

**Cruelty and Callousness in Virtue Ethics:
Why the Virtuous Agent Acts Well Towards Animals**

By

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ABSTRACT

CRUELTY AND CALLOUSNESS IN VIRTUE ETHICS: WHY THE VIRTUOUS AGENT ACTS WELL TOWARDS ANIMALS

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The purpose of this thesis is to answer the question: “Do the virtues prevent the virtuous agent from acting badly towards animals?” I conclude that an agent who is truly virtuous will not act viciously towards animals due to the agent’s virtue. In chapter one I show that a neo-Aristotelian virtue ethic does not have any aspect internal to the theory that would prevent care or concern for animals. In chapter two I defend the theory from outside critiques, each of which challenges the viability of virtue ethics as an approach to animal ethics. Finally, chapter three is a study of two vices: cruelty and callousness. I define both vices and show why each is necessary for discussing virtue and animal ethics.

DEDICATION

For:

MCY

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MY

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NE - Nicomachean Ethics
ST - Summa Theologica

CHAPTER 1

Intro: The goal of this section is to clearly explicate the concept of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics in order to argue that there is no aspect internal to the structure of the theory that would preclude its application to animal ethics, broadly construed. I go about this proof by looking at the works of modern virtue theorists who generally fit into the category of “neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics.” While there are unique, and contradicting sentiments within the specific works of these theorists, they do share many, key concepts amongst their writings, which puts them in agreement with one another in relation to the components that I will herein discuss. Differences and arguments that arise between these theorists tend to be at a level of specificity that I will not reach in this section, and which does not change the general claims that I will be dealing with. The topic of virtue’s relation to animals is under represented in this survey, because there is very little writing that exists today towards this end. I hope to begin laying a framework that can bridge this gap.

I will first discuss a fundamental quality of neo-Aristotelian virtues, eudaimonism, before moving on to a description of a virtue, how it relates to certain human powers and what it is, and then discussing the four cardinal virtues’ logical structure in order to show how they do not deny animals as the proper objects of their concern. Further, I aim to show how the virtuous person operates; what they are concerned with, and which “parts” of their reasoning and humanity constitute their virtue. The framework of a virtue and the actions of a virtuous person, which is to say the actual *being* virtuous, are both necessary to see how it is one goes wrong when they act cruelly or callously towards animals, and why a virtuous agent would avoid such actions (ch. 3).

1. Eudaimonism

1.1 Defining eudaimonism

The account I aim to provide of virtues’ concern with animals fits into the eudaimonistic account of virtue favoured by neo-Aristotelian theorists. I now explicate eudaimonia, showing its importance to an account of the virtues, before providing justification for the meaningfulness of our concern for animals in the eudaimonistic life.

Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, the basis for the neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics tradition, considers the study of ethics to be the study of final ends of human action, and the states of character that are necessary and sufficient to attain those final ends. The final end is happiness. So to say, the reason for all human action is to be happy. The study of ethics is thus a study of how to live so that we can be happy. Aristotle is like his ancient contemporaries in his belief that,

“ethical theory is designed to enable us to reflect on this implicit overall goal and to make it determinate,” but though there is agreement in this general structure, “this is trivial, for substantial disagreement remains as to what happiness consists in.”¹ The very purpose of ethical theorizing is different for the ancients than it has been in modern times. Recognizing the importance of this difference is integral to recognizing the role of concern for animals in the virtuous life.

