

**Honour and Individualism:
Reawakening Aristotle's Virtues in the Modern Era**

**by
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B.GS., Simon Fraser University, 2015

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

in the
Graduate Liberal Studies Department
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Summer 2019

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Abstract

This project asks whether the Aristotelian virtues have diminished as a result of a modern emphasis on the individual in place of the good of civilization. The idea of honour is addressed, suggesting that there is a place for a redefined concept of honour in modern society which could offer value to the individual while concurrently benefitting the larger community.

Part I discusses the Aristotelian virtues, his concept of “the good” and the notion of human flourishing. An examination of the past and present ideas and definitions of honour follows. Charles Taylor’s *Malaise of Modernity* serves as evidence to support the notion that the virtues are in decline.

Part II examines a case study of an honour code within an honour group, focusing on the US Department of Justice and a controversial decision. The relationship of honour to shame is examined in addition to honour’s shortcomings.

Part III involves an examination of honour as a *personal set of ethics*. Paths toward utilizing a redefined concept of honour which allow the individual to flourish while enhancing the community are explored.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my gratitude and respect to Dr. Stephen Duguid for the support, wisdom and patience he provided throughout the research and production of this project. Thank you also to Dr. Gary McCarron for his time and well-received attention to detail.

In addition, as part of this project includes a segment extolling the virtue and value of deep, lifelong friendships, I would like to acknowledge how very fortunate and grateful I am for the unconditional love and support of my own “honour group”: Terri, Lori, Claudia, Andrea and my family “friends”, Lisa, Cyn and Mom.

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List of Acronyms

DOJ

United States Department of Justice

ISKF

International Shotokan Karate Federation

Introduction

The degree to which the Aristotelian virtues run through modern Western society is high, yet we do not often recognize their influence on our modern lives. Aristotelian virtues such as courage, justice, temperance, liberality, friendliness, good temper and truthfulness have influenced the concept of what constitutes a flourishing human being and provided an understanding of the need to value the good of the community beyond merely that of the individual. Although Aristotle's notion of "the good" has had its critics, it continues to influence modern Western society.

The goal of this paper is to inquire whether these Aristotelian virtues have diminished as a result of a modern emphasis on the individual in place of the good of civilization as a whole. Referring to the work of Charles Taylor, Martha Nussbaum, Alasdair MacIntyre, Richard Sennett, Karen Armstrong and others, this paper specifically addresses the idea of honour in the context of Aristotelean ethics, and argues that there is a place for a redefined concept of honour in modern society. I argue that the notion of honour continues to offer value to the individual while concurrently benefitting the larger community. A modern-day case study is examined with these questions in mind: The firing of the Acting Attorney General of the U.S. Department of Justice, Sally Q. Yates.

Part I offers a brief overview of the meaning of the Aristotelian virtues, his concept of "the good," and the notion of human flourishing. This is followed by a discussion of Aristotle's important concept of *Eudaimonia* in addition to an examination of the past and present ideas about and definitions of honour. Included is an overview of the classical view of honour in the Homeric sense, and a review of the complex understanding of the modern view of honour. Various key terms that have a relationship with the modern view of honour, such as dignity and later, pride are also examined. Charles Taylor's exposition of his three modern malaises are discussed, which serve as evidence to support the notion that the virtues are in decline in Western society due to the rise of individualism. Richard Sennett's views of the workplace are referred to as examples to show how Taylor's malaises manifest within modern society. Additional ideas from a range of other theorists are also used to support Taylor's explanation.

Part II considers a case study in which honour is highlighted. The Sally Yates situation is analyzed as it relates to an honour code within an honour group; the U.S.

Department of Justice. In addition to a brief summary of the U.S. Department of Justice, the section provides an overview of the events surrounding a key Yates decision and her subsequent firing by the Trump Administration in 2017 as a result. The relationship of honour to shame is reviewed in addition to examining how both of these concepts can affect the behaviour of the individual within a group. The origins of shame are discussed from a psychoanalytic perspective. Honour's "dark side" is surveyed and its shortcomings noted while examining whether the motivation to avoid dishonour may also serve both the individual and the community.

Part III discusses potential methods to support a reinvigoration and redefining of honour as a sub-virtue to foster positive civic engagement. An attempt to address the key question of this project is made: *Is there a place for a redefined concept of honour in modern society which could continue to offer value to the individual while concurrently benefitting the larger community?* It begins by arguing that the inherent honour within the Aristotelian virtue of *friendship based on good character* can act as a method for creating a flourishing individual and motivating greater community involvement. It explores the motivation behind the desire to serve that drives many people to flourish, including the former Attorney General, Yates. This section weaves in elements of the Yates situation to serve as an example and evidence to support the claims. An examination of honour as a personal set of ethics which aims to provide a framework for the individual to base his or her actions upon follows. It is within this final section that we will examine potential paths toward utilizing a redefined concept of honour, allowing the individual to flourish which, Aristotle would argue, subsequently enhances the community.

In closing, a personal review of how honour has affected the author of this project is provided as a practical example of how life-changing the adoption of a practice can be. A discussion of the tenets of my chosen martial art and their effect upon my day to day outlook upon life and resulting action will be reviewed.

Part I - The Aristotelian Virtues

According to Aristotle, to employ the virtues in daily life leads us toward happiness and aids in developing a flourishing human being. This brings good to the community in which we live. While Aristotle provides us with a number of virtues, this project includes a select number that have been chosen for the purpose of showing their connection with both modern and classical views of honour. In addition, the purpose of highlighting specific virtues is to introduce the differences between these two notions of honour which will be examined in greater detail in a discussion of the heroic dimension.

The Aristotelian virtues appear to be an exposition of what comprises that which is good. Briefly, they are descriptions of human states of being that require action to put into effect and they are naturally oriented toward the good. This orientation toward the good which Aristotle claims is natural to the virtues continues to be an idea underlying the work produced by leading scholars such as Martha Nussbaum, Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre. Aristotle's position about this orientation is therefore a foundational assumption that the work of this project is based upon.

Unsurprisingly, there are varying ideas about what the virtues are. According to MacIntyre, opinions vary as to which virtues might be regarded as superior to the others. There are even varying viewpoints as to what exactly constitutes a virtue (MacIntyre, *Virtue Ethics*, 118). Finally, as we will see later, debate continues as to whether honour is a virtue or something more akin to a sub-virtue.

The Good

Let us first briefly examine the broad notion of "the good." In his book, *Dependent Rational Animals*, MacIntyre addresses the question of defining "the good" by describing the ways in which we ascribe goodness. Goodness, claims MacIntyre, is found in what benefits us or benefits others and notes that "...goods that are valued as ends worth pursuing" (MacIntyre, 65). He provides an example of a situation in which the good, or virtues, are developed by describing the role of the parent with a child, and how that child will flourish if the parent provides "security...and recognition of needs" through unconditional commitment, similar to what is suggested in Rousseau's *Emile* (90).

MacIntyre suggests that this basic comfort will allow the child to develop into a person who can reason independently (91).

The Common Good

For Aristotle, the community is important and must always be taken into account when considering the good. Jonathan Barnes, who authored an introduction to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, reminds us that Aristotle led a life within a "small city-state" (Aristotle, xii). If we are to apply Aristotle's views to present day, we must remember that he believed the polis was the location of his notion of the good. Aristotle's view of the community as paramount was shared with Plato, of whom he was a student. In *The Republic*, Plato states that a city "comes into being because each of us isn't self-sufficient and in need of much" (Bloom, 46). Here he acknowledges that human beings cannot flourish alone, and recognizes that each individual needs both his own skills and the skills of others. Plato argues that choosing one's profession based on inherent skills and aptitude is therefore the individual's civic responsibility. Thus, citizens within the polis rely upon each other and have a mutual interest in the flourishing of one another. Pursuit of the good is a shared experience within the city-state.

This reliance upon one another does not necessarily exist in larger groups however, as Iseult Honohan's *Civic Republicanism* points out. The virtues, or constituents of "the good", are central to Honohan's work, which builds upon Aristotle's views of civic virtue and responsibility. Honohan's opening chapters address the "freedom of human beings who are not necessarily interdependent," which is considered republicanism's central problem (Honohan, 1). When various small groups can function independently, concepts, and structures emerging from them are needed to bind these autonomous communities together as a unit, which becomes a republic. Honohan outlines characteristics that are necessary for a republic to function including that a "mixed government" instead of a single ruler is instituted; that citizens are "free from tyranny" and their freedom is "guaranteed by law" rather than by the determination of a ruler (5). Law appears to be the primary means of control within a republic. Honohan states "being subject to law is not the same as being subject to a person. In a republic, laws express 'the common good' " (67). Law therefore provides protection against tyranny as it exists to protect the common good and ultimately the citizens of the republic. Another crucial element is members of a republic must be active and involve

themselves in military and political service (5). For this to happen, it is important for civil society to cultivate virtue which motivates the civilian of an independent society to maintain bonds within and as part of the larger group. Virtue is encouraged through methods such as reward for courage or honour bestowed upon those who sacrifice for the common good. The goal of a republic is to encourage virtue and minimize and control corruption (56). The virtues are tools to ensure this goal is achieved.

Moving from Aristotle, Honohan discusses the influence of the “cardinal virtues” of Cicero, such as wisdom, courage, moderation and justice, the latter of which is thought to be the most important because it involves members of the community and not just the individual (34). A change in the cardinal virtues occurred, according to Honohan, in the 13th century as a means toward freedom. Justice became the most important of these virtues, followed by fortitude, temperance and wisdom. By this time however these virtues were considered less important than the Christian virtues of faith, hope, charity and humility (43).

To understand Aristotle’s concept of “the good,” we need to examine what he meant by *eudaimonia* as it is frequently used by Aristotle’s in his discussion of the pursuit of the good. The goal of life, he claims, is essentially happiness. Barnes argues that in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle uses the word *eudaimonia* to loosely refer to a form of happiness (Aristotle, iv). Aristotle’s notion of happiness, however, differs from the way we understand the concept today. According to Aristotle, happiness is not about the constant pursuit of pleasure but should be properly understood as “a virtuous activity of soul” (21). This suggests there is an element of striving and patience involved in its pursuit. The related term *eudaimonia* is difficult to define and consensus about its meaning is often challenging to realize.¹ However, two features are often noted as central to Aristotle’s concept of happiness: Firstly, that happiness is the ultimate goal of a life and not just an immediate one, and secondly, that it is “cultivated” as an individual activity, which consequently benefits the larger community of family and friends (20). The community, Aristotle argues, is of higher importance than the individual. The flourishing of each person through the habituation of the virtues allows the community to

¹ “Eudaimonia is, avowedly, a moralized or value-laden concept of happiness, something like ‘true’ or ‘real’ happiness or ‘the sort of happiness worth seeking or having.’ It is thereby the sort of concept about which there can be substantial disagreement between people with different views about human life that cannot be resolved by appeal to some external standard on which, despite their different views, the parties to the disagreement concur.” (Hursthouse 1999: 188–189)

thrive because each adds to the whole. This habituation is an example of the action that Aristotle claims living a virtuous life requires.

Honohan's view of eudemonia focuses on human potential. He argues that while Aristotle's eudaimonia can be "best translated as all-round happiness, or human flourishing" and "depends on realizing the potential present at birth," we are oriented toward happiness because when we experience it we are, for the moment, essentially satisfied (Honohan, 19). As happiness is chosen solely for itself, according to Honohan's interpretation of Aristotle, we can view happiness as the final end and not as a means to an end. This perspective is also evident in Honohan when he states "...pleasure, wealth or honour are limited and intermediate goals, which are less satisfying in the long run than exercising distinctively human capacities..." (19). In addition to Aristotle's claims about happiness, he further notes that it exists "in accordance with, or implying, a rational principle" (16). The good is also self-sufficient, meaning it is "one which by itself makes life desirable and in no way deficient" (14). This self-sufficiency includes family and "fellow-citizens in general" (14). Happiness and self-sufficiency are therefore inseparable as they relate to the good. Happiness is "acquired by moral goodness and by...study or training"; therefore action is a requirement of the good (21). To think is not enough; we must work toward the good in the actions of our daily lives. Furthering Aristotle's notion that study is required, in Book II of *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle tells us that while virtue can be learned through instruction or acquired through habit, we only have the potential ability for virtue within us, but we must choose to act if we are to live a virtuous life (31). This choice is again an individual choice, one that requires agency.

What is Honour?

In Charles Taylor's Massey Lecture series, *The Malaise of Modernity*, he argues that we once saw ourselves as part of a larger order. It is this larger order that brought meaning to our lives and provided a sense of purpose. The idea of an individual's purpose was viewed with greater significance in the past because it involved a higher purpose; that of "something worth dying for" (Taylor, 4, 1991). The view that our individual life purpose was not merely about our self was likely predicated on the religious notion that the divine is within all of us, an idea that appears to be gaining popularity again in the secular west through a modern sense of non-denominational

spirituality.² Within this modern spiritual movement, the notion of interconnectedness has somehow replaced the idea of the divine, perhaps loosely based upon adapted Buddhist ideas, or even the impact of the rise of yoga culture in the West. Taylor argues that a "...culture of self-fulfillment has led many people to lose sight of concerns that transcend them" (15). This, perhaps coupled with the impact of technological forces that may inadvertently distance us from one another, may be adding to this loss of meaning. It is important to mention that Taylor recognized that a sense of meaning or purpose cannot arise without being a member of a community, as Aristotle argued. As Taylor claims in *Sources of the Self*, "...the acknowledgement of our identity requires recognition by others" (Taylor, 1989, 45).

