



The Aristotelian Virtue Ethics Theory and the Lugbara Concept of Virtue

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Abstract

Human life can be said to rotate around ethical concerns. The day to day actions performed by rational beings are moral actions that call for accountability. Ethically responsible actions are either praiseworthy or blameworthy and their natural orientation is towards the good as an end. Actions that tend to the good are described as virtuous, while actions that tend to the bad are vicious. At the center of virtue stands the good that becomes a habitus of a person. This paper argues that virtue as a category of ethical theory is founded on the good both in Aristotelian sense and among the Lugbara. Aristotle, also known as “the father of character”, promotes ardently virtue ethics as the ethics of the mean. His is the ethics of balance, ethics of avoiding extremes and deficiencies in any action. The Lugbara of Uganda equally have a similar version of ethics of the mean. Influenced by their cultural norms, virtue is the focus of good living among the Lugbara in relation to others and oneself. A virtuous person in the Lugbara understanding is one who manages to balance life particularly in the family and the society in general. This paper thus seeks to isolate points of convergence and divergence in the understanding of virtue ethics by Aristotle and the Lugbara of Uganda.

Subject Areas

Philosophy, Religion

Keywords

Ethics, Morality, Virtue, Vice, Habitus, End, Lugbara

1. Introduction

Virtue ethics of late has been rejuvenated due to apparent failures of popular ethical theories that rocked the 19th and early 20th centuries as attested to by the

writings of ref. [1] [2]. Such theories included utilitarianism/consequentialism and deontology. The master piece article of Anscombe opened the Panthora's box where the author avers that the best known scholars and writers of ethics from Butler to Mill are all at a fault. Consequently, Anscombe and MacIntyre in particular, pinned down the writers as neglecting the *sine qua non* of virtue in any ethical thinking and writing. The fore-mentioned scholars in their submissions proposed instead a return to Aristotelian virtue based ethics theory as the perennial ethical theory. Aristotle argues for stable disposition of character as basis for making moral decisions in his monumental work on ethics as in ref. [3]. This work seeks to isolate the points of convergence and divergence in Lugbara concept of virtue and that of Aristotle. The comparison is procedurally made through the presentation of Aristotle's virtue ethics in *Nicomachen ethics* and the Lugbara perception of virtue arrived at through available literature and interface with the cultural leaders who customarily are stewards of cultural ethics.

The Lugbara are historically best known for their hospitality [4]. Matters of justice and fairness formed the fabric of traditional Lugbara *ethos*. Could this be the case even in 21st century where technology is at door steps of culture world over? How different or how similar is their (Lugbara) ethical thinking to the Greek founders of ethics enveloped in Aristotle in regard to virtues? This is the thrust of this work as subsequently developed. Besides, the Lugbara have rich culture of ethics. But the available study on the culture is scanty. From this perspective, the study is timely to contribute a bridge to this lacuna in order to provoke more study by academic devotees on cultural ethics as well.

2. Methodology

The work relied heavily on qualitative approach that used content analysis [5]. This was possible by the use of library and internet resources. Among the Lugbara, the scanty literature was made use of. Interactive dialogue with Lugbara elders and clan leaders provided the needed information to achieve the basic objective of this study. Special characteristics of messages were identified in the process of conversations with the targeted subjects of the study to arrive at inferences.

3. Aristotelian Virtue Ethics

Aristotle's views and conclusions on the theory of virtue are found in his celebrated work; the *Nicomachean Ethics (NE)*, *Eudemian Ethics (EE)* and *Magna Moralia (MM)*—*Big Ethics*. However, the authorship of *MM* is still a point of contention. The gist of the three treatises is the same—good life. Insidious differences are only noticeable in organization, emphasis and content structure. In a way, the trio could be regarded as complementary treatises. This study is not initially a comparative study on Aristotle's three works on morality but rather a comparative study on virtue ethics in the mind of Aristotle and the Lugbara people.

