Intellectual Humility as Attitude

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Abstract: Intellectual humility, I argue in this paper, is a cluster of strong attitudes (as these are understood in social psychology) directed toward one's cognitive make-up and its components, together with the cognitive and affective states that constitute their contents or bases, which serve knowledge and value-expressive functions. In order to defend this new account of humility I first examine two simpler traits: intellectual self-acceptance of epistemic limitations and intellectual modesty about epistemic successes. The position defended here addresses the shortcomings of both ignorance and accuracy based accounts of humility.

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Broadly speaking, there are two families of views in the contemporary philosophical literature on humility.[2] The first family portrays it, following Driver (1989, 1999, 2001), as a

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[1] This paper is exclusively concerned with the intellectual version of this virtue. Occasionally, however, purely for stylistic reasons and to avoid repetition I drop the qualification 'intellectual' in the text. I shall not address here the undoubtedly interesting question of the relation between humility as a putative moral virtue and intellectual humility.

[2] Many of these views concern humility as a putative moral virtue. However, it does not seem implausible to think that, *mutatis mutandae*, the same accounts could be developed specifically for intellectual humility.

virtue of ignorance.[3] The second describes humility, following Snow (1995) as a virtue of accuracy. In my opinion both approaches hint at something which is true of humility in so far as they point in the direction of one of its two dimensions. However, neither approach gets the dimension toward which they are gesturing exactly right. In addition, they both miss one of the two dimensions altogether.[4]

The most serious problem with these accounts, however, if the view developed here is correct, is that they all characterise humility either in terms of the presence (or absence) of some cold cognitive state, such as belief, or as depending on the absence of some hot motivational state, like caring for one's epistemic good features.[5] These authors often grant that all virtues have motivational components, such as a love of epistemic goods, but presume that what distinguishes humility from other virtues is not a motivational state. Instead, I argue that the dispositions and emotions which are characteristic of intellectual humility are best explained as based on attitudes directed toward components of one's cognitive agency such as cognitive states, processes, abilities, habits and so forth.[6] These attitudes are (at least partly) associative states that relate an object to a valence, and can be thought as positive or negative affective states.[7]

This paper has two main aims: (i) to show that humility comprises both modesty and self- acceptance; and (ii) to provide an original account of intellectual humility which identifies it with a cluster of attitudes. It is divided into 6 sections. In the first I highlight the heterogeneity of behaviours that have been taken in the philosophical and psychological literature to

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[3] Strictly speaking Driver is concerned with modesty rather than humility. Since several commentators have taken modesty and humility to be near synonyms, her views have been generally interpreted as offering an account of humility. Driver herself thinks that modesty and humility are not very dissimilar, but that underestimation is only characteristic of modesty (1989, n 5, p. 378). Here, I follow the common practice of treating Driver's as an account of humility.

[4] Other taxonomies have been offered. For example, Whitcomb et al. (2015) list three accounts (Proper Belief, Underestimation of Strength, Low Concern) to which they add their own Limitation Owning account. In my view Proper Belief and Limitation Owning are accuracy-based accounts whilst Underestimation of Strength and Low Concern are ignorance-based accounts.

[5] I use the distinction between hot and cold cognition to separate states such as belief that do not involve arousal from states such as desire and emotion which do. See Thagard et al (2006).

[6] I use the expression 'cognitive agency' (or make-up) broadly to include any cognitive states and capacities which are attributable to the subject. I do not take the notion to imply that the subject has voluntary control over the constituents of her agency.

[7] This notion of an attitude is the central construct of social psychology. See Banaji & Heiphetz (2010). It is not to be confused with that of an attitude toward a proposition.

characterise intellectual humility. In the second section I distinguish modesty from proper pride about one's intellectual achievements. I argue that modesty about one's own epistemic successes is not to be understood as necessitating either ignorance, or a lack of concern, about them. Instead, modesty requires that one's evaluation of these successes is a consequence of their epistemic qualities rather than resulting from concerns with how they may reflect on one's social reputation or self-esteem. Section three provides an account of self-acceptance as comprising an evaluation of one's intellectual limitations based on their epistemic features without attending to matters of self-esteem or social standing. Although self-acceptance requires a realistic assessment of one's intellectual limitations, it does not depend on possessing an especially high degree of accuracy in this regard. In section four I argue that modesty and self-acceptance are distinct but are often found together because of a psychological need to reduce cognitive dissonance. In section 5 I develop, and begin to defend, an account of intellectual humility as a virtue based on stable attitudes directed toward aspects of one's cognitive agency that serve the knowledge and value-expressive functions. In section 6 I defend the account further, answer some plausible objections, and highlight some of its consequences.

1. Heterogeneity of manifestations

Even a cursory glance at the behaviours and at the cognitive, conative and emotional states that are generally taken to be characteristic of humility reveals them to be a heterogeneous bunch. They arguably include: being a team player, not overestimating one's achievements, acknowledging one's mistakes; not being envious of others' success; not seeking honours but caring about knowledge and truth; not boasting; being aware and forgiving of human intellectual shortcomings and frailties. Given this heterogeneity, it is no surprise that several philosophical accounts of humility, and its intellectual version intellectual humility, have been developed which are very different from each other. Whilst some psychologists appear to be simply accepting of the heterogeneity (Tangney 2002, pp. 412-13), philosophers seek some

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underlying unity to it. In this I am no exception, although in my account humility has two distinct aspects which are best thought as forming a single more complex virtue only because of the psychological connections that hold between them.

We can begin to impose some order on the heterogeneity by noting that some beliefs, behaviours, emotions, and motivations thought to be characteristic of humility are directed toward features of the self, whilst others are directed at features of other people (cf. Byerly, 2014). Acknowledging one's errors is an example of the first kind. Giving others credit for their contribution to a collective achievement is an example of the second.[8] In addition to these two distinct directions of focus toward self or toward others another important distinguishing feature of the manifestations of humility is a concern with one's cognitive limitations and shortcomings or with one's intellectual abilities, achievements or successes. For example, acknowledging one's errors is indicative of a focus on limitations; whilst not boasting, rejecting flattery, admiring others' achievements, exemplify a focus on abilities and successes.

As a result, there appear to be four dimensions to intellectual humility: concern for the limitations of the self; concern for the limitations of others; concern for one's own successes and finally concern for those of others. Thus, if acknowledging one's own intellectual shortcomings or even simply one's own finitude are examples of care directed at the limitations of the self, being understanding about others' reasonable errors would be an example of concern for those of others. Similarly, if being a team player is an instance of care for one's successes, giving credit would be a case of concern for the achievements of others. It may be tempting to conclude that humility is simply appropriate care for the limitations and successes of self and others. In a sense this is broadly correct if "appropriate care" is cashed out in the right way. Intellectual humility, I argue, is not a matter of knowledge (or ignorance) about intellectual features of the self and of other epistemic agents. Rather humility is a special kind of concern for the intellectual features of the self. What characterises the intellectually humble person is the manner in which she cares about her cognitive make-up. Her evaluations of its components are based on their epistemic worth rather than, for instance, on considerations of social status and self-esteem. Humility is also indirectly related to concerns with the epistemic

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[8] It may be thought that this behaviour is an expression of intellectual generosity rather than humility. I agree, but I mention it here as it has been taken by some to be crucial to humility. See especially Nuyen (1998).

qualities of other agents because of its connections with other virtues, such as proper pride, which involve fair rankings of individuals for their epistemic worth.