Although he does not specifically address honour, both Taylor's Massey Lectures and its predecessor, *Sources of the Self*, discuss the decline of this sense of higher purpose and argue for a retrieval of Aristotelian virtues as a way to once again enrich our lives with meaning. Without this idea of a larger order, Taylor's argument that we are experiencing this diminishment of meaning in our lives can be seen in modern attempts to reinvigorate it. Arguably, we can see this desire for meaning in acts of personal sacrifice. These can range from serious acts such as the person who risks his or her life to rescue someone in danger to smaller, simpler acts like missing an important personal appointment to help someone in need. Self-sacrifice may imply that the person making that sacrifice understands that there are inexplicable elements of greater significance at play than our own lives. In his Massey Lectures, Taylor attempts to describe this mysterious element through his claim that something has been lost in our lives; an archaic sense of the sublime or a kind of awe of something larger than ourselves, without which we have found ourselves facing a deep seated societal fear, a "fear of meaninglessness" which has come to dominate our modern lives (Taylor, 18, 1989). Now, we are no longer part of that larger order; we are individual, separate entities. Taylor states that the "...sense that human beings are capable of some kind of higher life forms part of the background for our belief that they are fit objects of respect" (25). There appears to be a modern awareness of this lack of meaning as well as a deep human desire to bring it into our lives. This vague sense of connection that we have to a larger whole may help ease the stress we feel as individuals. The desire to make this

² See the final chapter of Stephen Hunt's *Religion and Everyday Life*, entitled "The New Age, self-spiritualities and quasi-religions", 147-166.

connection something more tangible may also drive us toward acts that intensify our experience of the sublime or of awe. It may be that Taylor's notion of a fear of meaninglessness and the need to resurrect meaning in our modern lives could be something that a re-imagined conception of honour can help address.

Aristotle claimed that honour is "the prize of virtue" (Aristotle, 95). Honohan expands on this notion to explain that honour is viewed "as the reward for civic virtue", incorporating the importance of the community or society in virtuous action (Honohan, 6). Honour lies beneath Aristotle's concept of the good and yet he recognizes that honour is chosen in part "for the sake of our happiness" as honours, which are awarded to one via an entity larger than oneself, bring reward to the individual (Aristotle, 14). In Book IV-iii of *Nicomachean Ethics*, it is Aristotle's explanation of "the magnanimous man" which allows us the clearest insight into his view of honour because honour is the magnanimous man's chief concern (96). Therefore, the pursuit of honour is involved in all that he does. Moderation or middle ground is a recurring theme in Aristotle's vision of what a truly magnanimous individual should be, for how he measures his worth can lead to conceit if too high, or pusillanimity if too low. This magnanimous ideal involves many restrictions of behaviour, all geared toward how one is perceived externally. Much of Aristotle's views about the magnanimous man, or he who has "greatness of soul" are evident in Homer's ideal of the ancient Greek hero (93).

Honour in a Homeric Context (The Heroic Dimension)

To understand the concept of honour, both past and present, we need to look at how acts of heroism relate to this term. Much like the amorphous view of honour today, the concept of heroism is often unclear and simplistic in our modern minds, but it was clear in the classical, Homeric era. In *Untangling Heroism*, Ari Kohen investigates three different classical heroic archetypes and argues that there is confusion surrounding the modern view of heroism. Kohen highlights the military backgrounds of U.S. politicians and military veterans John Kerry and John McCain as examples of this confusion. Kerry's military experience in Vietnam involved him taking "decisive action after coming under enemy fire...", which Kohen loosely connects with an Achilles-like action-oriented achievement such as those events which would bring glory upon an individual (Kohen, 128). This kind of great deed is referred to as *kléos*, which represents the "glory of heroic deeds" despite the fact that these acts might result in the death of the person

performing them (5). There is great personal risk involved in these kinds of acts, brought upon oneself due to decisive action. In contrast, Kohen equates John McCain's capture and subsequent torture during his tour in Vietnam with *polytropos* – the notion of “suffering, endurance, (and) homecoming (*nostos*)” as experienced by Odysseus, suggesting a very different conception of what it is to act heroically (5). Here great personal risk still exists, but at the hands of others, yet the experience remains heroic due to the endurance and suffering required by the captive. Third, Kohen identifies the “other-regarding” notion of classical heroism which he claims is represented by the death of Socrates, who sacrifices himself in defense of what he perceives to be the good of the many through his attempt to “vindicate the philosophic way of life” (6). By “other-regarding”, Kohen means behaviour that arises on behalf of those that are not necessarily close to us, beyond family and friends. He notes that this behaviour “arises from strong personal identification with others”, which he sees as the foundation for this kind of Socratic heroism (97). The other-regarding classical hero seems to be less about the self and/or those with whom one is close and more about a principle or belief that one is committed to. Further, Kohen argues that all three types of classical heroes have a deep awareness of their pending mortality, claiming that this is a requirement of heroism. The choice to lead a classical heroic life is one that demands recognition of a purpose, as Shelley draws our attention to in Julian and Maddalo:

We know
That we have power over ourselves to do
And suffer - what, we know not till we try;
But something nobler than to live and die. (Julian & Maddalo)

With Socrates' sacrifice, Kohen believes he made a choice to die. Whether Socrates literally chose to die is questionable as his “choice”, which was essentially a form of coerced suicide by those who judged him, was determined by his sentence. Due to the questions surrounding the nature of Socrates' sacrifice Kohen spends considerable time providing us with the background to his calm activities close to his death, supporting the notion that his death was an act of heroism. Particularly strong evidence exists in Kohen's claim about what heroic action isn't: When we make a sacrifice for another who is our kin, or who we are close to, he perceives this as not particularly heroic because it is an expectation. Self-sacrifice for the sake of others soon became a critical element of heroism via his interpretation of the Socrates example. In addition, Kohen claims this notion of sacrifice has seeped into the ethos of the modern

hero, displacing the old heroic concepts of Achilles and Odysseus's *kléos* and *polytropos*. However, these classical heroes do remain. The McCain-Kerry examples provide evidence to support this notion, although Kohen argues that the aftermath of Kerry's rejection of the war effort and the controversy surrounding his experience in Vietnam affected the longevity of his status as a hero. It is this self-sacrificing nature of Socrates' death for something greater than himself which may have informed Charles Taylor's notion of the heroic dimension.

Honour in a Modern Context (Enlightenment and Beyond)

In contrast to the classical notion of honour we see in aristocratic heroes, Peter Olsthoorn points out in *Honor in Political and Moral Philosophy*, that honour has become largely internalized in modern times. Olsthoorn points to the example of the internalized code of ethics that West Point military cadets adopt and maintain. The expectation is for them to choose to live by that code due to this internalization and not because they may be concerned about how they are viewed if they violate the code (Olsthoorn, 11). Olsthoorn notes that honour, in this example, is more similar to our modern idea of integrity. This raises a concern about whether an internalized notion of honour, where recognition is virtually absent, can truly be called honour or if it has become something more like conscience, personal integrity or perhaps even personal dignity, which we shall explore shortly.

Olsthoorn states that honour is something that is a "reward for virtuous behaviour", a claim that he seems to have drawn specifically from *Nicomachean Ethics* (Olsthoorn, 69: Aristotle, 226). If the reward is a critical component of the modern view of honour, we may wonder if an internalized self-respect is enough to qualify as this reward. Perhaps the satisfaction gained by knowing one is acting according to one's moral code qualifies as the reward. These notions of reward are likely not entirely satisfying for the individual however. Individuals associate with and derive meaning from their relationships within a community. Arguably, reward in the classical sense may require involvement with the polis. Secondly, returning to Olsthoorn's example of the West Point cadets, it seems unlikely that a cadet would not be concerned with how he or she is viewed should s/he violate the military code of ethics. But Olsthoorn's point here is to show the shift toward a new conception of honour in the modern era, away from the public sphere which honour occupied in Homer's time.

Defining Honour

In “The Nature of the Virtues” in *Virtue Ethics*, Alasdair MacIntyre discusses the challenge of defining virtue due to the many different opinions that exist. This is a similar challenge we also face in understanding the word honour, particularly in a modern context. Oprisko states that our modern conception of honour is confusing, imprecise, and inaccurately discussed. Oprisko does not attempt to compress these diverse, modern notions of honour into a single, unified definition. Instead, he claims to resolve these issues in his book, *Honor: A Phenomenology*, by incorporating this diversity of opinion into his own definition of the word:

Honor – A multiphenomenal category of concepts that, as a system, hierarchically structure society by inscribing value onto an individual by another. (Oprisko, 159)

In addition, he offers sixteen additional sub-types of honour and lays out a structure identifying the components of internal versus external honour. Oprisko plainly, and controversially, states that he believes Aristotle intended honour to be a virtue, and that it “...is achieved in two ways, by excelling and not failing” (Oprisko, 71). Further, he points to the role of prestige and shame as they relate to honour, suggesting that we earn prestige through excelling and experience shame if we fail. Oprisko’s attempt to distill honour down to a clear, comprehensive definition is useful and ambitious. One of his key contributions to the notion is to illuminate the fact that our view of honour is changeable depending on the perspective of honour held by the groups in which it occurs.

It is difficult to reconcile a term’s meaning when its definition is constantly challenged, particularly in a subjective, rapidly changing and diverse world. Julian Pitt-Rivers, writing from an anthropological perspective, discusses the variety within the definition of the word honour and in particular how its meaning can be affected by place, era, and above all, social class. For example, the influence of era can be seen in that the concept of honour we currently hold in modern society may have shifted due to the impact of secularism in the 18th Century, arguably spurred on by Thomas Hobbes, who saw humanity as heavily self-interested (Olsthoorn, 28). As honour in the traditional sense required public recognition, from the events of the 18th century self-interest was

soon seen as a key component of honour and public views toward its value started to turn. Pitt-Rivers argues that honour is both an internal and external concept:

Honour is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his claim to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognized by society, his right to pride. (Pitt-Rivers, 21)

In addition, Pitt-Rivers claims that honour therefore acts as a link between a societal ideal and the individual's attempt to become this ideal. The idea of aspiring to become something, or to transform, is an important component of this statement as he appears to be claiming that, much like Aristotle's virtues, honour seems to require action. If honour is something that a person possesses, in the modern sense of the word honour, action was likely required for him or her to obtain it. But action in the pursuit of honour in this instance may also be represented by a decision upon which the action is passive: Pitt-Rivers uses the example of a young Englishwoman who protects her reputation as a gentlewoman. She does so by ensuring she restrains her actions, by making a decision about what she will not do.

Returning to the notion of dignity, Taylor's view in "The Politics of Recognition" and *Sources of the Self* is that modern honour is akin to dignity as a result of the dissolution of social hierarchies in the West, which he believes are fundamental to its very existence. Taylor notes that dignity is "...now used in a universalist and egalitarian sense..." stating that "the underlying premise here is that everyone shares in this" (Taylor, 1991, 46). If dignity is a universal concept which applies to all citizens and our modern conception of honour is akin to dignity, then honour has morphed into something altogether different. According to Taylor, the honour ethic has provided the "background for a very widespread understanding of dignity..." which fills the gap left by the diminished view of honour in that the "universalist" aspect of it suits the egalitarianism and recognition that individuals require today (Taylor, 1989, 25). He attributes this new equality, where it is believed that every individual should carry an equivalent voice, to the rise of democracy. Regarding the modern idea of honour, Taylor also agrees that an internalization of the concept has occurred. Here Taylor provides a clear explanation of modern, internalized "honour".

The ethic of rational control, finding its sources in a sense of dignity and self-esteem, transposes inward something of the spirit of the honour

ethic. No longer are we winning fame in public space; we act to maintain our sense of worth in our own eyes. (152)

Honour and Meaning

In Martha Nussbaum's article "Political Liberalism and Global Justice", she notes that several centuries ago there was an idea that agreement would eventually be reached amongst citizens about life's meaning. Further, people believed global societies would eventually let go of their religious beliefs and humanity would find itself in agreement about basic dogma. Nussbaum claims that there was an expectation that utilitarianism would step in to provide a new, rational belief system. Things did not work out as expected. Despite the heavy emphasis on instrumental reason in our modern world, various faiths and beliefs continue to exert themselves in much of the world's population, lending evidence to the possibility that the human desire for transcendence and connection to something larger may be both universal and powerful, whether through religion or other methods.

Although Descartes maintained his own religious beliefs, his new "model of rational mastery" led to the disenchantment of nature by viewing the world mechanistically (Taylor, 1989, 149). It was not until half way through the 18th Century that secularism's influence affected our notions of reason and rationality. Taylor notes that this rational mastery could also be referred to as "neutralizing the cosmos" because the cosmos is then no longer seen as an embodiment of meaningful order which can define the good for us (149). Taylor sees the model as "a matter of instrumental control" because reason now dominates over the passions. This shift toward viewing the world mechanistically in addition to an increasingly global community may have contributed to the diminishment of meaning in people's lives. Globalization may leave the individual lacking a strong sense of community, and we are now left wondering where meaning can find a place in modern society. This meaning, which is perhaps Taylor's heroic dimension or a notion that something is larger than the self, has not vanished however.

If we look closely at the modern concept of honour, we can still see a heroic dimension in action as acts performed in the name of honour can seem larger than merely ourselves. Still, we have largely turned away from the idea of honour in our rather narcissistic modern era. In one sense, the idea of honour appears as though it is a melodramatic, dated and quaint concept except in unique circumstances involving tightly

bound groups such as specialized military units. Aside from these highly specialized and rare examples of a military unit, as we are now living in a larger society whereby general group bonds may have loosened, the opportunity for a kind of serious personal sacrifice is diminished. While we have sports teams and institutionally-motivated “school spirit” as methods of forming these bonds today, there is somehow a spreading out of these connections, perhaps due to the expansion of larger, urban populations many of us now live amongst. When Taylor wrote about the malaises in 1991, despite an increase in global existential threats such as the emerging effects of climate change and the constant fear of nuclear annihilation, in the modern Western lives of the 1990s the majority of people were not facing the same level of immediate threats. For example, consider the threat of infection and death prior to the advent of penicillin or the odds of losing one’s life in childbirth... While modern threats do exist, our workplaces and homes are generally not places of heightened danger as they once were even less than a century ago, when accidents were commonplace.³ We are for the most part living longer yet facing fewer immediate and severe dangers each day. One could argue that a degree of intensity in life is lost as a result. The advent and expansion of science has eliminated much of the mystery of life’s processes or perhaps replaced them. While our lives are for the most part physically easier, they are becoming increasingly emotionally flat, as Taylor has argued.

