Beyond Wisdom and Virtue

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Abstract

It is argued that there is presently a theoretical confusion in psychology between the concepts of personal wisdom and moral virtue, a confusion not present in traditional religious and philosophical literature. It is further argued that this confusion may be resolved by understanding how exemplars of wisdom and virtue develop such qualities. The narratives of 16 participants, 8 scoring high on the Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale and 8 scoring low, from 2 age cohorts (18-25 and 60-85) and 4 religious backgrounds (Atheist, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim) were analyzed for implicit narratives of developing exemplary qualities. It is found that wisdom and virtue are best understood as perspectival and procedural aspects of some further, little-discussed quality, stemming from deep immersion in religious paths of cultivation, which is shown to have important implications for the psychology of wisdom and virtue.
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Chapter 1

1 Wisdom and Virtue: History and Conflation

"Más sabe el diablo por viejo que por diablo." ("The devil is wise, not because he is the devil but because he is old.") This proverb demonstrates an interesting point: there are some ways in which wisdom is spoken of that have little to do with moral virtue. Similarly, if I were to come across a homeless person, and—without further consideration—donate to them my life's savings, that would likely be considered selfless, a virtuous act. However, such a willful sabotage of my own future would be unlikely to be considered terribly wise\(^1\). Despite examples such as these, which provide an intuitive dissociation between wisdom and virtue, scholarly literature on moral psychology, virtue education, and the scientific study of personal wisdom, overlap at many significant points. To understand why this might be, it must first be acknowledged that this confluence is not something that occurred in a vacuum; each field draws on the intuitions of their contributors, and frequently relies on the folk theories of participants to support the theories they generate. These intuitions, and the folk theories of laypersons, draw on older philosophical roots (Hadot, 1990), roots that are worth examining due to their influences, implicit or explicit, on our modern beliefs. To best understand the beliefs of participants in studies of wisdom and virtue, as well as the implicit beliefs of those conducting the studies, we must examine the contexts, beliefs, and traditions upon which our modern-day participants may be drawing with respect to what they tell us about wisdom and moral virtue. This chapter presents an overview of the relationship between wisdom and virtue in traditional philosophical contexts, as well as how these concepts have become increasingly conflated in current academic study.

1.1 Philosophical Roots: Sources and Traditions

The philosophies and religious traditions explored in this section, traditions stemming from the Classical era of human history, retain a significant degree of influence over our contemporary beliefs about wisdom, virtue, what is good, and how to lead a good life. Religious traditions such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam all boast followers in the hundreds of millions.

\(^1\) Thank you to Ricca Edmondson for this example.
Philosophies such as Platonism and Confucianism were influential in secular movements during the Renaissance, as well as influencing the scholastic and scientific traditions which inform much of our modern worldview; Confucianism holds a similar place in the history of East Asia. Neither are these traditions entirely unified. Christianity exists as multiple denominations, from Eastern Orthodox to the numerous types of Protestantism. Types of Buddhism are countlessly many, despite loose grouping into Theravada and Mahayana traditions. Islam primarily splits along Sunni, Shia, and Sufi lines, while presenting a unified doctrine of atheism would seem like an exercise in futility. A complete account of the theories of wisdom and virtue from within the family tree of any one of the traditions described below could, and have, filled entire books. In the interests of accessibility and applicability, the sections below draw on prominent, and accessible, sources and commentators within the broadly delineated faith traditions addressed in this study, aiming to detail the themes of each, rather than attempt to capture the specifics and nuances that are inevitable in millennia-old, thriving, multiplicitous traditions.

1.1.1 The Humanist Tradition

I will begin by exploring those philosophical traditions of moral virtue and wisdom that never became “religious”, as we might commonly understand it. Rather, they gave rise to practices and ideas concerned primarily with the affordance of human flourishing in this life, rather than the next, and were divorced from any metaphysical commitments beyond the question of human nature; these I will refer to loosely as the “Humanist” traditions.

It is perhaps best to start with the tradition to which, in the words of Whitehead, all European philosophy serves as a footnote to: the Platonic tradition. Whitehead’s characterization is not too far off the mark; as will be observed, Platonic concepts of wisdom and virtue are integrated into, or responded to by, every later Western tradition. The thoughts of Plato are encoded in the form

\[ \text{If not libraries.} \]

\[ \text{The first tradition examined, the Platonic tradition, is the exception to this: its metaphysical commitments are essential to its theory of wisdom and virtue, and allowed for its integration into later religious traditions.} \]
of dialogues, in which he depicts his teacher Socrates and some interlocutor debating the nature of various ideas, such as statecraft or courage or, importantly here, wisdom and virtue. Central to Platonic ideas of both wisdom and virtue is knowledge. For example, in the Protagoras, it is asserted that, as no person does wrong knowingly, right action, or virtue, derives from knowledge, while vice and evil spring from ignorance. Likewise, in the Theatetus, it is asserted that wisdom and knowledge are the same thing; to be wise is to know things.

In the Apology, Plato shows Socrates making a firm distinction between human and divine wisdom, asserting that only God is truly wise, and that human wisdom is ultimately not worth much; this distinction will be again relevant when examining the Christian and Islamic traditions. That acknowledged, however, Plato’s other work examines how to take limited human wisdom to its limits. As wisdom and virtue are both dependent on knowledge, the question becomes one of how to acquire said knowledge. Arguably, the question of what it means to know something is at the center of Plato’s entire work, but the metaphysics and epistemology of knowledge feature prominently in the Theatetus, the Timaeus, the Republic, and somewhat in the Meno and the Symposium. To have knowledge is to know immutable, fundamental truths; to intellect the Platonic Forms. The precise metaphysics and epistemology of the concept is too large a subject for the present review, therefore it must suffice to say that the Forms represent perfect, intelligible truths, and the love and pursuit of this truth, transcending desires and self-interest, is the proper object of philosophy.

Perhaps more familiar to psychologists interested in wisdom and virtue, especially those from a Western background, is the Aristotelian tradition. Aristotle’s philosophy has recently experienced a resurgence in academia, due in part to Nussbaum (1988; 1999) and MacIntyre’s (1999; 2013) revitalization of virtue ethics; it has also seen increasing incorporation into discussion of character education (Kristjánsson, 2015), and, of course, theories of wisdom (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006). The primary source for Aristotle’s philosophy of the nature of

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4 There is some debate as to whether Plato accurately depicts the thoughts of Socrates, or uses him as a mouthpiece for his own ideas; regardless, the ideas as depicted in the writings of Plato are what is of interest to the current review.

5 The translations of Platonic works referenced in the present thesis are collected in The Collected Dialogues of Plato (1961/19960, edited by E. Hamilton and H. Cairns
wisdom and virtue is his *Nicomachean Ethics*, the subject of which is the question of how to live a good life. the *Politics*, often considered a companion novel, extends the question to the place of wisdom and virtue in the state. The thesis of the first chapters of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is that the best life is the life of the philosopher, who is possessed of both wisdom and virtue; this is the life most suited to human flourishing. The concern of the *Politics*, following this, is how to afford this sort of life for the most number of people, with the claim being that with the goal of mankind and its communities being to acquire some good, then political communities and political sciences, which aim at the most good for the most people, are the highest of these.

Virtue, in these works of Aristotle, is said to be the excellence of a thing, relative to its proper functions, and can be of two kinds: intellectual virtue developed through teaching and requiring time and experience, and moral virtue, developed through habit and requiring excellence of character. Moral virtue is a state of character concerned with maintaining careful balance between excess and defect in various passions, such as fear, pity, confidence, anger, or appetite. For example, the virtue of courage is the mean between fear and overconfidence. These must be felt with reference to the right objects, right people, right motive, and right method. This rightness and intermediacy is as would be determined by a person possessed of practical wisdom, or phronesis (II.6.1107). From here, the text continues to speak of particular virtues.

Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics* contrasts between phronesis, which is practical wisdom concerned with specifics, means of human happiness, and sophia, theoretical wisdom that marries intuitive reasoning and scientific knowledge of first principles; this latter term is the word primarily used for wisdom in the Platonic tradition. For sophia, Aristotle argues that intuitive reason, not rational argument, is what is necessary to grasp the beginnings and ends of things, a concept which resonates with later ideas of the ineffable qualities of the objects of wisdom. *Sophia* he values more highly than phronesis; following on his argument that man is a rational animal (found in the *De Anima*) that by nature desires to know (asserted in the opening of the *Metaphysics*), the greatest virtue or excellence of a human is the virtue by which they

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6 The translations of Aristotelian works referenced in the present thesis are collected in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited by R. McKeon, 1941.
know rationally. Phronesis provides for sophia to come into being, and the ideal would be to possess both. Aristotle discusses the relationship between practical wisdom and cleverness, asserting that practical wisdom does require cleverness insofar as cleverness is the capacity to achieve goals we set for ourselves, but that practical wisdom is over and above mere cleverness in identifying the best goals in accordance with virtue (VI.12-25). He additionally explicitly differs from the earlier Platonic tradition in arguing that the virtues merely involve rational principles, rather than being rational principles in and of themselves; mere knowledge of what is good is insufficient for good actions. In summary, the Aristotelian view of wisdom and virtue holds wisdom to be two kinds of intellectual virtue, theoretical and practical, with practical wisdom being used to determine the mean between extremes appropriate to the situation; the habituation of acting according to this mean is how one develops moral virtue.

These ideas of moral virtue as the mean between extremes, wisdom as a capacity to judge what must be done, exemplary character as educated habit, and the connection of wisdom and virtue to political life, are not unique to Aristotle. Moving to China, another great Axial civilization, the Four Books of Confucianism, the Analects (Trans. Eno, 2015), the Great Learning (Trans. Eno, 2016), the Doctrine of the Mean (Trans. Eno, 2016), and the Mengzi (Trans. Eno, 2016), were written or compiled in China at roughly the same time that Aristotle taught in Greece, and make strikingly similar claims. The Confucian tradition deserves examination in its own right as a Humanist tradition, as there is increasing dialogue between the study of Confucian philosophy and both the study of wisdom, such as the work of Yang (2001; 2008; 2014) or Hu and colleagues (Hu et al., 2016), and moral psychology, for example Bongrae Seok’s exploration of Confucian shame and social cognition (2012; 2015), David Wong’s application of social cognition research to Mengzi’s theories of ethical motivation (2015), and Edward Slingerland’s psychological interpretation of the idea of wu wei (2015).

The primary text of the Confucian tradition, the Analects, is a collection of the sayings and conversations of Confucius, compiled by his students. In broad strokes, the text concerns what it means to be a junzi 君子, originally meaning “prince” but here used in the sense of a cultivated moral actor, the ideal person. Emphasis is particularly put on ren 仁, “benevolence/humaneness”, a rather more encompassing term than its translation would make clear; the term encapsulates not merely goodwill but a powerful interpersonal resonance from which the goodwill must stem. Other qualities of the junzi, what we would call virtues, are also discussed: li 禮, “ritual”,

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encompassing not just correct ceremonial actions but also smaller scale acts of propriety that we would identify as good manners; *yi* 義, “righteousness/propriety”, emphasising doing the right thing; *xiao* 孝, “filial piety”, extending beyond respect for one’s parents to respect and deference to one’s elders and betters in general. Book 4 of the *Analects* in particular details the qualities of the *junzi*. The cultivation of these qualities is noted to require dedicated study and practice. Another Confucian text, the *Great Learning* (A chapter of the Classic of Rites), says of the matter:

In ancient times, those who wished to make bright virtue brilliant in the world first ordered their states; those who wished to order their states first aligned their households; those who wished to align their households first refined their persons; those who wished to refine their persons first balanced their minds; those who wished to balance their minds first perfected the genuineness of their intentions; those who wished to perfect the genuineness of their intentions first extended their understanding; extending one’s understanding lies in aligning affairs. Only after affairs have been aligned may one’s understanding be fully extended. Only after one’s understanding is fully extended may one’s intentions be perfectly genuine. Only after one’s intentions are perfectly genuine may one’s mind be balanced. Only after one’s mind is balanced may one’s person be refined. Only after one’s person is refined may one’s household be aligned. Only after one’s household is aligned may one’s state be ordered. Only after one’s state is ordered may the world be set at peace. (Trans. Eno, 2016)

This passage resonates with an idea in section 2.1 of the *Analects*, that the exemplary ruler rules by means of virtue; this connection of virtue to politics is shared with Aristotle, who in the *Politics* outlines the thesis that wisdom and virtue are essential to the good state, and that we ought to follow those who are superior to us in virtue and the capacity to perform the best actions. What is interesting here is the idea that virtue can be cultivated by extending knowledge; this will be discussed below. For a final word on virtue, the opening sections of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, particularly Chapter 2 once again outline an idea that exemplary conduct is found in moderation in all things. The *Analects, Doctrine of the Mean*, and *Great Learning* all observe that exemplary conduct is a matter of devotion; one must constantly act in accordance with what is right in order to be virtuous.

Although wisdom (*zhì* 智) is one of the 5 classic Confucian virtues, discussions of the nature of wisdom are, interestingly, largely absent from the Confucian tradition. That said, the above passage from the *Great Learning*, having some form of knowledge of things as necessary for virtuous action, resonates with the idea in Aristotelianism that practical wisdom can help one
identify the best things to be done based on what is optimal. In the Confucian tradition, the
capacity to identify what is optimal may be cultivated through study and effort. A more explicit
treatment of wisdom appears in the *Mengzi*, containing the thoughts of, and named after, the
most important classical Confucian thinker after Confucius himself. In Book 6A of the *Mengzi*,
Chapter 6, Mengzi’s moral psychology is outlined in terms of what are called the Four
Beginnings, or Four Sprouts, capacities with which all people are born. The sense of
commiseration is the beginning of *ren* 仁; the sense of shame, *yi* 義; the sense of respect, *li* 禮;
and the sense of right and wrong, *zhi* 智, “wisdom” in the sense of knowledge. As before,
wisdom appears to provide one with the capacity of discernment, in this case the ability to
discern right from wrong, or the optimal action from the suboptimal. Here, wisdom is listed
alongside the central Confucian virtues, rather than being an ordinating capacity above them as
in Aristotelian thought.

In general, the Humanist traditions view wisdom and moral virtue as cultivated excellences of
human abilities, prerequisites for leading the best sort of life. There is a sense in which this view
bases itself on the idea that there is some “correct”, or at the very least optimal, solution to
problems of human interaction, based on what is optimal for human flourishing; this is most
salient in the Platonic tradition, which rests wisdom and virtue heavily on knowledge. Wisdom,
generally, is what allows one to perceive and make judgements concerning the optimal thing,
while virtue is acting in accordance with these judgements. An interesting confluence that may
be observed between these traditions is that both wisdom and virtue appear to be subordinate to a
greater quality that enables for the best sort of life. For example, wisdom and other virtues in
Confucianism give rise to the conduct of the *junzi*. In Book 4 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*,
Aristotle discusses the virtue of magnanimity, “greatness of soul,” which emerges from greatness
in every other virtue; as demonstrated, virtue in Aristotle includes moral virtue and intellectual
virtues, or kinds of wisdom. Finally, Plato asserts in the *Timaeus* (90b) that one who has loved
knowledge and wisdom, and has exercised their intellect to the greatest degree, will share in
divinity by knowing truth. In these cases, wisdom and virtue, taken together and to their limits,
produces something greater; this will be an important concept later.
1.1.2 The Christian Tradition

The Christian view of wisdom and virtue draws from two main sources. The primary source is, of course, the Old Testament, drawn from the Hebrew canon and New Testament of the Bible. However, through academic theology, the Christian view also descends partially from Aristotle, whose philosophy was adapted by Islamic scholars after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, and later Christian scholars after the revived philosophy made its way to Europe (Dod, 1982).

Within the texts of the Hebrew Canon, forming the core of the Old Testament, Proverbs is the Biblical text with the clearest discussion of wisdom. Set up as a text for learning wisdom, Proverbs claims authorship by the paradigmatically wise King Solomon. As in the Humanist tradition, Proverbs describes wisdom as something worth possessing due to the flourishing of the possessor, through increasing the good of their own lives as well as divine favour; it also frequently contrasts various acts of wisdom with acts of folly and their accompanying misfortunes. Perhaps due to the nature of the text as a teaching tool, much emphasis is placed on heeding advice and fear of God at the beginning of wisdom, but emphasis is also placed on wisdom and its association with powers of discernment (Proverbs 16:21, 16:24, 17:24, The New Oxford Annotated Bible). Though not originally part of the Hebrew canon, The Ecclesiasticus, or The Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach, is a wisdom text that was incorporated into the canons of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, as well as some Protestant tradition. The text comprises a series of aphorisms and maxims extolling wise behaviours, similar in structure to Proverbs. The Wisdom of Solomon is similar; thought to be written by an anonymous Hellenistic Jewish author in Greek, it follows the more exhortatory style of Hellenistic philosophical wisdom texts, but carries many of the same themes.

Interestingly, the benefits of this kind of wisdom, encoded in maxims and proverbs of wise persons, appears to be contradicted in the New Testament by Paul’s letters to the Corinthians.

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7 There is, of course, significant debate even in the present on the nature of wisdom in the Christian tradition; one major point of interest is in whether wisdom can co-occur with evil or a lack of morality in the Christian sense. See Pinsent (2012b) for more.

8 This more practical, proverbial style of wisdom seems to be common to Semitic cultures; it additionally appears in the Islamic tradition. See Section 1.1.3 for details.
Consider for instance 1 Corinthians 1:19-25 and 2:1-8, Wherein Paul lambasts the idea of worldly human wisdom in favour of the wisdom of God, whose least is greater than the highest human potential. Again, Paul contrasts wisdom with folly; 1 Corinthians 3:18-20 puts forth the thesis that those who are wise in this world are fools before God, and that they might do better to become fools to become wise in God. The word for wisdom here is the Greek *sophia*, the theoretical knowing-wisdom spoken of above in Aristotle. In general, wisdom seems to be dependent on knowledge of some form, especially as encoded in proverbs, but as Grimm (2017) observes, there is tension between wisdom as it belongs to man and as it belongs to divinity; we have previously seen this distinction made by Plato through Socrates.