In what follows I first describe concerns with successes before discussing the manner in which the humble attends to her limitations.

2. *Intellectual modesty*

Intellectual modesty is the dimension of intellectual humility that focuses on one's epistemic successes. It is reflected in the willingness to be a team player, to carry out unglamorous but necessary tasks, to refrain from boasting about the originality of one's views or the importance of one's contribution to a collective achievement. Other characteristic behaviours and affective responses that have been associated with intellectual modesty include giving others credit for their contributions, not being envious of their successes, not seeking honours or fame for oneself at the expense of others.

The family of views that thinks of humility as requiring something like ignorance focuses on what I shall call the modesty dimension of humility. For Driver (1989), humility entails ignorance or underestimation of one's successes. Therefore, one is humble only if either one does not believe that one has achieved anything of significance or one's beliefs about the significance of one's epistemic successes are false because they underestimate it. I place Garcia's (2006) account of humility as being unimpressed with oneself within this family despite its differences from Driver's position. For Garcia, humility is not a matter of belief about one's successes. Instead, humility is characterised by the absence of a range of conative attitudes toward them. For example, one does not take delight, dwell or wishes to draw attention to them. In general, the humble person does not pay attention to her good intellectual features; this is what it would mean to say that one is unimpressed with oneself.[9] Thus, whilst for Driver,

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[9] Bommarito's view (2013) that modesty is a virtue of attention is in this regard close to Garcia's.

the humble is ignorant of her successes; for Garcia, the humble may be aware of what they are, but she ignores them anyway. [10]

Some of the problems faced by these views are well-known. Firstly, it is at best unclear how ignorance or the error of underestimation can be required by virtue. [11] Secondly, ignorance of one's epistemic successes is not necessary for humility. We can easily think of an individual who knows what she has achieved and appreciates its importance but who is nonetheless humble.[12] A brilliant scientist, for example, may be fully aware of the significance of her discovery and appreciate that she played a pivotal role in the research that led to it, without thereby demonstrating a lack of humility. Thirdly, humility is not incompatible with taking delight in one's success, since it is possible to be proud of, but humble about, one's achievements. The same brilliant scientist could, without arrogance or vanity, experience a sense of satisfaction and elation at her results.

Fourthly, ignorance or underestimation of one's epistemic successes is not sufficient for modesty. It seems perfectly possible that a person may underestimate her successes without being humble. For instance, the person who is intellectually self-abasing tends to attribute her successes to mere luck or to overestimate the contribution to them made by others; she may also underestimate the significance of any achievement that she is willing to attribute to herself. However, we would not say that this person manifests humility; rather we would say that this person belittles her own abilities and successes.

Fifthly, even overestimation of the magnitude of one's successes is in some circumstances compatible with modesty about them. For example, the brilliant scientist may manifest humility even though she overestimates the significance of her research. She may honestly believe that her discovery is a turning point in the development of therapies against cancer. If it turns out that she was wrong, her mistake could be a genuine error rather than

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[10] I take the account offered by Roberts and Woods (2003; 2007) to share this feature of Garcia's position. In another regard, namely in the requirement that intellectual humility requires a concern with epistemic goods, Roberts and Woods' views are closer to mine.

[11] It is hard to see how ignorance or false belief could be required by a virtue, let alone an intellectual one (Garcia, 2006, n 6, p. 419).

[12] Here and throughout the paper I am concerned with modesty as a trait of character. It is possible for someone to be modest about some successes and not others. I presume that the modest person is the individual who is modest about most (if not all) of her most significant epistemic successes in most contexts.

evidence of immodesty.[13] These five considerations support the conclusion that intellectual

modesty is not a matter of underestimating, or being ignorant about, the significance of one's

successes. It also does not require not being impressed by them.

Modesty, therefore, is not to be identified in negative terms with the absence of true

beliefs about one's epistemic success or with the absence of positive affective states directed at

them. Rather the examples presented above indicate that modesty concerns the motives or

causes for a person's positive stance toward her epistemic successes. She must value them

because of their epistemic value rather than for their contribution to enhancing her social

standing or to increasing her sense of self-esteem.[14] Hence, modesty is compatible with

knowledge of, satisfaction and delight with, one's epistemic successes but only if the delight or

satisfaction is derived from the nature and magnitude of the success rather than from its

reflection on oneself.[15]

I have argued that modesty about one's epistemic successes is compatible with proper

pride about achievements. Nevertheless, these two traits of character are different. Modesty is

an attitude toward one's own epistemic successes that values them for their epistemic positive

qualities. Proper pride is a concern that credit is appropriately attributed to one for one's own

epistemic achievements. There are, therefore, two fundamental differences between modesty

and proper pride. First, one can be modest about epistemic successes which are not

achievements because they are the result of innate endowments or because they are very easy

to obtain.[16] However, one cannot be properly proud of these. Pride in these cases would

intuitively qualify as somewhat vicious. Second, modesty is not a concern with the allocation of

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[13] However, we would not think of someone, who is grossly and consistently off the mark about the significance of her successes, that she is modest. Instead, we may label her a fool. Nevertheless, despite her gross overestimation, we may not think that she is arrogant either. It would seem therefore that there is no *conceptual* connection between modesty and absence of overestimation of one's successes or arrogance and the presence of such overestimate. These points are consistent with thinking that *as a matter of fact* modest people are on average more accurate about the importance of their epistemic successes than those who are arrogant.

[14] One should not conclude from these claims that agents must be consciously aware of their motivations for valuing some aspects of their cognitive make-up but not others.

[15] I resort here to talk about concern, care or valuing. In section 5 I explain how it should be interpreted. For now, I would warn the reader against reading it to mean anything more than the attribution to agents of evaluative and affective cognitive states of approval or disapproval of some features of the self.

[16] A discussion of the features that a success must possess to count as an achievement is beyond the scope of the paper. I take it that an agent may not be praiseworthy for all her successes but is always deserving of praise for her achievements.

epistemic credit or the attribution of authority. Proper pride, instead, is the virtue of having appropriate regard for one's esteem. Hence, proper pride is a concern that one's epistemic achievements are properly credited to one, and that one's epistemic authority is adequately recognised. For these reasons Whitcomb et al. are mistaken to identify proper pride as the virtue which relates to epistemic successes in the manner in which what they call "humility" relates to epistemic limitations (2015, p. 22).