Arguably, our morality has followed the same path, resulting in loose, flexible, “relative” values as Taylor points to and is concerned about. So today, honour is deemed an old-fashioned concept, often ascribed to glorified ideas about military teams where the potential for losing one’s life or the life of a colleague is possible. When the term “honour” is used in everyday conversation, it can appear excessively formal and even pretentious and therefore may not be taken seriously. For example, to say “I am honoured” to someone carries a tinge of nostalgia and sentimentality, possibly due to its attachment to an earlier time. As honour can be a powerful tool to drive people toward acts of great selflessness however, resurrecting it in a modern form within present day culture may have value. To do so, we can look at an Aristotelian revival of the virtues in order to refocus upon the group instead of merely the modern individual.

³ See John Eligon, “Hate Crimes Increase for the Third Consecutive Year”, *New York Times*.

The resurrection of a modern conception of honour is important as a method of restoring a sense of meaning to citizens in our highly individualistic and increasingly isolated modern society. Taylor's three malaises, discussed below, show a need for a revival of citizen responsibility. If Taylor's assertion that we have become excessively individualistic is correct, however, relying on citizens to adopt civic responsibility may not be successful. The benefit to "self" is not enough. With information on virtually anything and anyone so readily available, our heroes have fallen to earth, no longer rising above other mortals, as their lives have been pulled apart and their human flaws revealed. Add to this that information is often unreliable and unverifiable; we are left feeling cynical and uncertain, which contributes to the lack of meaning in our lives that Taylor refers to. In the early 2000's we saw the rise of the anti-hero in modern mainstream media. These were impressions of deeply troubled but somewhat relatable people. They were reflections of our individualistic need to see ourselves rather than human characteristics we might aspire to; characteristics that require will, commitment and a moral framework. I argue that, while recognizing through media the vulnerability and struggles that humans face can be important in creating a gentler, more compassionate society, it is equally important to be inspired by the human characteristics that reflect and enact the Aristotelian virtues so we may know what we are capable of and can aspire to. This is why honour can act as a method for motivating individuals to engage in activities beyond themselves and assist in this revival. Honour recognizes our narcissism. It is a kind of manipulation of our ego that, ironically, can result in a positive outcome for many.

Taylor's Malaises: The Diminishing Virtues

Taylor's *Malaise of Modernity* identifies three separate conditions of modern life that formed as a result of philosophical and socio-economic shifts that took place throughout the 17th to the 20th centuries. Underlying his arguments is the belief that the individual has been elevated to a position above or beyond the larger community, the whole, or that which is greater than us. The Aristotelian notion that we must strive to flourish as human beings, becoming what we are both capable of and inclined toward, had the good of the entire community in mind as the end goal. However, Taylor explains that this is not what society has moved toward, and suggests reasons why.

Taylor's First Malaise: The Rise of Individualism

Taylor's first malaise addresses the impacts of the rise of individualism which emerged from the development of individual human rights through the assertion of the will. The notion that the individual had rights was an idea that seeped into the societal paradigm following the works of philosophers such as Locke and Kant. The rise of the emphasis on the individual emerged from a shift in where we believed the location of the source, or divine is, as we stopped seeking this source externally and instead looked inward. It is Taylor who points out the modern burdens of this inward focus through his description of the malaises.

Taylor's assertion that individualism has had harmful effects upon modern Western society stems from his impression that people no longer "see themselves as part of a larger order" and thus our lives have somehow lost some depth or "magic" (Taylor, 1991, 3). Escaping from this order was in part what led to the individual freedoms we now value in modern Western society. However, he argues that from this freedom, the resulting focus on our individual selves has affected our desire to support the larger community. He states that the "culture of self-fulfillment has led many people to lose sight of concerns that transcend them" (15). This focus on the primacy of the self is also reflected in what Taylor calls the affirmation of "ordinary life", whereby ordinary life refers to "the life of production and the family, of work and love" (Taylor, 1989, 13). This Christian concept is connected to Taylor's important notion of authenticity which "centres on the self" (44). Unlike the Aristotelian view of ordinary life as a background matter, the later Christian view held the ordinary life was central to the "good life," which in turn moved the attainment of the "higher forms of life" to the side (13). However, this view of ordinary life as central could result in an obsession with the afterlife rather than the life one was living, at least until the influence of Protestantism resulted in the notion of living a good life in the present in order to transcend.

Although Plato's concept of what constitutes the good life involves self-mastery, his concept referred to the "dominance of reason over desire," whereby desire was a feeling that arose in the individual while reason would lead one to this higher form of life which involved the larger community. Taylor argues that the shift away from social hierarchies and the implications of a society that has moved towards social equality has contributed to the cultural shift toward primacy of self because individualism as a "moral

principle” can influence our societal structures (44). The individual, the self, has become our chief concern and how we live our lives stems from this fairly modern ideal. Taylor argues that this affects the meaning we attach to all relationships and therefore lessens the attachments we have to others as everything is secondary to the importance we attach to our own personal fulfillment and growth as “unique” individuals. These are the unintended consequences of the acquisition of individual freedom.

In a modern context, the ramifications of these temporary relationships are discussed in Richard Sennett’s book, *The Corrosion of Character*. Sennett discusses the temporary nature of work in the modern neoliberal economy and how moving in and out of employment as opposed to working within a company over many years makes it difficult to create strong bonds in the workplace and reinforces the focus on the individual rather than the larger community⁴. The early 20th Century socialist experiments may have tried to counter this shift towards narcissistic individualism, hoping that socialist structures may have acted to replace lost societal bonds which drew communities together and created social cohesion. Michael Ignatieff, in *The Needs of Strangers*, seems to suggest the “either/or” thinking about our political needs may have contributed to the failure of these experiments, noting “liberals by and large choose liberty over solidarity” and states that to date “no socialist society has yet managed to reconcile these antinomies” (Ignatieff, 18). Sennett claims there is a loss of a “shared fate” that would normally form from people working together for many years, and this loss lessens and flattens the connection amongst peers as they are not all “in it together”, weathering good and bad times. Why this temporary concept of work has emerged in modern society leads us to Taylor’s second malaise, the “rise of instrumental reason”.

⁴ Zygmunt Bauman in his his critique of modern neoliberal Capitalism argues that individualism has become privatized to the extent that it requires a “...compulsive *self*-critique born of perpetual self-disaffection: being an individual *de jure* means having no one to blame for one’s own misery, seeking the causes of one’s own defeats nowhere except in one’s own indolence and sloth, and looking for no remedies other than trying harder and harder still....With the eyes focused on their own performances and thus diverted from the social space where the contradictions of individual existence are collectively produced, men and women are naturally tempted to reduce the complexity of their predicament...[but]...there are, simply, no effective ‘biographic solutions to systemic contradictions’.” Zygmunt Bauman. *Liquid Modernity*. (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2019, p. 38).

Taylor's Second Malaise: The Rise of Instrumental Reason

Taylor's second malaise is a concept that is particularly evident in the modern neoliberal global economic model and even more entrenched within the market-driven laissez-faire economy in North America. By instrumental reason Taylor means the goal of maximizing efficiency. This is not the same as the Aristotelian notion of reason. Taylor claims "maximum efficiency, the best cost-output ration, is its measure of success" (Taylor, 1991, 5). A particular form of reason over passion in what appears to be an excessive, distorted mode of utilitarianism essentially removes the well-being of the individual from consideration which is oddly in contrast to a society rooted in the primacy of the individual. Further, in this neoliberal model the expectation is for the individual to "succeed" in life entirely independently, without the assistance of the society in which he or she lives. Ironically, this excessive form ends up removing the focus on the importance of the individual, for the aim of a utilitarian morality appears to be upon the happiness of the many rather than the one. It is as though this model has taken the Aristotelian idea of applying reason rather than emotion to manage our desires too far. What was originally intended to be a practice of employing rational thought has been warped into a concept neatly detached from human compassion where efficiency is the ultimate aim. In the laissez-faire neoliberal political economy of the West, the notion that the individual must strive independently to achieve his or her success in society is both a blessing and a curse, and makes an assumption of equality amongst all members of society which is simply not accurate.

A significant effect of Taylor's second malaise resides in the impact of instrumental reason upon our response to the environment in which we live. The constant desire for financial growth in a highly competitive environment has resulted in companies cutting corners on environmental standards in order to ensure maximum profitability and efficiency.

Returning to the workplace, the application of instrumental reason in companies operating within a laissez-faire market-driven economic model means, as Sennett would argue, that work becomes temporary as a method to reduce costs to maintain profitability and/or provide the greatest return to shareholders. The irony of shareholders investing in publicly traded companies that may damage the environment in which the shareholders live or take away shareholder's jobs in order to maximize profitability is

difficult to reconcile, particularly since the pressure to maximize profitability expectations is coming from the shareholders. This “flexible capitalism” encourages temporary working contracts as a result of this hyper-utilitarianism: Companies under pressure to continue to profit find the least expensive way to do so despite the anxiety they contribute to workers. The endless requirement for year over year profit leads to cutting more and more corners, often affecting the livelihood of the worker.

Offering an example of this flexible capitalism, Sennett tells us a story of bakery that, after a purchase by a large food corporation, had turned from a space which was held together by a long-term, tightly knit yet imperfect group of employees who performed all aspects of baking, to a heavily automated workshop consisting of part-time employees who performed individual steps of the baking process. This fragmented baking method had resulted in a degradation of skills, for no longer did anyone “actually know how to bake bread” (Sennett, 68). The part-time nature of the work and overlapping working hours appeared to eliminate the tight bonds that would form from groups of people spending each day’s working hours together. Before the purchase of the bakery, the former close-knit group of bakers would endure long hours in the heat, spending each day together and working through interpersonal conflicts as a single community. Sennett claims that attachments are formed as a result of these conflicts. Relationships were formed over the long term. The varying shifts and the task-oriented nature of the work of the new, temporary or part-time workers removed this sense of community as there was no opportunity for it to form. There was no longer a “shared fate” amongst the employees; they were no longer all in it together. This leads to a sense of isolation in addition to the “weak work identities” that may result when one has no opportunity to develop in one’s work (70). While there are pros and cons to the new part-time, piecemeal approach to the working environment, Sennett’s small scale example show us how Taylor’s instrumental reason has affected our relationships and added to his concept of the flattening out of our lives.⁵

⁵ Sennett’s point is supported by Alasdair MacIntyre’s insistence that practical reasoning by its nature must be “...reasoning together with others, generally within some determinate set of social relationships...The making and sustaining of those relationships is inseparable from the development of those dispositions and activities through which each is directed toward becoming an independent practical reasoner.” Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (Chicago: Open Court Press, 1999, p. 107).

Sennett also argues that the traditional work ethic is affected by the new, temporary, fragmented workplace. He notes that “the work ethic is the arena in which the depth of experience is most challenged today” (98). It is the Protestant work ethic that Sennett refers to here, which is related to Taylor’s rise of individualism and the primacy of instrumental reason. The Protestant work ethic involves both “delayed gratification” and the “self-disciplined use of our time.” However, these concepts are both challenged within the modern market-driven economy due to the temporary and piecemeal nature of the working environment and all that results from it socially (98). The precursor of this work ethic may be attributed to the need to survive. Sennett looks at early farmers and how delayed gratification was built into their trade due to the nature of the work i.e. seeding, tilling, and finally harvesting. Laziness could not be tolerated because survival depended upon working the soil. “Relentless hard work oriented toward the future” became the norm (104). Sennett highlights Weber’s example of Ben Franklin and points out that “everything in the present is treated as an instrumental means to a final destination” (105). Weber notes that Franklin’s practice of self-denial equated to a penny stashed away as a “little token of virtue” to be accumulated toward his self-worth, yet one would never reach a point of satisfaction where one accepted that they were finally worthy (105). We can see this concept mirrored in our hyper-capitalist concept of economic growth, year over year, simply for its own sake, deepening our crisis of meaning and self-worth. Looking at the Franklin example, the individual thus became responsible for his own worth; a notion which may have contributed to the focus on the individual in our culture. Arguably, this Protestant work ethic exists in modern times in significant segments of modern Western society. The heavy emphasis on obtaining self-worth from work, self-denial and sacrifice is in conflict with our current workplace environment which Sennett describes, contributing to the confusion we are experiencing today.

This crisis of meaning is also described by Karen Armstrong, who discusses the concept of “mythos” and “logos” and the confusion between belief and reason. Logos was “the pragmatic mode of thought that enabled us to control our environment and function in the world,” however, it didn’t provide meaning in people’s lives (Armstrong). It was mythos, the stories which expressed the prevailing beliefs of a culture that provided this meaning, that helped us understand the value of the virtues and presented lessons in storied formats. In *Sources of the Self*, Taylor frequently expresses concern about the

instrumental views of the naturalists, who appear to believe in the dominance of logos in their view of the world which has carried over into our culture of instrumental reason.⁶ As Armstrong points out, during the modern era, the “logos of scientific rationalism became the only valid path to truth” as we appear to have pushed mythos into the background as secondary, leaving us with an incomplete version of the truth that is lacking in depth and meaning.

Taylor’s Third Malaise: The Political Effects of Individualism and Instrumental Reason

Taylor’s third and final malaise deals with the effects of individualism and instrumental reason on a political level. He discusses the polarization that has occurred in Western culture as a result of the fragmentation of society. This fragmentation can occur due to single-issue politics that result in “members find[ing] it harder and harder to identify with their political society as a community” (Taylor, 1991, 117). Taylor equates these polarized positions on single issues to the rise of the societal norm to “settle things judicially” in order to decide upon a final position, eliminating room for compromise or contact which results in entrenching people further into their positions (117). There is also a paternal element to the tendency to use the courts to settle disputes involving deeply-held polarized beliefs in that the individuals do not ultimately have to work together to find common ground. Often these deeply-held beliefs are what Taylor refers to as hypergoods, which are “goods which not only are incomparably more important than others but provide the standpoint from which these must be weighed, judged, decided about” (Taylor, 1989, 63). An example of a hypergood may be a belief in justice. In Taylor’s explanation of hypergoods, he notes that people might consider this a singular belief “of overriding importance...that this above all others provides the landmarks for what they judge to be the direction of their lives” (62). Taylor also points out that our orientations to hypergoods are linked to how we define our identities and are frequently sources of conflict (64).

