vie et c) la tradition, dévoile deux concepts antagonistes du courage : la vertu du courage en tant qu'excellence et la vertu du courage en tant qu'efficience. Lequel de ces concepts l'emportera dépend du courage que nous adopterons en tant que seconde nature d'habitude.*

Mots-clés

Alasdair MacIntyre, courage, excellence, efficience, unité narrative de la vie, pratique, tradition