Because modesty is compatible with proper pride, the individual who is modest needs not be totally oblivious to how she is regarded by others. An attempt to gain the recognition which one deserves, and of which one may wrongly be deprived, is not immodest if its aims are to maintain self-respect and to address failures in the social epistemic practices for the generation and transmission of knowledge and other epistemic goods.[17]

The intellectually modest individual may also be intellectually generous. If she is, she will give others the credit they are due for their role in her successes. I suspect that intellectually modest people will tend as a matter of fact to be also generous. In so far as the person who is modest does not have an inflated sense of her self-worth and is not after honours or recognition for their own sake, she will have little incentive to deny others the credit they deserve. Once again, it is perfectly possible that the generous person may make a genuine cognitive mistake about the magnitude of another person's contribution. Were she to make this error, she would not become ungenerous as a result, provided that she would feel regret if she became aware of her mistake.

It has been argued by Julia Driver that if one is modest, it is self-defeating to claim (or think) that one has this trait (1989, p. 375). This is the well-known self-attribution paradox which has been much discussed in the subsequent literature on the topic.[18] The initial characterization of modesty offered here can explain why a claim made about oneself that one is modest is likely to be immodest or at least provide evidence against its truth. In most circumstances such an assertion would be in itself an example of immodesty. But even when

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[17] She may especially care about such an acknowledgement when it is instrumental to achieving other goods. For example, a politician who is intellectually humble may, without vanity, care that her views are held in high regard by others because she needs to be elected to implement her good policies (Garcia, 2006 n 23 p. 423 modifying Driver, 2001, p. 23). In my view this person exhibits a form of pride which is compatible with modesty.

[18] See Garcia (2006), pp. 427-8; Whitcomb et al. (2015), pp. 26-28.

the assertion is not a boast, its utterance often is evidence that the individual is not modest. With the exception of special circumstances, such as being asked by a psychologist to describe one's character, declarations of modesty are most likely to serve the purpose of making one feel better about oneself. Such declarations thus are ego-boosts. They are however unlikely to work for individuals who have a deflated sense of self-worth (although they may in a few cases) since attending to the modesty of their achievements might further depress their self-esteem. In all likelihood, therefore, claiming modesty is a way of inflating an already inflated sense of self-worth. For this reason, its utterance is usually psychological evidence of the falsity of the claim.

3. *Intellectual self-acceptance*

Modesty about intellectual successes does not exhaust the range of characteristic responses of the intellectually humble person. Humility is also importantly concerned with human limitations in general and one's own limitations in particular. This dimension of humility is manifested in the awe which is felt by us in the presence of forces that makes us feel small such as the strength of a storm at sea. A typical intellectual manifestation of this aspect of humility is the ability to acknowledge one's own errors or shortcomings, rather than to deny them. As a result, the intellectually humble person is likely to accept fair criticisms with equanimity and is not resentful of them. Consequently, this kind of person is also likely to possess the virtue of open-mindedness because she has no interest in covering up or denying her own limitations.

The concern with one's own limitations is an aspect of humility which is conceptually distinct from modesty. I call this aspect 'self-acceptance'. The label is apt because the person who possesses this quality is accepting of limitations that she attributes to herself. The dimension of humility which I call 'self-acceptance' is the focus of the family of views that take humility to be an accurate assessment of one's own limitations. For Snow (1995) humility is a form of self-knowledge of one's limitations. For Hazlett it is a matter of having a proper assessment of the epistemic statuses of one's first-order doxastic attitudes (2012).

Acceptance of one's own intellectual limitations, however, is not to be identified with knowledge of what they are. An individual may have developed a keen awareness of her limitations which is she determined to cover up; she may also be hiding these aspects of the self because she wishes to receive praise. Thus, for example, a student may know that she does not understand a theory or a concept, but she may attempt to cover up the fact by repeating word by word formulations which she finds in a textbook. Despite her knowledge of her limitations, this student would not be manifesting humility if she behaved in this way. Humility, as self-acceptance, would require instead that she admits to her lack of understanding and either seeks assistance or thinks harder about the topic. Self-knowledge of limitations is thus not sufficient for humility. It is also not necessary. A person may have underestimated a limitation because of a genuine cognitive error. For example, a person trusting her memory, even if in fact it is no longer what it used to be, may tend not write down appointments in her diary and miss a few meetings as a result. This behaviour does not *per se* display a lack of humility. However, if this person's motivation for trusting her memory is that she thinks people would be impressed by her ability to recall, we would be tempted to think of her as vain and as lacking in humility. So humility is a focus on one's own limitations which is not driven by a concern for how their presence reflects on one's reputation or self-esteem.

Intellectual self-acceptance can thus be initially characterised as a matter of being concerned with or acknowledging one's limitations and freely admitting to them. In order to care about these, one must have some awareness of their existence and extent, although one need not be exceptionally reliable about them. However, the most significant feature of self-acceptance is that it is a form of concern, rather than a kind of knowledge. This concern with one's putative limitations is directed toward their epistemic qualities rather than the fact that they are one's own. Hence, self-acceptance is a way of caring that one has limitations because of their effects on the pursuit of various epistemic goods such as truth or understanding, rather than for their potential impact on one's reputation or one's sense of self-esteem.

A concern with one's limitations may generate either a sense of defeatism and resignation, or a desire to address them with a view to improve. In the self-accepting individual, the concern for limitations motivates actions to address these defects. This person seeks to

remedy those shortcomings that can be lessened, circumvent those which she cannot change, or when nothing else can be done take her limitations into account in her behaviour. In conclusion, self-acceptance is a concern for one's epistemic limitations because of their epistemic impact which motivates one to remedial action.

This aspect of my view may appear to have a close similarity to Whitcomb et al.'s Limitations-Owning account (2015). Both approaches associate humility with a stable disposition to have a realistic assessment of one's intellectual shortfalls, to regret the fact that one has these limitations, to admit to their existence, and to take them seriously by addressing them (2015, p. 11). However, these commonalities hide significant differences.[19] First, I suspect that we do not interpret "admitting of one's intellectual limitations" in the same way. Whitcomb et al. think of admittance as a matter of not being in denial about the existence of one's limitations, so that one would know about them and take them into account in one's reasoning. For this reason, I believe that their account ultimately takes humility to be a virtue of accuracy. In my view, instead, admitting of one's own intellectual limitation is also a matter of being disposed fully to reveal them to others even when doing so may go against one's self-interest.

Second, and as a result of the first disagreement, we also are of different opinion as to whether it is psychologically possible for a person to be intellectually humble whilst being exclusively motivated by self-interest. I deny this possibility; instead, Whitcomb and colleagues claim that one can own one's limitations and thus be intellectually humble even though one is primarily or even exclusively motivated by self-interest. In these cases, one would possess the dispositions constitutive of humility but would not possess the virtue because one would lack the appropriate motivation which is a non-instrumental commitment to truth or other epistemic goods. Hence, in their view virtue requires aiming at epistemic goods for their own sake, but possession of the relevant character trait can be had non-virtuously when an

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[19] There are also other significant differences between our views. I mentioned above in section 2 a disagreement about the notion of proper pride. I also differ from them because, as I argue in section 4 below, I think that humility is as much concerned with epistemic successes as it is with limitations.

individual has the required stable disposition but her concern for the epistemic goods it produces is non-existent or merely instrumental.