With regards to virtue in the Bible, the texts dealing with exemplary behavior are by and large the same as those texts detailing wisdom, such as Proverbs and the Wisdom of Solomon, suggesting a tighter overlap between wisdom and virtue in the Hebrew tradition, at least. More formal discussions of Christian virtue appeared with the Church fathers, particularly Augustine of Hippo and later Thomas Aquinas. In *Augustine’s Invention of the Inner Self*, Cary (2000) details how Augustine began the break from virtue as mere human excellence, to identify virtue and wisdom with the highest good and truth, namely Christ as the Virtue and Wisdom of God, existing independently of a mortal soul. Following Paul, we here can observe the beginning of the removal of concepts of wisdom and virtue from complete human control; they become, at least in part, dependent on God in some sense.

Thomas Aquinas, in his *Summa Theologica*, picks up this thread, defining virtue as “a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us.” (ST I-II q.55 a.4). Pinsent (2012a) holds that Aquinas differs from Aristotle in positing that virtue is not solely habit, but rather is partially gifted by God. Aquinas differentiates between acquired virtues, those developed via habituation, and infused virtues, those which are bestowed upon humanity by God. However, this does resonate with the Aristotelian account of *phronesis*, which is either had or not had, and virtue is doing whatever the one with *phronesis* would do. In essence, Aquinas is claiming the source of *phronesis* as divine. As a good quality of the mind by which we live righteously, virtue here appears to overlap with ideas of wisdom. With regards to wisdom as *sophia*, Aquinas does count wisdom as a virtue, specifically one appended to the virtue of caritas, or divine friendship, implying that
wisdom stems from a sort of friendship with or connection to the divine; this resonates with the Augustinian account of wisdom and virtue’s dependence on divinity.

While the split between wisdom as a discerning faculty by which we know the right thing, and virtue as the best sort of actions and practices appears to be consistent in the Christian tradition, there appears to have a tighter coupling between the two concepts, weaving proverbial wisdom and admonishments to exemplary conduct together as overlapping concepts.

1.1.3 The Islamic Tradition

Admittedly, there is precious little scholarly work in English on Islamic ideas of wisdom or virtue, at least in comparison to the plethora of work on the other traditions that comprise this chapter. This absence of Islamic ideas from Western academia has been remarked upon by Gutas (1981)9 and Kelsay (2012); in general, Arabic and Islamic subjects have not been well-integrated into the corresponding areas of Western scholarship, from religious studies to philosophy to more specialized subjects of wisdom and ethics. Thankfully, there is enough to glean some general ideas. Similar to the Christian tradition, Islamic thought concerning wisdom and virtue draws from two sources: the pre-Islamic Semitic cultures of the region, as well as the Greek tradition, inherited through the importation of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic texts into Africa and the Near East. The synthesis is perhaps less complete than in Christianity; there is well-documented tension between philosophers and religious figures in the Islamic tradition, perhaps best exemplified by Al-Ghazali’s *Incoherence of the Philosophers* and Ibn Rushd’s later *Incoherence of the Incoherence*.

According to Gutas (1981), the Arabic word generally translated as “wisdom,” *hikma*, can mean both “wisdom” and “maxim,” with most Islamic wisdom being encoded in maxims and sayings of wisemen (*hakim*) or prophets. In the Qur’an itself, the word *hikma* appears 20 times, 10 of those times accompanied by the word *kitab*, “book”; as will be seen, wisdom in Islam does appear to be more akin to formal *sophia* than *phronesis*. In pre-Islamic times, the authority of said maxims came from the experience and insight of the *hakim* who spoke them, but over time

9 Gutas speculates that it may partially be a matter of sheer scope, with wisdom being such a prevailing theme in Islamic religious literature that it is hard to isolate as a topic.
they began to draw their authority from more religious sources, indicating a turn from wisdom as life experience to wisdom as religious insight. Despite the change in provenance from life experience to divinity as the authoritative backing of wisdom, Gutas observes that there is significant consonance between the pre- and post-Islamic senses of hikma and hakim. Someone who is wise is able to draw upon their insight into the nature of things, whether sourced from vast experience or closeness to the divine, make pronouncements regarding proper behavior, and act according to those pronouncements, whether their own or those of another. Such a description of wisdom resonates with other definitions of wisdom from within the Islamic tradition, both from philosophy and from religious scholarship.

Golshani (2005) goes over several definitions of wisdom by Qur’anic scholars, each one centered on the theme of wisdom as the capacity to perceive, recognize, and know truths about the world. Al-Isfahani, he notes, defines wisdom as “the realization of truth through knowledge and intellect,” while for Qurashi, “Wisdom is the characteristic of comprehension and diagnosis through which one can comprehend the truth and reality”. In all listed definitions, there is an underlying connotation of wisdom as recognizing and preserving the truth against corruption by folly. Similarly, the medieval philosopher Al-Farabi, in his book *Directing Attention to the Way to Happiness*10 (trans. McGinnis & Reisman, 2007), defines wisdom as perfect knowledge of perfect things, hence God’s perfect knowledge of itself making God wise.

The aim of wisdom, according to Farabi, is the performance of noble acts; here we see the relationship between wisdom and virtue carried forward from Farabi’s Aristotelian scholarship. Virtue, or khayra, is discussed in some detail in *Directing Attention to the Way to Happiness*, largely in a similar vein to what one finds in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Butterworth (2011) observes that Farabi’s philosophical predecessors, Al-Kindi and Al-Razi, made similarly Aristotelian claims regarding virtue.

Returning to the Qur’an (trans. Ali, 2003), Surah 32 (The Wise) also contains the case of the paradigmatically wise Luqman, a pre-Islamic exemplar of wisdom, blessed with wisdom by Allah (32:12). Several verses quoting Luqman’s various exhortations to belief, regular prayer,

10 The text is in essence an updated *Nicomachean Ethics*. 
patience, and modesty. Given Gutas’ observation of the dual meaning of *hikma* (as well as the name of the Surah), we might take these exhortations as examples of Luqman’s wisdom granting him the power to make declarations about good behaviour. Similar exhortations appear elsewhere in the Qur’an, for example in 2:177, which lists belief, regular prayer, patience, and charity as examples of righteousness.

In addition to Qur’anic verses extolling certain noble or righteous qualities, there exists the *sunnah*, or the conduct of the Prophet, which can also be taken as a model for righteous action. According to Gade (2009), in Islamic ethics and jurisprudence, the *sunnah* is the most authoritative model of normative conduct after the Qur’an, and is also important for the area of “positive law” referred to as *adab*. Gade notes that despite a wide range of meanings, *adab* generally refers to learned exemplary conduct, with texts gathered and taught under the label of *adab* including records of past exemplars of piety. Internalisation and expression of these exemplars of conduct serves as an important pathway to self-cultivation.

In summary, wisdom and virtue in the Islamic tradition relate once again as apprehension versus action. Wisdom, achieved by deep religious insight, permits one to apprehend and pronounce truths about the nature of lived experience, and act accordingly. In general, given the emphasis on maxims and models of ethical conduct against which individuals may be judged, the Islamic tradition may be said to be slightly more “legalistic”, in the sense of involving more clearly delineated rules, than any of the other traditions in this chapter. This powerful codification of standards of conduct, and the place of wisdom in establishing said standards, gives the Islamic tradition of wisdom and virtue a uniquely judicial bent.

### 1.1.4 The Buddhist Tradition

Coming full circle, we remove God from the picture once again, coming to a view part-way between the religious and the humanist; that of Buddhism. Buddhism serves as a mid-point between a religious viewpoint and a secular one for committing to certain metaphysical conditions of the universe beyond those of human psychology, namely theories of emptiness,

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11 It is simple enough to write wisdom off as mere knowing, but I will argue later that wisdom as apprehension or comprehension makes more sense as an interpretation. Knowledge, as we tend to understand it in the West, is motivationally inert.
dependent origination, etc, to ground its philosophies of wisdom and virtue, without relying on anything recognizable as a deity. The primary source for the Buddhist tradition is the Tripitaka, or the Pali Canon, a threefold division of the original Theravadin Buddhist teachings; these are common to most if not all Buddhists traditions, with the Mahayana and Vajrayana branches adding additional scriptures\textsuperscript{12}. The second branch of the Pali Canon, the Sutta Pitaka or “Basket of Discourses,” records the sermons of the Buddha. Some additional texts include the Dhammapada, a collection of aphorisms drawn from the teachings of Gautama Buddha and similar to the collections of proverbs central to the Christian tradition, and the Visuddhimagga or “Path of Purification”, a later text by Buddhaghosa which His Holiness the Dalai Lama extols as being “the epitome of Pali Buddhist Literature”, (in Nanamoli, 2003) being a comprehensive summary and practical interpretation of the Tripitaka.

Within the Sutta Pitaka (ed. Breneman, 2010), virtue and wisdom, together with concentration, are a common theme throughout the Buddha’s discourse; these three later also form the internal divisions of the Visuddhimagga. Wisdom (Pali: panna; Sanskrit: prajna), is consistently used with a perceptual bent in the Sutta Pitaka. Frequent mention is made of discerning or seeing penetratingly with wisdom. Additional mention is made of the mind and heart being released from desires through wisdom. In A 5.14 Vitthatasutta in Detail, wisdom as one of the five powers, alongside faith, effort, meditation, and concentration, is described as dispelling unpleasantness through penetrating insight into the five aggregates, thereby underscoring its combined role in perception and mental freedom. Several suttas, such as Sutta Impermanence II and s22.43 Be a Light for Yourself, likewise speak of wisdom as seeing the reality of impermanence. In M 43 Mahavedalla Sutta, it is said that the purpose of wisdom is for depth of realization, understanding, and abandonment, and in M 107 Ganakamoggallana Sutta, that wisdom comes about after getting rid of the five hindrances of covetousness, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt. The connection of wisdom to the truth, alongside freedom from attachments and self-mastery, is underscored in the 6\textsuperscript{th} chapter of the Dhammapada, which details the qualities of the wise person in contrast to the fool.

\textsuperscript{12} The extent to which Buddhism has canonical scriptures as Christianity or Confucianism would understand them is a matter of debate; the word here is simply used to refer to influential religious writings.
The *Sutta Pitaka* is similarly a significant source for core Buddhist teachings on virtue. D 11 *Kevaddha Sutta* lists a number of ways in which one might be virtuous, including avoiding taking life, not taking that which is not given, celibacy, avoiding false, divisive, abusive, or idle speech, as well as avoidance of specific acts such as accepting money, self-beautification, dancing, running messages, and damaging seed and plant life. Recurrent themes throughout the text are the nature of virtue as restraint, and the benefits of virtue with regards to safety from the negative influences of the world, happiness, and blamelessness. The *Visuddhimagga* (trans. Nanamoli, 2003) gives a more nuanced, technical view of virtue (*sila*) in its first section, concerned with virtue and ethical doctrine. Aside from a discussion of the nature of virtue, the text argues that virtue is virtue in light of its composing, or coordinating, the actions of the virtuous, not allowing for any inconsistency in action, as well as serving as a foundation for various goods. Virtue is seen in a slightly different light than in previous models reviewed in this section. Rather than being a positive excellence of a person, it is instead the restraint of their negative qualities. The third section of the text likewise contains a discussion of wisdom (*panna*, also translated as understanding)\(^{13}\). In this section, the connection between wisdom, perception, and consciousness is emphasized, especially in chapter 14, which characterizes wisdom as a lack of delusion. The wise individual is possessed of complete understanding; its relationship to perception and consciousness of something is compared to a money-changer’s understanding of coins versus that of a child or villager. The child can see the coins, and the villager may know what they are for and how they can be used, but only the money-changer will know whether they are counterfeit and where they were made and a variety of other information; they have complete understanding of the coins. Hence the text argues that wisdom stands over and above acts of perception or cognizing, allowing one penetrating insight into fundamentals.

The relationship between wisdom and virtue is well worked out within the Buddhist tradition. A 5.22 *Agaravasutta* details the relationship between virtue, concentration, and wisdom, arguing that training is impossible without a basic set of ethics, virtue is impossible without training, concentration impossible without virtue, and virtue impossible without concentration. There’s

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\(^{13}\) Interestingly, chapter 14, section 2 of the Path of Purification notes that trying to explain all the senses of wisdom would accomplish nothing and would lead to distraction in definitions, thereby rendering a complete explanation pointless.
thus a slight resonance with the Aristotelian notion that virtue is a prerequisite for wisdom. M 44 Cula-vedalla Sutta demonstrates how the Noble Eightfold Path relates to the three aggregates virtue, concentration, and wisdom: right speech, right action, and right livelihood are the domain of virtue; right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration belong to concentration, and right view and right resolve belong to wisdom, or discernment.

In summary, the Buddhist view takes a negative twist on virtue and wisdom, as a lack of fault and a lack of delusion, respectively. There is a sense in which this helps avoid having to give any positive definition; it is simpler to point at an unvirtuous fool and describe virtue and wisdom as “whatever they don’t have.” The split between wisdom and virtue as discernment and action is particularly salient in the Buddhist tradition, with virtue being a prerequisite for wisdom; only a mind free from attachments can perceive things as they truly are.

1.2 Scientific Branches: Theories and Applications

1.2.1 Wisdom

As might be expected from such a broad array of historical concepts, the modern landscape of theories of wisdom exhibits a high degree of variation. Walsh (2015) surveys the many ways in which wisdom has been spoken of, and observes that a primary difficulty in wisdom research has been one of definition. Beyond the general linguistic difficulty in developing a satisfactorily general definition of a word that gains new nuances in every language it’s translated to, scholars of wisdom generally do not agree what the proper object of a psychology of wisdom should be.

While wisdom has been a subject of philosophical and theoretical psychology for some time (See James on sagacity, Erikson’s work), empirical studies of wisdom began in the 80s Clayton & Birren (1980), for example, studied the underlying structure of implicit views of wisdom. Sternberg (1985) examined the links between intelligence, wisdom, and creativity, and Holliday & Chandler (1986) looked at the uniqueness of wisdom as a trait. The Berlin Paradigm (Baltes & Smith, 1990), one of the earliest proposed methods of measuring wisdom, defines wisdom as knowledge of the fundamental pragmatics of life, and assess wisdom using five criteria: rich factual knowledge of the fundamental pragmatics of life, concerning topics such as human nature, development, interpersonal relationships, and social norms; rich procedural knowledge, involving strategies for dealing with the conduct of life; lifespan contextualism, incorporating
temporal and contextual perspectives; relativism of values and priorities, acknowledging and tolerating differences in what people need and value; and recognition and management of uncertainty, dealing with the natural and unavoidable perspectival constraints of one’s own knowledge and decision-making abilities (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000). These are tested by asking the participant to respond to various hypothetical situations, such as that of a 15-year-old girl who wishes to marry.

While this seems comprehensive enough, Ardelt (2004) raised a significant criticism of the paradigm; while it does a good job of measuring the relative ability of participants to identify what the right thing to do in a hypothetical situation may be, it fails to measure whether or not the participants would themselves act in such a manner when the situation arises. In essence, the Berlin Paradigm measures a participant’s knowledge about wisdom, not their wisdom itself, which Ardelt argues is a significantly more personal capacity. Ardelt’s own metric of wisdom, the Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale (3D-WS; Ardelt, 2003), uses a self-report measure of wisdom that splits into three components: a cognitive dimension, an affective dimension, and a reflective dimension. The two theories can be considered to follow a similar distinction as the one made by Aristotle between sophia and phronesis, and, indeed, have been operationalized as such (Ferrari et al., 2011). Other theories of wisdom that have been operationalized as psychometric tests include the Adult Self-Transcendence Inventory (ASTI; Levenson et al., 2005), which, following Curnow (1999), focuses on wisdom as transcending the self, and the Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale (SAWS; Webster, 2003), which views wisdom as a combination of experience, self-regulation, reflectiveness, openness, and good humour. There also exist theories that have been operationalized pedagogically rather than psychometrically, such as Sternberg’s balance theory of wisdom, which views wisdom as depending on a balance between various environmental factors, supported by a balance of inter-, intra- and extrapersonal interests, supported by tacit knowledge and practical intelligence, and mediated by values.

Grimm (2015) makes a distinction between complete and incipient wisdom, or wisdom in its idealized, perfect state, and wisdom as it is generally attainable within a human lifetime. He observes that this distinction can help explain the distinction between general and personal wisdom, at least as it applies to the debate between Baltes and Ardelt. However, while these two conceptions of wisdom may exist on a continuum from actual to idealized, the wide variety of other theories of wisdom are sufficiently varied that Staudinger and Glück (2011) divide them
into two general camps: theories of general wisdom, following Baltes in studying what wisdom looks like as a generalized knowledge of life; and personal wisdom, following Ardelt in studying wisdom as it manifests in an individual’s own capacities. While this split loosely holds in practice, there is significant overlap in what is identified as important at the theoretical level. Bangen, Meeks, and Jeste (2013) reviewed a range of the presently extent psychological theories of wisdom and identified a number of overlapping core themes: knowledge of life; prosocial attitudes; self-reflection; acknowledgement of uncertainty; emotional homeostasis; tolerance; openness; spirituality; and a sense of humour. Despite this overlap, the theories, and the scales which operationalize them, still lack significant agreement. In a comparison between the Berlin Paradigm, the 3D-WS, the ASTI, and the SAWS, the majority of correlations between the measures were below 0.30; only the ASTI saw any higher correlations with any of the other measures or their subscales.

In summary, attempts to define and study wisdom have resulted in anything but consistent results. Even without the divide between personal and general wisdom, the emphasis appears to be on decision-making, and qualities that afford the capacity to make “wise” decisions. This is reflected by the more specific research of Grossmann into wise reasoning abilities, which appear to be facilitated by self-distancing (Grossmann & Kross, 2014; Grossmann, Sahdra, & Ciarrochi, 2016).

