Justice as unity: tracing virtue in the context of diversity in Africa

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Abstract
The critical concerns of justice in Africa crisscross social, political, and economic lines; with the idea of justice significantly impacted by systemic corruption, inequality regarding the (re)distribution of resources and opportunities, religious and ethnic struggle-themed identity politics, the continuing effects of (neo-)colonialism and the efforts at undoing such effects. Recognising that the human person is essentially at the centre of the issues raised here, this article deploys a reconstructive approach in emphasizing justice as a moral and political virtue necessary for the mitigation of the human condition; via an approach to virtue that promotes positive intersubjective relationships as a means of fostering social cohesiveness. As such, this paper shall retrieve and reconcile varying concepts of justice in Africa, both from historical and modern perspectives, while showing that the shared ideal of unity as contained in the unity theory advanced by Leif Wenar (2020) is important for safeguarding common good. By emphasizing specific values that foster harmonious co-existence, the paper states that the unity theory offers a moral framework for the practice of justice in African communities characterized by diversity.

Keywords
Justice, Unity theory, Virtue, Africa.

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***La justice comme unité : la recherche de la vertu dans le contexte de la diversité en Afrique*.** Les préoccupations critiques de la justice en Afrique traversent les lignes sociales, politiques et économiques ; l'idée de justice est fortement influencée par la corruption systémique, l'inégalité concernant la (re)distribution des ressources et des opportunités, les politiques identitaires axées sur les luttes religieuses et ethniques, les effets persistants du (néo)colonialisme et les efforts déployés pour y remédier. Reconnaissant que la personne humaine est essentiellement au centre des questions soulevées ici, cet article déploie une approche reconstructive en mettant l'accent sur la justice en tant que vertu morale et politique nécessaire à l'amélioration de la condition humaine ; par d'une approche de la vertu qui promeut des relations intersubjectives positives de favoriser la cohésion sociale. En tant que tel, le présent article se propose de retrouver et de réconcilier les différents concepts de justice en Afrique, tant du point de vue historique que moderne, tout en montrant que l'idéal partagé de l'unité, tel qu'il est contenu dans la théorie de l'unité avancée par Leif Wenar (2020), est important pour la sauvegarde du bien commun. En mettant l'accent sur des valeurs spécifiques qui favorisent une coexistence harmonieuse, l'article affirme que la théorie de l'unité offre un cadre moral pour la pratique de la justice dans les communautés africaines caractérisées par la diversité.

Mots clés
Justice, Théorie de l'unité, vertu, Afrique.

Introduction: Human Existence and the Good Life

The question "what is the good life?" is both a global and perennial question with relevance across societies and cultures. The perennial relevance of this question always situated in the context of colloquial existential exchanges and within spaces dedicated to academic reflection. To be sure, the good life has been viewed from a variety of perspectives; with the consideration that it essentially consists in some ideal to which the human spirit aspires or gravitates. Despite this, the very nature of the good life has remained the subject of continuing discourse.

Different traditions and thought systems have historically linked the idea of the good life to the cultivation and practice of specific virtues such as integrity, kindness, continence or self-control, justice, and other salutary values as a means of attaining the good life. From the Asian notion of *ren* to Aristotle's notion of *eudaimonia*, these ethical traditions have advanced the view that the good life is neither simply reduced to a matter of satisfaction at the level of the human appetite nor the immersion of the self in hedonist interests, but a state of being in which an individual is able to share life in common with others. African philosophical traditions across history also present moral values such as the *ma'at*, *ubuntu* (Møller and Roberts, 2021), *omolúwàbí* and other cognate ideas as foundational to intersubjective existence and the possibility of achieving and maintaining social cohesion and order.

Now, as social beings, the good life is not shared with the self but always in interaction with other beings. As such, to pose the question "what is the good life?" is to seek to identify the place of the individual among the many. Such question is always an attempt to determine how intersubjective relations within the *polis* are negotiated and consolidated both at the domestic level where the family constitutes the smallest unit of the society and within the context of pluralistic society spanning beyond the immediate frontiers of the *domus*.

There is a specific focus on justice as a moral and political virtue in this paper because, in a pluralistic society, justice as a crucial virtue enables constructive intersubjective relations in the society by promoting social cohesion and stability while mitigating the social tendencies toward chaos and anarchy. To be sure, the idea of justice features prominently whether from the history of oriental and western perspectives of thought

or as present in African philosophical traditions as a valuable constant in the context of organising the human community. The point here is to state that the good life across global cultures is intricately linked to the sense and moral ideal of justice. In what follows, this paper proceeds by attempting a location of the nexus between the idea of justice in African contexts and the unity theory advanced by Leif Wenar as a means of humanity approximating itself to the ultimate good.