They offer two examples of non-virtuous humility. The first is a greedy manager whose company values intellectual humility. In order to advance his career this manager "needs to get his employees to rate him highly on" intellectual humility (2015, p. 12), he - thus - cultivates the qualities associated with humility and succeeds in acquiring them. The second is a student who succeeds in developing the same traits whilst being solely motivated by the desire to get good grades because they are conducive to economic success (2015, pp. 12-13). These are both examples of individuals who are not non-instrumentally motivated to seek the truth as they are wholly driven by greed or self-promotion.

Without wishing simply to trade intuitions, I do not see that either of these two individuals can exemplify a humble disposition which is cross-situationally stable.[20] The greedy manager, as the description offered by Whitcomb and colleagues makes clear, cares solely that they are perceived by others as humble; he does not care that he is humble, not even as a means to his greedy ends. The development of the traits possessed by humble individuals is not the best strategy to pursue for one who wants to appear humble. False modesty will achieve the same end in a more cost effective way.

But suppose this manager's employees are particularly apt at spotting false modesty. Therefore, the manager decides to try to cultivate humility itself, rather than just its appearance, as a mere means to career advancement. It would seem that he cannot succeed unless he also changes his motivations. Even in a company that values humility there are limitations such that to admit to them is to admit incompetence. The humble person is nevertheless disposed to admit to these in front of colleagues knowing that it will damage any chance of promotion. The greedy manager, who develops dispositions associated with humility, would not freely admit to his limitations were he to find himself in this situation. He would not because in such an instance the display of humble behaviour is an obstacle to the achievement of his goal. Hence, his humble-like dispositions are not the same as those possessed by the truly humble individual since they have a narrower range of manifestations.

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[20] Stability across situations is essential for dispositions which are character traits.

Further, in many other marginal cases this individual will have to weigh up which behaviours are more likely to increase his chances of promotion on a given occasion. He will sometimes choose behaviours consonant with humility and at other times behaviours which are not humble. The genuinely humble person would not need to engage in all this weighing-up of options. I suspect that individuals like the greedy manager would over time change their motives and dispositions so that they would end up in one of three possible positions. First, one may become virtuously humble (and stop caring much about the promotion). Second, one may merely pretend to be humble when doing so is advantageous. Third, one may become rather ambivalent and allow one's dispositions associated with humility to be cross-situationally unstable depending on whether self-promotion or acceptance of limitations directs his behaviour on a given occasion.[21]

Similar considerations undermine the plausibility of the example of the humble but entirely grade-driven student. It is plausible, and true, that many students are motivated both by caring for grades but also caring for truth and understanding. These students may exhibit a certain degree of humility. The example offered by Whitcomb and colleagues (2015) is different. This is an individual who only cares for the grades and for the economic success that they promote but tries to develop the traits associated with humility exclusively as a means to improve her grades. Even assuming that being aware of one's limitations, avoiding any temptation to delude oneself about their extent and studying hard to remedy them is the best policy to improve one's grades,[22] it is hard to see why this student would freely admit to her limitations in a range of circumstances in which a student who is truly humble would. For instance, if the grade for the course has a self-assessment component, the grade-driven student would *ceteris paribus* inflate her grade, whilst the humble student would not. The grade-driven student usually would admit to limitations in front of teachers and other students only when doing so may help her in the endeavour of improving her grades, but would not do so when the

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[21] In this third case one will have stopped calculating and instinctively choose self-promotion or humility on different occasions.

[22] Alternatively, we can assume that this student is morally honest and would not consider cheating.

revelation may be thought to create expectations in the grader which may lead to lower marks.[23] The humble student would freely admit to her limitations in these circumstances.

In sum, contrary to appearances, it is not possible for an individual to manifest all the qualities of humility in a cross-situationally stable manner, but be motivated to pursue only selfish ends. No selfish individual can be truly humble because owning or accepting one's limitations requires more than not being in denial about their existence. It also necessitates that one is open about them in front of others even in situations where it is not to one's advantage to do so. The greedy manager and the grade-driven student can admit to their limitations insofar as they need not harbour delusions about these, but they cannot admit to them in front of others in a sufficiently broad range of circumstances to warrant seeing this openness as a stable disposition.[24]

4. *Humility as modesty and selfaAcceptance*

The characterisations offered above helps to clarify the different shortcomings of existing philosophical theories about intellectual humility and to explain why such variety has proliferated. Humility has two dimensions. It concerns both successes and limitations. The ignorance-based accounts have focused on successes to the detriment of acknowledging limitations. The accuracy-based accounts have faced the opposite problem. In addition, these accounts have tended to mischaracterise the nature of the concern with successes and limitations. Some have taken the concern to be a matter of belief (or of its absence); others have taken humility to require a lack of positive affective or conative attitudes directed at one's successes. *Contra* Snow (1995), Whitcomb et al (2015), Hazlett (2012), and Driver (1989), the characterisation offered above illustrates that humility is not best thought as having (or lacking)

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[23] This can happen, for example, if expectations of low achievement in a student prompt the teacher not to give the benefit of the doubt in the case of unclear answer or to place the student in the less capable stream.
[24] These examples show that intellectual humility is incompatible with overpowering selfish motivation. My analysis of these cases does not settle two further questions. The first is whether virtue requires virtuous conscious motivation since virtue may exclude the presence of some motivations without requiring the presence of any specific ones. The second is whether, granted that motivation is required, it must involve caring for epistemic goods non-instrumentally.

accurate or inaccurate beliefs about one's cognitive features. *Contra* Garcia (2006) and Roberts and Wood (2007) it does not require not caring for one's successes. Humility involves caring for one's limitations as Whitcomb et al (2015) suggest. However, *contra* them (2015), not every form of concern with limitations is compatible with humility. One's concern must motivate one to admit freely to their existence, even when doing so is damaging to one's self-interest.

One may note that my initial taxonomy of the beliefs, behaviours, motivations and emotions associated intellectual humility referred to psychological states and behavioural responses directed at others as well as some targeting the self. In my view it is only the latter group that can be properly included among the manifestations of intellectual humility. In this sense humility is self-centred. States and behaviours directed at others are not essential to humility although they are often associated with it. Often these affective and cognitive states and behaviours are manifestations of other intellectual virtues that promote, and are promoted by, humility. Thus, I have noted above that the modest person is also likely to be generous (and vice versa). Her modesty about her successes is thus accompanied by the generous acknowledgment of the contribution made by others. Similarly, the self-accepting person, who acknowledges her limitations, is also likely to be tolerant of others' genuine errors and open minded to criticism. Hence, self-acceptance fosters intellectual equanimity or tolerance and open-mindedness.

Humility is also self-centred in another sense. The humble person is not preoccupied with comparing her successes and limitations with those of other agents, nor does she care much for how others rank her in comparison with them. In other words, the humble person is not much concerned with pecking orders. Humility, however, does not require that one simply accepts intimidation, put downs or behaviour designed to humiliate from those who are very focused on such rankings and, typically, attempt to secure a reputational high status. So whilst humility *per se* comprises only one's evaluations of one's cognitive features, it is not incompatible with a demand (characteristic of proper pride) that one is given due epistemic credit by others.