Needless to say, from its etymological constitution, the term *virtue* comes from the Latin word *virtus* which is derived from *vis* meaning “strength”. Accordingly,

ref. [6] describes virtue as the “motor” of moral life rather than its “brakes”. Virtue takes the place of an engine in human life. Just like a car without an engine cannot move, so also a human being without traits of virtue is stuck. A car without an engine is an equivalent of a toy. It cannot perform the function for which it is defined as a car. If virtue is not a constituent of the personality, such a person is well-nigh half baked. Virtue then becomes a way of *being* when developed over time. To be virtuous would mean to be nearly good at all times.

Nonetheless, our discussion is mainly dependent on *Nicomachean Ethics*. In this work (*NE*) is systematized ethical issues centered on virtue as good living. Aristotle does not believe in theoretical ethics. Good living is measured in practical terms. It is a result of practicing justice, prudence, temperance, fortitude, modesty and judgment. Therefore, good living consists in good character traits *i.e.* life of excellence. Because of his avid emphasis on character formation, ref. [7] considered Aristotle to be *the father of character*. His ethics is thus character based. But this character must be rational, hence, it exhibits the simultaneous exhibition of both excellences of reason and character [8]. Good living must consist of rational activities of the soul in conformity with virtues or excellence. In this sense, good living is a life guided by reason. In Aristotle’s thinking, good action is a result of long time practice of virtues. Following the footmarks of his predecessors Socrates and Plato, Aristotle further contends that the goal of ethics is well-being. Therefore, the fulcrum of well-lived life is virtue.

3.1. Theoretical Dimension

From the above running arguments, one may be tempted to think that Aristotle’s ethics has no theoretical dimension after all. However, such apparent perception of ethics as non-theoretical discipline in Aristotle must be understood in context. Referring to ethics as “practical” philosophy is actually in terms of action. That would mean ethics deals with action and not with production [9]. Action in this sense could mean practical decision making in a crisp situation. For example, the judgment of right and wrong behavior, what ought to be done, and what ought not to be done from action. Action denotes praxis. That is, what human beings can voluntarily achieve by their own efforts. This action only pertains to rational human beings. Other animals are incapable of voluntary action as in *NE*, III, 1, 1111a26. This is so because other animals are said to be incapable of rational thinking. The aim of Aristotle’s “action” is *eupraxia*—*acting well* for itself. In contrast, “production” denotes craft which aims at an end outside itself, satisfying a process as alluded to in *NE*, X, 4, 1174a19-b5. In this sense, virtuous activities are not merely productions but actions.

3.2. Ethical Virtues

Toing the path of Plato, Aristotle summarizes ethical virtues into four cardinal virtues and describes ethical virtues of justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude as complexities of rational, emotional and social powers. He however, parts with

Plato on the question of acquisition of the virtues [10]. For Plato, the acquisition of virtue is strictly through science, mathematics and philosophy, hence by study which is rather idealistic approach to acquiring virtues. A clear conception of what goodness is, completes the training in attainment of virtues in Plato. Aristotle instead underscores proper upbringing and habits guided by reason in acquiring virtues. He thinks that science alone is inadequate, hence opting for a holistic approach that does not ignore the practical aspects of upbringing and building of habits or character traits right from childhood.

Many contemporary virtue ethicists see themselves as continuing in one way or the other, the legacy of Aristotle, as suggested in ref. [7]. To this effect, ref. [11] affirms that “virtue ethics theorists, in the main, take their inspiration from ancient Greek philosophers, especially Aristotle”. This makes Aristotle a tall figure in the debate of virtue as central to human character formation. It is apparently on this ground that other categories of ethical theories in one way or the other may trace their foundation from virtue ethics theory. If we talk of utilitarianism or consequentialism for instance, the bench mark is some good at the end of it all which is basically virtue ethics. Only that consequentialist theories care less about the minority view. A consideration is made of the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. This mathematical approach to ethical goodness is what Aristotle apparently contests in advocating for fairness for all, not only the majority. That is why a rejuvenation of a return to Aristotelian ethics becomes a kind of *sine qua non*.