To begin with, it is important to properly understand the meaning of the term ‘eudaimonia. The Greek word “eudaimonia” has been translated into modern English as “happiness.” This term can be ambiguous. For example, the subjectivist argues that happiness is related to an individual life and how that person wants to live.² In this sense the idea of happiness has no regulatory role in guiding action or in considering the kinds of constraints on action that moral philosophy theorizes about; or, at least, the sense in which happiness does have a regulatory role does not match with the sense of moral philosophizing. If someone is made happy by stealing and lying then the subjective view that Cahn advocates is comfortable saying that they are genuinely happy, although they may be acting immorally. Because happiness can be ambiguous, it is reasonable to translate eudaimonia as “flourishing” rather than “happiness” in order to indicate the sense in which the ancients used the term. The term flourishing points to an objective standard. Someone can be mistaken about whether or not they are genuinely flourishing, because their sense of value is out of sync with reality in some way. I adopt this terminological norm, and below I employ the terms happiness, flourishing, and eudaimonia interchangeably, as textual reference and grammar demand each of their uses at various points.

The role of eudaimonia in the Aristotelian text is as a unifying principle for which, or end towards which, all of our acts aim. The role of moral philosophy in this view is to better understand how we may flourish. One may flourish without the practice of moral philosophy, simply by acting well for the right reasons, but the practice of moral philosophy is a work to discover the kinds of reasons we ought to act for i.e. when we begin this study knowing that we are aiming at the science of human flourishing, we will have a better understanding of how we should act to achieve this end. The role of moral philosophy in the human life is not one of absolute law, but rather one of “things that are good and rules that hold for the most part (NE 1094b15-27)³. Moral matters are always practical matters, dealing with action and specific acts, but they cannot be held under some ultimate law that says to always do this particular kind of action (e.g. always wash your hands); rather, our actions can at best be guided in a more general “do this category of action” (e.g. be sanitary), where a variety of acts can fill in the category, the specificity of which will be determined by context and circumstance. By unifying all acts under one principle, though, Aristotle, and his modern followers, are producing a system of moral

¹ Annas, Julia. *The Morality of Happiness*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. p. 12

² Cahn, Steven M., and Christine Vitrano. *Happiness and Goodness: Philosophical Reflections on Living Well*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.

³ All citations from Nicomachean ethics are from the C. D. C Reeve Translation, unless otherwise noted.

philosophy that is not exact in its pronouncements of how to act, and this follows in my project. The connections I make between eudaimonia, virtue, and animals will hold for the most part. What every virtuous agent must develop is their power of practical reasoning, so that they may tell what acts fall into which categories in any given circumstance, as opposed to habituating themselves to blindly follow certain precepts of specific actions (e.g. never eat meat). Aristotle saw the practice of moral philosophy as a manner of developing our reasoning on the subject of human flourishing (eudaimonia), where reasoning well leads to acting well and so by developing the moral virtues.

Let us look at the eudaimonism thesis generally, before looking at the Aristotelian recommendation specifically. Anne Baril writes that eudaimonia's central recommendation (ECR) is: "A human being ought to organize [their] life so that it realizes eudaimonia."⁴ Baril then offers two accounts for understanding what this means. The first is what she refers to as a welfare account that considers ECR to mean 'eudaimonia makes us happy living our lives.' That is to say, one ought to organize their life so that they flourish as that is how they can become happy. The welfare account, Baril argues, motivates one's acceptance of a eudaimonistic ethic because one naturally wants to be happy; this view is corroborated by Aristotle notably in his feeling that it is unnecessary to even debate whether people organize their lives to be happy or not; he takes it as a given that this is true (NE 1095a17). A welfare account is not substantive in its directions of *what* to do but it is substantive in *why* to do it, namely, to be happy. So to say, the welfare account is explanatorily powerful in its account of motivation for adopting the eudaimonist view of ethics even though it does not dictate the specifics of a happy life. There are powerful objections to this line of thinking, such as the egoism objection, which I will explore in Chapter 2.