On the Unity Theory

When posed within the context of multiculturalism and the plurality of interests and values that characterise it, the question of what the good life consists in can be resolved with justice seen through the lens of the unity theory advanced by Leif Wenar in his 2020 essay "The Development of Unity". Summarily, the essay advances the view that unity is important as a basic denominator in the advancement of justice, common good and human wellbeing in pluralistic societies. The unity theory is therefore proposed as "a logic that allows for great diversity across persons and cultures while explaining why pain and deprivation and disorientation are bad in themselves, and why health and care and integrity are intrinsically good" (Wenar, 2020, p. 211).

As a matter of clarification, Wenar himself makes clear that the unity theory speaks to the work of Martha Nussbaum oriented around the capability approach to development in which the ten central capabilities which the human person can have in view of a valuable functioning are listed (Wenar, 2020; Nussbaum, 2011). The unity theory as developed confirms Nussbaum's listing of the capabilities for human flourishing while at the same time interpreting it with the goal of seeking the points of convergence with "what is intrinsically valuable – what is good in itself" (Wenar, 2020, p.211).

The weight which diversity imposes upon the globe in contemporary times makes it instructive to evaluate the profundity of the human mind with respect to the ultimate question concerning the 'good in itself.' Against the background of the crisis of global justice today, Wenar notes that there is a difference in the formulation of the ultimate question concerning the *summum bonum* – the ultimate good:

> When the ancients took up the question of a good life, they asked, "What will make my life valuable, how can I live a better life, what is it that's really good?" But when modern philosophers take up the question of well-being, they ask very different questions: "What is in my interest, what will make my life better for me, what is it that's really good for me?" (see, e.g., Kraut, 2016, 20–28). Most theories of well-being today are theories of self-interest, and this fixation on self-interest keeps most philosophers from capturing our lived experience of what functionings are truly valuable (Wenar, 2020, p.212).

From the aforesaid, the form of the former question inquiring into fundamental, ultimate good can be said to be focusing on universal, intrinsic good; the latter form of question is concerned more with subjective human interests which are ordinarily liable to pluralist hairsplitting and multicultural inconvenience. Wenar illustrates a typical response to the question of the intrinsic good by recalling the Bhutanese index of happiness calibrated around the value of compassion; where the level of compassion that people have has been positively correlated with quality of life (Alkire and Jahan, 2018; Centre for Bhutan Studies & GNH, 2010; Wenar 2020). Subjective human interests are seen in the counterexample of the hedonist, self-interested humanitarian agency executive who despite what appears to the public as his career characterized by dedication to the cause of charity, is nevertheless given to exploiting the more vulnerable conditions of the beneficiaries of the humanitarian projects that he ostentatiously serves (Wenar, 2020). While the self-interested agent may on his own profit from the material perks and privileges of his position and may even be said to have provided shelter or nutrition to the impoverished – a duty which may be considered as ameliorating vulnerabilities in the world, his live cannot be said to be valuable in so far as his actions are not founded and driven by compassion; where compassion is understood as "not a strategy of self-love; it is selfless action in the service of another" (Wenar 2020, p.212).

To negotiate what is of ultimate value or the good life based merely on subjective human interests touching on material quantification, egoist benefits and other proximate or provincial benefits is to think only in terms of instrumental goods. While instrumental or contributory goods are not worthless or morally repulsive in themselves, they can nevertheless be deployed in unsustainable ways or made into the cause of disunity because of the privation of compassion; thus, causing humanity to lose integrity and cohesion. Indeed, the reification of instrumental goods such as power, the economy, cultural and/or religious recognition into ends in themselves within the context of multiculturality in Africa and beyond often leads to the

generation of intense politics of identity in which there is a certain intersubjective "othering" of persons into warring factions.

The question of the good life is thus better answered when the human mind transcends what may be of subjective human interest to contemplate the fundamental logic to value. Of this fundamental logic Leif Wenar states that:

> I believe that there is a deep common logic to human judgments about what is intrinsically valuable. There is a logic to value, as there is a logic to geometry, a logic that allows for great diversity across persons and cultures while explaining why pain and deprivation and disorientation are bad in themselves, and why health and care and integrity are intrinsically good. There is a logic that structures our lived experience of what is good, and this is a logic of unity. What explains the value in all human lives is unity: unity with the world, unity with each other, and unity within ourselves (Wenar, 2020, p.211).