A similar argument appears in Karen Armstrong’s work cited above, who says we have shifted our religious conception of the word belief by now defining it as an

⁶ Taylor notes that the “naturalist picture” looks at “having a moral framework as an optional extra” (Taylor, 1991, 41). Although the term “naturalist” or “naturalism” lacks consensus in terms of its meaning, Taylor appears to use the term to reflect the outlook of those who adopt a strict utilitarian, reductionist view of ontology.

“acceptance of a set of doctrines.” This differs from the original notion of belief, which, Armstrong claims, was simply “a summons to action” (Armstrong). This revised concept of belief or the believer may have created further entrenchment in our positions, creating people that are farther apart morally.

The Emergence of Cultural Relativism

Taylor also appears to be showing that the emergence of cultural relativism has diminished the depth and higher meaning of our moral ideas. In the West we value the rights of the individual and believe that equality amongst people is fundamental. There is a “universal acceptance of difference” in our society according to Taylor (Taylor, 1991, 50). The idea that everyone has a right to create their own, unique life, where each person is actively seeking self-fulfillment requires us to accept differences in individual beliefs and ways of living. Taylor discusses cultural relativism as it relates to the political effects of individualism. He expresses concern with cultural relativism because it does not allow agreement on any standard. Taylor argues that we need to arrive at some agreed-upon ideas of how to treat each other. In essence, he seems to be suggesting that we have taken cultural relativism too far, leaving us with confusion about what basic human moral behaviour can be.

In *The Quality of Life*, Martha Nussbaum notes in “Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach” that there is a “turn towards relativism” (Nussbaum, 243). Relativism requires that an applied philosophical “therapy” needs to be adapted to local norms and traditions. Aristotle took an opposite approach and believed the good was universal, and defended this idea, though relativism was not an influential view at the time (243). But the relativist, when considering individual virtues, believes we cannot suggest that all virtues are normative for all societies (244). Nussbaum seems to agree that humans seek the good through the virtues, but states that basic human economic and social needs must be met for this universal good to flourish. Relativists appear to believe that we should not attempt to apply therapeutic philosophy when cultural norms do not line up with the Aristotelian virtues. Nussbaum argues that holding to tradition can “prevent ethical progress” and argues that laws need to be open to revision in order for humanity to evolve (249). While Nussbaum is pointing out the limits of relativism, she is by no means a proponent of abolishing the idea. Her liberal position suggests she is balancing the need to apply some kind of universal values methodology while still

respecting societal differences. In addition, Nussbaum is aware of our own biased perspective, as she recognizes the limitations of the philosophical practitioner by pointing out that there is “no innocent eye” (260). We are all influenced by the cultural thinking in which we have been raised.

Taylor discusses the “liberalism of neutrality,” arguing that “one of its basic tenets is that a liberal society must be neutral on questions of what constitutes a good life” (Taylor, 1991, 18). To question the chosen lives and beliefs of others can be viewed as oppressive and is therefore avoided, reducing opportunity for discussion and understanding. If we cannot discuss what a good life is however, how can we know how to live one? Taylor is not arguing against respect for value differences; he is pointing out how relativism can lead to diluted moral ideals and encourages deeper discussion as he is eager for us to learn to strive for a higher ideal:

To come together on mutual recognition of difference – that is, of equal value of different identities – requires that we share more than a belief in this principle; we have to share some standards of value on which the identities concerned check out as equal. (52)

These standards of value cannot exist however without a framework, which Taylor claims are necessary as they offer “background assumptions to our moral reactions” (Taylor, 1989, 78). Taylor’s *Sources of the Self* identifies a need for these frameworks which he claims are the basis of our morality. He argues that we need these frameworks to allow us to make sense of our lives, and to not have them puts us at risk of falling “into a life which is spiritually senseless” (18).

By pointing out the modern malaises in the Massey Lectures, Taylor is not arguing that we should dismantle the need for individual rights and freedoms; rather he is attempting to bring greater meaning to our lives and communities. To do so, he argues that we must recover “authentic moral contact with ourselves” through identifying and articulating “the higher ideal” behind forms of narcissism that have emerged as a result of the primacy of modern individualism (27, 72). This involves a high degree of awareness, arrived at through contemplation and conversation. A resurrection and reimagining of honour may assist in this recovery and help balance our societal narcissism by initially indulging it and then, diminishing it for the sake of the “greater good”.

Taylor and Honour

One of Taylor's main claims is to suggest we are valuing our morality based on what we do instead of "what is valuable in itself" (84). Taylor claims that the latter is the natural tendency of humans to be oriented toward the good. Jerome B. Schneewind, in his essay "The Misfortunes of Virtue" in *Virtue Ethics*, agrees that this tendency to orient ourselves toward the virtues is likely an inherent desire:

Virtue is natural to humans, not in the sense that it need not be learned, or that it is easy to acquire, but in the sense that virtuous agents individually, as well as the community they compose, benefit from virtue. (Schneewind, 179)

If we make the assumption that we are naturally oriented toward the good, we may ask if we are also inherently oriented toward honour. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle makes it clear that he views honour not as a virtue, but instead as a sub-virtue (Aristotle, 226). As we have seen via the perspectives of various modern authors, the view of honour in Aristotle's time differed from the complex, situation-specific definitions we hold of honour today. For example, when we think of honour today, images of military honour may come to mind, such as the Kerry and McCain examples Kohen referred to in discussing the different types of heroism. Or, we might find ourselves considering honour in a nostalgic sense, such as in the form of an of the 18th century duel. But in Aristotle's era, honour was not a private matter. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle claims that honour is "the goal of political life" and was therefore a very public pursuit. He determines that honour is a sub-virtue because of his claim that "people seem to seek honour in order to convince themselves of their own goodness" and that therefore "goodness is superior to honour" (9). Yet honour in Aristotle's time also has distinct and narrow parameters built around it:

In the field of honour and dishonour the mean is magnanimity, the excess is called a sort of vanity, and the deficiency pusillanimity. (Aristotle, 43)

One's honour was thus something that had to be publicly visible and recognized by others within the community. Today, Taylor might view honour as something that can be bestowed upon oneself, based on meeting one's own expectations according to the frameworks of virtue that we subscribe to. It does not have to be publicly shared or even known and can be deeply personal, as we will see in the example of Deputy Attorney General, Sally Yates.

Part II – Case Study: An Honour Group with an Honour Code – Acting Attorney General Sally Yates and the U.S. Department of Justice

The Yates Decision - Summary

In January 2017, U.S. Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates, a 27 year veteran of the Department of Justice, was appointed to temporarily take the place of outgoing Attorney General Loretta Lynch as the Trump administration took power. This was to be a temporary role for Yates until the new administration could appoint a permanent replacement for Ms. Lynch. Ten days into her new role as Acting Attorney General, Yates was fired by the incoming President shortly after his inauguration for declining to defend a travel ban that prevented entry into the United States from seven Muslim-majority countries. Yates stated that she did not believe the travel ban, initiated by executive order, was lawful, arguing that she “couldn’t in good conscience send Department of Justice lawyers in to defend the executive order that I did not believe was grounded in truth” (Astor). Ms. Yates’s actions and her subsequent firing resulted in intense debate across the political spectrum. Some thought she should have resigned rather than refuse to carry out the order. Many called Yates a traitor while others proclaimed her acts were heroic in nature, yet Yates herself argued that she was “just doing her job” (Astor).

During the Senate subcommittee hearing on Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election in which Yates was questioned, Republican Senator John Cornyn questioned why Yates would override the executive order to enact the travel ban, which was vetted by the Office of Legal Counsel and determined to be “lawful on its face” and “properly drafted” (“Russian Interference in 2016 Election”). Yates explained that the Office of Legal Counsel holds “a narrow function” and doesn’t look “beyond the face” of the document nor does it “take into consideration statements that were made prior to the execution of the executive order that may bear on its intent and purpose” (“Russian Interference...”). Specifically, Yates determined there was a legal obligation to consider the anti-Muslim comments of the then-Presidential candidate, Donald Trump, in making her determination. Regardless of whether Yates’s decision regarding the travel ban is viewed as correct or incorrect, Yates believed that after deliberation with her colleagues in the DOJ she was acting in accordance with the ethical standards of the

DOJ, using the law and Constitution as the fundamental documents to guide her decision. Much of the criticism of Yates included the charge that she was acting from a partisan (Democrat) perspective. However, a critical component of being a member of the Department of Justice is ensuring one's political beliefs do not interfere with one's decisions and actions. That we are now insisting that partisanship affects the actions of the DOJ speaks to the highly divisive nature of U.S. politics today. It also may indicate that there has been an erosion of trust of non-partisan institutions.

The U.S. Department of Justice - Background

The United States Department of Justice was formed in 1870 to act as an organization that would manage both criminal and civil lawsuits and prosecutions that were deemed to affect the United States. Although the Attorney General was a position created nearly a century prior, the Department of Justice has expanded throughout the years to encompass a complex structure overseeing and handling various activities as shown in the following figure below.

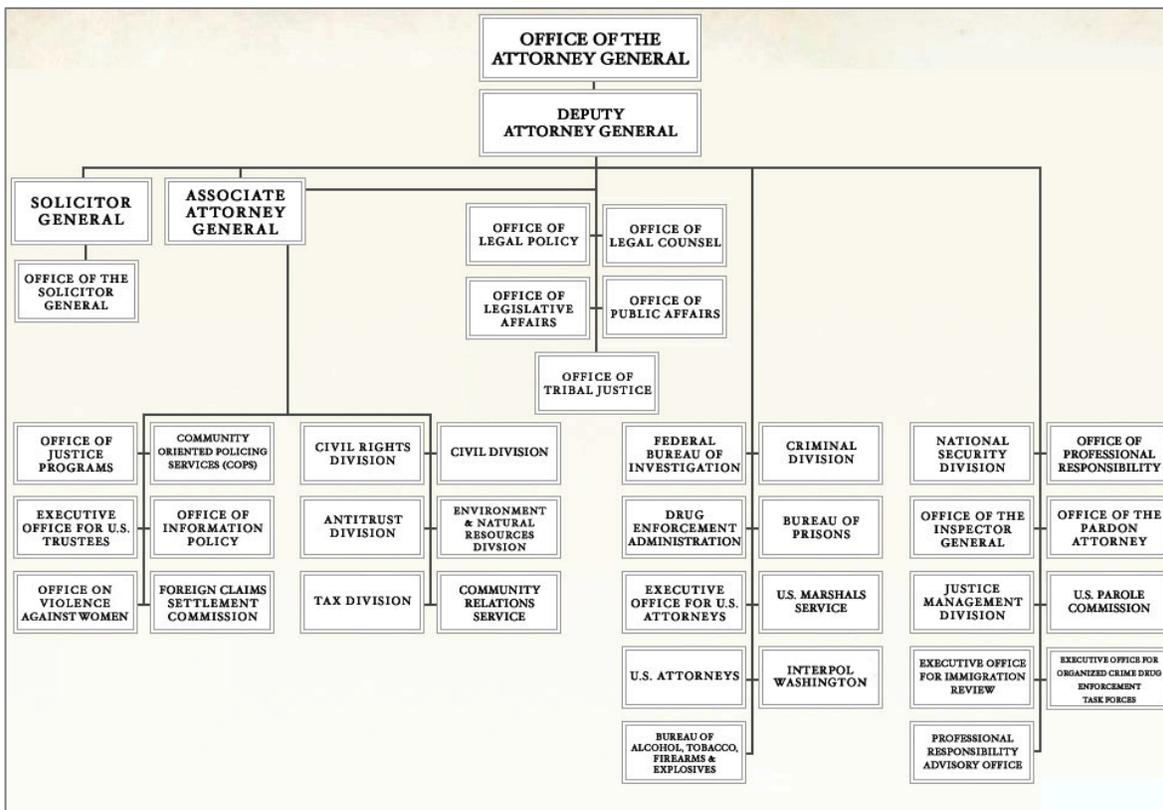


Figure 1.1 The United States Department of Justice Organizational Chart

Note: Adapted from the United States Department of Justice, www.justice.gov/agencies/chart.

The Department of Justice as an Honour Group

As a former high-ranking member of the Department of Justice, Yates's commitment to the law and Constitution could be considered part of an honour code and the DOJ itself as part of an honour group. The Yates decision to not defend the Trump Administration's travel ban was made based on an interpretation of the law and the Constitution, taking into consideration past comments made by the President prior to taking office. Whether the Yates decision was honourable depends on the reaction of the honour group, the DOJ, which remains undetermined. While it may have been honourable, labeling it as heroic may suggest a level of grandiosity that leaves out a degree of humility that could be more suitable to the situation. Heroism implies "conduct especially as exhibited in fulfilling a high purpose or attaining a noble end" ("Heroism", Merriam-Webster). This is arguably a limited, inaccurate view of what heroism is and according to the definition above, not a necessity. Yet still these classical ideas of what heroism is come to mind when the word is used. Some may view Yates's act as heroic, others would not. Was it a noble act, we wonder? While the nature of the work at the DOJ can have implications for the larger society and can be precedent setting, the concept of heroism brings to mind acts of great human sacrifice, such as putting one's own life at risk for others in a more extravagant, sometimes physical way; the Achilles-like *kléos*. However, the Odyssean endurance and suffering of *polytropos* may not necessarily suit this situation either, as the ban and subsequent action occurred quickly, and thus lacks the notion of an epic journey.