Modesty and self-acceptance are both parts of what we take humility to be and neither can be reduced to the other. It is possible that a person who, at least broadly speaking, accepts

her limitations and demonstrates this acceptance in the way she deals with criticism is at the same time arrogant about her successes. This is not uncommon among those whom we refer to as 'cocky'. These individuals have a high opinion of their intellectual abilities and present themselves with confidence. Nevertheless, some of them are also remarkably open to criticism from those whom they regard as their peers.[25]

It is also possible to be modest about one's successes without fully acknowledging one's shortcomings. This phenomenon is not uncommon among folk who display a certain amount of rigidity in their approach to all matters intellectual. These individuals can be largely modest about the significance of their personal intellectual achievements but are somewhat uncritical of their settled views. They have become blinkered, dogmatic, and unable to listen to criticism. They do not think of themselves as intellectually special in any way; but are unable to see that they may not be right on many issues. At the most extreme end of this scale we may find those individuals who are usually referred to as 'fanatics'. These individuals in their devotion to a cause, may be modest about their successes (and may even exhibit this modesty through their choice of clothing and diet), but have lost the ability to acknowledge their own individual intellectual limitations (although their awareness of human finitude may be heightened). These considerations indicate that modesty and self-acceptance are to some extent independent of each other. Hence, one may well wonder whether we should treat humility as the equivocal catch-all term for what are in reality two distinct traits.

This conclusion is premature. It is true that modesty and self-acceptance can be exhibited somewhat independently of each other. Nevertheless, it seems likely that it may be psychologically hard to secure and preserve either true modesty or self-acceptance whilst being very deficient with regard to the other feature. Further, the development of modesty may promote the development of self-acceptance and vice-versa. As one acquires modesty about one's own successes, one's attention may be drawn to one's limitations which one may then learn to accept. By the same token, acceptance of limitations should generate some sort of

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[25] But they may be prone to misjudgements about whom to include as a peer. Although it is possible for someone to care for one's successes because of how they reflect on one's own self-estimation whilst freely admitting to mistakes and limitations, these two tendencies are in psychological conflict since admitting to mistakes damages one's estimation of one's successes. For my purposes, it is sufficient to show that it is possible for individuals to possess this kind of conflicted psychology.

cognitive dissonance with one's tendency to immodesty. [26] It thus makes sense to think of humility as a cluster of two conceptually distinct psychological features which tend to harmonise because of the psychological need to avoid cognitive dissonance.

5. Humility as a cluster of attitudes

In this section I present my account of intellectual humility as a cluster of strong attitudes and offer some reasons in its support, before offering a fuller defence of the view in the next section. I have argued so far that humility is characterised by a concern toward one's own epistemic successes and limitations. It follows that humility is a psychological quality which is involved in the evaluation of aspects of one's own cognitive agency. Yet it would seem possible for a person to be humble without having ever consciously thought about her own successes or limitations. The account provided below explains how humility can be unreflective and yet directed toward aspects of the subject's cognitive agency. It can also explain why humility is a kind of affective evaluative stance rather than a purely cold cognitive one. Finally, since attitudes can guide future behaviour, patterns of attention and emotional responses, this position accounts for the characteristic manifestations of humility.

Before I present my view, however, I want to pre-empt two possible confusions which may arise if one draws too close a connection between the view developed here and discussions on meta-cognition. The first confusion would presume that attitudes about one's own cognitive agency and its components must be thoughts about one's own thoughts or at least presuppose these. This conclusion is unwarranted since monitoring and regulating one's cognitive activity does not require that one forms conscious thoughts about it (Proust, 2013). Instead, self-assessment can be carried out in a habitual quasi-automatic fashion that does not take the form of conscious reflection. The account developed here presumes that mature human beings have an overall impression of their intellectual strengths and weaknesses as

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[26] The discomfort generated by the perceived conflict between self-accepting and immodest attitudes should lead one to seek to resolve the tension by modifying at least one of the conflicting attitudes. For an accessible introduction to the literature on cognitive dissonance see Cooper (2008).

result of on-going evaluations of their cognitive features. These evaluations may be sometimes based on conscious reflection on past experiences, but may often be the outcome of lessons learnt unthinkingly.

The second confusion is to misconstrue the account I defend as proposing that humility is a second-order virtue of accuracy. In order to avoid this interpretation, it is necessary to note that attitudes, which - as I explain below - are summary evaluations of their objects, are not the same psychological states as those labelled 'evaluations' in the psychological literature on meta-cognition. These are validity tags; which is to say, implicit endorsements of something as true or accurate (Proust, 2013). Attitudes in social psychology are evaluations conceived as (at least partly) associative states that link an object to a positive or negative valence. Hence, a positive evaluation of a cognitive process or capacity is a preference for it, whilst a negative evaluation is a dislike for that object (Banaji & Heiphetz, 2010). The psychological notion of an attitude should not be confused with the philosophical notion of a propositional attitude. A liking of chocolate is an example of the former, a belief that 2 plus 2 is 4 of the latter. [27]

These preferences are cognitive shortcuts, based on experience, that summarise one's overall evaluation of an object (Fazio and Olson, 2007, p. 141). The evaluation is formed over time to serve a variety of functions. For instance, one may form a dislike for some food stuff having felt unwell after eating it on several occasions. The negative attitude toward that object once formed guides avoidant behaviour away from the disliked object without needing to rehearse one's reasons for that behaviour. In this example, the evaluation was formed to serve a utilitarian function because it classifies as liked those objects whose pursuit furthers the agent's self-interests and as disliked those whose avoidance serves those same interests. Whilst the categorisation of attitude function is still a matter of some dispute, there is agreement about a core group of these. They are: knowledge, utilitarian, object appraisal, social-adjustive, ego-defensive and value-expressive functions (Fazio, 2000; Maio et al. 2004). Attitudes can serve more than one of these at the same time.

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[27] Social psychologists tend to think of attitudes and even of their bases in purely associative terms (Maio and Haddock, 2004). There are grounds to suspect that, even though the attitudes themselves may be purely associative, their bases include propositional states. See Levy's (2015).

It has been argued that all attitudes serve an object appraisal function (Fazio, 2000). Unfortunately, the notion is, in places, used tautologically to mean evaluations that serve the function of evaluating. It is thus no surprise that all attitudes serve this function.[28] It is also a pity that the object-appraisal function is conflated in the literature with two further functions: utilitarian (Watt et al., 2008) and knowledge (Katz, 1960).[29] The knowledge function, as originally conceived, is different from the utilitarian function. The latter classifies objects in accordance with whether approaching or avoiding them serves the agent's interests. Instead, the former can be driven by curiosity and serves the need to know or understand objects for what they are.

Evaluations that serve social-adjustive functions are formed to adjust one's preferences to those of one's social group. These attitudes are positive or negative summary evaluations of objects which are based on the likes and dislikes shared by members of the group to which one belongs. Similarly, attitudes that serve an ego-defensive function are based on an assessment of whether the object is a threat to the self. Finally, value-expressive attitudes are summary evaluations of objects formed to serve the need to express one's own values.[30,31]

Having thus offered an overview of the notion of an attitude as this is used in social psychology, I first characterise the attitudes that constitute intellectual humility before defending this identification. Intellectual humility I propose refers to a cluster of strong attitudes, the informational bases from which they are derived, and their consequences which include characteristic emotions, dispositions to behave and patterns of attention. The attitudes are summary evaluations of the subject's cognitive agency and its components. Thus, for example, one may be positive about one's vision, but have a negative attitude toward one's

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[28] It is equally no surprise that those attitudes that do it best are strong attitudes since it is these which are causally the most efficacious.