The unity theory aims therefore to underscore and enhance unity in diversity. It is a means of resolving the challenge that the plurality of values generate by recognizing that "it's not the object of desire (values) that are good or bad. It is rather how these desires or values fit with the world, and with each other" (Wenar, 2020, p. 215). The plurality of values which is a reality we live with within social contexts – the comprehensive doctrines of various religious traditions, cultural practices, values, legal systems, health practices, language and colloquial expressions, economic values and interests, are expressions of plural desires. These desires are according to Wenar "the atoms of value." Every such desire cannot be said to be good or bad in themselves except when evaluated from the point of view of how they stand in relation to other desires out there in a logical geometry of values; taking into account the matrix of relations among the desire itself, the wellbeing of subjects involved, and the common good (Wenar, 2020). This recalls in a certain way the universalizability of human choices and actions as advanced in the Kantian imperative whereby the acting person can will that his or her actions can be made into law without the attrition of a negative recompense.

Unity and the Concerns of Global Justice

It is important to make some comments concerning the unity as a principle for reacting to the question of the supreme good, and its relations to other aspects of being that have to do with more proximate desires and needs of human persons that

are either empirically quantifiable or perceptible. Beyond what might seem like the supposition that the unity theory discountenances the importance of existential goods such as food, shelter, health care, pleasure, sexuality, economic resources, power, religio-cultural recognitions, and many other things that can contribute to commodious living, it becomes expedient to note here that unity as a principle of ordering human desires and values is not antithetical to the concerns of global justice. Rather, by charting a logical geometry of human desires, unity determines the undergirding common values that can make inter-subjective co-existence possible.
As such, the unity theory is relevant in the context of re(distribution) by which the challenges of socio-economic injustices can be addressed in so far as the goal is to ensure for instance that the distribution of economic goods creates "unity with the world, and also unity with other people, and also unity within oneself" (Wenar, 2020, p. 213).

In this connection, Anke Graness makes a retrieval of the works of Henry Odera Oruka particularly as they touch on the theme of "global justice" – a term which Oruka himself develops to refer to the concept of justice at a global level; thus, anticipating contemporary discourses on global justice as early as 1981 (Graness, 2017). The idea of global justice as expressed in the thoughts of Oruka dovetails into what can be considered as his theory of distributive justice by which poverty is to be understood not as a moral issue inclining on charity or humanitarian action but as a question of global justice; where global justice is itself understood as "safeguarding a minimum standard of life for every human being" (Oruka 1989, 1981; Graness, 2017, p.318). For Oruka, the primary needs of humans enumerated as food, shelter and clothes, knowledge, freedom of action or movement, health, sexuality, as in the capability approach, do necessitate the importance of ensuring certain freedoms such as freedom from hunger, freedom to find shelter, freedom from ignorance, freedom from restriction, freedom of movement and action, freedom from ill health, sexual freedom (Oruka, 1991).

The Notion of *Justitia Connectiva*

The unity theory resonates with extant ideas in Africa especially as its function is to establish what binds humanity together notwithstanding the reality of plural values and interests. In what follows here, the notion of justice extant in African thought from ancient Egypt to contemporary south of Africa is retrieved by Anke Graness;

with such recollection presenting justice either in the older context of its appropriation or in more contemporary contexts as 'unity' – an expression of an enduring bond existing among intersubjective beings.

The retrieval of the idea of justice in ancient Egypt is here accomplished by drawing upon the expositions of the Egyptologist Jan Assman, who provides an elucidation of the concept of *Ma'at* as it applies to the unity of beings and the moral duty that such unity of beings implies. Graness notes *inter alia* that *Ma'at* as an overarching principle is a concept amenable to differing interpretations such as 'truth', 'justice', 'world order' or even 'sense of direction' (Graness, 2017, p. 306). Albeit the varying translation of this concept, it nevertheless encapsulates a vision of global order and equilibrium. Graness makes the point that the extensive implication of the idea of *Ma'at* should be understood as having been bifurcated in later years into plural investigations of human interests – political philosophy, moral philosophy, law, philosophy of nature and theology (Graness, 2017).