Kohen's Socratic-sacrificial version of heroism may represent the closest analogy to the Yates decision. The weight of the sacrifice is in a sense a *modern* sacrifice; that of giving up one's place within the honour group to which one belongs and serves within. But was it other-regarding as Kohen argued Socrates's sacrifice was? Yates sacrificed her long and distinguished career within the DOJ which she claims she loved being part of, as defying the Trump Administration unsurprisingly resulted in the loss of her job. The act was other-regarding in that it was made in the interest of citizens that she did not know personally – those who would have been affected by the travel ban. However, because the act of making the decision, which was ultimately determined by Yates but involved the input of her colleagues at the DOJ, was an *expectation* as part of her Acting Attorney General role, it may not have risen to the level of Kohen's Socratic heroism. Yates's life was not threatened, but she apparently had a good idea that the decision

would be viewed poorly by the new Administration. This modern situation may support Taylor's assertion that we have lost this heroic dimension, part of which involves a "sense of higher purpose" and secondly, "*something worth dying for*" (Taylor, 1991, 4). While one could argue that there was a higher purpose involved in Yates's decision, its modern context does not require her to sacrifice her life. However, the lives of many in the seven Muslim-majority countries who would have been affected by the ban may have faced significant hardship as a result of its execution. There are elements that both support and do not support the notion of a Socratic sacrifice in this complex situation.

What is most interesting and relevant to honour is Yates's reason for not resigning as a result of the executive order, as others might have been tempted to do and as her critics argue that she should have done. To resign, according to Yates, wouldn't have been doing her job, and would have resulted in her passing the legal dilemma onto the next in line at the Department of Justice:

My resignation would have protected my own personal integrity, because I wouldn't have been part of this, but I believed and I still think that I had an obligation to also protect the integrity of the Department of Justice... We're not just another law firm. There really is something different about the Department of Justice. (Lizza)

It was this decision not to resign which was not only about doing her job, it was an action that honoured the Department of Justice as Yates upheld her commitment to it. Additionally at the Senate subcommittee hearing on Russian interference, when Republican Senator John Cornyn reminded Yates that he gave her his vote at her confirmation hearing and was now disappointed that she overrode the decision of the Office of Legal Counsel, Yates reminded him that during that confirmation hearing he asked if she would uphold the law if an executive order was unlawful or unconstitutional. Yates promised Cornyn that she would. Yates also noted that, at her confirmation hearing, one of Cornyn's colleagues asked her if she would resist an executive order even if it "would reflect poorly on the Department of Justice" (Lizza). Yates acknowledged that protecting the DOJ's integrity is important. Her claim that she had an obligation to protect the DOJ's integrity is evidence of a fundamental value within the department, the idea of a commitment to the department itself yet nowhere in the following mission statement of the DOJ is this value specifically stated:

To enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to the law; to ensure public safety against threats foreign and domestic; to provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime; to seek just punishment for those guilty of unlawful behavior; and to ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans (“About DOJ”).

Additionally, the protection of the DOJ’s integrity is not specifically stated as part of the publicly stated role of the US Attorney General or the Deputy Attorney General, yet DOJ integrity remains the primary reason why she chose not to resign. Protecting the integrity of the DOJ is an unwritten value, or part of an honour code. The mission statement above outlines the primary functions of the DOJ which have the law and constitution as the foundation for its guiding principles. Since Watergate and the subsequent inception of the DOJ’s Office of Professional Responsibility, heightened sensitivity regarding professional ethics and code of conduct has been evident. Yates’s position, first as Deputy Attorney General, the second highest role within the DOJ, and later briefly as Attorney General, the highest position of authority within the department, required her conduct and behaviour to be beyond reproach and set the standard for the thousands of employees within the various branches of the Department. The commitment to DOJ integrity and justice are further evident in Yates’s following statement:

My responsibility is to ensure that the position of the Department of Justice is not only legally defensible, but is informed by our best view of what the law is after consideration of all the facts. In addition, I am responsible for ensuring that the positions we take in court remain consistent with this institution’s solemn obligation to always seek justice and stand for what is right (“Letter from Sally Yates”).

Here, the *obligation to seek justice* is of course the paramount duty. Yates claims that seeking justice is the primary role of the DOJ. Justice acts as its guide, along with a carefully considered interpretation of the Constitution. Yet one can note the seriousness underlying the comments related to impartiality and integrity. This sentiment is likely related at least in part to the past corruption within high levels of the Department during the Watergate scandal in addition to an understanding of the heightened seriousness of DOJ decisions. The DOJ is not without its past scandals, as “*charges of criminality, abuse of authority and unethical behavior*” have all allegedly occurred (The DOJ and its Lawyers, A20). Yates understands that the integrity of an institution of the highest level needs to be accountable to the very highest standard, exemplified by its

most senior people. While the law and Constitution are concrete documents that provide a basis for the pursuit of justice, they are open to interpretation within a legal context. The honour code within the DOJ is an abstract but important concept with a purpose: To create cohesiveness within the organization and ascribe dishonour to individuals who deviate from the DOJ norms. Yates's decision not to resign so that she would uphold the integrity of the DOJ matters because of what the institution stands for. Cracks in DOJ integrity could have significant implications upon the fundamental norms of the country.

James Bowman's book, *Honor: A History* argues for a return to a more traditional view of honour which will not be advocated for here, but some of his arguments are worth addressing as they relate to the Yates situation. For instance, Bowman argues that politicians need to "stress the elements of fear and respect that authority traditionally elicits", presumably to achieve the results that one desires (Bowman, 314). He states that politicians and others in positions of power are essentially ashamed of their own authority and presumably are reluctant to exhibit behaviour that would elicit such fear in others. On the contrary, here I refer to Yates as an example of a person who was in a position of authority that did not need to use fear or be ashamed of their role in order to be effective in her job. While Bowman's notion of a revival of fear in order to elicit respect is not a position taken in this paper, respect is a critical requirement of honour. For example, Yates's 27 year tenure in the DOJ in addition to her years under Obama as Deputy Attorney General awarded her a degree of respect from her DOJ colleagues. She had worked her way through the ranks of the DOJ. Had she simply catapulted from a private Attorney directly to Deputy Attorney General, the degree of respect would be diminished. By working cases within the DOJ and working alongside DOJ members, respect was earned.

Bowman is also critical of the "celebrity" idea of being "nice" and suggests that politicians have adopted this strategy when dealing with the media and the public but provides no reason why kindness is a poor strategy for the politician (Bowman, 314). He argues that there is a need to "restore a sense of respect to leaders who have grown used to contempt" (314). However, Yates's demeanor when handling difficult questions from Senators during the Senate Intelligence Hearings on Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election proves otherwise. It is possible to earn respect through rational, patient, prepared answers and responding respectfully even in the face of

several disrespectful Senators lobbing questions in her direction which were meant to unsettle and elicit a display of partisanship from Yates. In media interviews, Yates displays the same prepared, firm but kind response to questions that may challenge her.

Thus, I argue here that part of acting honourably is holding one's own line in terms of standards of behaviour and methods of communication. Once we cross these lines, we have stepped outside of our personal boundaries and set a precedent for future behaviours which may not result in our desired goals and/or uphold the commitment to the tenets of the honour group. The DOJ demands a standard of professionalism for this very reason although recent events may call these standards into question (Barrett and Zapatosky).

Much like a military organization, the DOJ is a hierarchy where honour is a foundational aspect. Included in one of the many definitions of honour offered by Oprisko is his attempt to distill a definition of honour down to "a social process whereby individuals are inscribed with value by a group" (Oprisko, 113). The "group," like the DOJ, is therefore a critical constituent of honour. If we refer to this definition in this instance, that value must be instilled by someone, then in the case of the DOJ as in other organizations this value is inculcated throughout a group by its leadership and maintained by its members. The honour group must then hold values that are shared.

Taylor's "liberalism of neutrality" discussed earlier, is absent within the DOJ because the members share a series of values as a code or specifically, expected behavioural standards. But what is the "value" embraced by members of the DOJ? As we have determined that the members are held to higher ethical standards, both personal responsibility and accountability are also greater. We can see this put in practice when DOJ members recuse themselves from investigations in which they may be perceived as having a conflict of interest. The stakes are higher as they relate to a failure to uphold these standards. It is this adherence to a higher commitment that bonds members of the DOJ together; it is "above and beyond" the responsibilities of everyday civilians. They know they are tasked with upholding the law, which at its base, has the Constitution, a revered historical document created by the founding fathers of the United States, as their guide and they understand the seriousness of this task. Referring back to Taylor's assertion that in order to bring greater meaning in our lives we must strive for a higher ideal, the DOJ is an institution that may represent a higher ideal

at its core and therefore can more easily be viewed as an honour group than some other institutions. The nature of the DOJ is that it is devoted to civil service. The concept of service may attract potential employees who have an interest in serving the public and in upholding and preserving the norms upon which the DOJ was founded.

Honour and Shame

Oprisko, referencing Speier, sets out three requirements for honour: that it be “borne by the honoree, bestowed by the honoring agent, and observed by others for honoring to be effective” (Oprisko, 5). These conditions would seem to apply to the roles of the members of the DOJ. Arguably, it is both the deep-rooted belief of its members in upholding the integrity of the DOJ and the prospect of the shame of failing to uphold its standards that provides motivation to the staff to maintain their commitment. Indeed, it is important to consider shame in the exploration of whether a revival of honour might assist in the flourishing of both individual and society because shame might be considered the other side of the coin upon which honour is prominently displayed. Oprisko enters his chapter on shame by highlighting two positions that refute the notion that shame and honour are opposites, and argues that they are “processes of a holistic virtue that represents an individual’s value within a society” (71). He quotes Frank Stewart, who argues that one of the differences between shame and honour is that shame is generally perceived as an emotion unlike honour which is not usually considered an emotion. Thus Stewart holds that this difference negates the possibility that each can be the opposite of the other. Whatever conclusion is to be drawn from these arguments, shame is an important concept when it comes to considering the usefulness of honour as one cannot be discussed without the other. We are eager to avoid shame while honour is something that we strive toward. Thus, shame acts as a kind of fear-based motivator.

The environment in which both shame and honour can flourish is an environment involving a group. As the group environment extends beyond the individual, it is therefore dependent upon relationships within the group. In *Honor and Shame*, Jean Peristany claims that one of the challenges in a very large, individualistic population is that our temporary relationships do not form the same intense bonds as smaller groups of people that may be working toward a common goal. This reflects the argument made by Sennett with his example of the situation involving the bakery workers. Neither

honour nor shame is an effective tool to help manage and motivate individual behaviour in large populations or groups because individual accountability is weak. In order for both honour and shame to show themselves, group dynamics need to be involved. When we have no one to disappoint other than ourselves, the motivation to act honourably is primarily absent, particularly if one has no solid framework of personal honour. To some degree, one could say the same about shame. Although the DOJ is a massive institution, the oath the members take in acting as civil servants and the commitment they make to the law and Constitution bind them together. Any deviation from DOJ standards of behaviour thus has reputational consequences which could affect an individual's career path. But it is also the shared experience of the members of the DOJ that helps to form this bond and makes them all accountable to one another. For one, they are all members, directly or indirectly, of the legal profession. Secondly, they are members of the civil service, in service to the American people and the democratic process.

When Sally Yates deliberated with her staff over whether to defend the Trump Administration's travel ban, perhaps she knew that her final decision would be perceived in opposite ways by members of the House, Senate, and general public – particularly in such a polarized political environment as the present. Given that Yates had spent 27 years with the DOJ, and appears to be a strong advocate of the organization's role in public service, one might guess that Yates would be dismayed by the prospect of being perceived by some as acting dishonourably, even though she stood firmly by the logic she applied to making her decision. Over her decades-long career in the DOJ, Yates had earned her position as Deputy Attorney General and the honour that accompanies the position. Honour, once earned, may set up a fear of loss, however. To lose one's honour and bring dishonour upon both oneself and an organization like the DOJ would clearly be something a DOJ member would wish to avoid. Thus, the prospect of shame resulting from dishonour could be deeply motivating to keep a member of an honour group committed to principles within that group. Honour can therefore act as a method of social control within a group. Several interviews with Yates, in which her firing is highlighted, resulted in Yates reminding the interviewer and audience that she indeed did spend 27 years at DOJ, yet she is now primarily known by the larger public for a single decision that brought her both infamy and hero-worship. The power of our views of honour and shame are evident in this example.

The above DOJ example refers to a specific honour group, however Peristany argues that honour and shame exist within all cultures. The notion of shame currently seems to be perceived as deeply damaging to the individual in popular Western culture and we are encouraged to avoid or reject it, which in many cases aids in healing. Certainly the shaming of marginalized individuals within a culture to express disgust or opposition can be profoundly harmful, such as hatred toward the LGBT community. However, in situations where one is ashamed of behaviour that, for example, has been hurtful toward others, or has broken the trust of a friend in need, what we do with the experience of shame can vary as it can serve a purpose. For example, the intensity of the experience of shame is strong, and the desire for redemption from past wrongs may instill a powerful drive in some individuals to make amends.

Returning to Bowman, it is worth mentioning his perspective that “honor...can never be compatible with any serious degree of egalitarianism,” (Bowman, 312). According to Bowman it is this desire to be perceived as equal to others which is purportedly the source of this shame he argues our politicians are exhibiting today. He argues that this egalitarian shame would have to be removed in order for us to experience the true nature of honour. By “true nature,” one wonders if Bowman is referring to the Homeric view of honour rather than the more modern, self-sacrificial view of honour that involves the well-being of the community. Regardless, adopting this old perspective would be to return to an earlier time and would not be particularly useful in an attempt to resurrect honour to serve both individual and larger community in our modern era. Taylor does argue however that one reason for our modern focus on our individuality and identity is due to the “collapse of social hierarchies” which he claims was once “the basis for honour,” so there is some corroborating evidence to support Bowman’s claim about egalitarianism (Taylor, 1991, 46).