The alternative account of eudaimonism is the excellence based account. On an excellence based account the substantive condition of eudaimonia is that it is a state equivalent to some excellence. By excellence is meant "good functioning" or "proper actions", so an excellent eye is one that sees without issue. On an excellence account, eudaimonia is good functioning, whether or not that makes one happy. The excellence account says that one ought to live a life of eudaimonia, ought to organize their life to achieve eudaimonia, and the way to do that is to organize their life to realize it as a life of excellence. This does not fill in what is meant by excellence; many conditions of excellence can be posited, such as acting in accord with god's will, acting as an ideal rational agent, or acting as an excellent baker. Further, on the excellence based account claims, "Eudaimonia may be good for the person, but the essence of eudaimonia, or the very concept of eudaimonia, is not that of the life that is good for the agent, but that of virtuous activity."⁵

⁴ Baril, Anne. "The Role of Welfare in Eudaimonism." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 51, no. 4 (2013): 511-35. doi:10.1111/sjp.12042. p. 513

⁵ Ibid. p. 519

We now have two competing accounts of how to fill in the ECR, both of which are supported within the NAVE literature. I argue that both accounts maintain the structure of thought that I draw on to justify concern for animals in virtue ethics. Choosing between the two is not necessary for this project, nor, Baril argues, necessary for defeating egoism or forwarding virtue ethics as a eudaimonist account in general. The difference between the two accounts of ECR is a difference of fit. The welfare account says that the fit goes from human happiness to motivation for action. While the excellence account says that the fit moves from good action to happiness (potentially, though not necessarily). Both of these support the ECR, though, and so both maintain the logical priority of acting for the human good as the end of ethical action. And it is this structure that will fit my arguments for concern of animals in virtue ethics.

1.2 How happiness is the end of human action

Eudaimonia, then, has a clear connection to an ethical system that believes moral inquiry is required to live a happy life. What is next to be made clear is the way in which eudaimonia operates in regards to the ends of actions. Aristotle's ethic is a eudaimonistic virtue ethic, and has been described as an "ethics of desire."⁶ By this, Vanier means that it is an account of ethics as driving one forward, like a tendency, an aim. Eudaimonia, as happiness or flourishing, is the good of the human life. Aristotle notes that across all lives there is a consensus that everyone acts for the good. Vanier clarifies the sense in which "good" is meant here, "we are not talking about good as the opposite of evil, but about a movement of attraction and tendency."⁷ The good is what the agent recognizes as good and moves to obtain. Proper human desire, though, means our actions ought to tend toward the good, toward our flourishing.

Actions are taken up for ends. That is to say, we do things so that we may bring about certain states of affairs, e.g. I reach for the glass because I want to take a drink. But the human can represent a multiplicity of potential states that could satisfy the desire to have something, e.g. I am thirsty and I know that coffee, water, Gatorade, or soda will quench my thirst, so reaching for any one of them is a means to fulfill my end. There are also many ends to act for. We can act for the end of self-satisfaction, or the end of another's satisfaction, for example, and in these two different ends we see the same act in two different lights; we see two different acts. Because we are reasonable beings who can represent to ourselves multiple ends, multiple reasons for acting, it is important to know what end we are acting for: "The point is that ends determine the distinctive character of the things leading to them by setting the standards of their success."⁸ In one case I am doing my work so that I may be happy with myself and in the other case I am

⁶ Vanier, Jean, *Made For Happiness*, trans. Kathryn Spink. House of Anansi Press, 2001. pg. 4

⁷ Ibid. pg. 3

⁸ Richardson-Lear, Gabriel, "Happiness and the Structure of Ends." In *A Companion To Aristotle*, edited by Georgios Anagnostopoulos, 405-422. Chichester: Blackwell Press, 2009.

doing my work so that another person may be happy with my progress, yet in both cases the act itself is the same. In some cases, certain ends of action may stand as mere means to greater ends. For example, someone who is training to become a firefighter will first have to strengthen their body, and so they may take up weight lifting, wherein they have an end of gaining muscle mass through exercise. This end, gaining mass, is a proper end of their training, but is also itself a means to the even greater end of becoming a firefighter. Having a multiplicity of ends and a multiplicity of means to reach those ends puts us in a position of having to order or rank these ends and means. What Aristotle claims is that the ultimate end, towards which all other ends aim, is happiness. In this way of thinking, the person training to be a firefighter is doing so in order to be happy with their life.