Ma'at as an overarching principle of social order is made more explicit in the following text as a principle that transcends the *Anthropos* while encompassing the existence of both animate and inanimate beings in nature:

> The Egyptian doctrine of *Ma'at* refers to the place of the individual within society, to the place of society within the Pharaonic state and to the place of the state in the cosmos. It is a 'world of symbolic meanings' that every kind of action as well as every order and institution is based on (Assmann, 2006, p.18). Thus, the term 'Ma'at' implies a unity of cosmos and society, order and justice; it has to do with the constant demand to provide for political order, social justice and harmony between the gods and humans and to keep the world going (Assmann, 2006, p.34). To lead a good life it is necessary to consider oneself an element of an all-encompassing whole and to make oneself part of this whole in word and deed. *Ma'at* goes beyond that which humans owe each other; it includes man in the divine order of the cosmos (Graness, 2017, pp. 306 – 307).

Ma'at in this appropriation is understood as an ontological relationship of unity among beings despite the distinction of species or genus. Assmann himself underscores this interspecies relationship when he states that:

> For the Egyptians, community is established and maintained by way of each individual doing Ma'at and speaking Ma'at. This way he/she establishes and strengthens the network of connectivity which both makes his/her life go on beyond death and guarantees the harmony of

> human community. What matters is that one understands oneself to be an element of an all-encompassing whole while making oneself part of this whole in word and deed (Assmann, 2002, p.63).

Assmann refers to this vision of the *Ma'at* as "*justitia connectiva*" {connective justice} (Assmann, 2006, p. 67). In its formulation, the divine relates seamlessly with other beings in nature – humans and non-humans alike; and the beings in nature relate in turn with the divine to create harmony. Such relations are supposed to exclude selfishness so that mere individualist interests can be replaced with solidarity in view of advancing harmony. This is particularly for the human community when each person is expected to deploy rational faculty and agency in view of making the human community a home for all. This implies duties and responsibilities to intersubjective human agents and indeed to the environment. *Ma'at* is therefore, according to this schema founded on the understanding of nature, "a programme of a political order that establishes social justice" (Graness, 2017, p. 308).

With insights from other scholars, Graness has argued that the connective dimension of justice captured in the idea of the *Ma'at* echoes beyond ancient Egypt and constitutes a guiding principle for several African societies to the South of the continent. (Graness, 2017; Kiros, 2012; Obenga, 2006; Diop, 1954). In this specific connection, Graness states that the *Ma'at* which Teodros Kiros describes as the "modern moral principle that can motivate both (a) organic leaders of people, and (b) social movements themselves, to recognize the public sphere in contemporary Africa, which is in a serious crisis" (Kiros, 2012, p. 239) offers significant promise in helping to resolve political crises in Africa (Graness, 2017).

Ubuntu and the Unity of Being

In more contemporary African thoughts, justice as a moral virtue constructed around the unity of beings as in the ancient idea of the *Ma'at* is presented using the term *ubuntu*. Emerging from indigenous thought systems in Africa, the idea of *ubuntu* has implications for personal and social ordering. Albeit the literal letters of *ubuntu* being traced to the Nguni language family of South Africa, (Graness, 2017), its synonyms and related nuances are present in other African languages and cultures.[55] If the idea

[55] For instance, '*umundu*' in East African Kikuyu language; '*umunthu*' in the Chewa language in Zambi; '*kimuntu*' in the kongo language spoken in what today is known as the Democratic Republic of Congo

of *ubuntu* has today become prominent in the context of post-colonial, post-apartheid ongoing scholarly attempts at reconstruction in Africa where it takes on a sense of a socio-political and ethical understanding of persons as being interconnected, it nevertheless was lived and understood in indigenous African spaces as a moral quality of a person (Gade, 2013). The indigenous understanding of *ubuntu* as a moral quality implies salutary values such as the ability to empathize, share, forgive and relate freely with one another. The post-colonial understanding of *ubuntu* which gained currency at the dawn of a new South African nation emphasizes the intersubjectivity of humanity; such that individuals are not insular beings but beings in active relations with one another.

To be sure, both senses of *ubuntu* are related since the first and indigenous sense of *ubuntu* as a moral quality to express salutary values is only realistic in the context of a vision of human intersubjectivity. Concerning salutary values, Graness herself states that "the characteristic features of *ubuntu* ethics are compassion towards others, respect for the rights of minorities, conduct that aims at consensus and understanding, a spirit of mutual support and cooperation, hospitality, generosity and selflessness" (Graness 2017, p. 312). The *locus* for the exercise of these moral values is always at the centre of the community. In this, both senses of *ubuntu* can therefore be said to be expressed in "the Zulu-Xhosa aphorism *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* — 'A human being is a human being through other people'" (Graness, 2017, p.310).

