

# Working Virtue

## *Virtue Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems*

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## Racial Virtues

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Race, or the racial domain of life, presents a very rich context of value. There are many different kinds of things that can go wrong and right in the area of race, and race and racial identities can play an important role in understandings of a just society, a good society, a good individual life, and a good life for groups. Yet, by and large, moral philosophers have given race scant attention, apart from social justice concerns such as discrimination and affirmative action. Although love, friendship, family, civic relationships, and other aspects of our interpersonal lives have increasingly drawn the attention of moral philosophers, the racial dimension of this complex domain has not. In this respect moral philosophy has not kept pace with public concern. Popular understandings of race are shot through with evaluative takes on various aspects of our relations with one another—being offended in a manner relating to one's racial identity, exhibiting an adequate grasp of the character and importance of others' racial identities, showing an adequate moral understanding of the role race plays in one's own life, shows respect or disrespect to racial others, evincing subtle forms of exclusionary behavior and attitude, and so on.

Virtue theory in particular has been an untapped resource in this area. Yet virtue theory provides a rich psychological framework for encompassing the complexity of emotion, perception, motivation, imagination, and behavior implied in our evaluations in the racial domain. Perhaps one reason for the general lack of engagement between virtue theory and race is that race is seen as a primarily negative evaluative domain—one in which the moral task is primarily to avoid doing wrong, for example, to avoid being 'racist'. By contrast, virtue theory, while of course encompassing vice as well, has a primary focus on positive qualities of character. Even if virtue theory were able only to help articulate the myriad ways things can go wrong or badly in the racial domain, it would still provide essential understandings. I will argue, however, that there are also genuine positive virtues or sub-varieties of virtue of a race-related character, and that race presents opportunities for value as well as disvalue, where the value is not the mere avoidance of the disvalue. More generally, I will discuss several distinct race-related virtues and vices, attempting to demonstrate the plurality of value in the racial domain, and especially the interpersonal part of that domain.

The plurality of racial value has also been masked by two common approaches to value issues in the racial domain. One is to think that color blindness or race blindness

is an adequate overarching norm that should govern all of our actions, and thoughts, in this domain—that we should endeavor to ignore people's race as much as possible. I will reject this claim, in part because it is sometimes appropriate to acknowledge persons' racial identity, and in part because there are several virtues that bear some resemblance to color blindness but are nevertheless distinct from it and from each other.

The second approach is to focus only on 'racism' as the general form of all disvalue in the racial domain. While occasionally the term 'racism' is indeed used as a general term for all racial disvalue (so that focusing on it would not exclude any racial disvalue), more commonly it is used with a narrower scope, to refer to a belief in racial superiority, to racial discrimination or exclusion, or as a catch-all term for the most serious racial wrongs or ills.<sup>1</sup> Some racial value and disvalue would then lie outside the scope of racism, so focusing only on racism will tend to mask that broader domain.

### GARCIA'S ACCOUNT

I will find it convenient to approach this topic through a critique of Jorge Garcia's work. Garcia has worked out, with great subtlety, a virtuist or, more precisely, a 'vice-ist' account of racism. Garcia sees racism as most fundamentally an individual vice. His best-known piece in this vein, 'The Heart of Racism', has been reproduced in several canon-defining collections on race and racism, and he has further developed his virtue theoretic approach in three later articles (1996, 1997, 1999, 2001). I will argue that Garcia's analysis does not provide a sufficiently psychologically rich description of the phenomena he encompasses within his own definition of 'racism'. In particular he tends to conflate motivational and emotional dimensions of racism. In addition, his account of racism provides insufficient guidance to the plurality of race-related value. Focusing almost solely on racism, Garcia does not place the racial ills encompassed by 'racism' in the context of the wider set of racial values and disvalues. Finally, Garcia's account fails to capture some of what is distinctive about vice and virtue as they operate in a race-related manner, and this failure points up a more general failure of much work on the virtues. That failure is to confine virtues and vices too much to 'standard issue' virtues and vices, generally designated by single terms such as justice, honesty, benevolence, charity, temperance, perseverance, and the like. Diverse as the standard issue virtues are (and not only moral ones, though I will confine my discussion of race-related vices and virtues largely to moral ones), they still do not encompass or account for the full range of types of virtue-related value and disvalue. Looking at the case of race will help to reveal something of the character of this broader domain.

Let me briefly set the context for Garcia's work. Prior to Garcia, one might say that there were two reigning conceptions of racism. One, with origins in the first uses of that term in the 1930s, views racism as an ideology or set of related, false

<sup>1</sup> I discuss different meanings of 'racism' in popular and scholarly discourse in Blum (2002, 2004b).

beliefs about the innate character of large, intergenerational groupings of human beings called 'races'. Charles Taylor expresses this view in his book *Sources of the Self*: 'Racists have to claim that certain of the crucial moral properties of human beings are genetically determined: that some races are less intelligent, less capable of high moral consciousness, and the like' (1989: 7). Anthony Appiah propounded a complex form of this account in his canonical 1990 essay, 'Racisms'. Appiah essentially defined racism as (1) belief in innate differences among 'races' (a view Appiah calls 'racialism'), (2) belief that these differences involve significant inequalities in characteristics of mind and temperament, and (3) a belief that it is justifiable to treat persons of different racial groups differently in light of the latter differences (1990).<sup>2</sup> So Appiah's view linked belief—the original meaning of 'racism' that Taylor's view reflects—with discriminatory action, or at least a belief in its justifiability.

The second conception of 'racism'—generally less theoretically elaborated in the philosophical literature but a dominant conception of racism in much popular anti-racist thought and in some social science literature—is a structure of unjust inequality between racially defined groups. When we speak of racism, or of something's being racist, we must in some way be referring to such structures. (These structures need not be, on this conception, the direct result of acts of racial discrimination. The relation between racial discrimination and racism is generally undertheorized on this 'systemic' account of racism.)

Garcia rejects both the doxastic and the systemic accounts. Both fail to root themselves in what Garcia takes to be the fundamentally moral character of the terms 'racism' and 'racist'. The label 'racist', Garcia says, 'is today thoroughly moralized. To call a person, institution, policy, action, project, or wish "racist" is to present it as vicious and abhorrent' (1997: 7). Although the systemic definition builds in a notion of injustice and thus provides a morally based account of racism, Garcia regards it as omitting or providing an inadequate account of forms of *individual* action and motivation that are standardly referred to as 'racist', such as racial bigotry and race-hatred. Against Appiah's cognitive account, he argues that false belief cannot be a core moral failing, that forms of individual racial wrong do not require racist beliefs, and that mere differential treatment by race is not in its own right morally wrong, and indeed may in some cases be justified.

Garcia sees racism, understood as an individual vice, as taking two distinct but related forms—race-based ill will or hatred, and 'racially based or racially informed disregard' (1997: 13; 1996: 6). Racism is morally bad because it is a type of vice, a vice Garcia often describes in terms of its being the opposite of, or offending against, certain virtues, especially benevolence and justice (1999: 13), but which he also describes as a form of (the vice of) malevolence.

What Garcia calls 'racism' involves both motives and feelings. Ill will or hatred motivates the racist to engage in actions harmful to others (those of a racial group other than her own, or, in the case of internalized racism, toward members of her own

<sup>2</sup> Appiah is not entirely consistent in point (3); for he also says that racial favoritism, especially on the part of members of subordinated groups, can be permissible and even admirably supererogatory, if it does not contravene what is owed to all equally.

group). But racial ill will or disregard also manifest themselves in certain feelings or emotions that do not necessarily prompt action. Delighting in the ill fortune of the racial other, anger or dismay at the racial other's successes, aversion to the presence of the racial other, glee when the racial other is humiliated, consternation that one's offspring or friend has befriended a member of a stigmatized race are or can be examples of such emotions.<sup>3</sup> Garcia does not give any attention to these emotions and feelings, and sometimes talks as if his account of virtue and vice concerns only the contents of the will; for example, he refers to his account as 'a volitional account of racism' (1996: 6). But the strength of a virtue account is its capacity to express the range of psychic phenomena involved in forms of goodness and badness. A racist is not someone who only has bad intentions, but someone who has bad and inappropriate feelings as well. Generally, the intentions and the feelings are conceptually linked. We would not attribute ill will to someone who was never motivated to cause harm to the object of his ill will; but nor would we do so if he did not sometime feel delight or pleasure in the ill fortune of that object. Both feeling and motive are integral to what it is to possess various virtues and vices. Nevertheless, it would be appropriate to attribute vicious racial attitudes to someone who never actually engaged in racist actions but who nevertheless thought of another racial group as inferiors, or who wished them ill. Perhaps the non-acting person fears disapproval or getting in some sort of trouble, or is too timid to act on these vicious attitudes, and this is why, after a while, he loses motivation to engage in the sorts of actions that naturally express such attitudes. Not all forms of vice require vicious motivation.

