Why Wisdom needs Fortitude (and viceversa)

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This is an unpublished conference paper for the 5th Annual Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues conference at Oriel College, Oxford University, Thursday 5th – Saturday 7th January 2017.

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1. The Relationship between Fortitude and Practical Wisdom

In our European and Western societies fortitude is not popular: to be honest, it is even often misunderstood as a virtue. Thus, further research needs to be done to clarify its meaning, and its place among the other virtues as well as its relationship with practical wisdom (*phronesis, prudentia*). On one side – without fortitude – prudence (*prudentia*) as practical wisdom loses its original meaning. On the other, without the regulative role of practical wisdom, fortitude turns into obsessive behaviour, e.g., into grit[1]. We can easily find both risks in our contemporary culture. In this paper, I will highlight the mutual dependence of the virtues of fortitude and practical wisdom, grounding primarily on the work of Thomas Aquinas and on his conception of the cardinal virtues.

First of all, let me give a definition of fortitude[2]. According to Aquinas, who distances himself on this point from a strictly Aristotelian perspective, following rather a Platonic, Stoic and Patristic path, fortitude is one of the four cardinal virtues, together with prudence, temperance, and justice. Thus, like all the four cardinal virtues, it can be conceived both as a specific and as a general virtue and it is not simply equivalent to courage in battle (*andreia*), as it was above all in Aristotle, but, as a general virtue, marks pervasively all virtuous actions:

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1 This might be the risk of some contemporary psychological approaches, particularly those of positive psychology. For A. Duckworth grit is «a positive, non-cognitive trait based on an individual's passion for a particular long-term goal or end state, coupled with a powerful motivation to achieve their respective objective» Duckworth, A.L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M.D., & Kelly, D.R. (2007). "Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals". Personality Processes and Individual Differences, 92 (6), p. 1087. Cf. A. Duckworth, *Grit. The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, Scribner, New York 2016. In fact, fortitude is not mere grit or resilience, but it has moral traits. On the topics of positive psychology from a philosophical point of view see Kristian Kristiansson, *Virtues and vices in positive psychology. A philosophical critique*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2013, in particular p. 208.

2 On the topic of fortitude both in Aquinas and in Chinese culture see L. H. Yearley, *Mencius and Aquinas. Theories of Virtue and Conception of Courage,* State University of New York Press, Albany, 1990.

So, then, there are two ways in which we can think of the four virtues under discussion: The first way is in accord with their common formal notions. And on this score, they are called 'principal' in the sense that they are general with respect to all the virtues—so that, namely, (a) every virtue that contributes to the good in reason's consideration is called prudence, and (b) every virtue that contributes to what is due and upright in operations is called justice, and (c) every virtue that restrains and represses the passions is called temperance (temperantia), and (d) every virtue that contributes to the mind's firmness in the face of any given passion is called fortitude (ST I-II, q. 61, a.1).

The cardinal virtues, broadly understood, are pervasive because all circumstances require us to exercise all of them. If we are in any situation that calls for any of the virtues, we have to exercise the formal principle of all the different cardinal virtues[3]. Such virtues, in turn, are united and form a system because they all require prudence (the correct conception of the end). In sum, the four cardinal virtues express the «perfect character of virtue, which requires correctness of desire»[4]. To act virtuously we must act on the cardinal virtues, no matter which special virtue we exercise in a particular action.

This premise on the twofold meaning of the cardinal virtues should allow us understanding also the meaning of fortitude as a specific virtue, i.e., fortitude as bravery, which will be the main focus of my paper. Although it has primarily to do with confronting the danger of death in battle, fortitude makes the brave person firm and constant in other situations as well[5]. It allows agents to overcome obstacles, by bearing and withstanding[6]. It includes courage, but does not coincide with it: indeed,

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[3] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II q. 123 a. 11; q. 141 a7. See Terence Irwin, *Do Virtues Conflict? Aquinas' Answer*, in S. Gardiner, ed., *Virtue Ethics, Old and New*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 2005, p. 60-80, in particular p. 67:« [...] Aquinas' view that the cardinal virtues mark pervasive features of all virtuous action is defensible by appeal to Aristotle. But it is especially characteristic of Stoicism».