Anke Graness has explained that the ideal of the *ubuntu* philosophy highlights the profundity of a relational approach to justice in Africa when she notes that "it {*Ubuntu*} emphasizes the existence of a universal bond that connects all people to each other and to all other types of existence in the universe. Interdependence and interconnectedness are considered the main features of this conception of the world" (Graness, 2017, p. 311). *Justitia connectiva* is thus reiterated and a resonance with the vision of the *Ma'at* which calls attention to the idea of a union of the multidimensions of beings in the universe is restated.

Ubuntu in the context of post-colonial considerations is not immune to criticism. A major concern about *ubuntu* and other cognate values functioning as a philosophical

and Angola; 'utu' as found in Swahili spoken in Kenya and Tanzania, are various linguistic expressions of the same idea of *Ubuntu*.

principle to achieve reconstruction and reconciliation is often tied with the efforts made at the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa, the Gacaca Courts in post-genocide Rwanda and the Human Rights Violations Commission set up at the dawn of the restoration of democratic governance in Nigeria (Graness, 2017; Kukah, 2010). Such criticisms can be extended to other similar contexts in Africa where vicious identity struggles have been the crux of the polity. Concerning the post-apartheid era and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission set up in South Africa in view of negotiating transitional justice, which in turn was supposed to cause a renewal of humanity, Graness expands on the arguments purporting the fragility of *ubuntu* for transitional justice in the following:

> However, both this principle {the principle of *ubuntu*} and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have often been criticized. The focus of criticism has been the fact that perpetrators who testified before the Commission went unpunished. This was considered a concession to be able to solve the crimes at all; however, in practice it often resulted in the victims and their relatives believing they had failed to achieve something like retributive justice. Furthermore, often they were left without financial compensation, or compensation was paid only after a long time (Graness, 2017, p. 315).

This point has been underscored by other scholars to the effect that *ubuntu* and the reconciliation it seeks to achieve are impossible given that those who have been victims of injustice often continue to nurse festering wounds and scars because the perpetrators of injustice have not been given their just desserts. (Mandaza 2003; Ramose, 2002; Soyinka, 1999). The vision of transitional justice here grafted on the *ubuntu* principle is thus considered to be partial to the powerful as in the definition of justice by Thrasymachus (Plato's *Republic* I, 338c) and convenient "for a small elite that inherits state power without the fulfillment of social justice for the majority" (Mandaza, 2003, p.511; Graness, 2017).

Indeed, the concerns raised about justice founded on *ubuntu* is germane and particularly belongs to the realm of the question of restorative justice; that is, justice aimed at (re)creating societal harmony through an approach that humanizes both perpetrators of injustice and their victims. This typically involves a full review of the events that happened in the course of struggle by all the parties involved (Marshall 1996, 1999), the determination of the extent of culpability, the admission of culpability by offenders, assuaging the feelings and needs of the victims often in the form of the offender(s) admitting culpability and the reparations which offenders or

perpetrators of justice can make as a form of atonement for injustices perpetrated. When contrasted with a retributive sense of justice, the restorative notion of justice with a foundation on the *ubuntu* ethic lays less emphasis on 'brutal' punishment of perpetrators (Zehr, 2002; 2005). The focus is rather on humanizing or dignifying both perpetrator(s) and victim(s) while ensuring sustainable harmony for the society. It is important to note the views of Christian Gade here that restorative justice also often involves a sense of punishment which may be either at a minimalist or maximalist scale depending on what or how punishment is understood (Gade, 2021).

There are also questions as to whether *ubuntu* can provide appropriate moral foundation for the recognition and promotion of human rights both at the level of individual subsistence and at the level of group interests. This concern is particularly important for pluralistic polities where human desires or interests expressed in the form of values are wont to clash with each other in the first place. This is more so as the *ubuntu* ethic relies on a primal recognition of the community instead of the individual (Oyowe, 2013; Metz, 2011). In recalling the ideal of *ubuntu* as a principle celebrating the intersubjectivity of humanity; we restate the view that a person is so identified only when in an active relationship with others; that is, the "'I' is completed in the 'We'" (Ubuntu Leaders Academy, 2022). The intersubjective creation of the other through the capacity to relate with others is at the very heart of human dignity. Thaddeus Metz refers to this characterization of human dignity as "the capacity for friendliness" (Metz, 2011, p.559). The idea of human dignity present in the individual in turn forms the core of what we have come to know, describe, and legislate about under the appellation of 'human rights. To this extent, it can be argued that albeit the ubuntu philosophy aims at common good, it can nevertheless function as a guide for the formation of human rights laws establishing the basic minimum for human flourishing in so far as the individual is constitutive of the common society.