On the other hand, the Greek rendering of the term “ethics” is equally associated with character. Virtue ethics, according to Aristotle, tries to analyze those qualities which a person needs so as to be able to live a life recognizable as human life. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, ref. [12] suggest that Aristotle defines good character as the right conduct in relation to other persons and in relation to oneself. In the thinking of ref. [13], The Philosopher contends that to be a person of character is to be a person who, over the course of a lifetime, cultivates the virtues; that is, those habits of thinking, feeling and doing that enable persons to flourish. Hence, the Aristotelian virtues are not abstract. They are achievable through habit development and practice. They are not actually innate in human beings. Even if they were, probably they could be inactive hence need to activate them through practice. The repeated acts help one build a habit which is referred to as “habitus”.

3.3. Virtue as “Habitus”

But the Aristotelian virtue is not merely a habit like any ordinary tradition but goes beyond into what is best explained by the Latin term *habitus*. The Latin rendering *habitus* denotes consistency and endurance. The *habitus* is therefore a stable/permanent behavior built overtime. Such behavior becomes part and parcel of the individual. It is not a part-time habit. Virtue is therefore *habitus* that works on human operative faculties to elevate them to the level of perfection. The term *habitus* was introduced in sociology by a French thinker called Pierre Bourdieu [14]. A sociologist by orientation, Bourdieu argues that *habitus* is created and

reproduced unconsciously. There is no deliberate pursuit and coherence in attaining *habitus* either. For ref. [15], *habitus*, from sociological point of view, “is created through a social, rather than individual process leading to patterns that are enduring and transferable from one context to another but that also shifts in relation to specific contexts over time”. The term is therefore not fixed. It can change under unexpected situations or simply over a long historic period of time.

We can see that the sociological and ethical notions of *habitus* have some intersection. One point is clear. Development and endurance are akin to *habitus*. Virtues are developed through *habitus* and they endure. From sociology, patterns are developed that last. Even if they may change over time, the change is not abrupt. It comes over a long period of time.

3.4. Kinds of Virtues in Aristotle

Aristotle identifies two types of virtues, namely, intellectual and moral virtues as in *NE*, II, 1, 1103a15-25. He argues that intellectual virtues enable us to think rationally, whereas moral virtues enable us to handle our desires and emotions rationally. According to ref. [16], Aristotle explicitly declares in *Nicomachean Ethics* that “virtues are implanted in us neither by nature nor contrary to nature: we are equipped by nature with the ability to receive them and habit brings this ability to completion and fulfillment”. Apparently, virtues are by *ipso facto* imbedded in human nature. Human beings only need to nurture them through practice to take precedence in their activities.

Aristotle further affirms that moral virtues (justice, prudence, temperance, courage) are acquired through imitation and practice of the corresponding acts. For example, we become just by doing just acts [repeatedly], temperate by doing temperate acts [repeatedly], brave by doing brave acts [repeatedly] suggests *NE*, II, 1, 1103b. Meanwhile, intellectual virtues arise in us by nature and they grow through instruction or teaching. For instance, teaching of moral judgment and conflict resolution as also observed by ref. [17]. Aristotle also contends that virtues are developed by an individual over time. He recognizes that a person may have the ability to think about the good without having the disposition to implement that good as thought of.

But what then does Aristotle mean when he says we acquire virtue by imitation and practice? It may not be taken for granted that a just, courageous, temperate, wise action qualifies one to be virtuous. It is not an art. We may not compare the case of art and excellence at equal level. No. They are not similar as observed in *NE*, II, 4, 1105a20ff. Virtue is rather a character developed over a long period of time until it becomes a *habitus*.