[4] *Summa theologiae*, I-II, 61, a.1.

[5] See T. Irwin, p. 72: «Aristotle is right to suggest that not every caso of facing danger is relevant to bravery. But we ought not to infer from Aristotle's account that facing danger is the only principal exercise of bravery. We find principal cases of bravery wherever we find the occasion of praiseworthy firmness in the face of danger for the common good. Since others types of danger may be equally relevant to bravery, according to this criterion, they may equally allow principal exercises of the virtue».

[6] Cf. *Summa Theologiae* II-II 123, 2: « […] the term "fortitude" can be taken in two ways. First, as simply denoting a certain firmness of mind, and in this sense it is a general virtue, or rather a condition of every virtue, since as the Philosopher states *(Ethic.* ii), it is requisite for every virtue to act firmly and immovably. Secondly, fortitude may be taken to denote firmness only in bearing and withstanding those things wherein it is most difficult to be firm, namely in certain grave dangers. Therefore Tully says (Rhet. ii), that "fortitude is deliberate facing of dangers and bearing of toils"». In this sense fortitude is reckoned a special virtue, because it has a special matter. See also. *Summa*

fortitude also involves magnanimity, patience, and endurance [7]. According to Aquinas:

Endurance is more of the essence of fortitude than attack [...] to suffer and endure is, furthermore, something passive only in an external sense [...] Enduring comprises a strong activity of the soul, namely, a vigorous grasping of and clinging to the good [...][8].

Among the four cardinal virtues, fortitude holds the third position, after prudence and justice and before temperance[9]. It concerns self-preservation and, according to

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theologiae II-II, 123, 4: «Hence fortitude is chiefly about fear of difficult things, which can withdraw the will from following the reason. And it behooves one not only firmly to bear the assault of these difficulties by restraining fear, but also moderately to withstand them, when, to wit, it is necessary to dispel them altogether in order to free oneself therefrom for the future, which seems to come under the notion of daring. Therefore fortitude is about fear and daring, as curbing fear and moderating daring».

[7] On the parts of fortitude see *Summa theologiae* II-II, 128, 1: «[…]there are quasi-integral and potential parts assigned to it: integral parts, with regard to those things the concurrence of which is requisite for an act of fortitude; and potential parts, because what fortitude practices in face of the greatest hardships, namely dangers of death, certain other virtues practice in the matter of certain minor hardships and these virtues are annexed to fortitude as secondary virtues to the principal virtue. As stated above (II-II:123:6), the act of fortitude is twofold, aggression and endurance. Now two things are required for the act of aggression. The first regards preparation of the mind, and consists in one's having a mind ready for aggression. On this respect Tully mentions "confidence," of which he says (De Invent. Rhet. ii) that "with this the mind is much assured and firmly hopeful in great and honorable undertakings." The second regards the accomplishment of the deed, and consists in not failing to accomplish what one has confidently begun. On this respect Tully mentions "magnificence," which he describes as being "the discussion and administration," i.e. accomplishment "of great and lofty undertakings, with a certain broad and noble purpose of mind," so as to combine execution with greatness of purpose. Accordingly if these two be confined to the proper matter of fortitude, namely to dangers of death, they will be quasi-integral parts thereof, because without them there can be no fortitude; whereas if they be referred to other matters involving less hardship, they will be virtues specifically distinct from fortitude, but annexed thereto as secondary virtues to principal: thus "magnificence" is referred by the Philosopher (Ethic. iv) to great expenses, and "magnanimity," which seems to be the same as confidence, to great honors. Again, two things are requisite for the other act of fortitude, viz. endurance. The first is that the mind be not broken by sorrow, and fall away from its greatness, by reason of the stress of threatening evil. On this respect he mentions "patience," which he describes as "the voluntary and prolonged endurance of arduous and difficult things for the sake of virtue or profit." The other is that by the prolonged suffering of hardships man be not wearied so as to lose courage, according to Hebrews 12:3, "That you be not wearied, fainting in your minds." On this respect he mentions "perseverance," which accordingly he describes as "the fixed and continued persistence in a well considered purpose." If these two be confined to the proper matter of fortitude, they will be quasi-integral parts thereof; but if they be referred to any kind of hardship they will be virtues distinct from fortitude, yet annexed thereto as secondary to principal».