Happiness is the good for which we ought to act, but how do we understand good in this sense? Aristotle's sense of good is contra the platonic good, or the utilitarian and deontic views. Rather than see one form of good in which all beings participate in some way, such that the good for the human and the good for the fish could be the same thing, Aristotle sees that there is a kind of good in each species' characteristic way of living (1096a22)⁹. In the case of the human life, this means perfecting our powers, most notably the power of reason. The idea of happiness as the ultimate end is therefore a twofold conceptualization in the human life. On the one hand it is a brute fact that we have ends of actions, this is not special, it is shared with all beings who operate from some autonomy in the world. On the other hand, it means representing those ends to ourselves through our power to reason about and reflect on those goods that we see. Foot writes, "the animal goes for the good they see, while the human goes for what they see as good."¹⁰ This line is telling as to the role of reason in our relationship to our character, our good, and our philosophy.

Aristotle's ethics are an ethics of desire. What we desire is to be happy. To be happy, Aristotle says, we must live characteristically good human lives. The virtues are the excellences of some being, and so are the characteristic good of some being. It follows that living a happy life will therefore involve living a virtuous life.

Here we return to the distinction Baril draws between welfare and excellence accounts in order to show how both involve, for our purposes, the same search for virtue. This appears to mean two things. First, it means that the virtues are, in some sense of the term, means to the end of a happy life. Second, it means that the virtues are always gone in for with the end of happiness in mind. However, these are both misrepresentations of the relation of virtue and happiness as an end of action. Rather than being means, exercising the virtues is happiness. That is, to be

⁹ Later, when describing the species-relative form of practical reasoning that he has in mind, Aristotle writes, "Now if health or goodness is different for human beings than for fish, for example, but whiteness and straightness are always the same, anyone would say that theoretical wisdom is the same for all but that practical wisdom is different, since the one who has a theoretical grasp of the good of a given sort of being is the one human beings would call 'practically wise', and it is to him that they would entrust such matters [political decision]" (NE 1141a21-27).

¹⁰ Foot, Phillipa. *Natural Goodness*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001. pg.56.

virtuous is to be happy. It is not that a virtuous life is an intermediary to a happy life; a virtuous life is a happy life. We are back at the distinction that Baril marks between an excellence based account and a welfare account of virtue and eudaimonia. Again, it is not our goal here to resolve the conflict between the two. It is enough to see that the two possibilities both take it that a virtuous agent will likely be a happy agent. If we ought to go in for virtue because it will probably lead to a happy life then we still ought to go in for virtue. And if we ought to go in for virtue because it is the happy life then we still ought to go in for virtue. Therefore in both cases virtue stands as the end of our actions studied in moral philosophy. And to study morality is to study virtue. Therefore, in order to prove that virtuous agents care about animals we need not worry about the role of happiness, for happiness is virtuous action or the result of virtuous action, and to discuss the role of animals in the happy life can be discovered through a study of the virtues, without reference to empirical understandings of happiness brought on by encounters with animals.

What is still not settled is the objectivity of the happy, flourishing state of the human at which all of our acts ought to aim. For this I discuss Foot's naturalism, briefly, as a conceptual tool to describe how virtue is both objective (happiness is objective) but able to be represented differently in each individual case. Having seen how the different structures of eudaimonist accounts are supportive of the logical structure of happiness as the end of ethics, I now move quickly over the naturalism that grounds the neo-Aristotelian view and substantiates an account of flourishing in the human life. This is a general account of which there are many specific iterations. By maintaining a general view of the theory I am suggesting that the claims I make here will hold in all individuated instances of the naturalist doctrine. Hursthouse and Foot, for example, are both ethical naturalists whose doctrines of naturalism differ in their views about how reason, practice, and natural facts in the human life fit together. However, they do not disagree that these are the major pieces of naturalist virtue ethics. As I discuss naturalism in a general sense I will draw on both of their works, as they discuss the same facets of the theory, and are in general agreement about how the specific parts operate. It is this agreement on the facts of the matter that are important here, for they do two things. They justify that there is an objective good for human to realize, and they provide a stable framework within which we can evaluate specific moral claims generally and the specific claims about animals that I will make later on.