However, Aristotle believes in his *NE* that generally a virtuous life is a life of moderation; moderation in all things. That is, rational actions performed should be within the limits neither in excess nor in deficiency. The middle ground between two extremes is what Aristotle refers to as the mean or moderation. For example, courage is neither extreme cowardice nor extreme fierceness. The kind

of moderation deliberated by Aristotle is not part-time business. That is what makes one virtuous. “A moral virtue is destroyed by lack and excess. For example, if you make someone too fearless so that he does not fear even the gods, he is not brave but mad; but if you make him fear everything, he is a coward. A brave man or woman will neither be he or she who fears all things nor he who fears none”, as suggested in ref. [18]. However, Aristotle’s moderate state is not a mechanical or arithmetic mean but one that is relative to the situation in line with sound or reasonable judgment.

In conclusion, Aristotle’s concern in his theory of virtue is to produce good statesmen, good citizens. Good citizens aim at making society good. They make others good by running good society. This presupposes that the leadership of such a state is in the hands of good people. Given this assumption, the life of virtue is concerned with the end of a good society which is good life. In his *Politics*, Aristotle accordingly explores the means of achieving a good society which is not the focus of this paper. This study is about Aristotle’s and the Lugbara understanding of virtue. We have just put together in discussion Aristotle’s conception of virtue. We now turn to the Lugbara understanding of virtue and how it permeated their daily living. This is done with the view of arriving at points of intersection and divergence.

4. Lugbara Concept of Virtue

4.1. Who Are the Lugbara?

Before we delve into discussing their concept of virtue, it is important to sketch who the Lugbara are. Accordingly, the Lugbara are located in northwestern Uganda—West Nile—near Congo and Sudan border. Speakers of central Sudanic language, the Lugbara are basically settled agriculturalists of peasant origin. Historically, they belonged to Congo Free State till 1914 when the British in agreement with the Belgians conveniently took over the territory [4].

The Lugbara live in Congo and South Sudan with the majority in Uganda. They speak a language close to Madi, Logo, Lendu and Keliko, also remotely related to Azande and Mangbetu. The language is known as “Lugbarati”. Two distinct, though minor, regions are made of them as higher people—*Urule ‘ba* and lower people—*Andrale ‘ba* [4]. The dialect spoken in the two calibrations slightly differs mainly in pronunciations and intonations. This ethnic group is conscious of their singular identity geographically, linguistically and culturally. However, not much literature exists about the Lugbara in general.

4.2. The Lugbara Language and Culture

The Lugbara, just like other ethnic groups, love their culture and language. The particularity of their language is distinct in its terminology. The *Lugbarati* (the name given to the language spoken by the Lugbara) words are generally brief and analogous. Very few words in their vocabulary suffice for univocal definition. The largely concise vocabulary however is rich in meaning though difficult and

confusing for a starter in the language. A case in point is the word “*ti*”. It has more than ten popular meanings. For example: it can refer to *language, mouth, cow, musical beat, suicide, futility, remove, beat, tight, choke, delivering, smartly dressed, harvest...* Such words like *ti, aci, 'ba, taa, fu*, have several meanings creating a huddle in learning the language. However, the rather rhythmic Lugbara language has earned the description of “musical language” from a number of foreigners who have ventured into learning it.

The fore-runners in alphabetizing the Lugbara dialect (*Lugbarati*) were the Comboni missionaries who evangelized the Lugbara people from 1912 to early 1980s [19]. One prominent scholar who popularized Lugbara language in literature form among the Comboni Missionaries was Albert Titus Dalfovo, who was a renowned professor of Philosophy at Makerere Public University. Dalfovo made a number of collections about the Lugbara, starting with Lugbara dialect dictionary to proverbs [20].

A remarkable ethnographic research about the Lugbara is credited to John Middleton. As one of the pioneer researchers on Lugbara land, ref. [4], an ethnologist, accurately described the Lugbara people as kind, patient, helpful and friendly rather contrary to what some “outsiders” think about the Lugbara as being violent, hard and uncultured, poor, ignorant and barbaric. In fact, the Lugbara often seem kinder therefore more virtuous to foreigners than their own. A typical Lugbara will make sure a foreigner does not die in their hands. They seem to be following the biblical ethics of being good to foreigners very well as in Lev. 19: 33-34; Dt. 10: 18-19; Zech. 7:). Just treatment of a foreigner is believed to bring many good returns or fortunes to the individual and their progeny. Conversely, injustice to a foreigner is conceived as a bad omen and therefore a curse that may affect generations over generations. This is the apparent basis of their concept of virtue, that injustice to anyone is a curse. To be virtuous is, first and foremost, to be just and fair. Such traits were treasured and passed on from generation to generation through the elders who were accomplished custodians of moral values.