In general, Garcia does not explore the range of psychic phenomena constituting racial vice. For example, he does not look at the characteristic ways that the racist views or perceives the racial other, or the sorts of thoughts the racist might characteristically have. The racist, for example, might fail to notice types of accomplishment in a racial other whose group is seen as inferior; or he might acknowledge the accomplishment but see this as a fairly rare exception, atypical of the group in question.

Thus, although Garcia helpfully and convincingly construes racism as an individual vice, and though he plausibly takes racial ill will to be a form that vice takes, he does not give a psychologically adequate account of the character of the vice in question. He fails to avail himself of the full resources of virtue theory.

A second limitation in Garcia's account is his failure to articulate the plurality of virtues and vices related to race. I have developed this criticism of Garcia elsewhere (2004b), and will summarize those arguments here. The limitation takes two forms. First, Garcia fails to pay adequate heed to the diversity within what he himself takes to be encompassed by the term 'racism'.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, he fails to situate racism within a broader panoply of racial ills and vices.

On the first point, Garcia occasionally describes the vice of racism as involving inadequate concern *or* respect, or an offense against *either* benevolence *or* justice (1996: 10 and elsewhere). Since benevolence and justice are distinct virtues (and

<sup>3</sup> Hursthouse (1999: 114) mentions these and other emotions characteristic of a racist.

<sup>4</sup> One part of that diversity is the 'ill will' and the 'disregard' strands of racism. In Blum (2004b) I argue that Garcia nowhere provides a satisfactory account of the relation between these.

malevolence and injustice distinct vices), and since inadequate concern is not the same as inadequate respect, this appears to acknowledge two distinct sub-forms of racism. In *'I'm Not a Racist, But ...'*, I argue that these two forms are best understood as antipathy (toward a racial group), and inferiorization, viewing or treating the racial other as humanly inferior (Blum 2002). But Garcia does not consistently recognize these as two distinct forms of racial disvalue. Indeed, he explicitly argues that the inferiorization type is a mode of the antipathy (ill will) type (1996: 9). This argument is not successful. A racial hater might not see the racial other as inferior; one can hate a racial group seen as superior, or as neither superior nor inferior. Conversely, a racial inferiorizer does not necessarily harbor ill will toward the racial other. Although ill will can accompany inferiorizing, these are two distinct forms of racial wrong, and any account of racial disvalue must distinguish them.

Garcia's account also understates the range and plurality of racial value and disvalue by failing to situate what he designates as 'racism' within a larger domain of race-related vices. On rare occasions, Garcia does mention items that are plausibly seen as falling within that category—engaging in racial stereotyping, giving credence to the false doctrine of racialism (what Taylor means by 'racism'), seeing persons primarily as members of racial groups rather than as individuals (1997: 21). But in general, there is no articulation of wrongs and ills in the racial domain that are other than racism, and no attention to the valuational bases of ills or vices other than race-based ill will or disregard.

Even if Garcia had recognized the plurality of standard-issue virtues and vices bearing on race (justice, malevolence, disrespect, and so on), an important dimension of race-related value and disvalue would have been omitted. Garcia generally implies that the reason *race-based* ill will is bad is simply and solely that it instantiates the vice of malevolence. Malevolence is a vice in its own right, independent of whether race is involved as its basis. Garcia's implication is that if I hate Andres and wish him ill out of jealousy, this is as bad—because equally a form of malevolence—as if I hate him because he is black.

We do not, however, generally look at malevolence in this way. We tend to think that race-based ill will is a *worse* form of ill will than are many other forms. The concept of a 'hate crime' is a legal analogue to this moral intuition. The idea behind a hate crime is that a crime, such as assault, committed out of hatred of someone grounded in certain group-based characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and the like, is worse, and deserving of more severe punishment, than the same crime committed for a different reason. (Indeed, the term 'hate crime' is somewhat misleading, since it is not hatred as such that warrants the more severe punishment, but only certain group-targeted forms of hatred.)

Thus, race-based ill will seems to be bad not only because it involves ill will, but because the ill will is based on race. Whatever the explanation for this, it suggests that ill will comes in morally distinct sub-varieties (and perhaps the same can be said for disrespect, disdain, disregard, and so on). One might even say that race-based malevolence is a different vice from jealousy-based malevolence, in having a distinct moral valence and perhaps a somewhat distinct psychic structure. On the other hand, one might not want to call these sub-varieties distinct vices, on the grounds that they

are recognized to be sub-varieties of a standard vice; but one would still want a virtue theoretic approach to recognize the form of distinctiveness in question.

The latter concern raises the question what a virtulist account of something consists in. How do we know when a moral phenomenon constitutes a virtue, or vice? A natural way of reading Garcia's account is to say that he sees a virtulist account as one that construes the phenomenon in question as an instance of an already recognized virtue or vice—in his case malevolence (or disregard). Much philosophical literature on the virtues appears to proceed on the assumption that we know what all the virtues and vices are, that they are generally represented by single words—honesty, cruelty, hypocrisy, compassion, and so on—and that what the virtues and vices are recognized to be has not much changed in hundreds, even thousands, of years. James Rachels, for example, in his popular ethical theory textbook, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (4th edn.), lists twenty-four virtues in his section 'What Are the Virtues?'—all single-word virtues (2003: 176). Zagzebski articulates this approach to the virtues: 'Those qualities that have appeared on the greatest number of lists of the virtues in different places and in different times in history are, in fact, virtues. These qualities would probably include such traits as wisdom, courage, benevolence, justice, honesty, loyalty, integrity, and generosity' (1996: 89).

True, this is not absolutely inconsistent with there being other virtues. But I think it fair to say that most contemporary writers on the virtues make the at least tacit assumption that all the virtues, or at least the important ones, have already been marked out for us by our current terms designating virtues. When a general point about virtue is being made, these standard issue virtues are always the ones chosen in illustration.

However, if a (moral) virtue is an excellence of character and a vice a deficiency of character, why could there not be many virtues and vices that are not on the standard lists, and that are not designatable by a single term or two ('ill will')? Why, and this is a separate point, couldn't there be virtues (or vices) that have come to be recognized only fairly recently, or, indeed, have come to *be* virtues (or vices) only fairly recently? I want to suggest that we cannot do justice to the variety of value and disvalue in the racial domain unless we are willing to accept a positive answer to these questions.<sup>5</sup> In the remainder of the chapter, I will suggest several distinct virtues and vices related to race, ones which standard virtue/vice terminology does not adequately express. Although some of these virtues/vices may be seen as exemplifications of more general ones, this does not mean they are not in some way importantly distinct as excellences of character.

Let us begin by noting that 'racism' itself appears to be a relatively recent vice. The term itself, in English and other European languages, was not used until the first third of the twentieth century (Blum 2002: 3f; Frederickson 2002: 5). This does not mean, of course, that the phenomenon it denoted had not previously existed; but it does suggest, what historical scholarship appears to support, that racism had not hitherto been generally seen as a vice, or more generally, as a wrong or ill. This does not, of course, mean that it was not actually a vice previously, and certainly some abolitionists in the

<sup>5</sup> On virtues other than standard issue ones, see Rosalind Hursthouse's contribution in Chapter 7 of this volume, in which she suggests virtues related to treatment of the environment.