[29] For an example of the assimilation see Kruglanski and Strobe (2005).

[30] Thus, not all attitudes toward values are value-expressive and not all value-expressive attitudes have values as their objects. One may have a positive attitude toward equality which is formed because it satisfies the need to fit in with one's Islington set. Also one may have a positive attitude toward one's walking boots that plays a value-expressive function because it expresses one's commitment to a range of values such as spirit of adventure, love of feeling healthy and strong, and so forth.

[31] Social psychologists think of liking and valuing as nearly interchangeable notions despite clear differences between the two. In this paper I am largely concerned with attitudes as expressions of preferences. Value-expressive attitudes are preferences for objects which one takes to promote one's commitments to one's values. Thanks to Jonathan Webber for pressing me on the need to clarify this point.

hearing. Attitudes can be directed at beliefs or theories one may hold, as well as cognitive capacities. They may have habits or skills as their objects, and finally one may have an overall attitude toward one's cognitive agency as a whole. Some of these attitudes are positive and others are negative. Others still will be ambivalent.[32] If, as social psychologists have argued, attitudes are the main construct of social cognition, there is no doubt that every individual has attitudes about oneself, about one's cognitive agency and about its components.

In my view these positive and negative evaluations of aspects of one's cognitive make-up are, in fact, assessment of them as strengths or epistemic successes or as weaknesses or epistemic limitations. Hence, for example, the person who has a positive attitude toward her memory is the person who, unthinkingly perhaps, assesses memory as one of her cognitive or epistemic strengths. This is so even when the positive evaluation of memory is actually formed to serve the need for self-esteem and is not based on an accurate judgement of the reliability of one's memory. I take this point to be a consequence of the cognitive dissonance that would be caused by holding on to a positive evaluation of some aspect of one's cognitive agency whilst thinking that it does not promote epistemic goods. One cannot have a positive attitude toward one's hearing without, for example, treating it as reliable. Similarly, one cannot maintain a positive attitude toward one's position on a given issue whilst also thinking that one's view is the result of mere wishful thinking. These considerations apply to all those cognitive capacities, skills, habits, and to their products, which constitutively aim at accuracy, knowledge or truth.[33] Since these cognitive features are successes only when they promote epistemic goods, and one evaluates them positively only if one implicitly treats them as successes, a positive evaluation of one of these features of one's cognitive make-up is tantamount to an assessment of it as an epistemic success. Similarly, a negative evaluation is an assessment of a feature as an epistemic limitation.

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[32] I do not address the issue of ambivalent attitudes. These are unstable (cf., Maio and Haddock, 2009, p. 34) and thus incompatible with virtue.

[33] This idea that there are such capacities is a staple of virtue epistemology. One prominent example is Sosa (2007, pp. 22-23). In the remainder of this section my discussion of aspects of an agent's cognitive agency should be taken to be limited to those which are constitutively connected to epistemic goods unless otherwise specified. Not all cognitive capacities have this feature. For example, imagination does not aim at the truth or understanding.

Individuals have their own distinctive patterns of evaluation of their cognitive features. These patterns will depend on the characteristics of their actual cognitive capacities and talents but also on the functions served by their evaluations of them. It is my contention that those individuals whom we classify as humble have attitudes toward their cognitive agencies and their components that serve knowledge and value-expressive functions. This is ultimately an empirical claim which will need to be tested. There are, however, known considerations that point in its favour. In what follow I first clarify the view before discussing these considerations.

The person who is humble has attitudes toward her cognitive make-up that are summary evaluations based on past experiences and assessments. These attitudes, I claim, serve both knowledge and value-expressive functions. I shall take each of these two functions in turn. Consider first the knowledge function. One can compare it with the utilitarian function. Suppose that one has a negative evaluation of pain, and that this attitude serves a utilitarian function. The attitude is formed on the basis of past experiences which showed pain to be correlated with a lack of preference satisfaction. As a result, one has a negative affective reaction to pain which causes one to avoid it.

Suppose instead, that one has a positive attitude toward one's problem solving ability and that this attitude is formed on the basis of past experiences, beliefs, emotions and assessment of one's behaviour. This attitude serves a need for knowledge. One has developed this evaluative stance over a period time. Because of its knowledge function, it results in a preference for those aspects of one's cognitive agency which seem to one to have proved useful for the purpose of acquiring knowledge or understanding. In short, this person prefers or likes those aspects of her cognitive agency that, from her point of view, have promoted the acquisition and preservation of epistemic goods. And she treats these aspects (but not others) as her cognitive strengths. For the same reasons, this person dislikes, and treats as weaknesses, those components of her cognitive agency that, given her beliefs, experiences and emotions, appear to have inhibited her access to knowledge or understanding.

A contrast with another individual may be of assistance to clarify further the point I wish to make. Imagine a person who has a positive attitude toward his problem-solving ability. This evaluation is based on his beliefs, affective attitudes and past experience. However, this

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person's past evaluations of his cognitive agency served the need to defend the self from potential threats. As a result, he develops a positive stance toward those among his cognitive features which have proven effective at sustaining a positive self-concept or image against threats. In short, this person likes those aspects of his cognitive make-up that make him feel good about himself, although he is not aware that this is the case.[34] Suppose that his problem-solving skills are among these. It is possible that he is good at problem-solving, and having solved several problems and felt good about it, he likes this ability of his because of how it makes him feel about himself. Of course, he would not like his ability so much if he appreciated the structure of his motivations. If he became aware that he likes his ability because of its effects on his self-esteem rather than its epistemic qualities, his preference would no longer be effective at promoting a high opinion of oneself.

It is also entirely possible that a person with poor or average problem-solving skills may develop a positive attitude or evaluation toward them which serves an ego-defensive function. Suppose that this person belongs to a group who is stereotypically thought to have excellent problem-solving skills. Although this person may have limited capacities with regard to solving problems, because of assumptions about people like him, others may presume that he is skilful (or attribute to him more ability than he should be credited with). As a result, he may be praised for the problems he solves (thus confirming that he is able) and excused for those he does not (which therefore are not taken as evidence that he lacks ability). In these conditions a child may develop a positive stance toward his problem-solving ability formed to serve a knowledge function. However, since presumably evidence of one's true level of ability, independent of other people's opinion, would mount up as one tackles problems with mixed success and one witnesses the achievements of others, only a person motivated to discount such evidence would be able to preserve a positive stance toward one's problem-solving ability

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[34] Were he to become aware of the function served by his evaluations he would be pulled toward changing them due to the effect of cognitive dissonance. See Petty and Wegener (1997) on the role of cognitive dissonance on attitude change.

under these circumstances.[35] In such a case the attitude would have acquired a different function. Ego-defensiveness would seem to be the most likely candidate.