[8] See J. Pieper, *The four cardinal Virtues,* University of Notre Dame press, Notre Dame 1966, p. 128-29. Cf. *Summa theologiae* II-II, 123, 6: «[…] fortitude is more concerned to allay fear, than to moderate daring. For it is more difficult to allay fear than to moderate daring, since the danger which is the object of daring and fear, tends by its very nature to check daring, but to increase fear. Now to attack belongs to fortitude in so far as the latter moderates daring, whereas to endure follows the repression of fear. Therefore the principal act of fortitude is endurance, that is to stand immovable in the midst of dangers rather than to attack them».

[9] *Summa theologiae* II-II, 123, 12: «Now reason's good is man's good, according to Dionysius (Div. Nom. iv) prudence, since it is a perfection of reason, has the good essentially: while justice effects this good, since it belongs to justice to establish the order of reason in all human affairs: whereas the other

Aquinas, is rooted in the first precept of natural law, which concerns the preservation of human life[10].

Let us consider the relationship between fortitude and practical wisdom (*prudentia*). First of all, before examining such link, it is useful to recall the difference between prudence and one of the sub-excellences it encompasses, namely *synesis*. The latter concerns mere judgements about human behaviour, whereas the former includes *synesis*, but it is essentially prescriptive [11]. Such difference helps us understanding why prudence, given its prescriptive character, requires strength of character, the virtue of fortitude.

Practical wisdom acts on the irascible part of the soul aiming it toward the golden mean of fortitude and against both weakness of character and stubbornness. As Joseph Pieper holds «Fortitude becomes fortitude only through being "informed" by prudence»[12]- Grit is not enough, because we need practical wisdom in order to develop a moral virtue as fortitude (and perseverance) in ourselves[13].

Given such clarifications, I will now defend three specific claims aimed at clarifying the bound between fortitude and practical wisdom.

1) According to Aristotle and Aquinas temperance is specifically connected with practical wisdom, since – by moderating pleasures and pains – it preserves it from errors in deliberating about the human goods[14]. But the lack or deficiency of temperance is often related to the lack of fortitude, i.e. to a virtue deeply rooted in the *irascible* part of the soul[15]:

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virtues safeguard this good, inasmuch as they moderate the passions, lest they lead man away from reason's good. As to the order of the latter, fortitude holds the first place, because fear of dangers of death has the greatest power to make man recede from the good of reason: and after fortitude comes temperance, since also pleasures of touch excel all others in hindering the good of reason. Now to be a thing essentially ranks before effecting it, and the latter ranks before safeguarding it by removing obstacles thereto. Wherefore among the cardinal virtues, prudence ranks first, justice second, fortitude third, temperance fourth, and after these the other virtues».

[10] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, 94, 2: «[…]there is in man a first inclination to a good of the nature he shares with all substances, insofar as each substance seeks the preservation of the existence it has according to its own nature, and following this inclination the things by which the life of man is prevented pertain to natural law».

[11] Cf. Aristotle NE VI, 10 1143a6.

[12] J. Pieper *The four cardinal Virtues,* University of Notre Dame press, Notre Dame 1966, p. 123. In the instruction of fortitude by prudence the former receives from the latter its inner form, that is, its specific character as virtue.

[13] Cf. *Summa theologiae* II-II 65, 4; A. Duckworth, *Grit. The Power of Passion and Perseverance,* Scribner, New York 2016.