Deeply imbedded in the Lugbara linguistics is the Lugbara philosophy of life and moral values. By their fondly kind attitude, the concept of virtue traverse life activities including development. Virtues were and are still central in a typical successful Lugbara man or woman. Marriages are described successful on the basis of virtues manifested by the couples and consequently by their progeny. Therefore, delving into the intricate nexus of Lugbara perception of virtue unveils Lugbara philosophy of life.

4.3. Lugbara Concept of Virtue

Terminology. From the onset, there is no single direct Lugbara word for the term “virtue”. It is rather a description of good. Virtue is something innate and “obvious’ in their context. Good behavior called *adriza ala* or *adriza muke* is concomitant to human living in society. The term *adriza ala* is a description of an excellent repeated character which is developed over time. Often the Lugbara link such

behavior to one's ancestry. They believe strongly in the proverb "*Odo* ifi '*dee odo ndua*'". *Odo* is a fruit tree that produces edible fruits. The proverb roughly translates to "The *Odo* tree cannot drop its fruits anywhere else except under itself" [20]. The implication of the proverb is that in the same deterministic manner, a human being produces effects that are proper to its nature. It therefore follows that if one's great grandparents were known to be good people; their children would also be so. Although today, the exposure to education and technology, thanks be to globalization, has seemingly turned that principle upside down. Often children of morally reputable individuals in history have become rogues or hooligans as commonly attributed imported cultures.

The concept of *adriza ala* or *andriza muke* is used to express the concept of virtue. *adriza ala/muke* is composed of two words *adriza* and *ala/muke* [21]. *Adriza* generally pertains to behavior or conduct. *Obi* is a synonym of the term *adriza*. As a word, *adriza* is indifferent. It can only be qualified and perhaps quantified by the action of the performing subject. If the actions conform to the acceptable norms and values of the society, it qualifies for the good (virtue—*adriza ala/muke*. Meanwhile, the contrary qualifies for the bad—*adriza onzi*, therefore, the evil (vice). *Adriza* also means a state of being—to be good or bad, virtuous or vicious. The Lugbara use three qualifiers of *adriza* as *ala*, *muke* and *onzi*. The first two refer to good or right or virtue—although often the terms *ala* and *muke* are used interchangeably. The latter however, is used to denote bad or evil or vicious conduct or generally wrong doing. A person who is generally known to be immoral (vicious) is described by the same term *onzi*. On the other hand, morally upright person is described by the term *ala/muke* (virtuous). *Ala* in religious sense depicts holiness. The term is reserved and used mainly in religious books especially in Catholic liturgy to describe God as holy instead of *muke*.

For the Lugbara, virtuous living is a whole human project. For example, a family can never be described as living virtuous life if one parent is a known thief, wizard, killer... It is a holistic enterprise of good living that extends to the entire family. This is the ideal conception of virtuous life. In practice, discrepancies may exist. Good nurtured parents may end up with unruly children. Conversely, bad nurtured parents may also end up with disciplined children.

When the Lugbara were curved into Uganda from the then Zaire, now The democratic Republic of Congo, by 1914 as in ref. [4], life was never the same. The opening of this hitherto secluded society to foreign administration among others, corrupted their moral convictions. Given the apparently repressive foreign administrators, the natural thing the Lugbara people did was to resist the foreign rule. It is upon this resistance that A.E. Weatherhead, the probably first foreign administrator of the Lugbara territory, impatiently described the people as "wild and intractable and as shy and unorganized requiring severe measures before submitting to administration" as pointed out by ref. [4]. Most likely, with such a new approach, the Lugbara could not maintain their traditionally good attitude towards foreigners. At least this caliber of foreigners was viewed as enemies therefore

to be fought. In contrast they described Administrator Weatherhead as a little man but fierce and could walk among them without a gun. He is said to have waged a continuous and largely unsuccessful war against the Lugbara in order to subdue them to foreign rule.