1.2.2 Moral Virtue

Similar to the study of wisdom, the topic of morality and moral virtue has also diversified as it has become the subject of psychological inquiry. In terms of morality in general, Killen and Smetana (2015) provide an overview of various theories of morality in philosophy and psychology, particularly with an eye to various definitions of morality and the study of moral development. Much of moral psychology in the late 20th through to the 21st century followed Kant’s deontological views, focusing on the problem of making rational moral judgments; it is observed elsewhere (Kristjánsson, 2010) that much of this has to do with moral psychology’s descent from Kohlberg, who overprivileged the cognitive aspects of moral development and was otherwise a staunch Kantian. Aside from deontological moral judgements, other areas of interest in moral psychology which Killen and Smetana include in their review are the connection of
morality to empathy and prosocial obligations, evolutionary mechanisms, identity, conscience, and cultural norms.

The subject of moral virtue was conspicuously absent from the landscape of moral psychology until very recently. A thread of virtue ethics remained in moral philosophy; see for example Anscombe’s (1958) essay questioning where virtue had gone from moral philosophy, and the subsequent revitalization of the idea by Aristotelian-inspired work of Nussbaum (1988; 1999), and MacIntyre (1999; 2013), as well as Murdoch’s (1970) Platonist approach. Virtues, or character strengths, really only became a field of interest for psychologists following on the work of Peterson and Seligman (2004) on character strengths and virtues, and the genesis of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) more generally. In a review of the religious literature of China, South Asia, and the West, Dahlsgaard, Peterson, and Seligman (2005) argue for the cross-cultural existence of six core virtues: courage, justice, humanity, temperance, wisdom\(^{14}\), and transcendence. The literature examined included the texts of the same traditions explored above. These virtues formed the core of the Values In Action classification of character strengths and virtues (VIA), along with subordinate character strengths; the purpose was to develop a manual of human mental goods, in the same vein as the DSM is a manual of human mental illness. Following on recent interest in educating for moral virtue (Kristjánsson, 2013), there have also recently been suggestions on possible ways to quantify virtue, for the purposes of evaluating programs designed to teach it (Curren & Kotzee, 2014).

The VIA classification, and the concept of virtue ethics in general, have not been without their criticisms in psychology. Arguments from situationist social psychologists, claiming that the influence of character traits is negligible compared to the influence of contexts, and therefore that character traits cannot generalize across the scope of humanity, have been dealt with by Arjoon (2008) and Jayawickreme and colleagues (2014) with regards to Aristotelian-derived virtue ethics, and Slingerland (2011) with regards to Confucian virtue ethics. These defences tend to centre on the empirical reality of individual differences at the level of traits, and there is

\(^{14}\) The presence of wisdom among the virtues adds yet more confusion to the relationship between the two concepts from a definitional perspective.
independent empirical evidence that people are able to consistently judge the moral character of themselves and others with good reliability between the judges (Helzer et al., 2014).

Naturally, virtue ethics have also been subjected to attempted biological accounts. Churchland (1998) attempted to ground moral virtues out in the entrainment of the brain’s neural networks; the account is essentially behaviourist in nature. Haidt and Joseph (2004; 2007) ground the virtues in the overcoming of evolutionary adaptive challenges: caring and kindness aid in overcoming the challenge of protecting the young or vulnerable; fairness, justice, honesty, and trustworthiness, helping reap benefits of dyadic cooperation; loyalty and self-sacrifice, reaping the benefits of group cooperation; obedience and deference, helping to maintain social hierarchies; and temperance, chastity, piety, and cleanliness, helping avoid microbes and parasites (Haidt & Joseph, 2007).

What all proponents of virtue ethics share, also common to the Humanist tradition in the previous section, is that virtue exists as part of the realities of human nature. However, the focus on the necessity of virtue as an aspect of what it means to lead a good life, as well as the nature of virtue as something that contributes to societal well-being, give one cause to wonder: what, precisely, is the difference between a virtuous person, and one possessed of wisdom, especially personal wisdom?

1.3 Summary of the Review

The above review summarises major traditional philosophical and religious conceptions of wisdom and virtue, as well as modern scientific theories thereof. Some major emergent ideas of note are:

- Wisdom and virtue are generally shown to be closely related concepts in traditional literature, which tends to emphasise the praxis of how to live a good life over being concerned with strict definitions in the vein of modern science.

- Virtue across traditional contexts appears to be predominately concerned with matters of action, while wisdom appears to be predominately concerned with matters of discernment.
• Many traditional views of wisdom and virtue define their relationship by how they contribute to the cultivation of a sort of perfected state of being.

• The scientific study of personal wisdom and moral virtue both focus on the question of how the construct in question contributes to living a good life, but the relationship and differences between the two concepts is not well clarified.

1.4 Statement of Premise One

Virtue, it seems, is in all traditional cases at least partially a matter of acting in accordance with what is judged to be good, while wisdom appears to in all cases be a matter of discernment. It is particularly salient, in comparison with the relative consistency (accounting for cultural variations in specifics) in ideas of what wisdom and virtue are and what they’re for in traditional conceptions, that the theoretical landscape of the two concepts as they are studied in psychology is near hopelessly muddled. In particular, there appears to be some confusion regarding the relationship between wisdom and virtue. Dahlsgaard, Peterson, and Seligman (2005), for example, count wisdom as one of the virtues, while Baltes and Staudinger (2000) and Schwartz and Sharpe (2006) count wisdom as something superordinate to the virtues, apportioning them in various contexts. This brings us to the first premise of the argument that back the present study. Contemporary academic theories of moral virtue and personal wisdom, disembedded from their philosophical contexts of practice, have begun to overlap as the emphasis is increasingly placed on formalizing and codifying definitions of what are essentially organic, developmental aspects of practice. There can be no consistent theory of wisdom or virtue that is divorced from the practice of becoming and being wise and/or virtuous. As will be described in the next chapter, and has been implicit in section 1, the attempt to formally define such concepts apart from a praxis for their development is antithetical to the traditions that gave us these concepts in the first place; the proof of wisdom and virtue is not in theoretical definition, but in active, lived experience.
Chapter 2

2 Exemplars and Process Definitions

As explored in Chapter 1, the variety of different definitions of and relationships between wisdom and virtue render any attempts to develop clean, distinct definitions of each of these topics, definitions which do justice of every aspect thereof, extremely difficult. Chapter 2 explores possible avenues for generating compelling, pedagogically useful accounts of wisdom and virtue, without the need to rely on a definition of the concepts themselves. This exploration will begin by examining Zagzebski’s Exemplarist Virtue Ethics as a model for identifying virtue in the wild, as well as support for this model drawn from literature on implicit learning and moral intuitions. It will then present Vervaeke and Ferraro’s argument for the necessity of process theories of wisdom over the prevailing product theories. Taken together, these two arguments create a way to theorise about wisdom and virtue without requiring a strict definition of either.

2.1 Exemplarist Virtue Ethics

In a series of publications, Zagzebski (2010; 2013; 2017) lays the groundwork for what she refers to as Exemplarist Virtue Ethics. In her view, moral theories such as utilitarianism, Kantian deontology, and neo-Aristotelian virtue models, are all what she calls “foundationalist” moral theories; each theory attempts to justify their views by referring to something more “real”. In utilitarian morality, virtue supports right acts, which promote the good, in this case the realization of what everyone desires, whatever that might be. Neo-Aristotelian views posit right acts as an expression of virtue, which permit one to live a good life, a full expression of human nature. In deontological view, the good is whatever is reasoned to be so, therefore being equal to right acts. Zagzebski argues that the problem with these theories is their attempt to ground morality in something more “real”, something which she claims is unnecessary; the proof of an ethical theory is in the practice, not the internal consistency. As will be explored below, humanity in general is excellent at practice, but consistency between theory and practice continues to elude us.

According to Zagzebski, the attempt to ground morality in something ostensibly objective doesn’t add much to them, beyond tying said theories to something everyone agrees on already; that happiness is good, that a flourishing life is good, or that reason is good. However, if we
could find some thing that could be agreed on as good, and could justify our moral theory and practice, that thing need not necessarily be “foundational” in the sense of being naturalistic, though she concedes that foundation in some uncomplicated root is useful. Zagzebski then identifies four desiderata for a moral theory: it should simplify and systematise our pretheoretical beliefs about morality; it should be of practical use in decision-making; it should justify our moral beliefs and practices; it must connect to an identifiable aspect of morality that exists independently of the theory. To satisfy these desiderata, Zagzebski proposes exemplarism.

Exemplarism draws from the theory of direct reference put forth by Putnam (1979) and Kripke (1980), where it was used to explain categorisation of natural kinds. To explain by way of example, humans are generally able to identify water across a variety of contexts without making any reference to H2O. “Water” is simply *whatever is the same as* what runs in rivers, or falls from the sky; “water” is just the same thing as *that*. Similarly, “gold” is simply that which is the same element as whatever *that* is, a horse is whatever is the same species as *that* is. Direct reference allows humans to identify things in the world without needing to know anything about their deep structure; good thing too, else we may have an even harder time telling sugar from salt. Similarly, for exemplarism, virtue is whatever it is that a virtuous person is doing.

At first glance, this may seem like a tautology, but upon close examination, we find that all of the traditions explored in Chapter 1, and then some, contain some form of exemplary moral figure. Aristotle defined wisdom in terms of the actions of the person possessed of *phronesis*. Confucius held the Zhou dynasty and the Duke of Zhou in particular in high esteem, and his pupils would later raise Confucius himself as an exemplar. The Christians have Christ, Muslims Mohammed, Aisha, and Ali, and Buddhism has adherents seek the Buddha nature within themselves. The Stoic tradition held Socrates and his moral fortitude as their exemplar, and other examples abound. While these schools of thought may formalise and identify specific admirable and imitable virtues over time, they all have, as their original aim, the emulation of some exemplary figure considered paradigmatically good. According to Exemplarist Virtue Ethics, this

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15 There is an argument to be made that more “mystical” traditions such as Daoism and Gnosticism do not rely on exemplar models. The reasons for why cannot be explored within the scope of the present thesis; suffice to say for now that it is possibly due to the transcendental nature of these philosophies not allowing for such.
emulation is motivationally driven by the feeling of admiration. Psychological research is no stranger to exemplar studies. Zagzebski (2017) draws on past studies of caregivers and Holocaust rescuers as part of her case for Exemplarism, and the study of wisdom and virtue have made use of exemplar studies before. Walker, for instance, has conducted extensive on nominated moral exemplars (Walker, 1999; 2013; Matsuba & Walker, 2005), with additional studies by Colby and Damon (1993), Hart and Fegley (1995) and Reimer and Wade-Stein (2004); these studies have advanced theory regarding moral behavior beyond single-variable conceptions to looking at moral conduct as a cohesive whole. Yang (2008) and Krafcik (2015) both conducted studies with participants nominated as wise, which have yielded more information on the real-life processes and conditions in which wisdom emerges. These past exemplar studies will be important in future chapters for operationalizing the present argument.

On the more general side, people do appear to be generally quite capable, and consistent, at recognizing the moral character of others, at least at the trait level (Helzer et al., 2014). Additional reason to accept an exemplarist model of virtue comes from the well-established field of implicit learning. Reber (1967) was the first to observe that while people are general quite good at pattern recognition, they are unable to explicitly describe the pattern in its entirety when it becomes sufficiently complex. This was originally studied using artificial grammar strings, sequences of letters generated (or not generated) according to a complex set of rules withheld from the participants. After exposure to a sufficient number of exemplars, participants are able to reliably discriminate between grammatical and non-grammatical strings. However, in a free-report test, participants were unable to explicitly verbalise what, precisely, made the strings grammatical, and the strategies they claim to have used were nonsense. Furthermore, providing participants with explicit instructions to search for rules governing what was and was not grammatical, actually deteriorates their ability to classify strings (Reber 1989; Dienes, Broadbent, & Berry, 1991). Pattern recognition, at least of sufficiently complex patterns, appears to be predominately tacit\textsuperscript{16}, or implicit. As observed by Hogarth (2001), most of our learning takes place through these implicit processes of pattern recognition; these form the bases of our intuitions. The world, and its various interactions, is simply far too complicated to track using

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\textsuperscript{16} Tacit knowledge plays a large role in Sternberg’s (1998) balance model of wisdom.
formal, explicit, reasoned processes; Dennett’s (1984) “Cognitive Wheels” thought experiment, demonstrating the frame problem, illustrates what would happen if even simple tasks had to be performed using explicit rule sets. Aside from the support this area of work lends to the idea that we learn morality through use of exemplars, it is also another incidental strike against forming a definition, or rule set, for moral behaviour; we as humans simply do not process complex phenomena as explicit rules. While we may attempt to identify rules and justifications after the fact, in the moment, we tend to rely on our intuitions, not our professed beliefs.

Haidt’s theory of moral intuitions (2013) further supports this theory. According to Haidt, the majority of moral decisions are made through intuitive, rather than reasoned, judgements. While reasoning certainly plays a part in moral decision making, it is predominately relevant to making decisions in a collective. As independent decision-makers, however, humans tend to rely on automatic, intuitive processes. These processes are susceptible to bias, yes, but as Hogarth (2001) observes, intuition can be trained. Haidt theorises that intuitions can be constrained through the reasoned explanations to others of their own moral judgments, hence the usefulness of reason in group decision making. This constraint by the reasoning of other members of a group could possibly constitute one environment in which to train intuition, as it contains all the hallmarks outlined by Hogarth: clear, tightly coupled error feedback from the environment in question.

In summary, there are a number of reasons to be suspicious of any theory of morality that attempts to limit virtue to a set of definitions. The Exemplarist view manages to avoid most of these pitfalls, while still accounting for our ability to identify virtue when we see it, as well as providing a possible account of how we might cultivate our intuitive moral judgments by comparison between ourselves and the exemplar.

Exemplarism works for wisdom as well, and in fact there have been several exemplar studies of wisdom; a notable recent study was carried out by Krafcik (2015), conducting a mixed-methods analysis of 20 wise exemplars, nominated by a screened pool of other participants. Paulhus and colleagues (2002) showed differentiation between figures nominated as exemplars of intelligence and exemplars of wisdom, while Weststrate, Ferrari, and Ardelt (2016) used historical exemplars of wisdom to reveal benevolent, practical, and philosophical wisdom prototypes. In addition to these modern works, as seen in Chapter 1, many traditions speak of some perfected state of being that comes as a result of the confluence of wisdom and virtue: becoming a junzi, sagehood,
communion with God, enlightenment, magnanimity and flourishing, or sharing in divine power. Studying those who are truly exemplary may allow us to understand the relationship between wisdom and virtue by how they contribute to this “perfected” state of being, to the extent that anyone may have achieved it. The definitions of wisdom and virtue, and what it means to be wise and virtuous, vary immensely; however, we do seem to know the exemplary when we see them.

2.2 Process Explanations

Of course, “we know it when we see it” is not a sufficiently scientific account of anything. The purpose of a scientific theory, where appropriate, is to establish principled, *a priori* reasons for predicting that some thing in the world will behave similarly to some other thing in the world, rather than *a posteriori* confirmations. Therefore, it is still necessary to come up with some principled reason why certain entities, such as exemplars of wisdom and virtue, should be categorized together; we have merely surrendered the idea that this reason can have anything to do with a definition based on rules or comparison of the products. Thankfully, third generation cognitive science has abandoned theories based on either of these things; the toolkit of dynamic, process-oriented theories is ripe to use to account for wisdom and virtue.

Vervaeke and Ferraro (2013) make a compelling argument in favour of a process view of wisdom, rather than the alternative, and more common, product view. Following Chisholm (1983), they argue that for wisdom, much like knowledge, it is difficult to ever generate a comprehensive theory of precisely what the thing is. Any theory of what the thing is, fundamentally presupposes a theory of how the thing is generated; the nature of the product is inherently dependent on the process. Given this presupposition, Vervaeke and Ferraro argue two points. One, the distinction between general wisdom and personal wisdom does not really hold, as if the individual in question is able to describe the processes that would lead to virtuous actions without being able to engage in them themselves, this would simply make them a knowledgeable fool. This point is additionally endorsed by Grimm (2015), as well as historically by Diogenes the Cynic; *The Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* (trans. Hicks, 1925), a classical text recording the biographies and thoughts of ancient philosophical exemplars, records several anecdotes wherein Diogenes mocks those who are merely knowledgeable, such as his responding to Plato’s definition of man as a “featherless biped” by presenting him with a plucked chicken. Similar themes are found in the traditions outlined in the first chapter; wisdom must evoke some
transformation of being and apprehension, not simply permit dispensing good advice or propositional truths.

The second point they argue is that a product view is therefore insufficient; we care less about what wisdom is, and more about how to be wise. With due respect to Baltes and scholars of general wisdom, it is not that such a question is uninteresting; what precisely wisdom is, is a question that has recently been taken up again in philosophy (Baehr, 2012; 2014). But we already have an abundance of product theories, of both wisdom and virtue, and as these product theories tend to take the form of definitions of the qualities of wise or virtuous persons, they frequently overlap, hence the confusion described in Chapter 1. Moreover, as explored in the previous section, people cannot be trusted to come up with a reliable set of rules that makes certain things belong together, despite being able to categorise them reliably. Therefore, from both a scientific and pedagogical standpoint, it is best to abandon product theories of wisdom and virtue, and instead attempt to identify the pathways to their development.

While the original argument by Vervaeke and Ferraro concerned wisdom, there is no reason why a process explanation of virtue should not be equally viable, insofar as virtues are at least partially of the mind. Similarly, though the argument was originally aimed at the cognitive level, arguing in favour of understanding the cognitive processes that lead one to wise behaviours, there is no principled reason why this argument should not work at the personal level. Cognitive processes must be learned somehow, and it is one’s life experiences that ultimately lays the ground for what they learn. There is already burgeoning scholarly work on the life narratives that lead to one becoming wise (Weststrate & Glück 2017), and Yang (2008) has already argued in favour of a process view of wisdom at the personal level. Perhaps in taking a closer look, we might identify which aspects differentiate the development of wisdom and virtue.