[14] Cf. Aristotle NE VI, 5, 1140b 11-12 and *Summa Theologiae* II-II 123, 2.

[15] *Summa theologiae* I-II, 61, 4 ad I; II-II, 123, 2 Reply to Objection 2*:* «Ambrose takes fortitude in a broad sense, as denoting firmness of mind in face of assaults of all kinds. Nevertheless even as a

> […] whoever can curb his desires for the pleasures of touch, so that they keep within bounds, which is a very hard thing to do, for this very reason is more able to check his daring in dangers of death, so as not to go too far, which is much easier; and in this sense fortitude is said to be temperate. Again, temperance is said to be brave, by reason of fortitude overflowing into temperance: in so far, to wit, as he whose mind is strengthened by fortitude against dangers of death, which is a matter of very great difficulty, is more able to remain firm against the onslaught of pleasures; for as Cicero says (*De Offic.* i), «it would be inconsistent for a man to be unbroken by fear, and yet vanquished by cupidity; or that he should be conquered by lust, after showing himself to be unconquered by toil».
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> Therefore, by acting directly on temperance, fortitude acts *indirectly* on practical wisdom.

2) The lack of fortitude may also *directly* affect practical wisdom when dreadful aspects of life shock us. In these situations, the functioning of practical wisdom is compromised and so are our judgments and our choices.
3) Fortitude operates on the capacity of practical wisdom (*prudentia*) to direct actions in context, judging with openness of mind and choosing and acting bravely (*parrhesia).* This means to tell the truth when it is required and in the right terms that are required.

2. Fortitude and recognition

Everyone, who wants to become wise (*phronimos)*, must develop the virtue of fortitude. But this requires a strong motivation, which is related to the right answer to the question of self-love, of happiness and the meaning of life, particularly in front of adversities (as in Aristotle and Aquinas)[16]. And this question is strictly related to the

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special virtue with a determinate matter, it helps to resist the assaults of all vices. For he that can stand firm in things that are most difficult to bear, is prepared, in consequence, to resist those which are less difficult».

16 Kant – like Stoicism – stresses the role of fortitude in his ethics, role that was not ignored, but less stressed, by Aristotle and Aquinas. Kant does not stress the motivating role of pleasure in virtue

topic of recognition during the first years of life, but also later on[17]. As Christine Swanton holds:

> There is something wrong, especially if failure to stick with projects is a form of escape characteristic of lack of self love […]the point is that perseverance is a virtue of bonding rather than merely a virtue responding to the demands of value[18].

In fact, what is specifically *human* in our world if we try to look at it from a "point of view of nowhere"? I would answer: first of all, a restless desire for recognition by other human beings or other persons, i.e. beings endowed with reason, freedom, and love. This means a restless desire for originality and authenticity in front of others, a quest that may have good or bad ethical consequences; a desire for interpersonal communication in the silence of the universe, communication with other human beings also by media, but also with God (in religion), a quest for honour, but also a desire for compassion towards and from other human beings[19]. This restless quest often occurs either pushing up the infrahuman level (animals etc.) towards the human level, or thinking the divine from the point of view of man.

Let us go back to the desire for recognition. As Max Scheler holds, we cannot think of (and therefore desire) anything higher than person (a being with reason and free will), although not only conceived in merely anthropomorphic terms[20]. Therefore, in our experience person is the only being who may really nourish and satisfy human desire. For instance: parental love is fundamental for children's education[21]. In general, the role of the others deeply qualifies our moral experience

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(pleasure which according to Aquinas often it is not present with fortitude). Although he underlines the quest for the meaning of life and for happiness. Without grasping a meaning of life we do not have motives to be strong in front of difficulties. See K. Kristiansson, *Virtues and vices in positive psychology. A philosophical critique*, p. 151 and 171. According to the author positive psychology does not highlight the main role of practical reason (*phronesis*) among virtues.