Let me hasten to add, before discussing the value-expressive function of attitudes, that these examples do not show that reliability about one's cognitive strengths or weaknesses is either necessary or sufficient for humility.[36] The view presented here entails that in ordinary circumstances the humble person is extremely unlikely be consistently and grossly mistaken about her epistemic qualities. However, what is essential to humility is that attitudes are formed to serve the need for knowledge. It is possible for an attitude to have this function even though it overestimates or underestimates the extent to which the feature it evaluates promotes epistemic goods. Overestimation is possible when, for example, current evidence is misleading. One may believe without arrogance that one's discovery is more important than hindsight reveals it to be. Underestimation may occur in biased environments for instance. Mistaken judgements by one's parents or teachers may cause one to underestimate one's ability to do mathematics. Whilst such views are likely to affect one's self-attitudes profoundly by eating away at one's self-confidence, it is at least possible that one may simply acquire from them a mistaken assessment of one's mathematical ability which informs one's attitude, serving a knowledge function, of this aspect of one's cognitive make-up. Therefore, the reliability of one's attitude toward one's cognitive capacities is not a necessary condition of humility. In addition, it is not sufficient, because as I now show, humility requires that one's attitudes toward one's epistemic agency also serve a value-expressive function.

Preferences for some aspects of one's cognitive make-up serve the function of expressing one's values when they single out features which are consistent with, and indicative of, one's values. More specifically, these are preferences for objects that are generated by the need to express or manifest one's commitment to what one values. Hence, one may strongly

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[35] Discounting can be achieved by explaining failure away as bad luck. If the person has power he can delegate the difficult problems, believe the praise other may heap on him, and in general exaggerate his contribution to any team successes.

[36] Attitudes are not truth-apt since they are likes or dislikes. Therefore, they cannot be, strictly speaking, reliable or unreliable. However, one's attitude toward one's own cognitive make-up may be more or less consonant with its actual strengths and weaknesses. So one's attitudes are reliable in this loose sense if one prefers one's actual strengths and prefers them to a degree that is proportional to their strength, and one dislikes one's actual weaknesses in a similarly proportional manner.

like one's imagination because by using one's imagination one can carry out activities that manifest one's deeply held commitment to the values of freedom and rejection of authority figures. For example, one may have found in the past that using one's imagination one has made decisions that led one to travel and experience freedom and independence away from the authority of one's parents. In this manner one may develop a preference for imagination because of its ability to fulfil one's need to express the values to which one is committed. In such a case, one's positive attitude is a value-expressive one. In the person who is humble attitudes that serve a knowledge function are also value-expressive. That is to say, the attitudes that express her values are those attitudes that exhibit a preference for epistemic goods such as truth, knowledge or understanding. These preferences are adopted as an expression of value and thus reflect some deeply held commitment of the person in question.[37] In summary, the attitudes of the person who is intellectually humble are formed to express a commitment to epistemic goods and are formed as a result of past experiences driven by the need for knowledge and understanding.

Humility itself does not consist exclusively of the attitudes themselves but it also includes their contents or bases. The content of an attitude, as social psychologists use the notion, is not what an attitude represents. Attitudes are associative states; they are not representations with accuracy conditions. Instead, 'content' or 'base' refers to the states which convey the information from which the attitude is derived.[38] Contents are usually presumed to include three kinds of components: beliefs, emotions and past behaviours (Zanna and Rempel, 1988; Maio and Haddock 2004, pp. 428-9). These states guide the formation of the attitude, and determine in part whether it is preserved or revised (Maio and Haddock, 2009).[39] Thus, on the classic model of attitude, an attitude is caused by its content which it is said to express. The attitude itself is an evaluative summary of everything which is comprised in its content.

Clearly, humility cannot be a mere pattern of likes and dislikes directed at one's cognitive make-up. Hence, if the identification advanced here has to have any plausibility,

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[37] For the view that value-expressive attitudes are indicative of deep features of the self, see Maio & Olson (2000).
[38] I shall set aside here questions about the cognitive processing that has the base as its input and the attitude as output. In my view these processes are not exclusively associative but can be content-driven.
[39] I say in part because external inputs are also decisive.

humility must consist of the characteristic emotions, past actions, and beliefs which are the psychological bases of the attitudes themselves. This conclusion is not *ad hoc*, given that it is common practice in social psychology to examine attitudes together with their bases since they are both causally effective in the production of behaviour.

I now turn to a defence of the view. In this section I show that the account explains the features attributed to modesty, self-acceptance and humility in the preceding sections. In the next section I broaden my scope to argue that thinking of (at least) some virtues as clusters of strong attitudes explains some of their features such as their motivational structure, their unreflectiveness, their cross-situational stability and their ability to direct attention.

I argued in section 2 that modesty is compatible with underestimation or even overestimation of one's epistemic successes. The account of humility in terms of attitudes easily explains this fact by pointing to the existence of factors such as lack of information or biased environments in which evaluations formed to serve the need for knowledge are not reliable. There I also argued that what is crucial to modesty is that one cares for, or feels positive about, one's epistemic successes because they promote epistemic goods. The notion of attitude function captures well what is at work here, without postulating the existence of conscious motivations to value epistemic goods non-instrumentally.

I have argued in section 3 that self-acceptance is a way of acknowledging one's limitations which is incompatible with resignation and which requires full disclosure to others even when doing so is not in one's self-interest. The position developed in this paper identifies self-acceptance as a cluster of negative attitudes, serving knowledge and value-expressive functions, directed toward some aspects of one's cognitive agency. These negative evaluations are incompatible with a stance of resignation. Since these attitudes serve the need for knowledge, they cause one to avoid behaviour and objects that inhibit the satisfaction of this need. Avoidance is the opposite of the kind of dwelling on one's own failures which is characteristic of the person who is resigned. Most probably, the person, who dislikes some of her traits because they prevent knowledge acquisition and preservation, develops alternative strategies to satisfy her need for knowledge.

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The same negative attitudes are also incompatible with a disposition to hide one's limitations (unless revealing them proves to be in one's self-interest). Since these evaluations have a value-expressive function, the values which are opposed by the objects of these attitudes must be epistemic values, given that these attitudes also serve the knowledge function. Hence, one dislikes these features of oneself because they hinder one's expression of the values of knowledge and understanding. Since these attitudes serve the needs to pursue and value truth and knowledge they offer no incentive to the person who has them to hide their existence from others. Further, it would seem that a plausible way of valuing truth and knowledge is to value their acquisition by, and transmission to, others. Hence, the possession of these attitudes actually provides an incentive to reveal one's limitations to others since such openness facilitates directly and indirectly their ability to acquire knowledge.[40]

The account, in addition, can easily explain why one may be humble about some aspect of oneself but not others. The person, who is humble about one of his cognitive features but not others, has attitudes toward those features which serve knowledge and value-expressive functions whilst his attitudes toward those other features fulfil different functions. Relatedly, the view that humility is a cluster of attitudes explains why individuals can be said to be modest about the successes of others (children, or apprentices) whose cognitive agency has been shaped under their influence. In these cases, a person's attitude toward the cognitive features possessed by these individuals serves knowledge and value-expressive functions rather than the need for a positive self-image.