2.3 Statement of Premise Two

Following on the premise laid out in Chapter 1, that it is the modern attempt to define wisdom and virtue divorced from praxis that has led to the overlap in the study thereof, I now come to the second premise of the argument of the present study. It is possible to provide explanations of certain phenomena which do not require strict definitions, but may still allow us to fulfill the basic scientific and pedagogical projects of understanding how something comes to be, and how to purposefully replicate it. Such an explanation, or theory, of wisdom and of virtue may be
found in whatever process will reliably produce wise or virtuous behaviours, or, whatever it is that would make a person be judged as exemplary and admirable by others with regards to their assessed wisdom or virtue. This may also help us create a distinction between wisdom and virtue that can justify their existence as distinct objects of study. Should the processes for generating wisdom and virtue differ, then even if the product remains the same, or be revealed to be related some way in exemplars of both, it is reasonable to believe that they may be different entities.
Chapter 3

3 The Present Study

The present study is an initial attempt to operationalise the above argument, with both conceptual and methodological motivations. The conceptual motivation to attempt to determine what relationship exists between wisdom and moral virtue, concepts which generally have a well-clarified relationship within traditional literature, but which have become uncoupled in the present scientific study of each. Their relationship and the extent to which they overlap or differ, especially with regards to moral virtue and personal wisdom, is the question raised in Chapter 1. The methodological motivation is to test the assumption of the argument laid out in Chapter 2, that it is possible to generate a scientifically viable and pedagogically useful account of certain concepts, such as wisdom and virtue, without relying on definitions thereof.

3.1 Revisiting the Premises

Premise One argued that the well-defined relationships between wisdom and virtue in the traditional literature are a function of their being situated within praxes of self-cultivation. Divorced from these contexts of praxis and isolated as static entities within the framework of modern psychological science, the definitions of wisdom and virtue begin to overlap in a manner than can become theoretically confusing. Therefore, theories of wisdom and virtue are required that clarify their relationship in a manner that does justice to their origins in contexts of self-cultivation praxes; that is, such theories should centre on the question of how to become wise and virtuous, rather than attempting to isolate what such things are.

Premise Two argues that it is entirely possible to generate satisfactory scientific theories of wisdom and virtue, theories that can also guide pedagogical practice, without ever having to provide strict definitions. Cognitive science has begun to move away from entity theories, mere description what something is, and more towards process theories, integrating our understanding of the development and emergence of cognitive and behavioural phenomena into our theories of their natures and functions. Evidence from implicit learning research has demonstrated that exposure to exemplars enables people to identify recurring patterns that bind the exemplars into a discrete class, while evidence from moral psychology demonstrates that people are quite consistent at assessing moral character. Together, these suggest that people are at least able to
consistently recognise behavioural patterns that line up with exemplar characteristics, and implies that reliable theories of the nature of certain emergent behaviours are best grounded in studies of exemplars of these characteristics.

### 3.2 Operationalising the Argument

Taking into consideration the above premises, the present study operationalises the above argument by suggesting that theories of wisdom and moral virtue, particularly theories which will best clarify the relationship and differences between these two concepts, are best grounded in the question of how it is that people become exemplary in these regards. Exemplar studies are frequently used in the study of wisdom (Paulhus et al., 2002; Krafcik, 2015; Weststrate, Ferrari, & Ardelt, 2016), and moral behavior (Colby & Damon, 1993; Walker, 2013), demonstrating precedence for the present study. Of interest presently, however, is not what qualities make people worthy of nomination as exemplars of virtue or wisdom; this would regress back to being an entity theory. Rather, what is of interest to the present study is how it is the exemplars became exemplary with regards to wisdom and virtue, however the nominating participant chooses to conceptualise them. If there is little overlap in the emergent patterns, then, likely, wisdom and virtue are of many kinds. If there is great overlap, we might be more certain that we are studying something more cohesive. This may help us clarify what the relationship and differences are between virtue and wisdom are with regards to how they are cultivated, re-situating them within the framework of development and self-cultivation from which they came. If they are achieved by the same means, then the overlap reflected in the present entity theories of personal wisdom and moral virtue stands as scientifically reasonable. If they are not, this may help to begin the process of reconnecting our present understanding of virtue and wisdom with traditional conceptions. In all cases, the purpose of the present study is to identify how it is that individuals become exemplary with regards to virtue and wisdom, and what this tells us about each concept.
Chapter 4

4 Methodology

4.1 Study Design

The present study examines factors that are identified as having been important in the development of wisdom and virtue in nominated exemplars, as well as factors that participants identify as being important to their becoming wise or virtuous like their individual exemplars. The study uses a mixed-methods design, in which a quantitative element, in the form of a questionnaire designed to measure personal wisdom, is used to assess the relative wisdom of the participants. The qualitative element, in the form of a semi-structured interview, will be used to analyse participants’ beliefs concerning how exemplars of wisdom and virtue acquire their exemplary qualities, in order to develop comparative process theories of wisdom and virtue.

4.2 Participants

Participants were drawn from a larger sample ($N = 240$) that participated in a cross-cultural study in Toronto, Canada and Busan, South Korea in 2016-17. The study examined what motivates people to be virtuous, and what role, if any, is played by wisdom. Participants were recruited from two age ranges (18-25 and 60-85) amongst the Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, and Atheist communities of each site. These demographics are of particular interest for relating an emergent theory of virtue or wisdom back to traditional contexts; in addition to the range of represented belief systems, each of which can be expected to have a unique theory of virtue and wisdom, it also accounts for possible differences depending on age and accompanying discrepancies experience or understanding. For the present study, the sample ($n = 16$) was comprised of participants recruited at the Canadian site.

4.3 Procedure

Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, and Atheist-identifying participants were recruited from the Greater Toronto Area. Ethics approval was given by the University Ethics board for the study in 2015. Participants were administered the questionnaire and semi-structured interview by trained research assistants, predominately on-site at the University of Toronto, with a minority being met with off-site due to mobility issues with some older participants. Informed consent was acquired
from all participants (See Appendix A), and compensation for participation was given in the form of $10 CAD per hour.

4.4 Measures

4.4.1 Demographics

Participants were administered an online demographic survey, collecting information such as age cohort, gender identity, education level, degree of spirituality, self-identified religious affiliation, etc. For the present study, only age cohort and self-identified religious affiliation were used, in order to categorise participants.

4.4.2 Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale

The measure of personal wisdom used in the present study is the Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale (3D-WS; Ardelt, 2003). The 3D-WS operationalises wisdom across three subscales, representing a cognitive dimension, an affective dimension, and a reflective dimension. Each item in each subscale is measured on a 1 to 5 point Likert scale. The cognitive subscale contains 14 items primarily aimed at measuring need for cognition, acknowledgement of ambiguity and complexity, and ability to make important decisions despite ambiguity\(^ {17} \) (“Ignorance is bliss”; “A problem has little attraction for me if I don’t think it has a solution”; “I am hesitant to make important decisions after I think about them”)\(^ {18} \). The 13 items of the affective subscale are concerned with positive emotions towards others, the absence of indifferent or negative emotions, and motivation to nurture the well-being of others (“I can be comfortable with all kinds of people”; “There are some people I know I would never like”; “If I see people in need, I try to help them in one way or another”). Finally, the 12 items of the reflective subscale assess the capacity to see from a variety of perspectives, and the absence of projection (“I always try to look at all sides of a problem”; “When I look back on what’s happened to me, I feel cheated”).

\(^{17}\) Targets of each dimension sourced from the subdomains listed in Ardelt’s unpublished manuscript detailing the content of the 3D-WS.

\(^{18}\) Ardelt (2003) observes that the questions in the cognitive dimension are primarily structured to examine the absence of cognitive factors rather than their presence, due to issues with social desirability bias.
The 3D-WS was developed through a rigorous test-retest process, and demonstrates a good reliability and validity in a number of circumstances (Bangen, Meeks, & Jeste, 2013).

4.4.3 Semi-Structured Interview

The qualitative component of the present study takes the form of a semi-structured interview (See Appendix B), in which participants were asked various questions about their life history, the conduct of a nominated exemplar of wisdom and virtue, and their own moral virtue. Interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed by trained research assistants, and were approximately 30 minutes to 1.5 hours in length. For the present study, only the subset of questions pertaining to nominated exemplars of wisdom and virtue are used.

4.5 Analyses

4.5.1 Highest and Lowest Scorers

The 3D-WS will be applied to the broader subject pool in order to assess the highest and lowest scorers within each religious demographic for the Canadian sample, whose transcript data will be used in the initial exemplar analysis. This method of prioritizing the nominees of participants who are themselves considered wise is adapted from Krafcik (2015), who instead used the wisdom-facilitative criteria of the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm (Baltes & Staudinger, 1993) to prescreen for the wisdom of nominators. The lowest scoring participants will be additionally included for the purposes of extreme case analysis, allowing the exemplar analysis to demonstrate the greatest possible contrast in what qualities or experiences are deemed necessary for the exemplars becoming the way they are. If there is no contrast in specified qualities or experiences, this reinforces the generalizability of the emergent patterns; if there is a contrast, this may tell us something about what comparatively wise participants deem necessary to become exemplarily wise and/or virtuous versus comparatively unwise participants. The 3D-WS was preferred as a measure for the present study due to being a measure of personal wisdom, while the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm measures general wisdom; the importance of individuals being personally wise is outlined in Chapter 2. Relatively high and low scorers on the 3D-WS have already been demonstrated to exhibit qualitative differences (Ardelt 2005; 2010), making the scale suitable for use in extreme case analysis.
4.5.2 Exemplar Analysis

The present study will analyse the participants’ narratives concerning participant-nominated exemplars of moral virtue, wisdom, or both. Upon selection of the sub-sample from the larger body of participants using the method above, the section of each narrative pertaining to the participants’ discussions of how self-nominated exemplar of moral virtue and wisdom became the way they are will be read thoroughly, multiple times, to gain a sense of familiarity with the particulars of each narrative. As in Krafcik’s (2015) study of wise exemplars, the first portion of the analysis will proceed according to Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guidelines for thematic analysis in psychology, producing a list of themes present in the participants’ narratives, grouped under larger headings of major ideas. Coding will be performed using QSR International’s NVivo 11 qualitative data analysis software.

However, as observed by Vervaeke and Ferraro (2016), a list of the features of a phenomenon, as lists of themes essentially are, does not capture what is truly interesting about them. To use their examples, collecting the features of a bird, such as feathers, a beak, and hollow bones, does not make a bird itself; it makes a rather macabre mess. To rectify the lack of a gestalt between the themes produced by such an analysis, analysis of the narratives concerning exemplars will be supplemented by narrative thematic analysis (Riessman 2005), which permits for the overarching narrative structure within which the themes are situated to be accounted for as part of the analysis. The more specific themes grouped under the subheadings mentioned above will be used for this purpose, generating a more fine-grained analysis. These themes and structures will then be compared between participants by 3D-WS, age, and faith groupings, to see if it is possible to find some form of master narrative, to use Hammack’s (2008) phrasing, that emerges across the participants with respect to becoming virtuous and wise.

To situate the framing of the analysis within the variety of person-oriented research approaches described by Lundh (2015), the approach of the present analysis is best described in terms of Stern’s (1911) comparison research, where the focus of the research is on the similarities and differences of individual profiles. A further explication of this sort of approach comes from Bergman and Magnusson (1997), who argue that it is the pattern that emerges out of research, whether that research focuses on persons or on variables, that is ultimately of interest. This stance has some similarity with the notion of structural realism in philosophy of science,
introduced by Worrall (1989). This was an attempt to reconcile scientific realism, which argues that scientific theories are so successful at predicting phenomena that they cannot be attributed to random chance, and the anti-realist counterposition that there have been many scientific theories throughout history that, yes, were successful at predicting the world, but which we now know to be false. Structural realism, also called syntactic realism, argues that it is the important elements of contiguity between these theories, their underlying deep structure, that hold the greatest validity; it is the pattern that is real, not the particular manifestations of it through history. As van Fraassen (1997) argues, models must serve pragmatics; there is no purpose in a model that cannot be used to make judgements about the thing it is modelling. This resonates with Zagzebski’s (2010) grounding of exemplar theories: the idea is to generate a map that can be used to gesture, which is more important than its total propositional accuracy.

The core of the position is the acknowledgement that there is genuine uniqueness to any particular description of a phenomenon, based on a particular theory of its operation, whether scientific or folk. However, what is vital to our being able to understand phenomena scientifically is the recurrent, underlying pattern, whether mathematical, or, in the case of the present study, pertaining to thematic structures and the narratives patterns into which they gestalt. Taking a position similar to the “no miracles” position argued by scientific realism, the present study operates under the assumption that exemplars of wisdom and virtue do not become exemplary by random chance or by the grace of God; that is, there is some consistent procedure by which they become wise and virtuous, as is the claim of various philosophies and religious practices throughout history. As a counterpoint to the anti-realist position, it is argued that any personal narrative with regards to the specific is going to be unique to the individual; much like scientific theories disagree with each other about the nature of phenomena, so too will personal accounts. This emergent pattern, as an abstracted developmental structure representing a process, rather than some feature list, also allows us to theorize about wisdom and virtue, while bypassing the problems of definition described above in Chapter 2.
Chapter 5

5 Results

5.1 3D-WS – Highest and Lowest Scorers

Application of the Three-Dimensional Wisdom scale to the broader participant pool returned the highest and lowest scoring participants eligible to be used for the study within each category, \( n = 16 \). The average 3D-WS score for the highest scoring participants from each cohort was 4.31, compared to 3.18 for the lowest scoring participants. Participants were 56.25% female.

Table 1
Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3D-WS</th>
<th>3D-WS</th>
<th>3D-WS</th>
<th>3D-WS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>Older</td>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>Older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Score</td>
<td>AYH</td>
<td>AOH</td>
<td>BYH</td>
<td>BOH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Score</td>
<td>AYL</td>
<td>AOL</td>
<td>BYL</td>
<td>BOL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Participants tabled with 3D-WS scores according to faith and age cohorts. Note that the 3D-WS score consists of the mean score across all three dimensions of the scale. Participants’ designations have been changed to a three-letter label to reflect their faith and age conditions and 3D-WS score; for example, AYH is Atheist, Young, and High scoring.

5.1.1 Exemplars

In total, participants nominated 21 exemplars, 12 of whom were considered exemplars of both wisdom and virtue. A short description of each exemplar, and what qualities they were nominated for, is listed below by nominating participant.
Table 2
Participant Exemplars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>LOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| AOH  
Virtue: Wife, heavily involved in organising community service and church groups, despite being an explicit non-believer.  
Wisdom: Wife, and also Gretta Vosper, an ordained minister of the United Church who has previously made headlines for publicly declaring herself an atheist; participant served on the board of one of her groups.  
| AOL  
Wisdom and virtue: Husband, does his best to do the right thing and stick to it.  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AYH  
Wisdom and virtue: Mother, a social worker turned university professor, dedicated her life to preventing her bad experiences being repeated by others.  |
| AYL  
Wisdom and virtue: Friend, went on charity bike ride to raise money, mental health activist.  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BOH  
Wisdom and virtue: Monk of thirty years, received doctoral education in religion, frequently travels to teach and popular in the community.  |
| BOL  
Wisdom and virtue: Friend, former Christian missionary who began to study Buddhism and now runs meditation classes, very active in the gay community.  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BYH  
Wisdom and virtue: Mother, devout practitioner of Buddhism who always seeks out a temple when she moves, constantly reading or listening to recorded sermons, has been known to meditate through the night.  |
| BYL  
Wisdom and virtue: Mother, very devout Buddhist with a personal philosophy of altruism, feeds hungry children and volunteers at a hospital.  |
### 5.2 Emergent Themes

Analysis of qualitative interview data, in which the above highest and lowest scoring participants described their nominated exemplars of moral virtue and/or wisdom, revealed 32 themes which participants associated the process of becoming exemplary, 26 of which clustered into 5 overarching ideas; these factors were near-invariably identified as having contributed to both the exemplars’ wisdom and virtue. Gross frequency of the mention of each theme within a group of participants is taken as a rough estimate of their importance within each group.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Life Experiences</th>
<th>Path Immersion</th>
<th>Phenomenological Qualities</th>
<th>Intrinsic Qualities</th>
<th>Other Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upbringing Community</td>
<td>General life experience</td>
<td>Adherence to path</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>Born with it</td>
<td>Avoiding unnecessary risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Enduring adversity</td>
<td>Commitment to community</td>
<td>Inspiring</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Constructive coping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenging experiences</td>
<td>Commitment to friends</td>
<td>Personal magnetism</td>
<td>Divine mandate</td>
<td>Encouraging openness to experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Formal education</td>
<td>Positivity</td>
<td>Intellect</td>
<td>Prioritising others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respectfulness</td>
<td>Just how they are</td>
<td>Taking the perspective of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Welcoming</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Providing aid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Providing guidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seeking knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4
Frequency of Themes by High and Low Scorers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>All Participants</th>
<th>High Scorers</th>
<th>Low Scorers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Path immersion</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life experience</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic qualities</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenological qualities</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking the perspective of others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritising others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding unnecessary risk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive coping</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging openness to experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5
Frequency of Themes by Age Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>All Participants</th>
<th>Older participants</th>
<th>Younger participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Path immersion</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life experience</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic qualities</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenological qualities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taking the perspective of others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritising others</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding unnecessary risk</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive coping</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging openness to experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

Frequency of Themes by Faith Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>All Participants</th>
<th>Atheists</th>
<th>Buddhists</th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Path immersion</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life experience</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic qualities</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenological qualities</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking the perspective of others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritising others</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding unnecessary risk</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive coping</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouraging openness to experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.1 Environment

A factor shared equally between the high and low scoring participants was environmental influences, or the importance of having supportive friends, family, and community members. Upbringing, especially, appeared to be a commonly cited factor, as described by MYH, who spoke of how his friend’s parents passed the Islamic faith on to him, and AOL, who speaks of her husband’s mother as having been a good influence:

[W]hat happened was, when he was younger, his parents taught him about Islam. That as he grew up, as he grew up, actually it was at a pretty young [age], he started to do research on these things on his own. He would go to the Masjid, he would talk to the Imams, he would always have questions to ask right to solidify his faith. So through all this –throughout all these experiences, he started to develop these traits that I mentioned about, like how he’s more respectful and understanding.