Although, as Peristany claims, shame is universal this does not suggest the human response to it is necessarily identical. It varies across cultures. Nussbaum points out that shame is more pronounced in some individuals due to societal perceptions of specific groups, such as those who display physical abnormalities. Nussbaum states, members of these groups “...wear their shame on their faces...social behaviour tells them every day that they ought to blush to show themselves in the company of the ‘normal’” (Nussbaum, 2006). Nussbaum also discusses, from a psychoanalytic perspective, the origins of shame, beginning with an explanation of the “omnipotence of

the infant” and how this “blissful totality” of the infant is interrupted by the experience of birth, requiring the infant to accept that it must now depend upon the outside world to ensure its survival (265). Further, she argues that the dependence that the child develops on external entities fosters both love and anger, and that this anger relates to a “primitive shame” that is a result of this dependence. Nussbaum suggests this shame is actually derived from the need to be in control and a result of feeling incomplete:

Shame involves the realization that one is weak and inadequate in some way in which one expects oneself to be adequate. Its reflex is to hide from the eyes of those who will see one’s deficiency, to cover it. (270)

Nussbaum examines this perspective on shame by delving into gender differences, referring to the work of Nancy Chodorow, who writes from a Freudian perspective. Chodorow notes that many cultures require that males need nothing and no one and are never to behave like children. This requirement, Chodorow claims, stems from the view that any dependency upon the mother is to be avoided. In order to move past this dependence, one must separate and become self-sufficient. Chodorow highlights a clear gender distinction between males and females by noting that males develop shameful feelings about their “human capabilities for receptivity and play” (272). While an investigation of gender differences as they relate to shame and honour (or whether they relate to honour) is beyond the scope of this paper, it is useful to examine Chodorow’s research as it offers insight into one aspect of how and why shame is formed.

Regardless of gender, this perspective on the early development of shame may provide us with an understanding of why some people can be so powerfully drawn to honour: To potentially avoid or distance oneself from shame. Nussbaum notes that shame can be useful, although she also refers to the experience of shame as “subtle” and claims it can act as a great motivator toward goals and spur us on to create plans for their attainment. Arguably however, shame is *not* subtle, at least publicly. Instead, it can be perceived as a somewhat solitary emotion but one that can also be an overwhelming, driving force in the lives of some individuals. Consider, for example, the drive for redemption in someone who engages into volunteering as a path toward self-forgiveness. As well, the avoidance of shame in some groups is an extremely powerful drive, as Peristany points out in his examination of its impact upon various cultures. In Peristany’s anthropological examination of a Cypriot village in the 1960s, one’s

behaviour is examined at every turn because “all evaluations affect the standing of the family in the village” (Peristany, 179). This avoidance may then represent the idea that the underlying fear of shame acts as a motivator. The subtle experience of shame Nussbaum refers to may be seen in the lack of overt discussion of shame (and honour), for as Peristany notes:

Those people who make the most use of the words ‘honour’ and ‘shame’...are not those whose lives are most strictly governed by the principles which those words express. (Peristany, 81)

In modern society, it would appear that shame is stronger in some groups and virtually absent in others. Consider the elite soldier who operates under a strict code of behaviour and ethics within his or her unit. This code exists not only due to military history, pride or nostalgia; it is in place as a method for ensuring the safety of the unit and for acting as a tool to ensure goals are met. In this instance, shame is in a sense institutionalized, acting as a method to ensure soldiers meet the standards required of them. For an individual to adhere to such a code requires a high degree of both motivation and self-control, particularly in the face of hardship. It is interesting to ponder whether those with a very strong need for control would also score highly on feelings of shame as well as desire for honour. Honour and shame are deeply ingrained in some individuals as well as cultures and groups, but they are often silent cultural norms, not discussed openly but implicitly understood by all. This suggests they are highly influential concepts that people may go to great lengths to both avoid (shame) and achieve (honour), the latter pursuit acting to avoid the deeply unpleasant feelings and social disapproval of the former. The question is therefore whether shame is a stronger motivator than the desire to achieve some kind of honour. In essence, shame may be the underlying motivator while honour may be the redemptive prize.

Addressing the Dark Side of Honour

Just as the potential for moral fanaticism is possible, so can the pursuit of many of the virtues, or sub-virtues, be taken too far. Honohan addresses this by discussing the “corrupt mirror” which shows itself as “false glory,” offering Julius Caesar as an example of a man who pursued “extravagant schemes with no clear aim or limit” (Honohan, 56). Honohan reminds us that Hobbes warned us about honour and men,

knowing that they may aggressively pursue honour and fame, and that men can have a “dangerous passion for honour” (66). Presumably, this may lead to irrational actions.

There are two issues that create reservations about the idea of honour today: First, what we value is based on a limited, biased notion of what is valuable, and these notions are often based on economics. For example, society tends to reward athletes in one sport over another based on the marketability and economic viability of each sport; for instance, ice hockey versus field lacrosse. Secondly, there is a great deal of tradition and expectation associated with the idea of honour, and resistance to change is common when confronting what we perceive as valuable and traditional. Consider holiday “traditions,” for example, and how eager people are to ensure each tradition is carefully repeated and passed on to the next generation. Or, consider the resistance women have experienced in recent history as they have entered previously male-dominated professions.

Entrenched societal views can limit the possibility of an individual to pursue honour. For example, Honohan reminds us that Aristotle believed political equality should only take place amongst what he considered equals, therefore women, children, slaves and men who were manual labourers were considered unworthy of political participation. Aristotle’s justification for eliminating anyone from these categories from participation included the belief that “virtue requires relative prosperity” and that “education makes citizens aware of their interdependence” (28). The former belief thus removed slaves and men who performed manual labour from participation, while women and children were disregarded due to their inability to obtain an education. In Aristotle’s time a proportion of the population was unable to pursue acts that would provide them with the reward of honour as society was heavily stratified. These inequalities were built into ancient Greek culture. While our laws in the West now allow and require a much greater degree of citizen participation and these inequities have been *lawfully* removed, we continue to grapple with the remaining subtle biases and influence of power that still restricts some segments of the population from achieving as much as others who may start from a place of greater advantage. One blatant example of social inequality and the continuing influence of power and money is the recent scandal involving wealthy parents buying their child’s entrance into prestigious universities (Medina et al). Sometimes family expectations set up children for achievement. Other times there is no expectation whatsoever. Consider the fifth child of six who is accepted into University when no one

for three generations has ever attended. Imagine as well the child of a long line of lawyers. The expectation to achieve a degree of honour exists in the latter example and the chances of this achievement are likely more probable than the former due to role-modeling and anticipation that one can succeed because other family members have made it appear normal.

Some acts performed in the name of honour are deeply troubling. In Bowman's *Honor: A History*, the author discusses how cultural honour in some non-Western regions is difficult to comprehend. Bowman refers to the murder of rape victims performed by those in power as an apparent act of punishment. In the West, argues Bowman, often we assume those who murdered the victim for the act believe the victim consented. This does not mean consent is viewed from a Western perspective as justification for the victim's punishment however. Bowman seems to be suggesting that a victim consenting somehow allows us to understand the thinking processes of those who murdered the victim, in a culture that blames the victim. However, Bowman argues that this is an incorrect assumption, as the real point is that cultures performing these kinds of act do not view consent as relevant at all. According to Bowman, the perspective of these honour cultures is that the victim's honour is affected whether consent was provided or not. Her honour is not hers – it is that of her husband and father. Further to this, the point is not that consent is irrelevant, but that the woman is irrelevant, or at very least considered less than or less worthy than the husband or father:

A woman's honor normally belongs to her husband or father, and the dishonor of any sexual contact outside marriage, whether consensual or otherwise, falls upon him exactly alike, since it shows him up before the world as a man incapable of either controlling or protecting her. (Bowman, 18)

Earlier, I discussed Taylor's notion that the emergence of cultural relativism has been a factor contributing to the three modern malaises. The above example is one that shows not only the vastly different moral positions of diverse cultures, but also the entrenchment of these deeply held views. The origin of these diverse views shows why they are so embedded in our thinking. As Taylor notes, "autonomy has a central place in our understanding of respect" (Taylor, 1989, 12).

It is difficult to imagine how we may move past beliefs that are steeped in tradition and honour, particularly when those beliefs are based on deeply ingrained, unjust principles. For example, Sharon R. Krause in *Liberalism with Honor* explores the American South in the 19th century, and notes that an antiquated view of honour, which had at its core the notion of physical proficiency, exerted itself. Krause argues that the prevalence of the duel, using guns, exemplified this idea in addition to undesirable characteristics of honour.

Both the emphasis on external displays of status and the concrete rather than principled character of honor's codes, including the centrality of physical prowess, exacerbated the potential for superficiality and unruliness implicit in honor. (Krause, 126)

Additionally, Krause informs us that at the time of the Civil War in the United States, "...southern honor had coalesced around the defining ideology of a slaveholding society" (126). She provides a deeply disturbing quote from Alexander Stephens, who in 1861 was vice president of the new Confederacy. In his speech, Stephens rejected key aspects of the Declaration of Independence that involved natural rights, claiming that they are based on an assumption of equality amongst all people. Stephens rejects this idea, claims racial superiority and states that slavery is a natural condition. Krause's main purpose in highlighting this example is to show us how honour may "serve deeply unjust principles" and states the following as a kind of antidote to honour "going bad" (127):

...honor is incomplete as an account of moral and political agency in a good regime. Any liberal form of honor presupposes the background condition of a basically (if not perfectly) just society ordered by liberal institutions and committed to the principles of liberty and justice for all. Similarly, liberal forms of honor must coexist with impartial reason so that the moral content of codes of honor can be critically evaluated. (127)

As Krause notes, "...The idea of ruling over others has deep roots in the tradition of honor" (128). Krause's requirement that we ensure we include impartial reason and critical evaluation in the development and maintenance of our modern honour groups and application of honour codes must continue to be approached seriously.

Part III – Honour as a Method Toward Flourishing

Taylor’s malaises, and more pertinently, the rise of individualism and the subsequent move away from an emphasis on the larger community, suggest we may need to encourage greater civic engagement. Virtuous, ordinary citizens may be needed to increase participation in community matters in order to avoid passively handing over control to those who would ascend to and abuse power. Secondly, a paradigm shift toward the needs of the many may encourage us to consider the future impact our behaviours may have upon the community, animals, and ultimately, the planet. Here however, the scope of this project allows for focus only on the former.

The strong honour code of the DOJ suggests many of its members hold a passionate desire to serve. And this desire, I would argue, can be equated to a desire for deeper meaning or something larger than oneself, which Taylor suggests we’ve lost. Individuals such as members of the DOJ, or those who may engage in work that is in direct service to others, are likely fewer in number than a strong democratic society requires to result in a flourishing community in the Aristotelian sense. The challenge is in how to reach beyond those with this desire to serve and cast a wider net. A modern, redefined honour may act as a method for combining the individual reward that we desire in our self-identified society with concern for and subsequent action within the greater community, but how? It is not enough to simply motivate people to adopt the virtues and act upon them. The reward of honour may encourage this desire to serve.

Turning now to Aristotle’s virtue of friendship as a method for fostering civic participation may provide the motivation to reach over to additional, ordinary citizens and engage them. In Book VIII in *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle argues that friendship is “a kind of virtue, or implies virtue...” and he devotes an entire section of his book to this theme (Aristotle, 200). He also refers to friendship as one of life’s necessities, suggesting that nothing would be of value in one’s life if friendship were not a part of it. Howard J. Curzer notes that, in Aristotle’s view, friendships are based on goals which allow them to be classified (Curzer, 248). Aristotle refers to three types of friendship in Book VIII:

- Friendship based on utility
- Friendship based on pleasure

- Friendship based on goodness of character

While there are various sub-types of friendships such as those that are inequitable in nature (i.e. “elder to younger” or “ruler to subject”), these three represent the main types in Aristotle’s discussion (Aristotle, 211). The nature of a friendship based upon utility is one where each party aims to obtain something from the other; a kind of good that one wants. A friendship based on pleasure is one in which each party gains pleasure from the other. What both types have in common is that their nature is focused on what the self can obtain, whether it is a good of some kind or pleasure. Aristotle argues that both of these kinds of friendships are impermanent because once the object (utility-type) or pleasure is no longer there or the nature of it changes, the basis of the friendship disappears and thus the friendship ends. It is Aristotle’s third kind of friendship, which is friendship based upon the ideal of good character, which would seem most receptive to his ideas of honor. This, he suggests, is the “perfect friendship,” and is usually long-lasting because what binds the friends together is their goodness of character and shared virtue. In this kind of friendship, both have an interest in the well-being of the other but not for reasons that are merely self-serving; instead, the interest is authentic because of the goodness of each party. This type of friendship is also both pleasurable and useful. Aristotle claims that, since goodness tends to be a part of what someone is, the friendship is unlikely to change, and thus the friendship endures. However, these kinds of friendships are also infrequent as they take time to form, and during that lengthy time the parties develop trust through experiencing hardships together, which serve to build strong bonds. Familiarity forms in that each party becomes confident in knowing the other will not do anything that would cause harm to either of them. This familiarity is a foundation for trust. Finally, Aristotle determines that this kind of friendship above all requires love.

Aristotle also notes that those who are not good can form friendships, but that these friendships are based upon what each party receives from one another, pleasure or some form of useful good, and not upon what each individual gives for the sake of genuine care and love for the other. As Aristotle claims that only those that are good can become friends in this enduring way, the factor differentiating the individuals involved in this kind of friendship from those in a non-character type is their goodness and virtue that they choose to share with each other. If good character is necessary for this type, we can now question whether honour is a component of character-based friendship.

Aristotle discusses the role of honour in friendship during his discussion of inequalities amongst friends in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII-8. He argues that the majority of people prefer to be loved rather than to give love, and equates the idea of being loved with being honoured. He notes that people who wish to be honoured by those who are “in positions of authority” are eager to gain something from them while those who are honoured by “good men” believe that because a person of good character is honouring them, they reaffirm to themselves that they are also of good character, which is desirable (Aristotle, 213). Here Aristotle seems to equate honour with a kind of love, which actually appears not to be love but instead a kind of admiration. He notes that the love in which “people delight for its own sake” is something beyond honour as it seems to require that we offer love rather than only receiving love from another (213). He effectively uses the example of a mother’s love for her child by noting that a mother is often satisfied with knowing her child is well and flourishing even if the love of that child is not necessarily returned to her. It is in this section of *Nicomachean Ethics* that Aristotle’s view of honour as a sub-virtue is highlighted. Here we can also see an archaic view of honour rather than the more modern view that has arisen since the Enlightenment.