1.3 Objective structure- major goods and naturalism

One condition that a eudaimonist ethic must meet in this pursuit is the ability to explain how lives that look radically different from one another on the surface can both be described as flourishing or virtuous. That is, eudaimonistic virtue ethics of the sort I am here advocating for must explain how surface level different lives are *ordered* the same way. For example, in person

A's life it is good for them to farm, while in person B's life it is good for them to spend their days writing. Neither of these cases falsifies the other as a possibility of action leading to flourishing. Each is an instance of someone who has ordered their life and, *ex hypothesi*, finds themselves flourishing because of the order they have imposed on their life. Both the farmer and the writer have worked to be in a position where they can do what they enjoy and sustain their life in society. Where does this leave us in relation to ethics? Are either of their choices good because it makes them happy or is it making them happy because it is good?

Eudaimonia is an objective concept that addresses the question "How should I live?"¹¹ To fully describe what flourishing is, is to describe how it is someone should live their life. Thus, it touches on the kinds of actions they should perform, the intentions they should have, and in some sense prescribes a value structure to their life; it involves a rank ordering of goods. All of this implies a normative structure of happiness, whereby it can be the case that one person is properly described as happy and another is improperly described as happy, even if they both self-report as being happy. It is impossible, though, to produce a complete, substantive account of what is good in the human life such that specific acts or ways of living can be employed as norms in *all* cases of human life. What we can do is to think about the logical grounds of what will constitute a human good. Doing this means speaking at a level of generality higher than speaking of specific acts. In pursuit of this end I draw on Philippa Foot's naturalism as set out in *Natural Goodness*, which establishes a standard of thinking about human flourishing that is at once objective and open ended.

On Foot's naturalistic account, flourishing as an individual means flourishing in the characteristic manner of your species. Foot is interested in the logical grammar of sentences such as "S's F", or "F'ing is good for S's": "strong, deep roots are good for an oak tree". These phrases, such as "good oak trees have strong, deep roots", are called natural historical judgments. "Natural-historical judgments describe an organism's characteristic features and activities, and they do so in a way that identifies the function of those features and activities."¹² That means that the justification for the use of "good" in this sense, what makes this the proper use of the word as when applied to oak trees, is some fact about oak trees that is contingent on their existence as *this* kind of a living being.

In the case of plants and animals, Foot argues, the use of "good" appears non-controversial. "Good" roots are, for an oak tree, deep and sturdy; bad roots are those that are weak, shallow in the earth, and generally don't support the tree's growth like the "good" roots do. Similarly, the sense of "good" when applied to a bird could mean "good" wing, or when discussing behaviour, "good" hunting skills. That is, the bird's behaviour is such that it effectively hunts for food, thus providing it with nourishment. A "bad" wing or "bad" hunting techniques are merely the converse of the good ones, which is to say, are harmful in regular

¹¹ Baril, "The Role of Welfare in Eudaimonism," 512

¹² Lott, Micah, "Foot's Grammar of Goodness." In, *Philippa Foot on Goodness and Virtue*, edited by John Hacker-Wright, p. 257-276. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2018. p. 258.

cases for the bird to possess these traits. Natural historical judgments take functions or attributes of some living thing and make a claim by which individual members of the species can be compared to. In the case of the bird's wing, we can recognize the claim "The robin's wings are meant to allow a robin to fly", and so when we see a robin whose wing is such as to not allow it to fly, we conclude, "that is not a good wing". Such a conclusion is justified because of the truth making power of a natural historical judgment. The norms of nature define certain traits, functions, and characteristic ways of being for natural things. As it holds in the case of animals and plants, Foot argues that it also holds in the case of humans, and that the way in which it holds is sufficient for the basis of an ethical system.