Well, probably from his mom, because he certainly didn't get it from church. She was a good person you know as far as I know.
The influence of the community was also noted by several participants. The most striking account of this comes from AOH, whose nominee, along with himself, continued to participate in church for the community, despite being non-believers:

*And even though we are involved, we were involved in the church because we lived in that community. So the um the important part of that was community. Okay? And the important part to her -was, it was how we, how we were living. Not what you believed. Because we didn’t believe what so a lot of other people did. We didn’t believe in this heaven. And so that isn’t why we are going to church so that we are going to heaven. We were going to church because we belong to the community.*

More specifically, some mention was also made of the importance of the nominee’s friends, such as by AYL and MOL.

### 5.2.2 Life Experiences

Participants also occasionally invoked various types of life experience had by their nominees, frequently adverse, but merely challenging or simply large and varied in degree. AYL, for example, attributes his nominee’s exemplary virtue to having to be strong in the face of negative experiences, specifically parental divorce:

*He was always able to persevere and be strong and that sort of thing. Life experiences, just having setbacks, it’s probably enabled him to become a much stronger person.*

COH also mentions a case of parental divorce, as well as one in which having to care for unwell parents developed their nominee’s exemplary wisdom:

*I think, she’s an only child she, and so she she looked after her parents. Uh, they’re both deceased now, and I think she became an adult really quickly because she told me that she was, from the time she was little she was told that her job was to look after her parents.*

As noted, however, not all cases of life experience mentioned were negative. BYL, for instance, mentions his mother’s experiences over the course of her life, of all kinds, as having been important to the development of her personal philosophy:

*I think when you experienced, when you experience more than your way -- your attitude will change according to your age or experience. So, when you’re around that age, you will, you view the world differently than, than us. And I, and I can say maybe is her personal experience that made that form – that forms her philosophy right now.*
Other experiences merely posed challenges to the perspectives of the nominees. For example, in the case of BOL’s nominee:

*I think his experience in life, the people who he’s… he… who he’s… he even went overseas. He tried to take his Christian message overseas. He did that for a while. So he’s always been in communities, which are, uhhh, how do you say, challenging? But, also in ways where he is helped by the community around him to meet that challenge and to… So he’s looking for wisdom in the communities where he goes.*

### 5.2.3 Path Immersion

The most common factor identified as having contributed to the nominee’s exemplary qualities was the nominee’s immersion in and commitment to their particular path through life. Commitment to some form of path, or spiritual community, through life were frequently cited as important contributing factors to exemplary virtue or wisdom, especially leadership within these paths and communities. AOH, for instance, describes his nominee’s leadership within her community as being a notable aspect of her exemplary nature:

*But to me, she was doing, she was doing the leading. She was causing others to um to question how capable they were, okay? Um, I didn’t see her as getting that, you know, the community wasn’t causing this. It was her causing the community to question what they should be doing…*

Importantly, differing manifestations of path immersion were unanimously identified as being important across all eight of the participants who scored highest on the 3D-WS for their respective categories. Participants emphasized the extent to which their nominees went beyond what might be reasonably expected of people. Many were teachers or community leaders of some sort, especially from the highest-scoring participants, most of whom nominated someone heavily involved in their community, teaching, providing assistance, or facilitating some form of program.

*I mean, he was authentic in his living in a community and teaching, high school boys a way of life and that is a big help to your own personal following of your own path.*

*He was just an amazing person and would just go above and beyond, he’d lose sleep if… it was weird, he would go to people’s houses, not just to bless the house but if people needed like, he was almost like, I don’t want to say a therapist because he wasn’t. He*
would just listen and he wouldn’t judge, everyone loved him. So, I feel… like I said before, where he gains energy from helping people, everyone just wants him to help them. He didn’t make you feel that you were sick or you needed help, it was more like, let’s just talk.

Several participants noted their nominee’s commitment to providing material aid to others, such as BYL’s description of his mother feeding children in need, or COH’s organizing to provide meals to the homeless:

*She rallied me up to say we need to go feed the homeless because I know my daughter was staying in Toronto where she lives that they were needing extra people during a certain period of time. Truly, never thought about it. Said ‘fine.’ You can see the mother in her when we got there because we saw some very um, sad cases, we, we saw um, neglected people and we’re not experienced with that on a minute to minute basis. She rallied that kitchen up…*

High scoring individuals also emphasized their exemplar’s high degree of scholarship with respect to their chosen way of life. Exemplars were noted as being constantly hungry for more knowledge, which they would then put into practice to develop their wisdom and virtue even further.

*I think it came a lot with listening to the Dharma and I honestly believe this, like I believe that because she listens to the Dharma and she meditates often and she goes to the temple often and is able to listen to the Dharma that way. Um, and reads Dharma books on her own time, and often like she spends hours and hours reading Dharma books and this is like, one day for my mom would be literally from in the morning she’ll meditate and then she’ll read right all throughout the night. Or she’ll read and then maybe watch like a sermon online or listen to a sermon online and then read some more.

*I think it was a lot through her reading. Okay? And um… you remember those books that she made me read? That those were the things? We went through a journey from, you know having going to church and -and all those good things until uh we get to the point. She never stopped going to church. She love singing in the [0:19:21] But she complain about the language, and didn’t like it at all. Okay? And there will be several people say ‘well this is something Karen wouldn’t like’ but um… so I think that it’s reading. And the accessing knowledge and the questioning and those kind of things that grow with that…*

Education in general cropped up to a significant degree; see especially the above case of MOH’s exemplar, who is observed as having received a prodigious secular education in addition to their religious learning.
“He has five degrees in medicine. He has established maybe a dozen mosques in, around the world. He is the most renowned expert in nuclear medicine and nuclear contamination of all scientists in the world, probably the top one. Um he has several hundred if not thousand people who he teaches and gives personal guidance to... He has abandoned his personal life in favour of dedicating himself to the benefit of other people’s well-being as a commitment to his faith in God.

5.2.4 Phenomenological Qualities

Similar to intrinsic qualities, participants also observed several phenomenological qualities in their exemplars; that is, their exemplars made those around them feel a particular way. As with intrinsic qualities, such qualities were predominately noted by higher scoring participants, although a mention of friendliness and likability were observed by MOL:

Well he himself is a very outgoing and friendly person. So he always gets along well, he makes new friends very easily.

COH observes their nominee’s positive outlook, and MYH describes the respectfulness with which their nominee approaches others. BOH and MOH both noted personally magnetic qualities about their nominees, with MOH having the more poetic description:

[T]here was some kind of um harmony, some kind of um attraction, and um, you know, um compatibility that was indisputable. It was clear that that- this person was supposed to be my teacher – it was somehow infused into my heart, and into my, it was more, into my whole body. And uh, so after 48 hours with him, uh spending with him, um somehow this, just knew and I just didn’t ha- I really didn’t have any choice. I had been making prayers, ‘Please give me a teacher. Please provide somebody to teach me, to give me guidance’. When I met him, it was like the answer to my prayers. He was, immediately I was in harmony with him and he was ... you know it’s hard to describe you have to experience it, so. It wasn’t an intellectual decision it was a ... more at heart.

5.2.5 Intrinsic Qualities

A factor that was exclusively identified by the highest scoring participants, and near-unanimously, was some quality or set of qualities belonging to the exemplars that could not be attributed to their environment or their studies, instead being unique to the individual. These qualities were frequently observed as changing the nominee’s responses to others, or imbuing
them with special purpose or drive. Two participants, for example, mentioned that they felt some divine ordination or guidance had been given to their exemplar. As MOH put it:

\[ H e’ s \text{ influenced by God, by the forces, by, from the guy, from the unseen from Batin}^{19}. \He \text{ has received influence and guidance which helps guide him... He was visited as a child he was five years old. You were, may not, you know who Khidr is. He was visited by Hazraat Khidr}^{20} \text{ and he was somehow given guidance starting at that age.} \]

Other participants felt as though the abilities of their exemplars were something present from birth:

\[ I \text{ don’t think it was her situation ‘cause I think that would’ve... truly gone in the other direction. I think part of it is hard-wiring... (AYH, describing her mother)} \]

\[ S \text{he’s just got it in an innate ability to, to give and help and not think anything of it... It’s core, she didn’t learn it somewhere. It’s, if you believe in the soul, spirit inside, something beyond the organs that we all look at and work with and all of that, she just could sense, she could read the person inside if there was a struggle that they weren’t saying that they had. That’s the innate core, that it’s like saying where’s your feelings in your body, I’m not sure where the actual feeling component is, if you know what I mean. But there’s an innateness and there too but I don’t know where that is. (COH, describing a friend)} \]

Also mentioned as qualities innate to the individual were motivation, intelligence, and compassion, in each case noted as being part of who the nominee is, rather than resulting from anything specific, and contributing to their exhibiting exemplary qualities.

### 5.2.6 Other Factors

A few other factors were noted that do not cleanly group together under a single thematic heading. AYL, for instance, spoke of their nominee encouraging openness to experience in others, but not in the form of providing personalized guidance to doing so. AYH explicitly mentioned their nominee having coped constructively with adversity, rather than merely

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19 The “hidden” or “inward”, the realm of inner meaning in Sufi thought.

20 A prophet attested to in the Qur’an and a major figure in Sufism.
enduring it, using those experiences to fuel their work to ensure that others never face similar circumstances. MYH referenced their nominee’s avoidance of unnecessary risks and thrill-seeking, citing him as holding the opinion that one’s life and future are more important than any one experience. Aside from these more unique cases, themes of perspective taking, prioritizing others, and independence were more recurrent. MYL describes their nominee’s independent streak:

[S]he's an interesting person, she's not like other people I know she's very independent like, like like if she wants to do something she'll go do it, um which not a lot of people I know are like that and she's also like, mmm... I don’t know if-maybe unapologetic is the word? like if sh-like, she kinda doesn't necessarily care too much about other's feelings which is good and bad, good in that she doesn’t have to worry about what others think about her like she does what she has to do, but bad cause if hurts someone she may not realize it sometimes so, I think that's what it is she's very different... independent I would say like her own person.

The ability to take multiple perspectives, important to Ardelt’s (2003) 3D-WS, as well as the MORE model of Glück and Bluck (2013), also appeared in a few instances. For example, MYH describes his friend as always trying to see other sides of an issue, or other aspects of people:

He's always trying to understand what other people do because when we meet other people, they tend to have some qualities- some good qualities but other things to balance it out. For him it's like, he always tries his best to have everything good, so that he can always be respectful to other people.

Meanwhile, occasional mention was also made of the ability to prioritise the needs of others. AYH, for instance, describes what makes her nominee’s actions exemplarily virtuous:

[I]t weighed I guess the outcomes in a sense that,what, the people that she cared about, benefited. Rather than taking action against those who did harm, in the first place. So, uh there was more value in protection and promoting kindness and stuff like that than, uh, potentially like evening the score I guess...  

As an interesting side note, most of these instances of heterogenous themes were sourced from the narratives of younger participants; why that is will be discussed in the next section.
5.3 Emergent Narratives

As mentioned above, it is insufficient to merely generate a list of themes which emerge when participants discuss their exemplars. To leave the analysis there would be to generate a simple feature list, which is unable to serve as an adequate account of any phenomenon, let alone one as complex as exemplary virtue or exemplary wisdom. The primary comparison of interest is between the highest and lowest scorers on the 3D-WS, due to the a priori hypothesis, following on Krafcik (2015), that wiser individuals will be better qualified to nominate exemplars. However, comparisons between the commonalities in the narratives of older and younger participants were also made, as well as an examination of the narrative commonalities within each faith group, and how the latter compare to the philosophical and religious traditions.

Figure 1. Theme Frequencies by Participant. Themes presented here and below are the finer grained themes mentioned in the methods, grouped by higher-level theme.
explored in Chapter 1. Connections to various master narratives (Hammack, 2008) will also be discussed.

5.3.1 Low 3D-WS vs High 3D-WS

When the emergent themes are compared between the highest and lowest scoring cohorts on the 3D-WS, clear differences begin to emerge. The most obvious of these is of descriptive richness; the higher scoring cohort was significantly more detailed in their narrative depictions of their exemplars than the lower scoring cohort. This suggests that at the very least, screening participants through some measure of wisdom as Krafcik did will result in more detailed depictions of exemplary characteristics. Following on this is the observation made above, that phenomenological and intrinsic qualities were almost solely identified by the higher scoring
participants, with a single exception. The higher scoring participants emphasized their nominee’s exemplary qualities as stemming from, and being, part of who the person is. COH, especially, has a succinct summary of this:

[T]hat givingness from one person to another. you just know that, there’s not, it’s not taught, we never, nobody sat down and said okay here’s the plan in life, okay? Your grandmother’s getting old and you’re going to have to. You just did it... It’s inside. Where inside, I don’t know but it just flows. And if you let it flow, it flows rapidly, it makes total sense without judgement without resentment.

Other factors emphasized by the highest scoring participants include adherence to a particular way of life, leadership, seeking knowledge, and formal education, the last of these being another characteristic nearly unique to this cohort\(^{21}\). This education was frequently connected to their pursuit of a particular path. CYH, for instance, nominated her mother, a trained social worker turned university professor:

[S]he was a social worker and now she’s a professor and so it’s always been about education and... making sure the situation’s that like affected her, I’m guessing... aren’t as common in the future or people are growing from their situations and making improvements.

Similarly, MOH’s nominee is a highly educated specialist in nuclear medicine, who has dedicated his life to helping and better the lives of others. BOH’s nominee acquired a doctoral degree in religious studies, in the course of furthering his studies of Buddhism. Seeking knowledge and leadership qualities were likewise usually with respect to the nominee’s way of life, from reading religious texts and immersing oneself in traditional knowledge, to galvanizing a community to action and taking an active role in facilitating the development of others. For example, BOH describes his nominee’s sustaining of their virtue thus:

[H]e understands people and uh he works with people. On regular basis. And uh I think his knowledge on one hand. And attitude that he has developed towards human beings. Based on Buddhist teachings you know. And um and, and the skills that he has to deliver that, what the Buddha said at one time that you should not get somebody because he’s a

\(^{21}\) It is worth noting that according to the participant demographics, the higher scoring participants were on average more educated than the lower scoring participants, perhaps explaining this exclusivity.
superior class, he has a PhD, and others don’t have. Or he has, you know, he’s a man, and uh not a women, not a man, none of these things matter. What matters is how that person conducts himself or herself into day-to-day life you know. Compassionate and do not kill anybody. No, never tell lies you know. And even if he or she tells lies, he would justify that, even the reason why. And then never steal things you know and he’s not intoxicated all the time, you know. And he doesn’t have sexual misconduct you know. Those are the five things that we are supposed to do in Buddhism. So, you know that kind of thing and he brings those things back to people you know, and they are not difficult things to do... you know all kinds of people, like children, small children love to come to him because, one thing is that, he has his gimmies, he would give you some candies you know something the kid, they love to, just for that day come, then they talk to them you know. ‘Do you love your mother?’ ‘Oh yes.’ ‘Do you love your, you get angry with your father? No? Or yes?’ You know. Gradually he tries to inculcate you know, good manners and values. That’s something you have to develop for a long period of time.

In contrast, the lower scoring participants showed an increasing emphasis on the importance of one’s upbringing, as well as independence (though this will be shown below to be largely contributed by the younger cohort) and enduring adversity. A beneficial influence of one’s friends was also an opinion held solely by the lower scoring participants; by contrast, MYH explicitly believes that their nominee has more of an impact on them and their other friends than the other way around. The influence of community was also noted, though, surprisingly, the importance of adhering to a particular path was significantly less marked. In general, it seems that for the lower scoring participants, wisdom and virtue are things that happen simply by participating in life, or else are marked as resulting from things that one has survived, rather than things one has learned. Specific cases of exemplary action tended to be rather impersonal. For Example, AYL mentions his nominee’s involvement in a charity bike ride as part of why this person is exemplary:

Well also, he went on a big huge bike tour to raise money for somebody, to raise money for one of his friends who had type one diabetes.

While raising money for a friend would certainly seem virtuous, it is different from the sort of personal, emotionally rich support and guidance offered by the exemplars of the higher scoring participants. Charity work also features in the narrative of MYL, while COL mentions the
patience of one exemplar, and the tendency of another to provide moral support at community plays or funerals. In contrast, the highest scoring participants in general appeared to value as exemplary those people who worked at personally helping others to be more than they could be, using their own knowledge and gift for taking perspectives to help others to flourish. There’s an undercurrent of personal energy and drive that underwrites their narratives, from MYH’s nominee, who constantly seeks new understanding of Islam from the imams at his mosque, to COH’s grandmother, who cared for others because it was simply what one did, if one had the strength or the ability.

The overall picture of how exemplary individuals got to be the way they are, at least from the wiser participants, appears to involve a person being introduced to a particular way of living early in their lives, and committing to enacting and understanding it, learning and growing, continually developing through their study and interactions with others, teaching, dispensing advice, or providing aid. While life experiences may be a factor, as especially emphasized by the lowest-scoring participants, there appears to be some intrinsic qualities to the exemplary person, identified near-unanimously by the higher-scorers, that allow them to grow from their experiences. This would appear to particularly be the case for adverse experiences, which might, for someone lacking that quality, actually be a hindrance to development, rather than a help. In adherence to their path, the exemplary individual grows, and, in turn, is able to afford the growth of others. Meanwhile, the narrative of the lower scoring participants speaks to survivorship, becoming good, helpful, caring people despite their adverse circumstances. This notion of wisdom and virtue as stemming from the exemplar’s ability to rise above their negative experiences has significant resonance with some present psychological theories of the ontogeny of wisdom, especially as it results from posttraumatic growth (Calhoun, Cann, & Tedeschi, 2010) and fundamental life experiences (Glück & Bluck, 2013; Weststrate & Glück, 2017). The narratives of the higher scoring participants, by contrast, appear to line up more with claims made by the traditional philosophical literature, that commitment to a path through life, immersing yourself in study, understanding, and practice, will lead to becoming wise and virtuous. Such claims form a master narrative common to the majority of the traditions explored in Chapter 1. From the schools of Athens to the teachings of the Prophet, the Dharma, Christian scripture, and the records of generations of Confucian disciples, each of these traditions has
promised the key to live the best sort of life, in dedication to a certain way of being in the world. The narratives of the higher scoring participants echo this master narrative powerfully.