Finally, the account explains why humility has two distinct dimensions: modesty about success and acceptance about limitations, whose relationship it illuminates. A person may acquire negative attitudes toward some of her cognitive features as a result of past attempts to satisfy the need for knowledge and the expression of value. To this extent, this person is accepting of her limitations. She may however have also acquired some positive attitudes toward other aspects of herself such as her memory as a result of past experiences driven by the need to protect her self-image. Such an individual will be immodest about some aspects of

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[40] It does not follow that a self-accepting individual must reveal his limitations to those who, he suspects, mean ill toward him. It also does not follow that he must reveal his limitations unprompted to strangers when such a revelation is unasked for.

the self, whilst accepting of some of her limitations. Similarly, the person whom I labelled as 'fanatic' in section 4 above may have positive attitudes toward aspects of her cognitive agency that are compatible with modesty, but possess negative attitudes toward other aspects of her cognitive make-up which are formed to satisfy the need to fit in with her in-group and thus share its prejudices. Individuals with these psychologies are likely from time to time to be internally conflicted. But as I argued above they exist. Their existence shows that humility has two dimensions. The view defended here is to my knowledge the only one to explain both their close connections and their separateness.

6. Can virtues be clusters of attitudes?

Readers may still be sceptical about the suitability of attitudes as the construct that gives psychological reality to virtue. In this section I present a number of considerations that support the identification of at least some virtues with clusters of strong attitudes. None of these are individually conclusive, but together they build up a case that has sufficient plausibility to warrant further empirical investigation. I also consider two objections to the account before indicating how it opens up new avenues for research on the relations of virtues to vices.

There is no agreement on the nature of virtue. However, they are at the very least psychological features of agents which make them better persons (Battaly, 2015). Intellectual virtues are the excellences of epistemic agents. In addition, virtues are plausibly said to have the following features:[41] they direct behaviour and visual attention; they reliably tend to bring about good effects; they are stable across situations; they have characteristic motives but can be fairly unreflective; they are linked to characteristic emotional responses. Attitudes have been empirically shown to possess all of these features. For this reason, the identification (or at least close connection) of virtues with attitudes is empirically well-supported.[42]

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[41] There is considerable disagreement on each one of them.
[42] I am not the first to make this claim. See Webber (2015) for an account of some ethical virtues in terms of attitudes. Unlike Webber I hold that the notion of attitude function is crucial if we want to understand why virtues are attitudes.

There is robust empirical evidence that attitudes, when they are strong, are predictive of behaviour. The strength of an attitude is the strength of the association between the object of the attitude and the positive or negative valence (Fazio, 2000). [43] It is thus not a measure of how strongly one feels about the object. In addition, strong attitudes have been shown to direct attention and to be stable across situational contexts (Fazio, 2000). The contents of attitudes always include affective components while the attitudes themselves are an example of valenced cognition (Maio and Haddock, 2009). In addition, the arguments developed in section 5 have shown that virtue can be fairly unreflective since the psychological states that motivate behaviour may respond to a need for knowledge without the subject being fully aware of his motivational structure. Finally, in the preceding section I have also indicated that, at least with regard to humility, unless the environment in which one has formed one's attitudes was systematically biased and misleading, the person whose attitudes instantiate virtue is likely to be reliable about her epistemic strengths and weakness and to act in ways that promote the acquisition of epistemic goods.

It may be objected to the view that intellectual humility is a cluster of strong attitudes that humility is a trait of character, but attitudes are evaluations rather than character traits. Further, one may also object that there already are in the literature good candidates for the kind of construct that supplies psychological reality to virtues. These are the personality traits studied by personality psychology (Ashton and Lee, 2008). I shall take these objections in turn. Often philosophers use the notion of a trait of character without defining it. Since virtue is commonly used to include cognitive faculties such as memory and perception, it would seem that a trait of character in this context is something which is dispositionally stable, that can be manifested in multiple situations, that is part of the agent's cognitive agency in so far as it is not completely unconscious or automatic, and perhaps also a feature of oneself with which the subject identifies. Once character traits are explained in such a capacious manner so that they can be plausibly said to include memory as well as perseverance, it is perfectly plausible to think that clusters of attitudes when combined with their informational bases and contents, and the behaviours which they cause belong within this category.

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[43] The notion of attitude strength is however used ambiguously in the literature to refer to different measures.

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Yet, one may continue to object that virtues, and especially humility, are to be identified with personality traits rather than attitudes. One dominant account of these traits identifies six of them.[44] These are: Humility-honesty, Emotionality, eXtraversion, Agreeableness, Consciousness, and Openness to experience (HEXACO, in short) (Ashton and Lee, 2008). The HEXACO traits have been isolated through lexical studies of the most common psychological qualities attributed to people's personality in several languages. Despite their superficial similarity these personality characteristics bear little actual resemblance to the character traits invoked by virtue responsibilist epistemologists. Thus, emotionality refers to sentimentality whilst conscientiousness is a mark of someone's perfectionism. These traits are best understood as temperaments rather than virtue-like character traits since they do not exhibit some of the essential features of the latter (cf., Alfano, 2012). For instance, personality traits are not excellences because they do not make the people who have them better. Perhaps the best evidence that personality traits are not virtues but temperaments comes for biology (Lewis and Bates, 2014). Recent studies have highlighted the genetic basis of personality traits which are thus perhaps best thought as the kind of natural virtue that makes it easier or harder to acquire the attitudes required by virtue proper.

Whilst, as I have argued in this paper, the social psychology of attitudes provides a framework that sheds novel light on the nature of intellectual humility in particular and virtue in general, it also opens up three avenues of research that hold an enormous amount of promise. Firstly, there are well-developed methodologies for measuring attitudes and these could be applied to the study of virtue. Secondly, there is a large literature on the kind of interventions which are effective to bring about attitude change. These could be explored as a means to educate for virtue. Thirdly, the framework of attitudes provides a new and rich way of approaching intellectual vices. For instance, arrogance and self-abasement are among the vices that oppose intellectual humility along its modesty dimension. The person who is arrogant is immodest, whilst the self-abasing individual is someone who belittles his own intellectual abilities. The vocabulary of attitudes helps to understand these vices and to avoid the error of thinking of humility as a mean between them. The humble person is not the person who is

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[44] Earlier accounts identified five known as the big fives to which a sixth (humility) was added more recently.

sufficiently arrogant not to be self-abasing, and sufficiently self-abasing not to be arrogant. Given the account offered above, arrogance is also a cluster of strong attitudes toward one's own cognitive agency and its components. These attitudes however serve an ego-defensive function so that the arrogant individual prefers those aspects of her cognitive make-up that help her to sustain her self-esteem. Similarly, self-abasement is also a cluster of attitudes toward one's own cognitive agency; but these attitudes serve a social-adjustive function because the person who belittles her own abilities has made her own the dim view of her capacities that she thinks others hold. I plan to develop these themes in subsequent papers.[45]

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