There may be doubts about what takes precedence between the specific interests of the individual person on the one hand and the cultural and/or political interests of the community, where both interests clash if we adopt the line of thought that human dignity in the individual culminates in a moral foundation for individual claim rights. Should the community's interests which are thought to be of an essential majority not take precedence? Indeed, while societal harmony is the vision of *ubuntu,* an approach to *ubuntu* which recognizes the importance of "solidarity toward one another, or care about each other's quality of life" (Metz, 2011; p.559) should be

helpful in the resolution of the 'clash' between personal (individual) and communal interests. Solidarity functions here to ensure that human dignity – the capacity to relate with 'others' in a plural society, is intact. It is a means of fitting plural values with the world and with each other.

Omolúwàbí, Unity and Virtue

The perennial question pertaining to the nature of the good life receives a response in the form of a Yorùbá[56] conception of the meaning of life derived from a qualitative outlook instead of a vision of life merely focusing on material abundance or a quantitative dimension to the meaning of life. The qualitative outlook to the meaning of life maintains the position that the good life is one characterized by the exercise of moral virtues in both private and public spheres (Olujohungbe, 2020). With respect to the good life, the functional word deployed by the Yorùbá ethico-philosophy is *ìwà* which denotes 'character' or 'behaviour' *Ìwà* (character) as a concept in Yorùbá thought is explained in the following:

> The Yorùbá word *ìwà*, which has two functional but related meanings, helps in deriving a different conception of the meaning of life. *Ìwà* in the first place refers to the state of being or existence. This is always a sense of human existence, and from the Yorùbá perspective, one's being in this sense is always in relation to the community's being since, as John S. Mbiti (1970) notes, the individual exists in Africa because the community exists. The same word also refers in an ethical sense to human character or behaviour. The word takes on a moral sense here. Indeed, morality in Africa, and specifically among the Yorùbá is founded on the communal structure of the society (Olujohungbe, 2020, p. 225).

This is to say that the Yorùbá vision of the good life is found in the confluence of human existence and human behaviour. Since the human person is not an isolated being, and the actions of the human person always takes on meaning via the agencies of other beings in community, then human agents who constantly demonstrate responsibility and responsiveness to the self and the other through virtues such as solidarity, justice, integrity, respect, compassion etc. are therefore said to exude *ìwà* rere or good character. In this light, one who is referred to as *Omolúwàbí* is regarded as a model whose excellent deeds (*ìwà* rere) in both the public and private domains

[56] The Yorùbá people are members of an ethnic group with ancestral home in present day South-western Nigeria and a large diasporan presence in countries like Togo, Benin, Cuba, and Brazil.

are indicative of the good life (Olujohungbe, 2020; Olanipekun 2017; Adebowale and Onayemi, 2016; Awolalu, 1970). The good life according to this scheme is a life of unity – the unity of being (existence) with intersubjective virtuous agency.

Conclusion

As a way of concluding, a return is made to the question of what the good life consists in, and Leif Wenar's observations about the etymological foundation of the word "good" becomes very instructive in relating to that question here. Indeed, to say that the "good" is traceable to Indo-European roots where it means "to unite," (Wenar, 2020, p. 211) is to invoke that sense of harmony and collective wellbeing of subjects in the world. Here, the force of harmony implies solidarity in difference for pluralistic existence.

A reiteration of justice as giving to others what is proper must be founded on reflections on the idea of unity – unity with the world, with each other and within ourselves, since the goal of justice is to cause an appropriation of the good life within the existential reality of plurality. The ultimate function of unity as a virtue for intersubjective existence is to help to enhance in each person the capability to live the good life, understanding that justice properly so-called includes and yet transcends fair distribution of quantitative materials to reach the promotion of common good and wellbeing.

As "the unity theory helps humanity to make better sense of value pluralism" (Wenar, 2020), it nevertheless requires critical introspection particularly with respect to practical matters within real spatial contexts. This is to say that humanity's invitation to contemplate the good is as at once urgent and perennial; leaving us to continuously strive toward just living.

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