5.3.2 Older Cohort vs Younger Cohort

![Figure 3. Themes by Young and Old Cohorts.](image)

When divided by age, the primary differences between the two participant cohorts appear to be of degree, rather than kind. Younger participants tended to place a stronger emphasis on independence (a theme prevalent in the lower scoring group) and general life experience (prevalent among higher scorers) than did the older participants. It is interesting to note that the more heterogenous factors, those that did not easily group under one of the larger thematic headings discussed above, were predominately sourced from the narratives of the younger participants. Many of these having something to do with aspects of delayed gratification and self-transcendence, making their presence in the narratives of young adults possibly due to an implicit
feeling that these are things they themselves presently lack. Meanwhile, formal education, leadership, and commitment to the community are more emphasized in older participants, possibly due to a perspective on the value of such things that a younger cohort may not have, but also possibly because the older cohort has a wider selection of examples to draw on to illustrate their nominees’ exemplary qualities. For example, leadership in MYH’s narrative is demonstrated through their exemplar’s occasional leading of prayer at their mosque, while in BOL, the richer life experience of their nominee allows for more numerous examples, from starting meditation classes in various parts of the city, to taking an active role in the gay community of Toronto. This broader perspective and greater experience may also explain why it was only older participants, namely AOH, MOL, COH, and COL, who nominated different exemplars when asked about how wisdom develops, as opposed to moral virtue. Despite nominating different exemplars, however, the narratives of these participants remained relatively internally consistent. AOH’s exemplars were both atheists who nonetheless remained committed to the church as an avenue to help others. Both of COH’s exemplars were noted as having intrinsic qualities that allowed them to effortlessly help others, while all three of COL’s exemplars displayed calm and regard for others despite suffering under adverse conditions. Only MOL’s participants differed significantly, with his exemplar of virtue being a friend who made frequent pilgrimages to Mecca or other holy sites, and developed virtue through family upbringing and practicing Islam, while his exemplar of wisdom was an imam, who became wise through study and secular education. The themes of the older participants also resonate more strongly with the narrative of the higher-scoring participants. While the themes overlap sufficiently in terms of breadth and kind to make distinguishing overall narratives for the two groups difficult, it can be surmised that younger participants believe that a certain amount of self-determination and experience, possibly best conceptualized in terms of ego development, is necessary for becoming exemplary. Meanwhile, the older participants valued factors that might be seen as the fruit of such development: education, leadership, and commitment, being not merely self-determining, but able to contribute in some fashion.
5.3.3 Atheists

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the above emphasis on immersion in a particular life path being important for developing exemplary qualities, the Atheist participants had the least to say on the subject of how their exemplars became wise or virtuous. Upbringing and general life experiences are the most emphasized factors, with some mention of seeking knowledge and taking leadership roles within the community. Regarding specifics from the participants, it was the Atheist group that demonstrated the more distinct divide in the narratives of the highest and lowest scoring participants, perhaps due to a lack of a common framework in which to situate their understandings of wisdom and virtue. AOH’s primary exemplar, his wife, had dedicated her life to serving the community, involved in couples counselling and care of the elderly, and was an active participant in the church despite being an avowed non-believer; she was also mentioned as
being a voracious reader, always asking questions and looking for more knowledge. His second exemplar, Gretta Vosper, takes these qualities even further, being a publicly declared atheist despite being an ordained minister of the United Church. AYH’s mother, similarly, is a former social worker and current university professor, noted as having dedicated herself to ensuring that others are spared the hardship which she herself experiences. Both of these exemplars, despite being atheists, have dedicated themselves to causes greater than themselves, ideals which are absent from the narratives of the lower scoring participants. AYL does mention their exemplar’s involvement in charity causes, but raising money is a notably less personal service than the sort of direct providence of care and guidance demonstrated in the narratives of the higher scorers. AOL, meanwhile, holds the distinction of being perhaps the least descriptive participant. Describing why her exemplar, her husband, is morally good:

Well, he follows the rules, you know. He doesn’t do bad to anybody unless... well...

Similarly, AYL:

You know, he’s very open minded, um he’s welcome to change. He um... he believes that um, he also really agrees with the whole, with ending the stigma surrounding mental health.

While both of these are easily understood to be good traits, they are certainly less detailed and specific than the other faith groups below. The Atheist cohort also had the highest frequency of uncertainty of why their nominees got to be the way they are, with AOH actively becoming angry at the question of how their nominee got to be as wise as they are:

How did she get to be so wise? That’s a really terrible question. You know that? How does anybody get to be so wise? How do you measure wisdom? Is she wise? I would say that she’s smart. Okay? Um is she wise? I think she is. But how do I measure that? I don’t know how to measure that. I really don’t. It, it, I, how did she get to be? She did, you know, training and um... How did I get to be wise? Am I even wise? I don’t, you see what I, I don’t know. There’s a, that’s a judgment thing.

It is possible that this uncertainty is compounded by the lack of an external standard; as noted by AOH, how anybody gets to be wise is a difficult question, and something of a judgement call. Through use of an external tradition and its iconic exemplars as a metric, the other faith groups appear to be able to be far more certain in their narratives of how their nominees acquired their exemplary characteristics. Despite this lack of an explicit source of external validation, there does appear to be a general resonance between the Atheist narratives and the beliefs of the
Humanist philosophies laid out in Chapter 1; the Atheist exemplar is one who was instilled with good values and, through life experience, develops empathy and good habits, further cultivated through both practice and education.

5.3.4 Buddhists

Notably, the Buddhist cohort’s narratives appeared to have the greatest degree of cohesion between the participants. Adherence to the path of self-cultivation factors heavily in the narratives of Buddhist participants, as are concepts of providing guidance and seeking knowledge. Given that the cultivation of wisdom and virtue are explicit cornerstones of Buddhist praxis, the prevalence of such themes is perhaps to be expected. All four participants noted that their nominees had undertaken extensive study of Buddhism; BYH’s nominee in particular appears to be quite dedicated for a layperson:

Figure 5. Buddhist Themes
How did she get to be so wise? I think it came a lot with listening to the Dharma and I honestly believe this, like I believe that because she listens to the Dharma and she meditates often and she goes to the temple often and is able to listen to the Dharma that way. Um, and reads Dharma books on her own time and often like she spends hours and hours reading Dharma books and this is like, one day for my mom would be literally from in the morning she’ll meditate and then she’ll read right all throughout the night. Or she’ll read and then maybe watch like a sermon online or listen to a sermon online and then read some more. Like it’s very focused and concentrated on realizing the truth in this life and what Buddha has preached and what Dharma teaches, so yeah.

Similarly, BYL and BOL’s nominees are noted to have done a lot of reading about Buddhism, and BOH’s nominee has been a monk for thirty years. If anything, what appears to distinguish the higher and lower scoring participants within the Buddhist cohort is the extent to which the nominee is fully immersed in Buddhism. BOL’s nominee is noted to have been a Christian missionary before turning to Buddhist practice, and BYL’s nominee is exemplary as much for her own personal philosophies as her engagement with Buddhism. This emphasis on path adherence and study is similar to the Muslim cohort, below, though importantly exhibits more of an emphasis on the importance of the community in developing exemplary characteristics; upbringing, especially for the higher scoring Buddhists, is important only to the extent that their nominee’s upbringings introduced them to Buddhism. The prominence of these themes resonates with the Buddhist concept of the Three Refuges (Bikkhu Bodhi, 2013): the Buddha, representing the ideal and the goal of the path; Dharma, or the teachings of the Buddha as recorded in texts22; and the Sangha, the Buddhist community. Each of these is meant to represent motivational force in Buddhist practice. Interestingly, motivation is the sole intrinsic quality mentioned by the Buddhist cohort, specifically by BOH, the highest-scoring participant from the older Buddhist cohort, and the most detailed and descriptive of the participants in his account of his exemplar.

The lack of emphasis on intrinsic qualities in the Buddhist participants may stem from the same ideals as the emphasis on path adherence; it is the path, not the person, that is the source of wisdom and virtue, echoing the promise of the Buddha that the Noble Eightfold Path is the route to freedom from suffering, which is equated to possessing wisdom and virtue. Staying on the Path, learning to understand it further, and using those gains to guide the development of others,

22 Or in modern times, recorded lectures
is the narrative arc that emerges from the perspectives of Buddhist participants on how to develop exemplary qualities of wisdom and moral virtue.

5.3.5 Muslims

Figure 6. Muslim Themes.

The Muslim participants place the heaviest emphasis on their exemplar’s upbringing in their narratives, alongside adherence to their path, which is similar in emphasis to the Buddhist participants. The narratives speak of the exemplars being steeped in the tradition and its practices from an early age, blending the tradition with enculturation. This is especially the case with the higher scoring Muslims, both of whom note that their nominees were raised in environments with a heavy emphasis on Islamic culture. MOH’s nominee grew up in a Muslim community in the mountains of Bosnia, while MYH describes his nominee as having benefitted from the teachings and example of his parents:
He comes from a very religious family, like even now he has about 5 siblings beside himself and they’re all positively influenced, not religiously but also ethically, by their parents.

Interestingly, MYL’s nominee’s family is observed to be not terribly devout; her exemplary qualities come from her own independent adherence to Islamic practices, despite her family’s questioning why she does so:

I think maybe cause of that she wanted to go towards Islam cause she actually had a wedding recently, and they poked at her and were like, you know, why do you wear the hijab and all this stuff like, it was silly stuff they’re like, ‘you look like a terrorist’ and it’s like, that's really weird cause you come from a Muslim country and to say something like that is so weird.

The narratives of the Muslim participants are also noteworthy for containing one of the few instances where a clean differentiation was made between how an exemplar became wise versus how they became virtuous. MOL specifically observes that his exemplar of virtue, a friend and very devout Muslim, drew their virtue from their upbringing and their practice of Islam, while his exemplar of wisdom, an imam, drew their wisdom from their deep understanding of religious scholarship and secular education. This provides something of a stark comparison to this participant’s higher scoring counterpart, MOH, whose exemplar, his murshid, explicitly drew his virtue and his wisdom from the same sources of submission to the path of Islam and divine inspiration early in life.

Despite this discrepancy in attribution, the overall picture appears to hold. An exemplarily virtuous Muslim is one who has adhered to the path of Islam from an early age, observing its rituals and practicing in accordance with its maxims. An exemplarily wise Muslim is one who has undertaken intensive study and developed a deep understanding of the faith, its how’s and why’s. Ideally, however, one should be both, as is the case with the higher scoring participants. MOH’s participant is explicitly noted to have given over his entire life to service as an affirmation of his faith, which he learned from childhood, and is learned enough in the faith to provide spiritual and temporal guidance to hundreds. MYH’s nominee, who is described as already involved in teaching children to read the Qur’an in his capacity as a hafiz, one who has memorised the Qur’an, as well as showing a deep faith in the teachings of Islam, seems well on his way to fitting the mould. The narratives of the Muslim participants, then, appear to be similar
those of the Buddhist cohort: exemplary characteristics come from immersion in a path from early on, committing to acting in accordance with its precepts, gaining knowledge and understanding in it, and later providing guidance to others along the same path, is how one becomes exemplary. This resonates with the ideal of the *hakim* outlined in Chapter 1; a wise person is one who, through their vast experience and closeness to divinity gained through Islamic practice, is able to make proclamations about how to live rightly. The emphasis on path adherence also resonates with the central ideal of submission to God in Islamic thought; the ideal is to fully submit to God and the path, fully embracing and embodying the teachings.

5.3.6 Christians

![Figure 7. Christian Themes.](image)

Of the four faith groups included in the present study, the Christian participants placed the highest emphasis on enduring adversity and commitment to the community, as well as observing
the widest variety of intrinsic qualities. This resonates with several themes in the Christian tradition, notably ideas of virtue as stemming from divine favour (and therefore being intrinsic to a person’s nature), the importance of the church (particularly in the Catholic tradition), and the concept of martyrdom. However, while Buddhist and Muslim participants heavily evoked how steeped their exemplars were in their particular traditions, adherence to a path notably factored less heavily in why Christian nominees were noted for their virtue or wisdom. CYH, who nominated a priest, even invoked the priest’s lack of strict adherence Biblical scripture as a reason for his exemplary qualities:

*You don't have to follow the beatitudes, they are there as guidelines but naturally, just instinctively just follow... you know, you know be a nice person and you'll get to heaven and stuff. He was just, he just kind of took away, like he was a priest but he didn't rely too much on the Bible, and it’s weird ’cause he was Roman Catholic, it sounds weird but he said that the Bible is more like a guideline but he referred to it, he gave really good advice. It was religious but kind of like Buddhist at the same time.*

Likewise, while COH’s first nominee is noted to be an active participant in the Catholic church community, her participation in the church community is almost noted offhandedly. Her religious beliefs notably seem to act as a comfort, rather than a guide, called upon when she needs to go past her own limitations.

*I would say accepts her limitations and believes that there is a way of going beyond them and maybe that’s where she calls upon religion to help out the situation.*

While religious practice seems to factor into the narratives surrounding those two exemplars, it appears to lack the immersive element emphasized in Buddhist and Muslim narratives; religion is part of their lives, rather than their way of life. The religious themes in these narratives are instead implicit, emphasizing ideals of serving others, as well as innate qualities; CYH explicitly believes that her exemplar was destined by God to be a priest.

*But at the end of the day I really believe that he was put on this earth by God, like he was just called to be... like he was perfect as a priest, he was meant to be a priest.*

Interestingly, the two highest scoring Christian participants both observe that their nominees appear to gain energy from helping others, rather than feeling spent by the action. These narratives of intrinsic qualities dedication to serving others, and gaining energy thereby, form an interesting contrast to the narratives of the lower scoring Christians, both of whose narratives
instead emphasize simple involvement in the community or service to their immediate friends and family. CYL’s nominee, their grandmother, is noted as devoted to her family and a consistent church-goer, but no narrative of service above and beyond her own family is observed. COL, meanwhile, has several nominees, all of whom seem to fall short of a leadership ideal in some way. One is noted as being honest to the point of insensitivity, but is loyal to her friends; another is prone to conspiracy theories, but was devoted to caring for her parents while they lived. Faith and spirituality do not factor into these narratives at all, but they retain the theme of personal hardship leading to caring for others.

The narrative that emerges from the Christian perspective is one of grace in the face of adversity, individual strength of spirit, rather than dependence on a particular way of being. The exemplar is able to endure adverse conditions and flourish, partially through some quality intrinsic to their nature. They are able to provide guidance to others, as exemplified by the cases of CYH and COH, and have a strong commitment to their communities. Overall, this narrative resonates strongly with the Christian ideal of imitating Christ, who Himself was born with divine favor and a special nature as the Son of God, endured hardship, provided guidance to others, and was committed enough to His people that He died for them.

5.4 The Nature of Wisdom and Moral Virtue

Upon analyzing the narratives of the participants, it was striking how internally consistent their narratives were regardless of whether they were discussing the development and expression of moral virtue or wisdom. Some even explicitly claimed there was no differences, such as BOL and MOH. This prompted a further thematic analysis of how the participants discussed wisdom and virtue as they related details about their exemplars. This analysis aggregated the themes across participants, making no distinctions between faith, age, or 3D-WS score; given the commonalities observed in the traditional literature when wisdom and virtue are discussed, the goal of the analysis was to examine whether the same general concepts were present in the sample.
Table 7
Ways of Speaking of Wisdom and Moral Virtue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wisdom</th>
<th>Moral Virtue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-judgmental perspective</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging with multiple perspectives; Big-picture perspective</td>
<td>Following Rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life experience</td>
<td>Path adherence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacefulness; Letting things go</td>
<td>Personal choices and actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence; Understanding; Discernment</td>
<td>Moderation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Set of values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing guidance</td>
<td>Way of treating others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of scripture</td>
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5.4.1 Moral Virtue

Concepts of moral virtue tended to cluster around behavior, the emphasis being less on seeing a certain way, as appeared to be the case with wisdom, and more on acting in a particular fashion: adhering to a set of values or rules, and generally acting in the best interests of others. AOH, for example, describes his nominee’s virtuous action of providing care for elderly members of the community:

Karen would um, do visitations with different people in the community. Okay? And some of them... they would be elderly people. And she would make sure that they, checking in on them and making sure they were alright. And then there was one person, a close friend of ours, who um, developed dementia. Um well I think it was dementia, I wasn’t, I am not sure just exactly which it was but she became um incapable of getting to her uh appointments, doctor appointments. Karen would take her to the appointments, wait for her, and then bring her back home. And eventually when this person went into the hospital. She visited her every day. And um, there was nobody else in that community did those kind of things

Similarly, MOH describes his nominee’s virtue as stemming from his dedication to serving others:

He has abandoned his personal life in favour of the dedicating himself to the benefit of other people’s well-being as a commitment to his faith in God.
This particular description also evokes concepts of virtue as adherence to a code of conduct, a common idea among the Muslim and Buddhist participants, as demonstrated by BYH:

[To be] morally virtuous is like being super super religious and like following, um, the teachings of the Buddha.

AOL, as well, describes her nominee’s virtue in terms of following rules and not doing others any harm. Other accounts were more general, describing aspects of how the nominees behave towards others in general. For example, CYH said of her nominee:

[H]e kept telling me it’s compassion, and he just gained so much energy from helping others and I think for him it wasn’t hard for him to stay virtuous.

MYH’s account of their nominee’s virtue was similar:

[H]e has always been very respectful in that regard, where he treats everyone as an equal. Yeah, even if he thinks they are a bad person, that’s not going to stop him from treating them well.