U.S. and Britain and elsewhere recognized prejudice and oppression based on race to be an important evil.<sup>6</sup> This recency of recognition certainly distinguishes racism from Zagzebski's way of thinking about vices and virtues—that one looks cross-culturally and cross-historically for those most generally cited, as a way to discern what are truly virtues and vices. But in addition the notion of race itself, in the sense in which it is understood as part of 'racism', did not come into being in Europe until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and did not come into full flowering in the sense arguably required for our notion of racism until the nineteenth. In that sense, racism could not have been named a vice prior to the fifteenth century at least, and arguably until the nineteenth.<sup>7</sup>

## RECOGNITION OF BLACKS

With the example of racism in the background, let me proceed to my proposed examples of racial virtues and vices. I begin with a racial, or race-related, virtue, that I draw from a vignette from Vivian Paley's book *White Teacher*. Paley (in this book) is a kindergarten teacher in a racially mixed school. The book is an account of her attempt to deepen her understanding of how she, a white teacher, can be a good teacher for a racially and ethnically mixed group of pupils.

Paley describes meeting a black parent of one of her black pupils. The parent, Mrs. Hawkins, relates to Paley that in her child's previous school the teacher, who was white, had said to her, 'There is no color difference in my classroom. All my children look alike to me.' Mrs. Hawkins comments to Paley, 'What rot! My children are black. They do not look like your children. They know they're black and we want it recognized. It's a positive difference, an interesting difference, and a comfortable, natural difference' (Paley 2000: 12).

Mrs. Hawkins is asking something from her child's non-black teachers. She wants them to act and be a certain way with her children, and she implies that she wants the teachers to promote those values in her children's schoolmates. Mrs. Hawkins desires that these non-black children be comfortable with her child's blackness, that they see it as a positive and interesting difference, presumably analogous to other racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and so forth differences among the children.<sup>8</sup> She desires that Paley recognize and affirm the comfort and positivity that her child already feels about his racial identity.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The word 'racism' was coined, in response not to anti-black prejudice, discrimination, and oppression, but to Nazism; and it was in response to the Nazi horrors, especially to their full extent revealed only after the Second World War, that the term came into general use, where it was eventually extended to forms of segregation (including South African 'apartheid'), and colonialism rationalized by racist ideologies, in which persons of non-European provenance were its victims.

<sup>7</sup> Racism is not simply an in-group prejudice against an out-group, a form of prejudice which has certainly existed since human groups have existed. See Frederickson (2002).

<sup>8</sup> When Mrs. Hawkins speaks of her child's blackness as 'natural', I do not take her to be subscribing to the (largely discredited) theory that races are natural kinds, but rather that phenotypic variation of a sort generally associated with race (for example, skin color) is a natural part of human diversity.

<sup>9</sup> I think we can assume that when Mrs. Hawkins speaks of 'black', she is not necessarily embracing an understanding of what it means to be black that an African or Afro-Caribbean might



I want to draw from Mrs. Hawkins's remarks a suggestion of a more general virtue that can be exemplified by adults toward one another. Part of this virtue is recognition, as Mrs. Hawkins says, which I understand in something like Charles Taylor's sense of acknowledging a group or an individual in light of a group identity that is important to her (Taylor 1994). I want, however, to add an element that Taylor only ambiguously includes in his sense of 'recognition' and that is that the non-black view the black person as a *peer* in the shared enterprise or context that provides the setting of the recognition.<sup>10</sup>

The idea of 'peer recognition' rules out a patronizing form of recognition, in which the proffered recognition carries the message that without the recognizer's publicly conferring her recognition on the recognizee, the latter is without legitimate standing. Peer recognition construes the recognizee as a peer—as someone with, and already possessed of, standing equal to one's own in the context in question—and behavior toward the recognizee expresses that peer regard. (The equal standing, for example as a colleague, does not of course require being seen as an equal in every respect.)

Not every particular context is appropriate for acknowledging blackness, or other comparable groups and group identities; for example, the connection between the two parties may be too tenuous, such as riding on the subway with persons of different races. In general, the idea of peer recognition requires a shared or common enterprise, endeavor, or community of some kind. Recognition is appropriate only when the potential target of the recognition desires it. Mrs. Hawkins's view of this matter may not represent all African Americans. Some may desire to distance themselves from their black identity as they understand it. Nevertheless, it can be said that in general, black Americans do desire *some* acknowledgment of their black identity (in appropriate contexts). Even a black person who wishes to be seen first as a lawyer, a Christian, a world citizen, a Bostonian, and so on, rather than as black, would not characteristically wish her blackness to be entirely overlooked, or rendered invisible.

The recognitional virtue I envision here goes beyond recognition in the sense of a mere acknowledgment of a distinct identity, to involve a positive valuing or appreciation of the identity in question.<sup>11</sup> This is not only (although it includes, as Mrs. Hawkins sees it as well) a recognition of the value of the identity *to black people*. It goes beyond this to involve the non-black agent herself regarding the presence of black people as peers in the enterprises she shares with them as likely to be of positive value to those enterprises and, through doing so, enriching her own experience of those enterprises. What is valued, in this virtue, is inextricably connected with the black people's blackness, their racial identity. Of course, not everything that a peer

have, but rather a specifically African-American notion of blackness that may or may not be fully shared by other, non-African-American, blacks.

<sup>10</sup> In the beginning of his essay, Taylor clearly differentiates a form of recognition of the other as an equal from recognition of the other in her distinctness (generally a group form of distinctness) from the recognizer. As his essay proceeds, the equality dimension of recognition drops out of the picture. The notion of equality remains in play, but as a purely political and legal value rather than a recognitional one (Blum 1998).

<sup>11</sup> Susan Wolf, in her comment on Taylor's essay, similarly distinguishes 'recognition of the existence' and 'seeing the value' dimensions of what Taylor calls 'recognition' (Wolf 1994: 75).

contributes to a shared enterprise is connected with her racial identity and, indeed, it would involve the wrong sort of valuing to be unable to see that particular blacks, and particular members of any comparable group, contribute in ways unrelated to their racial identity. Nevertheless, in many contexts and enterprises, what is of value will be related to the racial and ethnic identity of the black people involved (in a manner elaborated below). It is this aspect of what is valued that I mean to highlight in speaking of peer recognition and valuing of blacks as blacks, which I will hereafter refer to simply as 'recognition of blacks'.<sup>12</sup>

## CONVEYING RECOGNITION

Recognition of blacks, as here envisioned, involves conveying to one's black peers the appropriate forms of recognition and valuing, so that those peers experience themselves as recognized and valued in appropriate ways, at least by the agent herself. (If Lily recognizes her black colleague but he is not similarly recognized in the larger institution within which he and Lily function, then he will not feel himself to be appropriately recognized in an overall way, but may still feel so by Lily.) Having the appropriate attitude of recognition and valuing does not guarantee conveying that attitude to its target(s) in an appropriate manner. Generally, it would be inappropriate, for example, to greet a new black colleague by saying 'I'm sure glad to have a black person around here; we're so undiverse right now.' New colleagues wish their professional merits rather than their racial identity to be in the forefront of one's regard for them.

By contrast, if a black colleague proffers an insight about racial dynamics among the organization's clientele that one sees to be very likely correct and something one's other colleagues would have been unlikely to notice, noting that fact publicly in the setting in which the insight is proffered might be an appropriate way to convey the appropriate race-related recognition/valuing. In doing this, one recognizes the colleague as an individual and as a colleague contributing to a shared goal, and the black identity is part of and appropriately secondary to that colleagueship.