[17] Cf. D. Narvaez, *The co-construction of Virtue: Epigenetics, Development and Culture* in N. Snow (ed.) *Cultivating Virtue. Perspectives from Philosophy, Theology and Psychology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford pp. 251-278. See also on the topic of Self-concern M. Slote, *Moral from Motives*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001, p. 77.

[18] C. Swanton, *Virtue Ethics. A Pluralistic View*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2003, p. 43.

[19] Cf. B. Pascal, *Pensées*, Penguin, Harmondsworth 1995. On the topic of the main role of glory in ethics see T. Chappell, *Knowing What To Do. Imagination,Virtue, and Platonism in Ethics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014, chapter 8.

[20] Cf. M. Scheler, *On the Idea of Man* (1915), "Journal of the British society of phenomenology", vol. 9, n. 3, october 1978.

[21] See among others M. Hoffman, *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice*, Cambridge University press, New York 2000; M. Slote, *The Roots of Empathy*, p. 65-86; D.

[22]. But I would like to stress that in all these cases the reason is first of all ontological and not merely psychological. Only persons are – as we are – intentionally and potentially everything or infinite ("quodammodo omnia" according to Aquinas) and, in the case of God, also ontologically and actually infinite. Every human being naturally needs recognition by others (*glory*), in order to acquire *magnanimity* (one of the parts of fortitude according to Aquinas) and hence autonomy in front of the world[23]. However, he must not depend totally on the judgment of other people because, from an ontological and psychological perspective, as finite beings, they cannot fulfil human desire, that is potentially infinite[24].

Hence, the main role of the recognition by a personal God in theistic religions and in general of wisdom to identify the right measure of recognition which leaves room to right self-love (*magnanimity*), to fortitude and again to practical wisdom[25]. This is a virtuous circle, the circle of human experience of inner development and growth, of equilibrated self-love as the root of fortitude and practical wisdom. As Aquinas holds:

Narvaez, *The Co-Construction of Virtue: Epigenetics, Development and Culture*, p. 251-278 in N. E. Snow (ed.), *Cultivating Virtue. Perspectives from Philosophy, Psychology and Theology*. Oxford University press. New York 2015.

[22] See, for instance, E. Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority,* Kluwer Academic publishers, Dordrecht 1991and *Otherwise than Being or beyond Essence*, Kluwer, Dordrecht 1991.

[23] On the role of glory today see T- Chappell, *Knowing What To Do. Imagination,Virtue, and Platonism in Ethics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014, p. 159: «The notion of glory may, perhaps, be a neglected one in contemporary philosophy partly because of the notion's apparent religious overtones. Be that as it may, to say a little about what glory is is not to introduce a concept that we do not have, but to clarify the content and significance of a concept that we already use (whether or not 'we' are 'religious'). In our society, the idea of glory—though not necessarily the word—is all around us; I doubt I have ever met anyone over the age of two who did not have the concept already. A concern with glory is central to our society's actual, though not always to its officially announced, values. For us glory is typically both an ethical idea, a concept that we use, and also an ethical ideal, a way of being that we aspire to. I shall have things to say about both the idea and the ideal, and about the connections between them, in this chapter. Glory is something that the sportsmen and sportswomen, the film stars andactors, the pop stars, celebrities, and 'personalities' who dominate our public life and discourse all typically aim at. Not that they all aim at it all of the time, and under that very description, and wisely and well. Nor that they do not aim at other things also»; p. 184: «I have been arguing that we might enrich our thinking about how to live and what to do, both by acknowledging the place that this idea of glory already has in our lives, and by making more use of it than we do already».

[24] Also, from an ethical perspective, if we depended *totally* on the judgment of other people, we could not judge in an autonomous way.

[25] According to theistic religions, being grounded in God, human beings can avoid both the risks of desiring too much or two less recognition (glory) by others.

Glory is an effect of honour and praise: because from the fact that a man is praised, or shown any kind of reverence, he acquires clarity in the knowledge of others. And since magnanimity is about honour, as stated above (Question [129], Articles [1], 2), it follows that it also is about glory: seeing that as a man uses honour moderately, so too does he use glory in moderation. Wherefore inordinate desire of glory is directly opposed to magnanimity[26].