Much as participant’s concepts of wisdom all focused on ideas of perception, perspective taking, and apprehension, the general concept of virtue that emerges from the participants’ accounts is behaving in a way that aids and benefits others, whether that takes the form of following specific maxims, or generally trying to avoid causing harm.

5.4.2 Wisdom

When discussing wisdom, participants generally invoked concepts of perspective-taking, apprehension, and the resistance of said faculties to affective or external influences. Participants recurrently described their nominees’ capacity to perceive certain things, for example AYH’s mother, who is able to consistently find the best way to lead AYH back to better mental states:

[S]he can recognize when that’s about to happen and... kinda like understands what the best way in that case would be to bring me back.

AYL makes a similar, if less specific, description:

He is very intuitive. Um... he’s...he’s very open minded. Um... very observant.
BOH, in describing his nominee’s wisdom, has an excellent account of this theme of wisdom as the ability to read others.

_Also, understanding the person, the way she or he is you know. And uh, he had developed this uh, skill of uh, reading people’s mind and if you go to him and uh he would, first time that he’s meeting you, and he would ask you to sit and ask you know ‘have you eaten’ you know. And you’ll have some tea downstairs and uh, ‘so what made you uh come to see me you know? It looks like you are a little sad.’_

Wisdom as also in two cases, AOH and BYH, equated with intelligence, and in MOL with learnedness.

_[S]he’s intelligent. She’s articulate. And she can she can explain her values - a lot better than me. (AOH, describing what makes their exemplar of wisdom wise)_

An aspect of wisdom frequently highlighted in the cases of lower-scoring participants was wisdom as the ability to take a big-picture perspective, or else to not be overconcerned by small matters. COL describes her father as an exemplar of wisdom, who lost everything during the communist revolution in China:

_So, he had to start over again, but you know he was never angry at the communist for taking everything. He said it was for the good of the people_

In general for the participants, wisdom appears to be predominately associated with the ability to perspectivise. Their intelligence, learning, and skill of discernment allow them to perceive and understand the perspectives of others, guiding them, advising them, or simply seeing what needs to be said. CYH describes the impact of her exemplar’s guidance in a time of need, her account making it clear that this was something that went beyond what words can easily convey:

_He just, like I was saying with the selfishness, I don't want to be selfish but he made it...he didn't make it seem like it was a selfish thing because it’s like I’m not... I don't know where to draw the line, but it was wise because he knew how to say it, in a way that it wouldn’t turn into something where I could become selfish. Does that make sense? Sometimes people give you advice like oh you have to take time to like you know just for you and then someone will like go on a shopping spree or whatever. You know what I mean? He just said it in a way, I can’t think of another word, it was just wise he said like... without even making a clear distinction, he did between you above everyone else deserve your love and affection, and being selfish... cause I don’t even know how to explain it, like does that make sense? Is that good?_
Chapter 6

6 Discussion

6.1 Discussion of Findings

The present study was an attempt to show that the relationship and differences between moral virtue and wisdom can be best understood by examining how individuals become exemplary with regards to those characteristics. It was found that commitment to some form of way of life, learning from it, acting in accordance with it, and teaching from it, was a recurrent pattern in the narratives of the participants. Immersion and success within these life paths were facilitated by the nominees’ upbringing, communities, experiences, and intrinsic qualities, and occasionally resulted in manifesting certain phenomenological qualities.

The above findings provide three primary discussion points: that the study of religious, spiritual, and philosophical traditions is vital for understanding wisdom and virtue, especially as they speak of paths one can follow for developing these qualities; that the development of wisdom and virtue is more about the process than about any form of beliefs or propositions, as demonstrated through the convergence on path immersion within narratives about nominated exemplars across these faith groups, and especially in the wiser participants; and finally, that there is some quality above wisdom and virtue that both of these qualities feed into, and that we need to study exemplars, and narratives about exemplars, in order to understand.

6.1.1 The Importance of Religion

The first point of interest that can be gleaned from the above exemplar analysis is that there appears to be significant resonance between the narratives of the participants, particularly the higher-scoring participants, and the traditional philosophical and religious literature reviewed in Chapter 1. The Atheist participants, overall, hold that their nominees developed their exemplary qualities through experience, study, and practice, turning their abilities to aiding their fellow humanity in some fashion, echoing the political dimension of wisdom and virtue observed by the Politics and the Confucian Canon. Christian participants attributed their nominees’ wisdom and virtue to having endured adverse conditions, possessing some special, intrinsic qualities, using the latter to flourish despite the former and the former to reinforce the capacities of the latter, echoing Thomist ideas about the nature and cultivation of virtue as a combination of bestowed
and habituated aspects. The higher scoring Christians both observed that their nominees seemed to actively gain energy from their tending to others, echoing Augustinian ideas of agapic love as the ultimate source of wisdom and virtue. Buddhist narratives of adhering to the path, providing guidance, seeking knowledge, and the importance of community echoed the Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, as well as the promise that the Noble Eightfold Path—which can be divided into aspects concerning virtue, concentration, and wisdom—will lead to attaining enlightenment. Muslim participants emphasized upbringing and adherence to the path, recalling the idea that the best life is found in submission to divine will and intent. Immersion in the path from an early age, following its rituals, embodying it, and seeking new understanding in it, will bring one closer to divinity, manifesting as the ability to make proclamations about how to live rightly, and adhere to them, infusing one’s life with both inherited and newfound wisdom and moral virtue.

Notably, the themes emergent in the Atheist cohort, those of experience, upbringing, leadership, and some education, are most consonant of the present traditions with established literature on how wisdom develops; the deviation of the religious traditions from this particular narrative suggests that there is something vital to their understanding of wisdom and virtue that is missing from our present accounts. If the case, we cannot afford to ignore this, as it suggests that a purely secular understanding of wisdom and virtue is an incomplete one, and therefore ironically at odds with the project of having a science of such things. The traditional literature from various world religions gives us good reason to believe that yes, there might be something missing. The vital thesis of the religious and spiritual traditions, with regards to wisdom and virtue, is that the development of these qualities is explicitly not random. There is a way to develop these qualities, some path that people can follow, that if adhered to will allow them to cultivate wisdom and moral virtue, and empower them to facilitate the development of these qualities in others. This is even the case in the more secular humanist philosophies, such as Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Confucianism, wherein specific curricula or regimens are laid out to facilitate the development of wisdom and virtue as interrelated qualities. The idea that wisdom and virtue can be trained is beginning to resurge in the study of wisdom and virtue, with various ongoing discussions of teaching for wisdom (Ferrari & Potworowski, 2008) and character education (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 2002; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Kristjánsson, 2013). However, these discussions, outside of some cases of Aristotelianism being brought into programs for character education
(Ferkany & Creed, 2014; Kristjánsson, 2015), largely leave traditional philosophical and religious curricula by the wayside. In some instances, this has resulted in rather ironic redundancies. For example, recent trends towards developing pre-emptive models for psychological treatments such as trans-diagnostic cognitive behavioural therapy (Scott, Hickie, & McGorry, 2012), in which participants are given training to develop the toolbox of cognitive behavioural therapy prior to its becoming necessary for managing symptoms, many of which are shared across disorders, have essentially recreated the practices of Socratic philosophy and Classical Stoicism; these are philosophical practices upon which various cognitive therapies were originally based (Beck, Emery, & Greenberg, 2005; Robertson 2010). Disembedding mindfulness practices from their traditional frameworks of understanding for use in educational and clinical practice, has also led to a great deal of confusion about just what mindfulness meditation is, necessitating philosophically-informed reformulation of the construct (Vervaeke & Ferraro, 2016). Indeed, the aforementioned cases of trying to educate for wisdom and virtue appear to be attempts to reverse-engineer from theory, methods that are already present in philosophical and religious literature. Insofar as psychology wishes to study wisdom, virtue, and care of the soul, any thesis it puts forward, any discovery it makes, will either reinvent, or owe tremendous intellectual debt to, the millennia-old religious and philosophical traditions that were the first to ask and answer such questions. While the urge to create secular theories of wisdom and virtue, and the development thereof, is understandable, it results in a limited perspective, as these are not strictly secular concepts to begin with. Any subject which concerns the question of how an individual is to relate to other people, and the world at large, involves metaphysical claims about the ultimate nature of man and his place in the universe as much the domain of religion as social science, and the latter ignores the former to its detriment. This is not to say that we should all rush to become Buddhist or Muslim, or convert public schools into a second coming of the Stoa. However, rather than merely studying the propositional thoughts of such traditions, it may be time for scholars of wisdom and virtue to begin paying more attention to their methods.

6.1.2 Procedure Over Propositions

And indeed, it appears to be the methods specifically that are important, not the propositional content thereof. What the recurrent patterns between the various faith groups make clear is that the path, or method of becoming exemplary, is as if not more important to the cultivation of
wisdom and virtue as the specifics of the beliefs attached to it; the enactment of beliefs via an immersive path is as important as the constraint of actions by accordance with held beliefs. Nowhere is this clearer than in the examples of the high scoring Atheist participants, who, as self-identified non-believers, do not have any external system from which to derive any form of dicta for how one must go about their lives; indeed, each mentioned their exemplar as being negatively disposed towards religious beliefs. In spite of this, however, their exemplars appeared to be powerfully committed to a particular way of life: AOH’s wife to participation in the community, offering aid and counselling to others, and AYH’s mother to ensuring that others do not ensure the same adversity that she did, as a social worker and a professor. As observed above, the same commitment to learning and service, immersion in a path of life, appears in the narratives of every faith group. Granted, there is genuine uniqueness to each individual narrative explored in the analysis, and genuine uniqueness between the individual faith groups, each describing the path that their nominees took to developing exemplary qualities of wisdom and virtue in ways particular to their traditions, and their perspectives thereon. However, as observed in Chapter 4, it is the consistent and persistent pattern that emerges out of these descriptions that holds scientific significance, and a pattern did emerge: That each of the highest scoring participants, and many of the lower-scoring ones, related a narrative in which the exemplar’s commitment to acting in accordance with certain ideals or paths through life was facilitative of their becoming exemplary, taken as a recurring pattern, is significant.

The suggestion that there is an external path to be immersed in at all is significant, as mention of a specific path by which one may cultivate wisdom or moral virtue is missing from present psychological theories of their ontogeny. Some stage theories of human development, such as Erikson’s (1984; Erikson & Erikson, 1998), do hypothesise an ordered sequence to human development with wisdom as the end goal, but these are descriptive accounts, not prescription of a path by which to attain such qualities. The idea of a specific, organized path to wisdom development is absent from Brown’s (2004) model of wisdom development, despite the fact that all four of its key components, environment, experiences, interactions with others, and openness to learning, can be facilitated by immersion in a traditional practice, such as a religion or a philosophical school. The Berlin Wisdom Paradigm, within its framework of wisdom-facilitative factors, does mention factors such as mentorship, organized tutelage, and providing guidance to others (Baltes & Smith, 2008), but these are not bound to the idea of a particular life path, again
despite that fact that such a path has the capacity to serve as a key framework for facilitating and organizing such factors. Even Krafcik’s model (2015), explicitly derived from interviewing nominated exemplars of wisdom, dances around the idea, finding that participants spoke of learning from mentors, letting wisdom arise from a larger source, and commitment to learning, without ever raising the idea of a formal path to becoming wise; this despite the idea of a path to wisdom being explicitly raised by at least one of his participants, and despite his finding that the narratives of nominators described exemplars as “deeply engaged in life” (Krafcik, 2015, pp. 14), using very similar descriptions to the above participants. Walker’s studies of moral exemplars (Walker & Frimer, 2007) include ideas of early advantage, including helpful, influential relationships and being exposed to the needs of others, but still fail to include mention of any cohesive path for developing virtue.

With regards to the traditions and representative participants examined in the present study, Buddhism and Islam differ significantly in their metaphysical beliefs, but both sets of participants viewed immersion in their traditions as vital to developing exemplary characteristics, following the precepts of their faith and teaching it to others. Atheists explicitly disagree with Christian ideas of God or other trappings of faith, but participants from both groups held up various life experiences, community, and commitment to serving the needs of others as important to their exemplars. These recurrent narrative patterns point to the conclusion that there is some consistent set of procedures and practices which one can undertake in order to cultivate exemplary qualities, both wisdom and virtue; indeed, both of these qualities appear to be two precursors to, or consequences of, something more.

6.1.3 Wisdom and Virtue are Subordinate Qualities

Analysis of the participants’ examples of cases of wisdom and moral virtue modeled by their nominated exemplars reveals a relationship between wisdom and virtue that is consistent with that found in the traditional literature explored in Chapter 1. Moral virtue, being spoken of in terms of how one conducts themselves and deals with others, appears to primarily reference procedural and behavioural aspects of exemplary character. Wisdom, spoken of primarily in terms of discernment, perspective-taking, and freedom from external influences on judgement, similarly encompasses apprehensive aspects. This begins to help clarify the relationship and differences between moral virtue and personal wisdom that was the original research question of
the present study, as well as bringing forth some interesting implications for current psychological theories of wisdom and morality.

For example, given that wisdom was associated with perspective taking as much as it was some form of knowledge, and in some cases, knowledge acquired through perspective taking, it is proposed that wisdom is best understood as the capacity to take appropriate perspectives, not simply a form of knowledge of what is best in life as it is so frequently relegated described. The psychological literature on insight problem solving is a treasure trove of cases in which knowledge is demonstrably useless to people without the appropriate perspective thereon, most notably in the case of the nine-dot problem, from which we get the phrase “Think outside the box.” Famously, explicitly telling participants to think outside the box is useless to them (Weisberg & Alba, 1981). However, drawing a larger box around the square formed by the nine dots, forcing a perspective shift on the image, allows participants to actually make use of this knowledge (Maier & Casselman, 1970). Similarly, in the case of artificial grammar learning described in Chapter 2, telling participants that there are rules is useless; they must develop the perspectival ability to discern these rules for themselves. Several theorists have already proposed that insight should be considered a key component of wisdom (McKee & Barber, 1999; Meekes & Jeste, 2009; Vervaeke & Ferraro, 2013). Admittedly, it does seem like wise individuals know things that less-wise individuals do not, however the counterargument to this position is that it could be as simple as wiser individuals prioritizing different information than less-wise individuals. This echoes both the literature on insight problem solving, as well as the Platonic tradition, in which Socrates, who famously claimed to know nothing, does in fact claim to be an expert on one particular subject; he claims to know what is good to care about, as best demonstrated in the Symposium. The equation of knowledge with wisdom in the present intellectual climate does seem to stem from the Platonic tradition, however Moline (1981) argues that the Greek word episteme, generally translated as “knowledge”, is better translated as “understanding”; a deep perspectival apprehension of what one knows, not the ability to spout facts. Equating wisdom with perspectival understanding, apprehension, and insight helps dissolve the apparent difference between personal and general wisdom, in a way that echoes the Muslim tradition: true wisdom is the ability to make proclamations about what is good, as well as follow them.
These findings also make a further suggestion, one that may help better clarify how best to develop theories of wisdom and morality. The above distinction suggests that to the extent that the literature on personal wisdom is discussing how people act, it is discussing virtue, not wisdom, and to the extent that the literature on moral virtue discusses excellence at moral reasoning, perspective taking, or intuition, it is discussing wisdom, not virtue. This would seem like a neat distinction, but it also appears rather unintuitive. Moral reasoning abilities and the capacity for perspective taking do appear to be important parts of one’s capacity to act in a morally virtuous fashion; Haidt especially would likely argue this point. Similarly, wisdom does appear to require one to not be a hypocrite; Ardelt, Vervaeke, and Ferraro would certainly support the point that wisdom requires more than simply making armchair declarations about what is good. There does not appear to be a good way to cleanly separate perspective from action, nor action from perspective.

The reason for this deep interpenetration between wisdom and virtue may be that they are both subordinate qualities; neither, in fact, represents the pinnacle of human ability, but both serve to facilitate the cultivation of something further. In the narratives examined in the present study, the wisdom and virtue of exemplars appears to be united by some further quality, something they began to exhibit in the process of becoming not simply good, but truly exemplary. Virtue, above and beyond being a set of qualities like bravery or kindness, and wisdom, above and beyond being some form of knowledge or some kind of perception, both appeared to refer to a specific way of being in the world, highlighting different aspects of some further, transcendent quality, in virtue of which one can be said to be exemplary. The ability to guide, teach, and serve the needs of others speaks to a combination of both wisdom and virtue, as well as something that ultimately transcends the self. This is resonant with traditional philosophies of wisdom and virtue, as explored in Chapter 1. Many of these traditions speak of some ultimate state of being, which can be reached by following their paths to their ends, and of which wisdom and virtue are merely expressions or prerequisites for. Aristotle has the idea of magnanimity, “great-soul’dness”, the virtue of having all other virtues. Confucians speak of the junzi and their capacity for limitless ren, benevolent resonance with other people; Chinese philosophy in general speaks of various types of sages (Kim 1992), perfected individuals living in harmony with nature, and shares this ideal with Stoicism. Plato has the idea of sharing in divine power by understanding the Forms, which later morphed into human perfection as being close to God in
the Abrahamic traditions. And, of course, Buddhism is centered on the idea of attaining *nirvana*, and, eventually, Buddhahood.