The influence of foreigners including the missionaries altered the moral topography of the Lugbara. The form of virtue that catered for fairness was deeply transformed. Justice was a big concern of the Lugbara. To be just was synonymous with virtue. Even then the resistance to foreign rule was seen as restoration of proper justice due to the Lugbara people. Rituals were performed to sanction justice. From religious point of view, a divinity called *Yakani* or *Abea* cult dispensed justice. This cult was invoked and became popular in the wake of foreign invasion as a remedy to the envisaged injustice.

4.4. The *Yakani/Abea* Cult in the Dispensation of Justice

Justice was considered to be the epitome of morality or virtues among the Lugbara. This was taught to the young lads by their parents, neighbors and the entire clan. Tradition has it that the *Yakani*, also referred to as *Abea* cult, was borrowed from Kakwa tribe, neighboring the Lugbara from the South. The epicenter of the *Yakani* was under the granary in the compound of the owner. It could be hired or bought on a permanent basis. One strange occurrence with this cult was that it dispensed justice without discrimination. It could even fall back to the owner should he/she act unjustly to anyone. According to Orivu clan elders, when invoked, the *Yakani* characteristically caused swelling of the stomach and of legs in both animals and humans. In animals it could cause quick death but in humans, death occurred after a long period of time. This length of time was interpreted as “grace period”. If one delayed or remained adamant to convene the council of elders to resolve the matter, then the end result would be death. One would wonder why such a divinity would also harm animals. The logic was that the attack on animals would sound a warning of potential danger to the culprits for quick action lest the human person would pay the ultimate price.

In the event of correct identification that it was *Yakani* causing trouble, rituals were performed by the specialists in the cult. The owner would be summoned. He/she came with their assistants and would charge fines in form of animals and birds. Today money is also accepted as part of the charges. Once these charges were paid, the cult officials went away without looking back. It was a one-way traffic movement. Should any one member of the team do the contrary, the *Yakani* would fall back and the whole process would be repeated at a later time with new charges. In the writings of ref. [22], the cult was initially a religious weapon to fight colonialism which ultimately aimed at restoring justice that was apparently lost due to colonial lordship.

The rationale behind the *Yakani/Abea* cult was the dispensation of justice and the training of the people in living a virtuous life. This cult was the most feared because it appeared to have dispensed justice correctly and timely. There were no

court backlogs in the system. If it was invoked on unfair grounds, it would fall back to harm the one invoking it. Because of such *modus operandi*, the owner would thoroughly interrogate the potential client to confess the truth and only the truth. Hence the Lugbara trusted the cult as a genuine dispenser of justice that even had no fear of the beholder. Although today this cult still exists, the influence of Christianity has apparently “killed” the institution. Christianity condemns it as superstitious, barbaric and summarily satanic. It is interpreted as breaking the first commandment: “Thou shalt not have no other gods before me”. Hence, Catholics *per se* do not get indulged in this spiritual cult. However, I think the missionaries did not study this cult in-depth. The logic behind this cult was not perceived hence a biased sentence was handed over to this cult.

However, it is rather an uphill task to prove the cult as true or false. What is clear is that a number of people have had harrowing experiences with the establishment. One thing that stands tall about *Yakani* cult is its spiritual experience. With certainty I can say the cult is a dealing with the spiritual world. It appears to be harnessing of the spiritual realm by some talented human beings to cause evil or good in order to restore justice. The experiences of this cult are hard to deny. Very insignificant number of people still clandestinely practice this cult today among the Lugbara as a form of promotion of virtuous life *via negativa*.