As Thomas Aquinas holds in *The Questions on Evil*:

[...] one of the things that human beings naturally desire is excellence. For it is natural for both human beings and everything to seek in desired goods the perfection that consists of a certain excellence. Therefore, the will will indeed be morally right and belong to loftiness of spirit if it seeks excellence in accord with the rule of reason informed by God [...] and one will incur the sin of pusillanimity if one should fall short of the rule of reason. And there will be the sin of pride if one should exceed the rule, as the very name "pride" [*superbia*] demonstrates, since to be proud is simply to exceed the proper measure in the desire for excellence[27].

Therefore, according to Aristotle and Aquinas magnanimity (*megalopsuchia*, *magnanimitas*) is the golden mean between pride (*kaunotes*, *superbia*) and pusillanimity or cowardliness (*mikropsuchia*, *pusillanimitas*)[28].

All that might suggest that the lack of the right desire of glory (*magnanimitas*) or the immoderate quest for it, therefore the lack or deficiency of fortitude may be one of the main causes of the transformation of the meaning of prudence (*prudentia*) in modern and contemporary age from the virtue of moral decision, personal

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[26] *Summa Theologiae* II-II, 132, 2.

[27] Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de malo* VIII, 2, Brian Davies, Richard Regan *On Evil,* Oxford University press, Oxford 2003. See also Aristotle, NE II, 7, 1107 b 21 ss, in particular 1125b20: «People seek honour both more than they should, and also less than they should; therefore, there is a right way to seek honour».

[28] Cf. T. Irwin, p. 75-76: «Aquinas confronts an aspect of the alleged conflict between the pagan and the Christian virtues, in his examination of magnanimity and humility. In his view, the two virtues do not really conflict, and we can see this when we understand their relation to the cardinal virtues. Magnanimity is a potential part of bravery and humility of temperance. Since each of them is subordinate to the overriding aims of the cardinal virtues, they do not conflict. Magnanimity stregthens us in the pursuit of appropriately great actions, while humility restrains us from the distractions that would result from illusions about our own importance; hence we need both magnanimity and humility to pursue the right ends without distraction (q. 161, a.1)».

responsibility and risk to the virtue of those who are careful and avoid risks[29]. In fact

To the contemporary mind, prudence seems less a prerequisite to goodness than an evasion of it. The statement that it is prudence which makes an action good strikes us as well-nigh ridiculous.—in colloquial use prudence always carries the connotation of timorous, small-minded self-preservation, of a rather selfish concern about oneself. Neither of these traits is compatible with nobility; both are unworthy of the noble man[30].

This is perhaps why Kant highlights in his moral philosophy the main role of *strength* in ethics. For him, «virtue is a moral *strength* of the will»[31]. But this concept of virtue might seem in Aristotelian terms more a kind of *continence* (*enkrateia*), than the virtue of temperance (*sophrosune*), which is proper of the wise man (*phronimos, spoudaios*)[32].

To sum up, fortitude, which is the root of temperance and prudence, is in turn rooted in a proper response to the desire for recognition, one capable of hitting the mean between an immoderate quest for glory (pride) and a form of pusillanimity. Such mean fosters a virtuous self-love, which in turn becomes the source of fortitude and of practical wisdom in our lives.

3. The main role of education and *parrhesia*

Finally, from a pedagogical point of view we must highlight that fortitude is not much cultivated in connection with practical wisdom in our politically correct everyday culture, and is sometimes repressed[33]. And this is not without consequences

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29 See I. Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Moral*, chap. II. «Skill in the choice of means to one's own greatest welfare can be called 'prudence' in the narrowest sense. Thus the imperative that refers to the choice of means to one's own happiness (i.e. the precept of prudence) is still only hypothetical; it commands the action not outright but only as a means to another end». On the topic of the change of the meaning of *prudentia* in the late medieval and modern age see Joseph Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, (trans. by M. T. Noble), The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C.1995.