Moving from animals and plants to the human is not a clearly justified continuation of the same idea. We cannot make the claim that "all humans need to reproduce," for example, whereas the evaluation of most animals and plants does involve a caveat of reproduction - wild animals strive to procreate, and this sense of their purpose is how we tend to understand many different behaviour types in the first place. Despite the complexity of the human life, in comparison to the non-human life, we can still make general statements of the sort that justify the naturalist's evaluative structure. Foot writes, "Nevertheless, for all the diversities of human life, it is possible to give some quite general account of human necessities, that is, of what is quite generally needed for human good, if only by starting from the negative idea of human deprivation."¹³ There are some necessities for a human life, such as sustenance, that are non-negotiable, and that these general needs have a vast array of individual instantiations does not deny that they are universal needs for human flourishing. So to say, individual instances of fulfilling human needs may appear contradictory in their sense (in the justification that one employs going in for them) such as a vegetarian lifestyle versus an omnivorous one; they appear to be contradictory stances, and in their contradiction it would have to be the case that one is correct and the other false (or that they are both false, but not that they can both be right). If this were so then the idea of a universal, objective sense of what is good for individuals would become incoherent. However, it is not the case that this difference needs to be thought of as contradictory.

Difference does not mean there is no objectivity. Rather, a eudaimonistic account will make general claims about how one ought to live in regards to their natural norms, but the substance of those claims, the filling in of action is not given in the general statement. In the case of the farmer and the writer, we can understand that both agents are filling in the general claim "organize your life so that your work is a beneficial part of your life." The farmer enjoys working as they do, and finds that they are able to do this, to organize their life as a farmer must, and maintain all the healthy aspects that a human being needs; so too in the case of the writer. Objective goods may be stated in general form but they need to be filled in by each individual who is living a life. There is no way to talk about an individual that strips all individuality from them. What is important is recognizing that there are different ways of expressing the same general concept that relates to flourishing. The concept "supporting yourself with work that you

¹³ Foot. *Natural Goodness*. pg. 43

enjoy” relates to flourishing generally, it seems wrong to say that someone is happy while working at something they find miserable, and in each of these cases we see two different ways of filling in this concept, each as justifiable as the other. What matters for naturalism is that an individual is fulfilling the potential of its species in the manner that is characteristic of that species.

As regards ethical development, on Foot’s argument, the potential power that we ought to develop in order to become good, ethical beings, is reason. Because the human is a being that can reason, it stands that we only act well when we act from reason. Living well, acting virtuously, then, is determined by the use of proper reason. In full circle form Aristotle’s original position in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, we become characteristically good as humans when we employ our characteristic power to its full extent. For Foot, this means that the end of eudaimonia is only achievable through the fulfillment of right reason, by the direction that reason gives to our lives. This is another representation of the objectivity of good character, and its relation to flourishing as a human. On Foot’s view, there are objective, non-beneficial reasons to choose certain ways of living, i.e. the virtues. She gives the example of the Sudetenland farm boys who refuse to join the Nazis as soldiers, citing the atrocities of the Nazi regime, and are so put to death. In this case, Foot argues, the boys did the right thing, they acted well, and although they were killed for it, their action was still the correct one within a eudaimonistic framework of virtue.¹⁴

1.2 The structure of a moral virtue

Having described the connection between virtue and eudaimonia, I now turn to a description of what a virtue is. We know that developing virtue is the only manner in which we can flourish, but what is it that we are developing? I focus on the constitutive parts that form a moral virtue by discussion of the mean, and the ways in which the human operates that are relevant to understanding whether or not someone is virtuous/is performing a virtuous act. In relation to the human, our internal states and our external actions are both important to virtue. By thinking of moral philosophy as a holistic study that involves the psychology of the acting agent, ethical study becomes a concern of human qualities and powers, pertinent to all individuals as individuals. Looking at the human condition of action is therefore of foundational importance to the project of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. Later, in chapter 3, the distinguishing function of psychology will play a crucial role in determining the genres of vices that I argue let us better understand the moral landscape of human-animal interaction.