Thus, appropriately conveying recognition and valuing involves particularistic judgment and knowledge, of the particular black persons in question, and of the particularities of the situation. One gets to know how it is appropriate to express

<sup>12</sup> One might attempt to characterize the general social conditions in which a more general version of 'peer recognizing/valuing blacks' is a virtue: (a) The group must be a stigmatized, underappreciated, or marginalized group in the society, community, or institution in question. (b) The group must be involved in or have a perspective on the society, community, enterprise, or institution. (c) The group must desire inclusion in the enterprise, society, community, or institution. (d) The group must have a legitimate claim to inclusion in the enterprise, institution, society, or community. From these conditions, one might derive, for example, 'recognizing handicapped persons', or 'recognizing Muslims' (in various nations) as analogous virtues. But it would rule out 'recognizing Basques' in Spain, if Basques do not wish to be part of the Spanish national community. The more general version might then be something like 'recognizing stigmatized, underappreciated, or marginalized groups in their specificity as those particular groups'. The groups could be defined by any number of characteristics other than race, depending on particular context—religion, other creed/political ideology, handicap, national origin, region, sexual orientation, and so on.

such recognition to one's particular colleagues, although some rough guidelines can no doubt be crafted prior to such extensive contact with particular persons. Indeed, there seems a general epistemological dimension to the virtue of recognition. The recognition and valuing of blacks must be grounded in some knowledge of the group that enables the recognizer to have a personal basis for seeing blackness or black people in a positive light. The epistemological requirement here is not overly stringent. The recognizer need not be an expert on black history or culture. A recognizer could recognize that she knows little about black history, culture, or life, and indeed welcome the opportunity to correct her ignorance (though it would not be virtuous to treat the recognized black person as one's only source of such knowledge). Still, she must have some knowledge both to have a positive view of blackness, as well as to know how appropriately to engage in recognizing.<sup>13</sup>

One might also say that, *ceteris paribus*, the more one knows about black life, history, and culture, the better positioned one will be to engage in the appropriate forms of recognizing behavior. Such knowledge will therefore provide the possibility, and indeed the likelihood, of a more excellent form of the virtue of recognizing blacks.

### THE COMFORT FACTOR

One general guideline regarding the appropriate form of verbal behavior involved in recognition of blacks is suggested by Mrs. Hawkins's remark that one should be able to refer to black identity and be comfortable in doing so. For discomfort will suggest that the teacher fails to view blackness, or black identity, as something positive or comfortable.<sup>14</sup> Philippa Foot, in her important early virtue essay, 'Virtues and Vices', says 'a virtue such as generosity lives as much in someone's attitudes as his actions' (1997: 166). This is by now a commonplace in virtue theory. If I offer money to a friend in need, this does not constitute an instance of generosity if I feel resentful toward the friend but have been shamed into this action by another friend. Similarly, referring to black identity but being uncomfortable doing so will not instantiate the virtue of recognizing/valuing blacks.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, it would not be adequate to the virtue in question if the non-black person felt comfortable with black people, but only when they avoid anything that

<sup>13</sup> Epistemic virtue is also involved in understanding the racial dynamics of one's society. That is independent of the role race-related knowledge plays in affirming and valuing the particular racial identity of racial others. For instance, many white people do not (at least not explicitly, or even consciously) embrace their white identity and would feel uncomfortable with that identity's being recognized. Nevertheless, it is a civic good to understand how white identity functions in society as part of understanding the role race plays in one's own society.

<sup>14</sup> One caveat here: Some teachers might have adopted such a strong belief in 'color blindness', or, more accurately, 'color muteness' (a commitment to not referring to racial identity) (Pollock 2004), that this by itself is enough to produce discomfort in referring to black identity, independent of any specific feelings the teacher has about blacks.

<sup>15</sup> Discomfort may preclude the virtue with which I am concerned here, but it does not preclude all virtue regarding racial interaction. Certainly one can accord an appropriate kind of identity recognition to an ethnic or racial other without feeling comfortable with that person because of that very feature of her identity.

calls attention to their black identity, for example by never mentioning it, nor mentioning or alluding to cultural markers of blackness such as certain foods, music, film stars known to be black, and so on.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the virtue would characteristically require the *absence* of certain kinds of feelings and emotions, such as a feeling of self-consciousness or anxiety in referring to blackness or black people's black identity. However, the excluded emotions in question are not simply the more distinctly racist ones of race-based contempt, fear, delight at the woe of the racial other, satisfaction at their being bested by members of one's own race, and so on.<sup>17</sup> The virtue I envision does presuppose the absence of such emotions, but also those other emotions just mentioned, less clearly rooted in either racial antipathy or an inferiorized view of the racial other.

'Comfortable peer recognition/valuing' of blacks is a virtue both in the sense that it can come in a trait version but can also be manifested by someone on one occasion, without the person's possessing the trait version. That is, a non-black person could have a standing and deeply rooted disposition to view blackness and black identity as natural and positive, and to accord blacks appropriate peer recognition and valuing. Or she could do this on one occasion without possessing the underlying disposition or state.

Recognition of blacks shares two other features with virtues traditionally understood. First, it refers not simply to the performance of particular discrete acts, nor a bare disposition to do so, but to forms of behavior that are inseparable from an underlying sensibility, characteristic emotions, and moral understandings.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, possession of the characteristic in question is only partly within the direct scope of the will. One cannot just *choose* to recognize/value blacks as peers, if one's attitudes and sentiments are not currently aligned with that value. Exemplifying the virtue requires attempting to change one's characteristic ways of thinking and feeling about, regarding, and responding to black people.

Moreover, the value in question involves a good to the agent—the good involved in the black peers' contribution to their shared enterprise as acknowledged by the agent. (The good could exist, however, without the agent acknowledging it.) For

<sup>16</sup> David Shieler cites a good example of a non-black (in this case white) person who exemplifies a certain comfort with blackness as long as it is not being called attention to: 'A white boss who loved *The Cosby Show* "became very irate when the youngest daughter named her twins Winnie and Nelson [after the Mandelas] because then the show became too black"' (1997: 135).

It is an interesting question, bearing on the more general issue whether virtues have a built-in success-tracking quality, whether the cultural markers of blackness in question are in some way 'objective', or subjective to the agent. Suppose that a black employee wears some African attire to work, and her white colleague is entirely comfortable with this, but only because she does not recognize the African provenance of the attire. (I am drawing this example from the character played by Anna Devereaux Smith in the film *Philadelphia*.) This would seem not to count as comfort with blackness in the sense required. Or suppose a non-black wrongly takes a certain style of speech developed by Indian-American youth to be black and is uncomfortable with it for that reason (though she remains comfortable with blacks who do not exhibit any cultural behavior that she takes to be black). This would also seem to preclude the comfort with blackness required by the virtue in question.

<sup>17</sup> In Blum (2002: chapter 3), I argue that the sort of racial discomfort referred to in the previous paragraph may be, but often is not, rooted in racist views of the other.

<sup>18</sup> See Crisp and Slote in their introduction to *Virtue Ethics*: 'Another striking feature of virtue ethics is its focus on moral agents and their lives, rather than on discrete actions (telling a lie, having an abortion, giving to a beggar) construed in isolation from the notion of character' (3).

those who see virtues as necessarily contributing to the agent's own good, the value in question shares this feature with virtues.<sup>19</sup>

### SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE PROPOSED RACIAL VIRTUE

Yet one element of recognition of blacks may seem troubling, calling into question whether it should be seen as a positive value at all, or at least mitigating that value. Why should blacks or 'blackness' as such be valued? For one thing, many contemporary race theorists and scientists have argued that there are no races in the sense in which 'race' is commonly understood; if so, there seems no blackness to be valued (Zack 1998; Appiah 1996). However, although there may be no races, the groups we designate by racial terms are genuine historical groups—groups with a shared history and social existence arising from their having been viewed and treated as if they were genuine races. They are, in that sense, 'racialized groups' (Blum 2002: chapter 8). Especially in the case of blacks in the United States, becoming a racialized group has meant adopting a self-identity as a distinct group, developing cultural forms and ways of life that express that identity and express the historical experience of being an inferiorized and generally stigmatized group. This response to inferiorization has also involved multiple and complex forms of resistance to that inferiorization. In that sense, blacks have developed a positive self-identity out of the negative experience of racialization and racial discrimination. It is this positive identity that is an appropriate focus for the positive valuing that Mrs. Hawkins suggests. And this positive identity provides an answer both to the objection that races do not exist, so there is no 'blackness' to value; and also to the objection that if 'black' is a historically constructed identity, it is so by virtue of being created as a stigmatized and inferiorized identity, and so is not an appropriate object of positive value.