In a character-type friendship, it is likely true that we are receiving love and admiration from someone of good character that we admire and respect. Therefore we are being honoured by our friend and this reaffirms our good character back to us. But this admiration is not inherently negative. We are also offering the same to the friend that we love. Perhaps due to the vision of classical honour in Aristotle’s time, the role of honour in this kind of friendship is understated. Referring back to Olsthoorn’s modern view of honour as a kind of internalized code of ethics, this exchange of affirming one’s character between friends creates a kind of behavioural standard which both parties silently vow to uphold. The friends engage in an ethical journey of sorts: an Aristotelian path of encouraging each other to develop their moral potential throughout their lives and to flourish as human beings. As the pursuit of the virtues requires action, as Aristotle claims, the friendship is a theatre for that action to occur. While the classical view of honour may involve something we publicly receive to raise our esteem in the eyes of others, this kind of shared honour code is an internal framework that raises our self-esteem and that of our friend that we love. Curzer’s overview of Aristotle and the virtues highlights why friendship may offer a way to foster civic responsibility:

Although [friendships] are entered into for self-interested reasons, once formed, character friendships dispose friends to seek the common good unselfishly, sacrificing for each other when necessary. (Curzer, 10)

The honour apparent within this kind of character-type of friendship can act as a method for motivating individuals to engage in civic duties, contributing to the benefit of the larger community. The shared ethical framework that friends maintain serves as reinforcement of acts of virtue as well as ensures that each individual remains true to that framework. Self-sacrifice is also a natural condition of love in this kind of friendship, for each party inherently wants the other to flourish. It is this condition of self-sacrifice that, through the nature of these friendships, encourages others to act as these friendships multiply. Arguably, even a friendship based upon utility or pleasure, particularly when part of a group of friends, holds the capacity for people to act honourably and benefit the whole. An example may be the coming together of a group of friends to support one that is unwell; even those that are not in character-type friendships may exhibit self-sacrificial behaviour in this instance rather than risk the shame of dishonour and disapproval by their peers.

Honour and the Desire to “Serve”.

The influence of peers upon human behaviour is powerful and it is useful to examine why from an anthropological perspective. The social pressure that exists within peer groups may provide insight into why some people are drawn toward service within their community. Sebastian Junger in *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging*, notes that during catastrophic events, such as wars or disasters, “self-interest gets subsumed into group interest because there is no survival outside of group survival” (Junger, 66). We voluntarily and unconsciously let go of our need for independence and our group dependency becomes all that is important. In life-threatening situations, tight bonds are formed in part due to the intensity of the experience. One needs only to think of specialized military units to comprehend the notion of shared experience in critical situations. Junger argues that these bonds are absent in modern life and missed by many, which may reflect Taylor’s notion of a flattening out of our lives and experiences in our modern individualistic lives. Perhaps the relative ease of our Western lives has resulted in this greater sense of individualism and thus non-reliance upon each other. I refer here to “relative” ease only as it applies to members of society that are capable of supporting and caring for themselves. While government mandated pensions and social

supports exist for those that need them, they may act as a fragile replacement for other, more traditional support networks such as family and close community, which may be weakening. As social beings however, we crave and appear to need a sense of community and the bonds that form as a result. We bond with others and come to care deeply about these connections, the depth of which drives some people into service to others.

Junger argues that the human drive toward tribalism is rooted in our communal evolutionary history. He explores the fascinating, deep bonds that form amongst war veterans and attributes the high level of post-traumatic stress disorder within this group to the loss of these relationships. The relationships that form amongst these kinds of tight knit groups may provide an environment in which selfless acts are rewarded. The reward then serves as reinforcement for behaviour of this nature, providing further motivation for individuals to engage in service. Junger refers to Christopher Boehm's anthropological work, claiming that "much of the evolutionary basis for moral behaviour stems from group pressure" (Junger, 27). He notes that while negative behaviour by an individual is punished, the opposite is also true, and "good" acts are rewarded by the group. Boehm states that the individual performing the good act is not only rewarded "by group approval but also by an increase of dopamine and other pleasurable hormones in the blood," and suggests this hormone release can lead to acts of self-sacrifice (27). As to the origins of these corrective processes, Boehm argues that the group pressure to manage aggressive, bullying behaviour by an individual may have prompted the evolution of our conscience:

The killing, wounding, social exclusion, and social avoidance of aggressive (or cunning) deviants who do not rein in their predatory tendencies could have influenced earlier human gene pools, affected them so profoundly that a unique human conscience was able to evolve. (Boehm, 165)

The behaviour of individuals helping to manage these bullies then not only could serve the individual via social rewards, but the act itself would help maintain or reestablish balance within the community. An honourable act, perhaps made in sacrifice for the well-being of others, may therefore be linked to the anthropological origins of good behaviour.

While Boehm's anthropological research may provide a biological reason for self-sacrifice and the desire to serve others, we are still left wondering what the non-biological reasons for it are and whether there are more complex motivations at play. In looking deeper into this need to serve that some so strongly exhibit we turn to Kant. Iris Murdoch highlights a fascinating footnote in Kant's *Grundelgung* in which she discusses his reference to *achtung*, or "respect for moral law" (Murdoch, 102). First, she discusses Kant's rational, responsible, moral man of freedom and the primacy of human choice and asks where we might find the emotions within this view. She refers to the example of *achtung* to show the part the emotions play:

This emotion is a kind of suffering pride which accompanies, though it does not motivate, the recognition of duty. It is an actual experience of freedom (akin to the existentialist Angst), the realization that although swayed by the passions we are also capable of rational conduct. (102)

This freedom is terrifying to us, hence Murdoch's reference to existential angst. But beneath this suffering pride lies something approaching the desire for transcendence. Murdoch argues that Kant's *achtung* actually represented a development in his philosophy which was influenced by the romantic era in which death was "transformed into the idea of suffering" (102). This suffering took on a kind of idealized emotional state of beauty, tinged with sweet sorrow, and perhaps involved the sublime. Murdoch calls this transformation a "cult of pseudo-death and pseudo-transience" (103).

When the neo-Kantian Lucifer gets a glimpse of real death and real chance, he takes refuge in sublime emotions and veils with an image of tortured freedom that which has been rightly said to be the proper study of philosophers. (103)

The existential angst inherent in the unusual joint satisfaction and discomfort of suffering pride is too much to bear. Facing the sublime terrifies us, so we desire to transcend. This is reminiscent of Taylor's notion of a fear of meaninglessness.

Similarly, Susan Wolf in her article, "Moral Saints," juxtaposes the reactions of two types of Saints, the "*Rational Saint*" and the "*Loving Saint*," to the denial of worldly pleasures. The Rational Saint, Wolf claims, denies worldly pleasures out of a "pathological fear of damnation" on the one hand, or "an extreme form of self-hatred" on the other (Wolf, 84). Alternatively, Wolf claims that the Loving Saint simply has no

attachment to these pleasures. Her position is derived from the observation that the Loving Saint happily and easily foregoes the pleasures that life offers and she therefore determines that the Loving Saint's ability to experience joy is simply missing. Perhaps it is reasonable to acknowledge that, if the Rational Saint's denial is driven by either fear or self-loathing, that a code or method of behaviour that is perceived as "good" can serve the individual. Good, in this instance, would refer to turning away from worldly pleasures thus maintaining one's commitment to what has been determined to be moral behaviour. This might be perceived as a sort of combination of the virtue of temperance and the avoidance of Aristotle's notion of incontinence. If the motivation is self-hatred, turning away from pleasure may provide the Rational Saint with a way to assuage guilt or act as a method to attempt to develop self-worth through the *suffering pride* of restraint. But given the belief in the Divine, heaven, hell and the afterlife by the Rational Saint, Kant's existential angst may be replaced for him with a basic fear of God. The motivation for the Loving Saint differs. If Wolf's claim that the Loving Saint is simply not interested in or drawn to pleasures that would normally tempt others, then we may wonder why he or she would be attracted to adhering to a moral code in the first place. We may wonder if this is moral fanaticism exerting itself. We can understand the appeal of service to the Rational Saint, but what has lured the Loving Saint to an ascetic life is a mystery that Eastern philosophy might provide insights into. Perhaps a deep reverence for God is enough to draw in the Loving Saint, who accepts the sacrifices willingly as a requirement of the expression of that love and devotion.

Pride and Honour

Given the parallels between pride and honour, closer examination of these two concepts is warranted. Recall that in Part I, Olsthoorn was quoted as stating that honour is a reward for virtuous behaviour, while Oxford's primary definition of pride is "a feeling or deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements, the achievements of those with whom one is closely associated, or from qualities or possessions that are widely admired" ("Pride", Oxford). Honour may also be able to represent a feeling, but included with that feeling is something that one specifically receives: the reward. This reward may be recognition, either in the form of a physical symbol or simply verbal recognition, or it may be in the form of esteem offered by others. Pride may then be solely the feeling accompanying the receipt of the reward or

recognition. There clearly exists a relationship between the two terms, particularly as our modern concept of honour has shifted away from the classical sense, for in the ancient view of honour a degree of public recognition is a critical component.

Whether we lean toward Boehm's anthropological explanation of the reward for good acts or Murdoch's reference to existential angst, an understanding of the desire to serve is complex. Particularly in the event of silent sacrifice, where there is no audience, no glory or spectacle, might people experience suffering pride. It may be that without an audience, the person engaged in the duty then has to bestow honour upon him or herself and then this internalized kind of pride arises. Perhaps this need to serve that some are drawn to is at least in part motivated by this concept of suffering pride and the underlying existential angst. This may offer insights into why honour may hold such appeal to some and why we wish to act honourably, for to feel a sense of self-sacrifice in the face of performing difficult duties may allow us to feel an internal sense of pride and reaffirm our self-worth. Honour acts as a tool in this instance, a reward on the path toward what may be a futile attempt to transcend.

Honour as a Useful Component of a Personal Set of Ethics

Aristotle's notion of friendship based on character has been discussed as a method for living a virtuous life based on a kind of shared ethical development or framework. In Milbank and Pabst's, *The Politics of Virtue*, the connection amongst honour, virtue and friendship is evident:

The highest outcome of virtuous practice is the reciprocal giving that is friendship, upon which...the human city is founded. In this way inner virtue is inseparable from external, manifest honour. Like justice, it must be seen to be performed if it is really to abide. (Milbank and Pabst, 7)

In Aristotelian form, Milbank and Pabst here recognize the value of friendship of character, but also that virtue must involve action for it to be authentic. But what is most intriguing about this theory is, by linking inner virtue to external honour, the authors offer support for the notion that honour can act as a personal, private code, or framework for virtuous action. While there appears to be a general consensus that honour requires some kind of externally-facing reward or public recognition, I argue that the requirement of recognition does not have to be as grandiose as we may expect. While the adoption of personal honour can elicit respect from others and benefit the larger group, it is

through simple virtuous action generated by one's internal framework of honour that this subtle public recognition can be seen. To pursue honour as a private "code" or set of ethics, we need to consider what will motivate individual citizens toward adopting it. We have explored this method within the DOJ; however, this is a long-standing institution that includes a built-in honour code, the social pressures to follow this code, and the likelihood that it attracts those with a willingness to serve. To elicit the ordinary person to adopt their own code, three methods for creating the psychological environment that allows for the formation of a personal set of ethics follows: Nussbaum's therapeutic philosophy, Murdoch's notion of "unselfing", and Neiman's argument in favour of education.

Contemporary philosopher Martha Nussbaum's early area of study involved the Greek Hellenistic philosophers, the Stoics, Epicureans, and to a lesser extent the Skeptics, all of whom were interested in healing human suffering and improving the lives of people. In Nussbaum's opening chapters of *The Therapy of Desire*, this concept of healing is discussed as a key tenet of Hellenistic thought in addition to the enabling of human flourishing or eudaimonia (Nussbaum, 15). The notion of philosophy as therapeutic was a deviation from the "detachment" of the "academic moral philosophy" of the early Greek thinkers (4). While Greek philosophical thought had in common a commitment to reason, Nussbaum questions why reason is thought to be a means to allow humans to be "free and flourish" (6). What appealed to Nussbaum about the Hellenistic schools of thought was the combination of logic in addition to compassion, and not just logic alone (9). It is Nussbaum's view that although there existed a "mistrust of the passions," among leading philosophers of the time, they too must be scrutinized and not pushed down, as the Stoics suggested. Both "desire and thought" must be transformed for humans to flourish, according to both Aristotle and the Hellenistic philosophers (11). Hellenistic society was viewed as "not in order as it is" (25). Hellenistic ethics attempted to "combine immersion with critical distance" when addressing societal problems (28). It is this Hellenistic therapeutic thought that Nussbaum equates with a "medical model" of philosophy, as opposed to a limited Platonic model of primarily reason, or an approach based on "ordinary beliefs," which comprise limiting beliefs such as religious fear or an obsession with economic gain. The Hellenistic philosophers believed these were "an impediment to flourishing" (32).

However, the basic Platonic assumption that good exists is a common thread in all three models.

Murdoch, in “The Sovereignty of Good over Other Concepts” from *Virtue Ethics*, discusses metaphor used in philosophical argument and the use of beauty to move us toward the freedom to understand reality clearly. Murdoch’s argument may assist us in moving past what appears to be an excessive, modern narcissism toward a less self-centred way of living. She argues that ethics are “a hypothesis about good conduct and how this should be achieved” (100). Her discussion of “unselfing,” how the observation and experience of beauty, particularly in nature, can help us move out of the self-centred and into what she calls “unpossessive contemplation,” is an intriguing way to suggest we approach ethical questions. There seems to be a subtle connection between this belief and the Stoic idea to minimize or perhaps manage the passions. Murdoch also draws art into her conversation with us, suggesting that art can “transcend selfish and obsessive limitations of personality” (106). By observing beauty then, we transcend ourselves. Murdoch seems to suggest this is a desirable state so we can clearly apply logic and reason to our ethical decisions. Study or intellectual pursuits are also championed by Murdoch as another way to transcend our selfish desires, so that we may “perceive justly” (108). She attempts then to explain “the good” as a transcendent reality itself, suggesting that this transcendence brings us “into the world” rather than away from it (110). Murdoch references Plato’s idea of ascension through the four stages. As we ascend, reality becomes clearer to us. The parallels to Eastern Buddhism are also evident, in particular as Murdoch suggests that freedom comes from the overcoming of one’s self (112). Returning to Aristotle’s notion of a definition of the good, Murdoch suggests it is complex and impossible. Noting that Plato used the sun to represent the concept of “good,” Murdoch, using metaphor, reminds us that it is difficult to look into.