30 J. Pieper, *The four cardinal Virtues,* University of Notre Dame press, Notre Dame 1966, p. 4.

31 I. Kant, MS 6:405.

32 Cf. Aristotle, NE I, 13, 1102 b 27ss.).

33 On the relationship between fortitude and wrath see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, 123, 10 ad 3. Cf. J. Pieper, *The four cardinal Virtues,* University of Notre Dame press, Notre Dame 1966, p. 130: «The fact, however, that Thomas assigns to (just) wrath a positive relation to the virtue

also from a psychological perspective[34]. On the contrary, fortitude requires a specific education. It develops in dangerous situations, but, as a dimension of every cardinal virtue, fortitude grows up by cultivating it every day, learning day by day how opportunities and also adversity can lead to advances in wisdom.

As Servais Pinkaers highlights:

Courage, which the Romans considered as the highest of virtues, is a characteristic of the morally mature person. It is indispensable for complete moral freedom. Gradually formed in us through life's discipline, first given, then personally appropriated, courage enables us to undertake worthwhile projects of high value to ourselves and others, regardless of all interior and exterior resistance, obstacles, and opposition. We act when and how we wish, to the point of exploiting the very setbacks that might have weakened our resolve and checked our plans. The person of little courage can indeed boast that he is free to do what he wants, and can affirm himself along with the crowd in rebelling against rules and laws. In reality, despite all his talk, his freedom is very weak and he is near to being a slave, for he does not know how to form a firm, lasting determination strong enough to rescue him from the pressure of circumstances or feelings so as to master them as he ought. Courage presupposes a mature personality, formed by difficulties and trials and capable of initiating and achieving the worthwhile actions that are life's fruits. Once again we are looking at a courageous freedom with qualities far different from those of freedom of indifference[35].

Freedom as mere capacity of choice is not enough, because human beings always desire a flourishing life. Fortitude requires education of freedom, in particular in young people, in order to develop their practical wisdom.

Finally, fortitude is extremely useful also in intellectual work. As Alexander Solzhenitsyn holds in the famous *Commencement Address* delivered at Harvard University in 1978,

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of fortitude has become largely unintelligible and unacceptable[...]This lack of comprehension may explained partly by the exclusion, from Christian ethics, of the component of passion (with its inevitably physical aspect) as something alien and incongruous – an exclusion due to a kind of intellectual stoicism – and partly by the fact that the explosive activity which reveals itself in wrath is naturally repugnant to good behavior regulated by "bourgeois" standards».

[34] Cf. J. Pieper p. 134: «To the modern science of psychology, we owe the insight that the lack of courage to accept injury and the incapability of self-sacrifice belong to the deepest sources of psychic illness. All neuroses seem to have as a common symptom an egocentric anxiety, a tense and sel-centered concern for security, the inability to "let go"; in short, that kind of love for one's own lover that leads straight to the loss of life».

[35] S. Pinckaers*, The Sources of Christian Ethics*, (trans. by M. T. Noble), The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C.1995, p. 356.

In the West there is no censorship, but there is a sly selectiveness at work, separating ideas, which are "in" from those, which are not. Although the latter are not directly quashed, they can find no authentic medium of expression in the press, in books, or in university courses. Legally, the spirit of your research is indeed free, but it is restricted on all sides by popular opinion[36].

Fortitude helps practical wisdom, which opens towards wisdom as *sophia* (theoretical wisdom), although, according to Aristotle, it does not rule over *sophia* «it issues orders, then, for its sake, but not to it» [37]. Philosophers and academics in general need the testimony of *parrhesia*, therefore of both fortitude and wisdom, in doing their job everyday.

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36 *Le declin du courage* [Seuil, 1978], p. 30, quoted by S. Pinckaers in *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, (trans. by M. T. Noble), The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C. 1995, p. 430.

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