A different worry about this alleged virtue is that it would seem to require stereotyping. What could the 'blackness' or black identity be that is recognized unless it is a set of stereotypes and stereotypical expectations of black people? I would say that such a stereotypical form of this recognition is a corrupted form of the virtue in question, not an inevitable one. A non-black can expect that her activities that are shared with blacks will be enriched by their presence, and will be so in a manner that is in some way related to the historical experience, cultural forms, and distinctive identity of black people, without necessarily expecting specific opinions or types of behavior from the particular black people engaged in the shared activities. To constitute a distinct and coherent identity, blackness need not be stereotyped or 'essentialized', even if it is an identity that has in fact been prey to powerful stereotyping.<sup>20</sup> Surely most black people possess their own black identity in a non-stereotypic manner, as members of any ethnic or ethnoracial group do. When a non-black is interacting with a black person in a way that expresses the appropriate sense of recognition and

<sup>19</sup> I am indebted to the editors of this volume for reminding me of this feature of virtues, according to many theories of virtue. I do not myself subscribe to the view that virtues must always be good for their possessor, although most of them will.

<sup>20</sup> How one cognizes group identities without stereotyping is further explored in Blum (2004a).

appreciation, she acknowledges the black person's individual way of understanding her black identity; the non-black should not impose, or expect, the individual black person to have a particular understanding of that identity. So, although recognition of blacks necessarily has a group-focused dimension, it need not involve stereotyping and can be applied to individuals in a way that allows for individuality, for individual forms of appropriation and understanding of that group identity.<sup>21</sup>

A final point of clarification: As I am construing recognition of blacks, in the spirit of Mrs. Hawkins's remark, it necessarily involves a person focus. Merely enjoying cultural products of blacks will not count; it will not count as valuing blackness if someone loves movies with Denzel Washington, Angela Bassett, and Mos Def, but does not wish to be in the presence of black people.<sup>22</sup> It is black *persons* (specifically, peers) who are to be recognized and valued in the appropriate manner.

### RECOGNIZING/VALUING BLACKNESS AND THE DIVERSITY RATIONALE FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Some doubts about recognizing blacks as a virtue may perhaps be dispelled by relating it to the so-called 'diversity rationale' for affirmative action, which was given expression by the majority opinion in the U.S. Supreme Court's 2003 *Grutter v. Bollinger* case. The opinion (written by Justice O'Connor) said that having a critical mass of the major racial groups present in each class in a selective law school was 'a compelling state interest that can justify the use of race in university admissions' (*New York Times* 2003: 2). Several benefits of this policy were cited by the Court—improved understanding of persons of races other than one's own; breaking down racial stereotypes; preparing students for a diverse, multiracial world; more stimulating and enlightening classroom exchanges. The critical mass was justified on the grounds that it made members of the racial minorities in question feel sufficiently comfortable in the institution; that goal, in turn, was regarded as necessary for the others. Without it, the minorities would not participate in the intellectual and social life of the institution in a way that would contribute to the enhanced learning of all.

Justice O'Connor assumed that because 'of our nation's struggle with racial inequality' in a society in which 'race still matters', racial identity is likely to affect the views of members of a given racial group (*New York Times* 2003: 3, 5). At the same time, she rejected the view that this truth entails that 'minority students always (or even consistently) express some characteristic minority viewpoint on any issue' (3). Indeed, undermining the latter belief is one of the purposes of attracting a mix of students of different racial groups in sufficient numbers, so that the actual diversity of viewpoints within each group is made manifest to the larger community.

<sup>21</sup> Although persons can put an individual stamp on the meaning of their racial identity, there are obviously limits to these meanings. There is no getting around the way that racial identity is an entirely involuntary identity, yet one fraught with great social significance.

<sup>22</sup> On liking black culture while remaining prejudiced toward blacks, see Ralph Ellison's vignette of a white youngster enjoying a Stevie Wonder song while spouting racist epithets at blacks swimming at a public beach (1986 (essay originally 1977): 21).

In a way, the Court could be taken to be affirming the value of recognizing blacks, or at least a part of that value. (I will now refocus the discussion on blacks specifically, rather than racial minorities more generally.) The University of Michigan Law School's policy aims to make black students feel comfortable and recognized in the institution. But what is being implied about individual non-black students with respect to this virtue or value? Certainly the University is saying that it is good for the non-black students that black students are present in sufficient numbers—good for them educationally, personally, and perhaps as citizens as well. And this benefit depends on the black students' blackness. Presumably, also, the non-black students recognize that they are benefiting in these ways from the presence in sufficient numbers of the black students, and to that extent they are pleased that the black students are present.<sup>23</sup>

At the same time, Justice O'Connor's argument does not go as far as saying that the non-black students should exemplify or cultivate the virtue of recognizing blacks (or other groups), or, more generally, that each group should extend a comparable recognition and valuing to the others. For it is not implied that the non-black students are to do anything to make the black students know that they are appreciative of their presence, in contributing to the non-blacks' opportunity to learn and grow educationally and personally. It is not a deficiency in the argument about affirmative action that it fails to engage with this level of individual virtue. But it does suggest a way that a virtue approach illuminates something about the terrain in which affirmative action operates that the standard social, legal, and moral philosophical arguments about affirmative action characteristically do not.

I cite the affirmative action diversity rationale in part to lend credence to recognizing blacks as a virtue; but also to bring out how the social, legal, and moral arguments involved in this rationale are enriched by the virtue perspective that highlights the attitudes, values, and qualities of character that are desirable in a community that has been created according to that rationale.

## CIVIC RACIAL EGALITARIANISM AS A VIRTUE

Peer recognizing of blacks—and specifically the dimension of that virtue involving the positive valuing of blacks in shared enterprises and contexts—is not equivalent to seeing and treating members of racial groups other than one's own (in particular, non-blacks seeing blacks) as civic *equals*. The differences between these two virtues are instructive. Civic equality is particularly pertinent to the case of blacks in the U.S. because for so long blacks were legally 'second class citizens', and the civic standing of blacks is still problematic in some respects. Blacks are stereotyped and stigmatized as welfare dependents, as complainers, as not adhering to the American work ethic—all markers of civic deficiency in the minds of many white Americans.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Richard Light found that students at selective universities were virtually unanimous in being pleased at the racial diversity on their campuses, and in feeling that their academic and personal development was enhanced by that diversity (Light 2001: chapters 7 and 8).

<sup>24</sup> See Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo (2000); Roberts (1997).

Let us see 'civic egalitarianism' (here, a virtue, rather than a set of beliefs) as involving regarding the other as deserving of all the rights and privileges of a citizen of one's polity, such as political expression, political participation, having one's voice heard and taken seriously in appropriate civic venues, the right not to be discriminated against in education, housing, and other basic domains of social existence, and so on. To see someone as an equal is not simply to lack certain objectionable attitudes toward that person. It is to have a positive take on that person as someone whom one has reason to respect and to take seriously in civic venues. For example, it involves not only recognizing that it is illegal to engage in racial discrimination in housing, but recognizing why and how it wrongs the discriminated-against individual for her to undergo that discrimination. It means not only countenancing persons giving voice to political positions one disapproves of, but recognizing why such political expression is or could be important to that individual, and appreciating why she has as much right to that expression as one does to one's own political expression. Thus it also requires that one be disposed to protest against injustices committed against one's civic equals, to sympathize with their plight, to feel indignation and anger toward the perpetrators of discrimination, and the like.