Such ideas appear only infrequently in the present psychological landscape. Developmental theories of wisdom, such as Erikson’s, view wisdom as an endpoint of human development. Likewise, the idea of moral virtue is tied to the concept of an excellence of human morality, which prompted Walker to begin his study of moral exemplars. Attempts to go beyond these ideas of wisdom and virtue to a more complete view of the “end” or highest peak of development and human life are rare, and often incomplete. They are, however, beginning to experience a surge of interest in both psychology and philosophy. Towards the end of his life, Maslow (1969a) himself began to question the idea that self-actualisation was the end of human development, listing some 35 definitions of the idea of transcendence (Maslow 1969b), but was unable to explore this idea further, passing away in 1970. The notion of transcendence does appear to be gaining a foothold in the psychological study of wisdom, such as in the work of Curnow (1999) and as developed by Levenson and colleagues (2005) on self-transcendence. Vervaeke and Ferraro (2013) attempt a dynamical explanation of wisdom as rationally self-transcending rationality, altering automatic mechanisms of construal as a pathway to wisdom. Here, though, wisdom still serves as the end, though other theorists are reaching further. Batchelor (1983) began to speak of the notion of enlightenment in psychological terms, as have Newberg (2010; Newberg & Waldman, 2016) and Forman (2011), whose earlier work began to reintroduce the phenomena of pure consciousness events or other higher states of being back into the scientific literature. Alexander (Alexander & Langer, 1990; Chandler, Alexander, and Heaton, 2011) has so far put forward some theories regarding what he terms “postconventional” development, including a program for accelerating such development through Vedic-derived practices; such work however reinforces the notion that the study of religion holds the key to understanding higher stages of development, as Alexander’s work draws explicitly on the Vedic spiritual tradition. Transformative experience has begun to enter into philosophy as well, from McGhee (2000) to Paul (2014). Finally, ideas of what it is to live a meaningful life, connected to things beyond the individual, have begun to re-enter the fray, through the philosophical works of Wolf (2010) to the psychological studies of Tafarodi (Tafarodi et al., 2012; Bonn & Tafardoi, 2013) and Hicks (Hicks & King, 2008; Hicks & Routledge, 2013). To best understand the relationship between wisdom and virtue, scholars of these subjects should understand this crucial
point: that wisdom and virtue are merely faculties in service to reaching the highest ends of human development, and living the good life, living out the sort of narrative encoded in traditional literature the world over.

6.1.4 Narrative as Encoding Perspectival Knowledge

This difficulty encapsulating the complexity inherent in the highest reaches of human ability, and all three of the above theoretical points, come together in a final important point to be taken away from the present study. It is the underlying narrative schematic, and not the surface-level feature list, that encodes the important aspects of qualities as multi-faceted and complex as wisdom and virtue.

Outside of a narrative format, in which the interactions between various features or manifestations of wisdom and virtue can be captured and related in a specific setting in relation to particular actors, there is no effective way to represent a person’s qualitative ability to fit their perspectives to those of myriad others to provide aid and guidance. This may be why so many classical wisdom texts are encoded as dialogues or stories about traditional iconic exemplars of wisdom. The Sutta Pitaka primarily consists of a series of anecdotes about Buddha, as much as the New Testament (especially the synoptic gospels) is a series of stories about Jesus from multiple perspectives. The Analects, the Mengzi, and the Zhuangzi all feature their central sages being questioned by interlocutors; even the Yellow Emperor’s Inner Classic, China’s oldest text on medicine, is encoded as a dialogue. Perhaps most famously, the works of Plato are all encoded as dramatic dialogues, which Hyland (1968) and Johnson (1998) argue is vital to their pedagogical function. The dialogic structure of Plato’s works force participation and engagement of the ideas laid out there, playing to reader sympathies and biases in the structure of a modeled debate. These ideas echo what Oatley has said on the importance of fiction to cognitive development. Oatley (2013) argues that fiction, which is an inherently narrative entity, is best understood as an externalization of consciousness, allowing whole perspectives to be passed from author to reader. He further argues (Oatley, 2016) that the perspectives codified in fictional narratives and internalized to augment everyday cognition.

This notion of internalizing alternative perspectives as encoded in fiction allows narrative to serve a vital philosophical and religious purpose. By encoding philosophical and religious lessons as narratives following some exemplar of the tradition, especially showing the exemplar
giving some form of lesson, dealing with alternative perspectives, or generally engaging in
debate, the reader, whom we can assume is not exemplary, as an initiate into the tradition, is
forced to engage with problems central to the tradition alongside the encoded perspective of the
exemplar. This very plausibly triggers what Fischer refers to as scaffolding (Grannott, Fischer, &
Parziale, 2002; Yan & Fischer, 2002). The process of scaffolding occurs when an expert uses his
or her knowledge to construct a bridge from the knowledge of the novice to newer, unfamiliar
information. The process may be represented in narrative by having the interlocutor of the
exemplar ask simpler or more obvious questions, which the novice themselves may also ask
when presented with the ideas in the text. Fischer elsewhere mentions the concept of optimal
performance under conditions of high support (Mascolo & Fischer, 2015), which refers to
conditions in which the learner is provided no support beyond a model to be imitated. Following
Oatley, it is no stretch to assert that such models can be encoded in narrative texts. By engaging
with various problems as they occur in the narratives of the text, the reader is able to internalize
the perspective of the exemplar on the problem, developing an internal representation of the
exemplar upon which to draw in real life scenarios. Engaging with an imagined third perspective
has already been demonstrated to facilitate wise reasoning; Staudinger and Baltes (1996) found
that interacting with other minds improved performance on the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm,
regardless of whether those minds were present in the room as other people, or “virtual”, with the
participants engaging with what they believed someone not present may think about an issue.
This plausibly would work for virtue as well; “What would Jesus do?” remains a stock phrase in
Western cultures when confronted with a moral dilemma.

If it is true that the highest reaches of human function are so complex as to only ever be properly
encoded as narratives, this has two implications for we as researchers. The first is that it is the
narratives of our participants that will best enable us to understand their wisdom, rather than
performance on any individual metric (e.g., any hypothetical problem or self-report
questionnaire). If anything, if we want to understand how wise people are, we should be looking
for something like narrative consistency between stories they tell about their own lives, and
performance on tasks like the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm or the protocols for studying moral
exemplars devised by Walker (Walker & Frimer, 2007), which require participants to give
narrative answers. The work of Grossmann (Grossmann, Gerlach, & Denissen, 2016;
Grossmann, 2017), which implies that state wisdom can fluctuate between measurements, further
implies that perhaps the most exemplary individuals are those who are the most consistently wise and virtuous, or who most consistently transcend themselves in both perspective and action. The second implication is that our theories of these high human functions, like wisdom, virtue, or transcendence, must themselves be narrative. In the present climate emerging as cognitive science reaches its third generation, it is no longer sufficient for a theory of something to consist of what Vervaeke and Ferraro (2016) deride as a mere feature list, some bundle of feathers and hollow bones and blood that we toss up in the air and claim to be a bird. Juarrero (2000) makes a more general claim: anything dynamic, anything that changes over time, develops or grows, demands a hermeneutic, narrative explanation, one that allows us to shift between the gestalt and the featural, the whole and the aspects, as dynamical entities do themselves. We must begin to create theories that reflect how the various aspects of human excellences hang together in gestalt, how they grow, change, and mutually influence each other in a dynamic fashion. We must begin to create feature schemata of complex concepts, narrative accounts of development and causation. Only then, maybe, will they begin to reflect reality.

6.2 Limitations and Future Directions

While the present study makes significant strides in demonstrating what analysis of lived religious and philosophical traditions can bring to the study of wisdom, there are naturally limitations that must be acknowledged. Firstly, the present study was limited to a narrative thematic analysis of 16 participants recruited from the Greater Toronto Area. While one of the most ethnically diverse regions of the world, a sample drawn from Toronto cannot be expected to be representative of opinions held across the world. This is especially the case for the Buddhist and Muslim participants, as it is plausible that, outside of their home nations, wherein such religious identities would be in the majority, participants may place greater emphasis on their religious practices as a way of connecting to their heritage. Additionally, these findings would be of far more import if it was found that they were consistent across a broader array of participants, both in terms of sheer numbers as well as represented faith backgrounds and age groups. The larger participant pool would also allow for statistical analyses beyond a simple frequency count to be carried out, such as chi-square analysis, to further substantiate the claims of the differences in themes between participant groups.
In undertaking such an endeavor, a more targeted paradigm of qualitative research, such as grounded theory, may be more appropriate for this line of inquiry. Grounded theory would enable the narrative analysis to better inform the data collection process, allowing for the emergent theory to be recursively and explicitly checked against the beliefs of the participants as it is being developed. This would improve the ecological validity of the findings, especially if the exemplars themselves were able to be interviewed, as well as the participants who nominated them. To further improve the usefulness of the findings, an analytical method such as the one developed by Rosenberg (Rosenberg & Jones, 1972; Rosenberg & Gara, 1983; Rosenberg 1989) for investigating implicit theories of personality in text may be applied to generate clusters of traits to represent prototypes of exemplars. This would allow for the possible isolation of differing templates of exemplary personality that emerge across a wider and more varied pool of participants, similar to the results found by Weststrate, Ferrari, and Ardelt (2016) regarding different prototypes of wise persons. If different pathways to exemplary personality emerge from a wider participant pool, especially if they differ with regards to how wisdom and virtue emerge and are embodied by the exemplar, matching these descriptive templates of exemplars as entities with the present prescriptive concepts of how exemplary faculties develop would generate more powerful and targeted narrative theories of how particular qualities emerge from particular practices.

It would also be beneficial to a general scientific understanding of these exemplary qualities if narratives about the abilities of exemplars could be checked against measures of these abilities, using the narratives to inform our understanding of how basic cognitive mechanisms interact to give rise to higher faculties such as wisdom and moral virtue. Additional quantitative measures of insight problem solving and perspective taking ability could be applied to participants at various stages in some traditional practice, ideally longitudinally, but also possibly by recruiting students and teachers within these traditions.

Finally, given the theoretical insights afforded by the present study, the 3D-WS, which is subject to the criticisms of the present state of wisdom psychology made above, may not be the most effective or accurate tool for assessing the validity of participants’ perspectives by screening their wisdom. It would be best if some new measure of wisdom, or some reconceptualization of extent measures, could be developed using the above insights into the importance of narrative structure in theories of exemplary human function.
6.3 Conclusion

The current study, in operationalizing the argument that the differences and relationship between wisdom and virtue can be best examined through narratives concerning the process by which exemplars of these qualities became such, found that wisdom and moral virtue are best understood as perspectival and action-oriented aspects of some further exemplary capacity, which is developed through longitudinal engagement with some life path. This finding is consonant with the claims of various religious and philosophical traditions, forming a connection between the modern psychological study of wisdom and virtue, and traditional literature, something which Walsh (2014) has previously identified as a lacuna. The importance of narrative to the study of wisdom and virtue should be further emphasized in future theorizing about these and other concepts related to human excellence, not just in the research methodologies, but in the structure of the theories themselves.
References


    *Contributions to human development*. Basel, NY: Karger


Appendix A

Consent Form
Informed Consent: Participant

Purpose: The goal of this research study is to deepen our understanding of how people motivate themselves to virtue.

Procedure: Should you agree, you will participate in two interviews and a decision-making computer game. During the interviews, you will be asked about moments in your own life when you were able to resist temptation, and general practices that you feel contribute to helping you be virtuous; you will also be asked to tell a story from your religious tradition or from literature that you feel exemplifies motivation to virtue; finally, you will be asked to nominate someone you know and an authority from your faith community who you consider to be exemplary in terms of their virtue and to explain why you nominated them. Each interview should take approximately two hours to complete; the computer game will take about 60 minutes. Participants will be paid $10/hour for their time.

Please Note: You will be asked to forward information about this study to someone you admire to see if they are interested in participating in it. Participants and nominees will not see each other’s data.

Benefits & Risks: This study has no inherent risks. By participating, you will be asked to articulate stories and ideas of deep importance to you, and many people find that enjoyable.

Participant’s Rights: Your participation is voluntary: You are free to skip any portion of this study, or to refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to in the interviews or the computer game. You are also free to withdraw your consent at any time and stop your participation without any negative consequences; however, you will only be paid for the time you have participated in the study to the nearest half-hour. If you wish to withdraw your responses after completing the study, simply contact the study administrators and your interview and game responses will be deleted from our records; until the results are published, after which time you will no longer be able to withdraw.

Confidentiality: Any information we receive from you will remain strictly confidential. Your name or any other personal information will not appear in any publication of the study’s results. Data will be temporarily stored on a secure online server at the University of Toronto, which utilizes server authentication and data encryption technology. Data will be later downloaded and kept in a password-protected database, with access limited to the researchers only; identifiable information downloaded and stored on laptop computers will also be encrypted, consistent with UT’s data security and encryption standards.

Questions: If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273. If you have any questions about the content or procedure of the study, or are interested in obtaining a summary of the study’s results, you can contact the principal investigator, Michel Ferrari, by phone (416-978-1070) or by email at michel.ferrari@utoronto.ca.

By signing below, you indicate your consent to participate in this study.

Signature: ________________________________________ Date: __________________

Print Name: (________________________________________)
For Interviewer: Participant ID Code: ____________________
Appendix B
Semi-structured Interview Guide

In the next part of our session, I will ask you some open-ended questions about your life and people you know, as well as your ideas about topics such as moral virtue and wisdom. Any information we receive from you will remain strictly confidential. Your name or any other personal information will not appear in any publication of the study’s results.

I. Questions about yourself and your life

First, I would like to ask you about yourself: Tell me a bit about yourself and your life story.

1. What are some of the most important things that you do? (e.g., activities, hobbies)
2. What are the most important aspects of who you are as a person?
3. Given that things change from year to year, would you say that you have remained the same person over time, or that you are a different person now than you were in the past?
   a. What are the things that made you say that? Can you give us an example from your own life?
   b. How do you know that you’ve changed or remained the same?
4. Do you consider yourself to be unique or different from others in any way? How so, or why not? Can you give us an example from your own life?

II. Questions about a moral and wisdom exemplar that you know

For my next question, let’s take a moment to talk about morality: Think of someone you know personally who has led a morally virtuous life.

1. Who is this person?
   a. How is [this person] morally virtuous? (Why did you choose him/her?)
   b. What is one story you know about [this person], or one thing [this person] has said or done that shows he/she is morally virtuous?
      i. What was virtuous about that?
   c. How did [this person] get to be so morally virtuous?
      i. How have his/her life experiences influenced his/her moral virtue?
      ii. How has he/she sustained his/her moral virtue over the course of his/her life?
   d. How have friends, family, or community helped him/her to become or remain morally virtuous?
   e. How might his/her cultural upbringing have influenced his/her moral virtue?
   f. How might his/her spirituality or religion have influenced his/her moral virtue?
   g. Has [this person] affected or inspired you in your own life? In which way has he/she affected or inspired you?
      i. Might it be possible for you to become morally virtuous like [this person]?
      ii. If yes, what would you have to do?

2. Is [this person] wise? [If yes, skip to question b. If not, proceed to question a.]
   a. Please take a moment to think of the wisest person you know in your own life. Who is this person?
b. What makes [this person] so wise? (Why did you choose him/her?)
c. What is one story you know about [this person], or one thing [this person] has said or done that shows [this person] is wise?
   i. What was wise about that?
d. How did [this person] get to be so wise?
e. [If different than moral exemplar]: Has [this person] affected or inspired you in your own life? If yes, how so?
   i. Has he/she helped you to become more virtuous? How so, or how not?
f. Might it be possible for you to become wise like [this person]? If yes, what would you have to do?

III. Questions about your own moral virtue

Now, please take a moment to think about your own moral virtue.

1. What is one thing that you have said or done or one story that shows your moral virtue?
   a. What was virtuous about that?
2. Can you tell me about an incident in your life where the morally right course of action was not clear to you?
   a. How did it become clear to you what to do?
3. In contrast to the example you’ve just provided, was there ever a time when the morally right course of action was clear to you, but for some other reason it was difficult for you to follow this course of action? [Please try to come up with a different example from the one you provided in the first question (pause). If you can’t think of a new example, that’s okay. Please describe how this question applies to your first example.]
   a. If so, what was the situation?
   b. How did you deal with this situation?
   c. Why did you keep going in the face of difficulties?
4. Are there any ways in which you would like to be more virtuous?
   a. If so, how would you like to be more virtuous?
   b. Are you working on this in any way? If so, what are you doing?

IV. Questions about the role of other people, groups, and organizations in motivating you to be virtuous

1. Who are the most significant people, groups, and organizations in your life?
   a. How about your family?
   b. How about your coworkers/colleagues?
   c. Are there any other significant groups for you?
2. How have these people, groups, or organizations helped you to become or remain virtuous?
3. How have these people, groups, or organizations hindered your moral virtue?

V. Questions about the role of your national community in motivating you to be virtuous

1. Do you think living in Canada has influenced your moral virtue? If yes, how so?
2. What does it mean to be Canadian? Has this influenced your moral virtue?
3. Can you tell us a story from Canadian culture or Canadian history that motivates you to be virtuous?
VI. Questions about the role of religion or the religious community in motivating you to be virtuous

1. Are you a religious person?
2. Do you think that religion has influenced your moral virtue? If yes, how so?
3. Can you tell us a story within your own or another religious tradition that motivates you to be virtuous?
   a. If not, can you tell a well-known non-religious story that motivates you to be virtuous?
4. Think of an authority within your own religious community who you consider to be living an exemplary moral life. Who is this person? Why do you consider him/her to be morally outstanding? What made you select [this person]? [For atheists: Think of a non-religious authority figure from a community group or organization you are involved with who you consider to be living an exemplary moral life. Who is this person? Why do you consider him/her to be morally outstanding? What made you select [this person]?]
   a. We would like to interview [this person]. How might we contact him/her professionally? Could you provide us with professional contact information for [this individual], such as an email address or phone number at the church/mosque/temple where he/she works?
   b. If not, would you be willing to forward a written invitation to [this person] on our behalf?

VII. Reflection

1. We have been talking about how national and faith communities motivate someone to be virtuous. Which do you think matters more or do they matter in different ways?
2. We have also talked about both wisdom and moral virtue. Which of them matters the most for you? Which one do you try to cultivate more, or are they connected in some way?
3. After having talked about moral virtue for some time now, how would you define it? What is moral virtue?
4. And finally, how do you think moral virtue develops?

Probing for more information:
- “You mentioned ___________, can tell me more about that?”
- “You mentioned ___________, what was that like for you?”
- “You talked about ___________, describe that experience in as much detail as possible.”
- “What else happened?”
- “Can you say a little more about that?”
- “Why do you think that matters?”
- “Why was that important to you?”
- “What was significant about this to you?”

Probing for clarification:
- “What do you mean when you say ___________?”
- “I’m not really sure what you meant when you said ___________. Can you say more about that?”