4.5. Aristotle, Lugbara Virtue and the Yakani Cult

In contrast to the Aristotelian view of justice, I argue that the *Yakani* cult was a traditionally lawful and fair means of equity and restoration of what was inequitable. Aristotle equally argues that justice consists of lawfulness and fairness in every human free dealings. It involves equal distributions and correction of what is irregular therefore unequal as alluded to by ref. [10] [23]. Ref. [24] observes that for Aristotle, the theory of justice is applicable primarily to free and rational human beings who are nearly equals. This was in contrast to Plato’s position that justice consisted in doing what one was suitable for. Plato categorized the *polis* into two broad classes: the rulers and the ruled. The rulers were those with the ability to rule—the intellectually gifted and the ruled were those because of their limitedness in thinking qualified to be ruled [24]. Plato would probably be dismissed as discriminative and insensitive. For, one may not be solely responsible for their limits. He was rather reckless on natural limitations and endowments. It is on account of such a position that Aristotle argues for justice on grounds of free human beings.

The Lugbara equally took into account the condition of the individual in dispensing justice. Punishments for vicious actions were rather rational and circumstantially based. A thorough investigation and interrogation was carried out before passing judgments. In agreement with Aristotle, only free beings with rationality were held responsible for their actions among the Lugbara. In this sense, the universality of virtues was affirmed. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, justice is a condition that renders us just agents inclined to desire and practice. In the words of ref. [10],

the Aristotelian mean of justice lies between the vices of getting too much and getting too little, relative to what one deserves, these by two opposite types of justice, of disproportionate excess, the other of disproportionate deficiency as in *Nicomachean Ethics*, V., 1129a - 1132b, 1134a. This sentiment was equally envisaged in the Lugbara sense of justice as primarily social institution. Aristotle and the Lugbara are in conformity that virtuous living is a wholesome project. It is a holistic enterprise of good living. A virtuous person is not a part-time doer of the good. Instead, the good constitutes his/her being.

However, the individual is part of the community hence the individual sense of justice is not farfetched either. As a point of divergence, the Lugbara understanding of virtue in general is community based. virtuous person is approved by the community as opposed to somehow individualistic development of virtues through individual practice and education. The custodians or trainers of virtues among the Lugbara are the elders. The council of elders were the monitors of etiquette not schools with their professors.

5. Conclusions

Virtues are part and partial of free human beings. They can be acquired by any rational being. The argument that virtues are both artificial and innate (David Hume) and are outside human beings (Aristotle) is immaterial to me. What appears clear in human experience is that virtues can be learned and therefore acquired through practice (*NE*, V, 1129a-1132b, 1134a) and through study. They could be latent in human nature but still need to be awakened through practice. Virtues are not *part time* habits. It is not enough to occasionally perform good acts to be called virtuous. They are lifelong “habitus” built over time. This applies to any rational being. Aristotle uses the Latin term “habitus” to underscore the enduring nature of virtues. A virtuous person is therefore one who lives good life as “habitus” regardless of race and any other affiliation.

The Lugbara sense of virtues falls under the universal conception of the term as life of excellence—*arete*. What differs from Aristotelean conception may only be the practice of the different forms of virtues, methods of acquisition and correction methods in case of vices. As presented earlier, traditionally, a number of parameters were considered to inculcate and enforce virtues. The family stood tall in the enforcing methods of correct acquisition and practice of virtues. Vices were discouraged using a variety of deterrent punishments. For example, sexual offenses were punishable by flogging and payment of fines in kind and money. The council of elders played a critical role in the acquisition and enforcement of virtues (*adriza ala/muke*). At the same time, the elders and *Yakani* Cult were arbitrators in village courts that dispensed justice. Today, there is marked difference in acquisition and practice of virtues among the Lugbara. Education and technology have embellished the Lugbara as well. Both positive and negative influences of education and technology have impacted on the Lugbara morals both positively and negatively. The assessment of the influence of education and technology on

Lugbara morals is yet another interesting field of study that was outside the scope of this work.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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