I am interested in a sub-variety of civic egalitarianism related to race—'civic racial egalitarianism'—and will again use blacks as my primary example, although other racial and ethnic groups have historically presented comparable concerns. This virtue has both an individual and a group dimension. It involves recognizing that blacks are a distinct socially and civically significant group, whose history of being treated unequally raises particular concerns about their being treated equally. So the virtue will involve being concerned that blacks as a group come to have equal civic standing. One's response to individual instances of, for example, discrimination in housing, will involve recognizing the larger group context; one will, for example, be inclined to regret, protest, and support redress of discrimination not only because it wrongs the discriminated-against individual, but also because it bears on the group's civic standing. The civic racial egalitarian is not merely someone who lacks racism (in the form of racial inferiorizing attitudes) toward certain racial groups. This is part of the complexity and variety of racial value and disvalue. Merely lacking racism does not guarantee the appreciation of the importance of the civic domain and of the wrongness of discrimination in public or public-related venues, nor the range of attitudes and reactions that express that appreciation, involved in civic racial egalitarianism.

Viewing blacks as civic equals involves certain considerations not necessarily present with respect to every ethnic, racial, or other socially distinct group. 'White cultural values fundamentally disvalue African Americans', Mary Waters writes in her study of West Indian immigrants to the U.S. (Waters 1999: 148). Although African Americans have formal rights equal to those of other Americans, they are often both stigmatized and discriminated against in major life activities and domains.<sup>25</sup> Waters's study is instructive in this regard. Her respondents—mostly blacks from the English-speaking Caribbean—are shocked by the stigmatization of African Americans, and of

<sup>25</sup> See Loury (2002) for a sustained argument that 'blackness' remains a stigmatized identity in the U.S. See also M. R. Banaji (2001).



blackness more generally, that they find when they arrive in the U.S.; they have not experienced anything like this in their countries of origin, which are nevertheless in no way racially egalitarian societies. Many, Waters finds, attempt to distinguish and often distance themselves from African Americans in hopes of exempting themselves from this stigma, though they share 'blackness' with African Americans.

If there is a pervasive devaluing of blacks and blackness, then seeing and treating blacks as civic equals poses a challenge not necessarily present in the case of other groups.<sup>26</sup> For most non-blacks, seeing blacks as civic equals will mean becoming aware of the cultural influences on themselves that foster the devaluing of blacks, acknowledging their own subjection to those influences, and finding ways to counter them. It is not necessary to claim that all non-blacks will need to engage in such forms of struggle (and certainly not to the same degree) in order to see blacks as civic equals. Perhaps some persons are brought up with such strong egalitarian beliefs, and a set of natural or learned predispositions to see their fellow citizens as equals independent of race, that civic racial egalitarianism comes relatively easy to them. This is a dimension of moral luck comparable to that present in all virtues. What for most people stand as obstacles to compassion, courage, honesty, and the like are, for various reasons, barely operative with respect to other persons.

Philippa Foot says, 'As Aristotle put it, virtues are about what is difficult for men' (1997: 169). She understands this difficulty in terms of temptation to be overcome, or a deficiency (e.g. of motivation) to be made good.<sup>27</sup> This is a plausible view about virtues; the patterns of action, feeling, and understandings constituting virtue must be developed by human beings against a background of difficulty of some sort. At the same time, although this is true of human beings in general, it can well be more true of some than others. Courage comes easier to some than to others; the latter must work hard to achieve the level of courage that comes easier to the former.

The race-related virtues I discuss here follow the same pattern. They come more easily to some than others, but in general they involve a kind of difficulty, an overcoming of deficiency, or moral effort. Yet there is an important difference here from the way Foot sees the difficulty or deficiency involved in virtue. For her this is always purely individual; a particular agent lacks natural empathy, or feels pulled by fear not to want to stand up to the bully. But in the race case, the deficiency is in the larger culture and in that sense affects individuals in light of their particular social location. The difficulty involved in seeing blacks as civic equals is socially produced rather than a purely individual psychic deficiency.

Treating blacks as (civic) equals and recognizing blackness are not the same virtue. Someone who sees blacks as equals need not also value blackness. She may entirely avoid sharing in the larger society's stigmatizing of blackness and entirely respect

<sup>26</sup> Arguably, some other ethnoracial groups besides blacks—for example, Native Americans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans—suffer some form of stigmatization.

<sup>27</sup> Von Wright (1963: chapter 7) takes a similar, slightly narrower view, that the virtues are all forms of self-control. Zagzebski proposes a more plausible, weaker criterion—that there be at least some chance that the person develop the corresponding vice rather than the virtue—that is still consistent with the idea that virtues are not merely natural dispositions but require moral effort of some kind (1996: 105).

blacks as fellow civic participants, without herself having a positive take on blackness as a distinct cultural/communal entity. This does not mean that the civic egalitarian must also be an assimilationist—someone, described earlier, who accepts blacks in shared enterprises only insofar as they do not call attention to their blackness. Such a person would not be a civic (racial) egalitarian in my sense. The egalitarian cannot be put off by the appropriate and reasonable invoking of blackness and black identity; but she need not attach any distinctive positive value to it either. The civic racial egalitarian need not feel that her shared civic activities are enhanced by the presence of black people; she need only feel that they are not diminished.

I am not certain, however, if the implication goes in the other direction. That is, could a valuer of blackness fail to be a civic racial egalitarian? It might seem not, since a valuer of blackness would also have to have entirely rejected any stigmatizing of black people or blackness, and would in that way have to see blacks as equals. But perhaps a civic egalitarian must have a deeper appreciation than is required by recognizing/valuing blackness, of the importance of the civic domain, and of how equality operates in that domain. A civic racial egalitarian would perhaps be more likely to be angry and indignant about a serious case of racial discrimination against blacks than would a valuer of blackness.

Note that even though recognizing/valuing blacks is not the same as egalitarianism, this does not mean that the valuer of blackness thinks *more highly* of blacks than of other ethnoracial groups regarded as equals. It is not a matter of comparing the value of different groups. The blackness valuer could also value Chinese-ness, Asian American-ness, Mexican American-ness, and so on. She need only see a distinctive value in different groups; she need not see that value comparatively.

Racial egalitarianism with regard to blacks also involves an epistemic dimension, but it is different from that in recognizing blacks. The non-black civic egalitarian (with respect to blacks) will characteristically know that blacks are stigmatized in her society and that she herself to some degree participates, even if unwittingly, in that stigmatizing. She will characteristically recognize that racial ideologies and existing and persistent socio-economic inequalities encourage us to view racially disadvantaged groups not as equals but as inferiors, and that these inferiorizing tendencies can be difficult to acknowledge because they run embarrassingly contrary to the ideal of equality in which we are meant to believe. For most non-blacks, such knowledge is required for them to work themselves toward an attitude of genuine civic equality with blacks, though I have allowed that a rare few non-black persons might be able to attain the civic equality stance without having been touched by the stigmatizing of blacks.

The difference in the epistemic dimension of the two virtues is this. With regard to valuing, one must particularistically value blacks and blackness and thus know particulars about black history, culture, and life as a basis for doing so. With regard to civic egalitarianism, this sort of particularistic knowledge is not necessary; all that is required is that one recognize that blacks have been subject to stigmatizing and inferiorizing assumptions and treatment that have prevented them from attaining full civic equality, and that continue to pose psychic obstacles to blacks' struggle to achieve civic equality.