The disciplined and rigorous thinking of the authors mentioned in this project may in time produce change in society, but the point of this section is to propose what can motivate this change, particularly to the everyday citizen. Returning to the virtues, Susan Neiman suggests in *Moral Clarity* that virtues that produce “caution,” like tolerance and skepticism, are borne of “disillusionment and worry” (Neiman, 121). Neiman suggests these are ill suited to motivate people to act, and to truly motivate, we must be emotionally moved. The parallels with Murdoch’s ideas about beauty and

unselfing are apparent. Neiman argues that ignorance can occur as a result of fundamentalism and supports the idea of knowledge as a way to transcend this ignorance. This belief has its roots in Plato, who believed in the connection between beauty and “the good,” a belief Neiman sees reflected in Homer’s *Odyssey* (117). Alternatively, Neiman reminds us of what dictators have seized upon throughout history: that the way to control a population is to convince them that humanity is brutal, that danger lurks around the corner, and that only a powerful leader can maintain order, all of which sounds familiar in the age of the Trump Administration. The notion that goodness moves people more than that which promotes caution is therefore important, and supports the argument that the cultivation of the virtues that maintain the good is necessary to produce a flourishing society. To revive a modern form of Aristotelian virtues re-establishes the primacy of “the good” and may recover the sense of awe that we have lost and may bring into balance the needs, desires, and rights of the individual with the needs of the larger community. As Aristotle would have recommended, our responsibility is therefore to strive toward a fulfillment and flourishing of our own lives in order to positively affect the larger whole.

A Personal Experience of Honour

Thus far in this project I have looked at the various views of honour, both ancient and modern, and explored how honour is “practiced” via the Yates example within the DOJ, a strongly hierarchical organization with well-established traditions and expectations for its members. Part III explored several broad ideas about how honour might be put into practice within our modern Western society. To bring this project to a close, I will now turn toward an unorthodox path and attempt to describe a personal example of how a modern conception of honour through a community group has affected a single individual’s day to day actions: my own.

Five years ago, I began the search for a gentler activity to engage in as a result of the physical challenges that had arisen in mid-life. My desire was also to find an activity I could continue to pursue in the future. Years of endurance sports such as cycling and distance running in addition to a harsh encounter between my bike and a car had left me thin, weak and dealing with the day to day challenges of an atypical form of chronic migraine that produced various neurological and vestibular symptoms. I had always had an interest in the “art” of martial arts, having trained for a few years as a young adult, but in a harder, fighting-focused style of karate called *Kyokushin* which seemed somehow to be missing a key element I was looking for. Having left *Kyokushin* training to engage in other sports, the intrigue with the mystery of martial arts never left me, and I returned to a more traditional style in my mid-to late forties. The style is Okinawan in origin, based upon self-defense, and is practiced all over the world. It is known as Shotokan karate, and the organization I belong to is called the International Shotokan Karate Federation, or ISKF. It was here I found an opportunity for individual development within a supportive community made up of a diverse group of people. Surprisingly, I also slowly discovered an honour code within this honour group, which seeped into my daily life.

While ISKF clubs vary in their emphasis on forms, fighting and training styles, the moves (*kihon*), forms (*kata*) and sparring (*kumite*) are universal within all ISKF places of training (*dojo*) and all based upon the same teaching of its founder, Gichin Funakoshi. The various clubs within traditional Shotokan karate offer a community, while allowing for the individual development which we are indoctrinated into pursuing, particularly in relatively young North America. The tenets and behavioural expectations of the

International Shotokan Karate Federation provide an atmosphere that lends itself to the pursuit of honour in our daily lives. Rooted in the Japanese tradition of *budo* (loosely and arguably translated as the martial way), Shotokan karate is not only a practice, it becomes a way of life for the practitioner (Lowry, 3). While the concept of *budo* may have been Westernized and likely deeply romanticized, it still offers a framework for human behaviour both independently and within a group depending upon its interpretation.

The Practice of Karate in the Dojo

In order to fully understand the influence of karate, the practice needs to be explained. The traditions of ISKF involve deep respect for training, senior students (*Sempai*), and the *dojo* leader and teacher (*Sensei*). The *dojo* itself is a place of training, thus entering into a *dojo* first involves bowing at the door as a sign of respect and readiness. When *Sensei* calls the class to order, all students will line up by rank earned, which is reflected by the colour of the belt the student wears with his or her *gi*, or traditional white cotton uniform. The students kneel in a horizontal line, and the *Sensei* assumes the same position, kneeling across from the students. White belts are the lowest ranked (9th *kyu* or rank) through to the coveted black belt, of which there are ten degrees or *dan* ranks. The most senior black belt, or highest *dan* rank will sit at the far end of the line, ahead of all black belts and lower, orderly ranks. A brief meditation occurs in order to allow the student to clear his or her mind and focus on training. The pre-class line up concludes with bowing to the *Sensei* before training commences.

A student in ISKF must advance through nine separate ranks, whereby each ranking must be earned through consistent, dedicated training and an exam that must be passed before the student can test for *shodan*, or first degree black belt. All exams are adjudicated by a panel of instructors including a high ranking *Sensei*. *Shodan* examinations and *dan* ranks are generally adjudicated by an internationally ranked *Sensei* of 7th *dan* or higher. To qualify for an examination, the club *Sensei* will choose who among his or her students is ready to test based on commitment, skill advancement, and readiness. The *Sensei* and instructors want the student to pass each grading in part because the student's performance is a reflection of the dedication and instruction of the teachers. Therefore, the performance of the student in an examination is a reflection of the teaching of the *Sensei* and instructors. This creates a sense of

responsibility both for the *Sensei* and instructors in addition to the student, as poor performance may be perceived as disappointing one's *Sensei*. This creates a unique, unwritten "contract" between student and *Sensei*. Unlike privately-owned karate business establishments, ISKF has guidelines for advancement and training periods required before a student is determined to be ready to test. This ensures a high degree of integrity within the organization.

Upon rising from the rank-ordered line up to commence class, both *kihon* (basic moves) and *kata* (forms) are generally practiced repetitively after a period of stretching and warming up the body. *Kihon* may involve repeating the same movements, such as a block, kick or punch, and striving to perfect each movement using power, speed and precision along with the expansion and contraction of the body, which drives the force of the action. Combinations of *kihon* are often involved in training, increasing in complexity for the more senior students, particularly in classes that involve only brown (3rd to 1st *kyu*) and black belts (1st *dan* and beyond). The various forms of *kata* are worked on at the most minute level of detail, and often disagreement among senior *Sempai* as to what the correct form is ensues. It is this constant attention to detail and repetition of action that produces expertise and develops character in the student.

At the end of each class, the *Sensei* will call for the class to line-up and again the same formation by rank forms in a line, with the *Sensei* sitting across from the students. It is at this point when an important set of intentions are stated by a high-ranking dan level *Sempai*. The *Sempai* states the following, and after each statement, the students will repeat the *Sempai's* words. These are called the *dojo kun*, and could be considered the tenets of the practice of this form of karate. I offer here an English translation of these *kun*, which my *dojo*, the Hinode Shotokan Karate Club, uses as its English interpretation as per its parent *dojo*, ISKF British Columbia:

1. Seek perfection of character
2. Be faithful
3. Endeavor
4. Respect others
5. Refrain from violent behaviour

In C.W. Nicol's *Moving Zen: Karate as a Way to Gentleness*, the author recounts his experience training in a Japanese *dojo* as he advances through the ranks. Referring to the *dojo kun*, Nicol notes that "the oath was always chanted with strength, never mumbled in insincerity" (Nicol,11). Just as movements would become automatic and reflexes conditioned, the simple truths of the oath would also penetrate the mind of the participant" (11). Over time, the karate student begins to understand the meaning of these tenets and a desire to put them into practice outside of the *dojo* seeps into the practitioner's way of being in the world. Perhaps here we see parallels with Aristotle's notion that it is not enough to merely contemplate moral behaviour; action is required.

The *kun* can be interpreted differently depending on the individual who interprets them. Here, I can only recount my own interpretation of the *kun*, loosely based upon what has been explained to me and what I have studied. Shotokan karate does not date back thousands of years. Although Shotokan karate is an Eastern martial art, despite the Confucian, Buddhist and other influences via Eastern religions and philosophical perspectives, there appear to be parallels with ideas of what is considered "good" in Western society. In my view, the first *kun seek perfection of character* is interpreted not to state that we must attain absolute perfection to prove our worthiness, but that the constant *pursuit* of perfection is the real value of the practice itself. ISKF international interprets this *kun* as the main focus of the practice of karate, or its main goal, and notes that this should be applied to everything one pursues in our lives. When one sets a goal, we work hard to meet it, and set another when we arrive. ISKF states that the requirement to *be faithful* involves sincerity. Specifically, we are to be truthful in all that we do in our lives and follow through on our obligations to others and to ourselves. My own interpretation also includes being sincere in our commitment to the practice of karate. *Endeavor* simply means to continue to try, and to offer our best. This applies to our efforts in training itself and beyond the *dojo*. When we arrive at the *dojo*, we give all of our attention and effort in the training session. This is required if we are to uphold the first *kun, seek perfection of character*. To *respect others* is a critical aspect of karate training and *kumite*. It involves humility, which is an expectation of the martial arts practitioner and deeply rooted in Eastern philosophy as ISKF states that humility is required to achieve an open mind, and an open mind is required to learn and develop our potential. To bow in karate one shows the crown of one's head, which is a vulnerable area. Doing so is the ultimate sign of respect for an opponent and shows

great humility. Finally, *refrain from violent behaviour* shows the defensive philosophy of Shotokan karate and reminds the practitioner that the use of violence is a last resort if one must defend oneself. ISKF notes that a calm, clear state of mind and body is necessary for the martial artist and control is always required.

It is likely that these karate tenets, borne of Eastern philosophical and religious influences, have been informally adopted into modern Western society in addition to the words of the Stoics, of Seneca, and more modern writers such as Rilke. While words such as these can provide support and guiding principles that create a framework which may act as a grounding mechanism for virtuous action, there are dangers in adopting an inflexible, literal and unrelenting attachment to them, including the irrational moral status we can assign to those who claim to champion these words. But adopted (and adapted) in moderation, frameworks can assist the individual, potentially providing clarity and direction. The resulting behaviour can ripple out into the community as the individual takes selfless action based upon them.

How the adoption of these tenets can transform into virtuous behaviour is a subtle experience. Here, I can offer only my personal experience as evidence. The repetitive attention to every physical detail of each movement, stance and position in karate training seems to develop patience and care. A *kata* (form) may involve as many as 65 moves, each done in sequence. To learn a *kata*, one must break down the full *kata* into series of moves, such as move 1-5, 5-10, etc. until the sequences can be joined. This is much like a musician learns a piece of music by memory, focusing on difficult passages until they flow perfectly. This activity involves the *kuns* seeking perfection and endeavouring.

As evidence to support the notion that honour can continue to offer value to the individual while concurrently benefitting the larger community, I shall offer a karate analogy: The individual is motivated by the desire to advance and receives the recognition (reward) via an elevation of rank, reflected by the colour of their belt, or if s/he has achieved the level of black belt, by the dan rank. To achieve the higher ranks, adoption of the tenets is expected to be followed, and a certain degree of skill must be exhibited by the practitioner. As every student is a reflection upon the *dojo* they are a member of, and of the larger organization, much like the DOJ those that are members are expected to uphold the standards that are clearly stated in the *kun*, and from the

examples the senior *Sempai* set out. These include supporting others, teaching if one is ranked highly, volunteering, and treating all others with respect. If one believes the actionable *kun* creates flourishing citizens, then the honour code within this honour group may offer greater value for the larger community. One could say the same of many other communities or groups that purport to promote the virtues, particularly when action is required at the community level. The struggle is inherent in agreeing upon what constitutes a virtue, which is likely why Taylor argues for a common agreement on some basic standards.

Conclusion

As some of the authors quoted in this project have noted, the shift toward looking at what is within us and the emphasis on freedom during the Romantic era led to a murky and diminished idea of what honour is. It became unclear in that words like dignity, pride and integrity were often used in its place. The classical notion of honour began to be viewed as something archaic and quaint. As some will argue that there is an inherent elitism involved in honour, this characteristic appeared to conflict with the idea of equal rights for all and the concept of honour started to be viewed in a negative light. But it is not honour itself that deserves this disdain; it is the very inequality in society that causes honour, at least in the traditional sense, to be elitist and alienating for some. Although inequality persists, we have also gained individual freedoms from shifting toward a more egalitarian society at least in terms of greater legal equality. While social inequality persists, valuing and/or rewarding someone for virtuous behaviour provides encouragement for an individual to pursue a difficult path. While deeply held, unjust beliefs can give rise to honour's dark side and must always be challenged, honour, in addition to those who receive honour, can also act as motivation for others to pursue challenges that seem insurmountable.

Postscript

Since the inception of this project's topic, a vast amount of change has occurred within the US political world. One of the primary examples of an honour code within an honour group in this project has focused on the U.S. Department of Justice. The Acting Attorney General Sally Yates example still exemplifies what it intended to. It is important to note that the DOJ has faced its share of ethical challenges since the inauguration of Donald Trump. Jeff Sessions, appointed Attorney General after the firing of Sally Yates, was heavily involved in the Trump campaign. Forced out essentially for recusing himself from the Russia investigation, he was replaced with an under-qualified candidate in Matthew Whitaker as Acting Attorney General until William Barr was confirmed by the Senate to step in. At the time of this writing, there is great unease and skepticism around whether Barr is protecting the current President, and Congressional subpoenas are being ignored. The cracks in the DOJ as an institution appear to be forming. We will know more in the coming months.

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