## SEEING OTHERS AS INDIVIDUALS

I have delineated two distinct race-related virtues—racial civic egalitarianism, and recognizing blacks—as part of attempting to show that the domain of race-related value is multifarious, and that a virtue approach can help us to access this complex domain. I will now discuss a third virtue, that exists in moral complementarity with recognizing blacks. This is the virtue that might be called ‘seeing others as individuals and not solely or predominantly as members of racial groups’. Although there may be many particular contexts in which one is perfectly happy to be regarded simply as a representative of one’s racial group, overall most persons wish others with whom they come in contact in more than a cursory fashion to treat them as individuals and not simply as a member of (racial) groups. But being so treated is not something one can take for granted. It requires the sort of moral effort, sensibility, and attentiveness involved in virtue. Both cognitive and emotional forces incline us to see other persons through the lens of group identity rather than saliently perceiving their individuality.<sup>28</sup> Race shares with other group identities this homogenizing feature, but it is intensified in the case of race (or at least it can be so argued). Seeing others racially inclines us to see them, wrongly, as fundamentally the same. In the United States, this homogenization has been particularly strong in relation to Asians and blacks; members of these groups tend to be seen by whites (and, often, by the other group) as members of homogeneous groups. (Because people tend not to homogenize their own group, and because whites are the dominant group in American society, whites are less subject to this homogenizing force.) Getting past these social and psychological barriers so as to see racial others as individuals therefore involves moral understanding and effort.

The virtue of ‘seeing others as individuals . . .’ (I use the ellipsis to indicate that the virtue in question is set specifically against the background of racial group identity) comprises a complex of dispositions of behavior, feeling, thought, forms of awareness, and perception. It involves, for example, one’s mental and emotional reactions to a particular member of the group in question not merely being the same as those triggered by the group itself. It means being vividly aware of particularities about the person in question not shared by other members of the group. It means not making unwarranted assumptions about that individual based on her group membership.

Seeing others as individuals rather than predominantly as members of (racial) groups is a race-related virtue like the other two virtues so far discussed. It is a *different* virtue from recognizing blacks, and the two pull in somewhat different directions. Recognizing blacks requires giving someone’s racial identity its due in one’s interactions with another person. ‘Seeing others as individuals . . .’ involves not allowing that group racial identity to loom too large in one’s response to the other person.

<sup>28</sup> Examples of cognitive and emotional factors inclining us to see others in terms of group membership rather than as individuals are that it is mentally easier to think in terms of groups than to make the effort to see the particularity of individuals, and that social distance between groups reinforces the perception of groupness over individuality. The large literature on stereotyping explores these matters. See, for example, Oakes et al. (1994).

It might seem that the particularistic dimension of recognizing blacks already encompasses the virtue of seeing others as individuals, since one needs to be aware of individual particularity in order to see how appropriately to give recognition to a particular black person. But how the recognizee relates to her black identity and how she would be likely to experience various expressions of recognition is only a part of her individuality. To oversimplify a bit, recognizing blackness takes account of someone's individuality in relation to her black identity, while seeing others as individuals in light of their racial identity takes account of her individuality as going beyond her black identity.

Our various group memberships are partially *constitutive* of our individuality; they do not only threaten to mask it. In addition, our individuality is expressed in the particular meanings we give to our particular group identities, the extent to which we embrace our group identity or distance ourselves from it, and the like. That is why an individual black person at a particular period in her life might wish to distance herself from black identity as she understands it, or as she recognizes others to understand it. Still, to be seen as an individual involves not being seen too exclusively in terms of a specific one of those memberships, however construed by the individual.

Combining the two virtues requires sensitivity and judgment; yet clearly it is a manageable goal. In our initial example, Mrs. Hawkins surely wanted her child to be seen and valued both as an individual *and* as black. She did not think the two incompatible, nor did Paley in commenting on the exchange with Mrs. Hawkins.<sup>29</sup> (Moreover, though the two virtues are distinct, it is quite possible to exemplify neither one—neither to see members of a racial group as individuals nor to give their group membership proper recognition. A racist in Garcia's sense, for example, does neither.)

Note that seeing others as individuals is not the same as the virtue of civic racial egalitarianism, or even of egalitarianism of any kind. Seeing someone as an individual is compatible with not seeing her as a civic equal; and seeing her as a civic equal is compatible with privileging her group identity in a way that is not consistent with seeing her as an individual. The lived sense of a racial other as *equal* is different from the lived sense of the racial other as an *individual*. The two virtues are not, of course, inconsistent with one another, and they do naturally go together; but they are distinct.

### 'COLOR BLINDNESS' AS A RACE-RELATED VIRTUE

I mentioned earlier that one reason many people fail to see the diversity of race-related value and disvalue is that they think that color blindness should be the overarching principle governing all racial matters including interracial interactions. We are now in a position to assess this idea. 'Color blindness' does not really refer to a single principle or value. In public policy contexts, it is taken to mean that social policies should not mention race, and thus should not explicitly call for the disparate treatment of

<sup>29</sup> Paley's book and a later companion volume, *Kwanzaa and Me*, are particularly good resources for seeing the operation of these two complementary virtues. These books can be read as a record of Paley's journey toward attempting to give appropriate recognition (and valuing) to her pupils' racial identities, while continuing to see them as individuals.

different racial groups. Several commentators have noted that some public policies which do not mention race are nevertheless intended to have race-differentiated effects (Blum 2002: chapter 4; Louny 2002). It is not clear, then, if it is the absence of intended effect or the lack of explicit mention of race that should count as color blindness.

The policy debate is not necessarily pertinent to our concerns with personal virtues. Yet here too there is no clear agreement as to what color blindness entails. Should it be equated with 'colormuteness', that is, not making explicit (or implicit?) reference to persons' racial identities in personal interaction (Pollock 2004)? Or should it be understood as a principle governing behavior toward other persons—that one should never treat persons differently because of their racial identity? Finally, it could also be taken to mean that one should strive to be blind to—actually not to notice—the physical characteristics taken as markers of racial identity, as the teacher cited by Mrs. Hawkins could be taken to have claimed, when she said: 'All my children look alike to me'. Finally, color blindness could be something about not what one notices, but what one attaches importance to; the principle could be that one should not attach any importance to racial identity. (This in turn could lead to the 'no differential treatment' form.)

The 'colormuteness' form seems normatively superficial, so let us take the other three as plausible candidates.<sup>30</sup> There are certainly contexts in which color blindness in any of these three senses is entirely appropriate, or even morally required. I will not attempt to characterize such contexts. But of the three race-related virtues I have discussed, recognizing/valuing blacks obviously requires attention to racial identity in thought, feeling, and behavior. An all-encompassing color-blind stance would make it impossible to realize this virtue. Seeing others as individuals and not only as members of racial groups seems closer to a form of color blindness, since it does not make specific positive reference to racial identities. Still, this virtue is not color-blind. It does not prescribe *ignoring* racial identity in how one sees or treats persons; it says only that persons should be seen as individuals and not *only* as members of racial groups. Insofar as one's racial identity is a part of one's individuality, color blindness would be at odds with this virtue. If I am Mexican American and think that a colleague, Revan, attaches no significance to this identity and tries to ignore it, I may well feel that Revan is unable to see me for the individual I am. So treating others as individuals, not only as members of racial groups, is distinct from color blindness (in some of its plausible forms), and can be at odds with it.

Of the three, only civic racial egalitarianism involves (one type of) color blindness. For it says that racial identity should not affect one's seeing and treating fellow citizens as civic equals; they should be treated as equals, no matter of what racial group. It must be noted, however, that this does not entail that persons' racial identities should be ignored, nor that they should never be grounds for differential treatment. For, I have argued, to acquire the virtue of civic racial egalitarianism, a non-black must

<sup>30</sup> Although colormuteness does not seem a plausible normative principle, its implementation can be harmful, in not allowing people to pay the appropriate attention to racial differences, for example, with respect to racial inequalities (Pollock 2004).

characteristically be aware of the role anti-black racism has played in relegating blacks to less than civic equality. This will, then, often mean paying a certain kind of attention to blacks' racial identity, and possibly engaging in race-sensitive behavior (or supporting race-sensitive policies) intended to support blacks' efforts to secure civic equality.

In sum, color blindness in its several forms cannot serve as an overarching virtue governing race relations in interpersonal and civic settings. It may, in some form, survive scrutiny, and take its place among the panoply of race-related virtues (Blum 2002: chapter 4). But at most it will be one among several such virtues.

### ARE RACE-RELATED VIRTUES TOO LOCAL TO COUNT AS VIRTUES?

Two objections can be raised to calling the race-related qualities of character that I have discussed virtues. First, it might be felt that they are too local in character, and thus of insufficient significance, to count as virtues. They pertain only to the racial domain of life, while standard issue virtues such as justice, honesty, integrity, and compassion are not so limited but apply across multiple domains.

Three replies can be made to this objection. First, standard issue virtues themselves vary quite a bit in the extent to which they apply in daily life. Honesty is arguably a virtue that is pervasively relevant. But courage seems a virtue that may not be pertinent to the lives of many persons for long stretches of time. Moreover, in particular societies and contexts within those societies, all three of the race-related virtues so far mentioned seem applicable across a broad range of contexts. If a non-black interacts with blacks on a daily basis, all three virtues will frequently be appropriate (especially if racial egalitarianism is construed not only as civic egalitarianism but as human, social, and political racial egalitarianism as well). So, depending on the social world involved, frequency of contexts of appropriateness will not necessarily favor all standard issue virtues over these race-related ones.

Furthermore, race-related virtues are arguably of vital importance in the United States, plagued as it is by a continuing legacy of troubling racial inequities in many domains of life, as well as segregative processes and other factors making interactions between those of different ethnoracial groups less than ideal.<sup>31</sup> So, for example, rejecting the negative value often attached to blackness and attaching positive value to blackness (valuings involved in civic egalitarianism and recognizing blacks, respectively) in one's interactions with black people and in one's life more generally are arguably important civic or civic-like virtues. These two virtues are somewhat analogous to but are more demanding than a general courteous respectfulness in dealing with those of ethnic, religious, political, racial, and linguistic groups other than one's own. This civic courtesy requires a lower level of engagement with the structures and processes of social value attached to different racial groups than do the two race-related virtues discussed.

<sup>31</sup> On racial inequities in important life domains, see Loury (2002: appendix).

Moreover, both these virtues arguably bear some empirical relationship to social justice. This is true of the racial civic egalitarian by definition; she must care that blacks and other racial groups not suffer from race-based injustices. Recognizing blacks is less directly civic in import; but it seems plausible that a recognizer of blackness will care about blacks and therefore about social injustices from which they suffer.

Secondly, I would note John Doris's argument that local virtues have an empirical reality that standard issue virtues generally lack (Doris 2002). Some people are 'honest in the context of family life' but not 'honest at work'; but only a very very few are 'honest' overall, in the way generally understood in attribution of traits. Although Doris does not attempt to characterize the form of localism in question, it seems plausible to see the race-related virtues I have delineated as, on Doris's account, more likely to have psychic reality than standard issue virtues. (How pertinent this point is to the normative adequacy of a proposed virtue is another matter.)

A third response to the 'too local' objection would be to question why more local worthy traits of character should not be thought of as virtues even if they lack the scope of some of the most important and pervasive standard issue virtues. They would still involve the psychic complexity of virtues, encompassing behavior, forms of perception, feelings, modes of moral understanding, and the like. They would still be traits of character that would enable persons to live well. One would have to give up the idea that a virtue must be for human beings as such, rather than applying much more to some societies (or other all-encompassing social contexts) than others. (The race-related virtues would be much less pertinent in racially homogeneous societies.) But jettisoning that view seems to me a gain for virtue theory. We seem already to accept some departure from this universalist ideal in the notion of role-related virtues, such as virtues attached to particular professions.

A second objection to calling the race-related traits virtues might be that they are no more than subspecies of more general, standard issue, virtues—or the same virtues applied in distinct contexts. Civic racial egalitarianism would be a subspecies of civic egalitarianism, which can perhaps be seen as a form of justice. With regard to treating the racial other as an individual and recognizing blacks, it is less clear of what standard issue virtue these would be subspecies. It is not justice, for example, since justice does not require the positive valuing of blackness. One possible candidate is respect. Indeed, Taylor's argument in 'The Politics of Recognition' can be read as suggesting that both regarding others as equals and appreciating others' individuality are forms of a common respect (Taylor 1994).<sup>32</sup> In turn, the latter form of respect can be seen as one variety of an intermediate subtype of respect, namely respect for distinctness, which also comes in the form of appreciating persons' *group* distinctness.<sup>33</sup> The latter, in turn,

<sup>32</sup> For Taylor, respect is not distinctly construed as a virtue, but only as a value. However, it can be construed as a virtue, and so can the sub-forms that Taylor derives from it. That is, respect can come in a trait form (perhaps 'respectfulness') and in a non-trait form that still refers to a complex of behavior, attitude, emotion, perception, and so on.

<sup>33</sup> I criticize Taylor for not fully appreciating that recognition of someone as an equal is not the same as recognition of her as a distinct individual (Blum 1998). Appiah criticizes Taylor for failing to appreciate that the group and the individual forms of 'respect for distinctness' can be at odds with one another (1994).

can be seen as a more general form of (at least a part of) the virtue of recognizing blacks. So Taylor can perhaps be read as suggesting a more general version of all three of our race-related virtues, as well as suggesting that all are forms of respect.

However, Taylor's 'recognizing group difference' would not actually be the more general form of the recognizing of blackness virtue, since Taylor's virtue does not require the morally significant element of marginalization, underappreciation, or stigmatizing of the group. This condition brings out that 'recognizing blacks' could conceivably disappear as a virtue in a particular society, if blacks became fully integrated and accepted, and the stigma of blackness entirely disappeared. Similarly, if blacks no longer came to constitute a group with a distinct group identity, or, in another direction, if certain cultural nationalist strands of thought became pervasive in the black community, so that blacks no longer wished to be included in major institutions and venues, it would also cease to be a virtue. That the virtues in question are not timeless but socially and historically context-dependent in no way impugns their moral significance in the contexts in which they do apply.

Even if the three virtues were all forms of some kind of respect, this would simply suggest that respect comes in importantly morally distinct sub-varieties that need to be distinguished from one another. The respect involved in civic equality differs from the respect involved in recognizing blacks, and both differ from the respect involved in seeing others as individuals not only as members of (racial) groups. Whether they are seen as fully distinct virtues seems less significant, once one recognizes that they involve both distinct values and distinct psychic structures, as I have argued above.

Moreover, there are certainly forms of the virtue of 'respect' that do not require the kind of positive group identity affirmation involved in recognizing blacks. I can respect someone with whose political views I deeply disagree. I do not value his views, but I respect him, and, let us say, I recognize that his, to me regrettable, views are honestly and conscientiously arrived at. I respect him and I respect his holding those views; but I do not confer value on the political identity he has adopted. We have reason to confer value on black identity, and perhaps other ethnoracial identities, that we do not have for some other sorts of identities. In this sense, there are certainly morally distinct forms of respect.

Not only are the three more general forms of the virtues I have discussed—recognizing groups, civic egalitarianism, and seeing as an individual...—distinct from one another, but, I have argued, the specifically racial form of each of the virtues is psychologically and morally distinct (at least in respect of involving distinct moral capacities and understandings) from other forms. Someone might exemplify the racial form but not some other form. For example, he might be a civic racial egalitarian but not a civic gender egalitarian, seeing blacks as civic equals, but not women. Someone might be a recognizer of blacks, but not a recognizer of Muslims, or of Mexican Americans. Though I would not advocate that each of these sub-forms differentiated by group be thought of as a fully distinct virtue, their distinctness does require recognition in a fully adequate account of them as morally valuable traits of character.

I have argued that the domain of race is a rich venue of value and disvalue. Drawing on Jorge Garcia's work, I have attempted to show that the virtue tradition



provides important resources to articulate the values in question. Amplifying Jorge Garcia's account of 'racism', I have mentioned several distinct vices (racial ill will, racial inferiorizing, racial disregard). I have also suggested several distinct race-related virtues, which are more than the mere absence of these forms of vice—peer recognition/valuing of blacks, civic racial egalitarianism, and treating persons as individuals rather than solely as members of racial groups. I argued that these virtues are distinct from one another, and have suggested thereby that there are likely to be other virtues and vices of a race-related character.

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