The moral virtues are excellences of character that one must develop in if they are to live a life of eudaimonia. Moral virtues are the virtues of our passions, our actions in response to the desires that we experience as human beings. Because we are human beings, we have

¹⁴ Foot, Philippa, “Rationality and Goodness” in *Modern Moral Philosophy*, (Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement 54), Anthony O’Hear (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004: 1–14.

distinct powers and distinct concerns. Notably, we are rational (normatively speaking). Rationality means our desires and our will (that power to motivate ourselves to action in response to our desires) are able to be controlled by the rational part of our being. A virtue is a character trait, and it is always enacted by an agent; in this section I work through the framework of virtuous action to clarify the holistic approach to ethics that Neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics takes up. Virtues, properly speaking, are not something that someone picks up, like a tool, but are states of being.

1.2.1 The mean and its object

Virtues are character traits, habitually reinforced through continuous action backed by reason. Each particular action, each virtuous action is a mean action. The mean is virtue not because the virtuous thing to do is always “the middle ground,” such that by virtue Aristotle means something like: always be conciliatory; in this erroneous formulation it would be virtuous to take the middle ground in a debate where one side says “we should kill five people”, and another side says “we should kill one person,” where the virtuous would say, “let’s take the middle ground and kill three people.” This is of course not correct. The virtue is a mean in that it is opposite of vice, and, “Some vices are deficient to what the relevant feelings and actions should be and others are excessive, but virtue both finds the mean and chooses it” (NE 1107a4-6). Aristotle elaborates on the idea of virtue and what it means to be intermediate when he says, “But having these feelings at the right times, about the right things, toward the right people, for the right end, and in the right way, is the intermediate and best condition, and this is proper virtue” (NE 1106b22-24). This list enumerates the parts of action that an agent must order in order for their act to be virtuous, repeatedly performing such acts until they become a stable character trait is what makes a virtue proper. One must be aware of their own desires and feelings, as well as the people they are acting toward, and they must be aware of the objects of their desires. In relation to desires and passions, it seems clearer how the vices of excess and deficiency can come about, as either too little or too much of some attending passion or desire. But it is less clear how the role of the proper object fits into a scheme of excess and deficiency to take one away from the mean.

Because Aristotle describes each virtue as a mean between two vices, one of excess and one of deficiency, it seems appropriate to think that one acts in the mean operation when they avoid excess and deficiency in quantity of the act. On this view, if one is trying to be temperate they must eat the right amount of food, not too little and not too much. In pursuit of this they could find some item to eat and weigh the amount of it that they determine to be the mean, and then eat that. They would either be correct, having gotten the amount right, or wrong, having been in excess or deficiency of what they should have eaten. The mean is therefore a question of quantity or magnitude of one’s actions. It can be described as a line, on either end of which is

some vice, and in the center a segment that is marked “mean”. An act is virtuous if it falls inside the “mean” segment.

Hursthouse, however, shows us that this simplistic view is mistaken. Rather, she argues, there are many ways to go wrong in relation to what Aristotle describes as the mean, and depending on the excess, i.e. if it is excess in desire or excess in object, we can point to different vices.¹⁵ Gavin Lawrence seconds this idea, enumerating the “aspect” evaluation that is made available through the doctrine of the mean. He writes that the simplistic form is there to as a “framework” to “help us grasp” what Aristotle is pointing at. While we can say that someone always goes wrong by excess or deficiency, and so by produce the simple “linear” form of the doctrine of the mean, it is more accurate to consider the excess and deficiency as possibilities in multiple “aspects” of the human action. In this conception, then, the doctrine of the mean is better conceived of as a dartboard, rather than a line. We ought to try and hit the bullseye, not the center of a singular line. This complex form of the doctrine of the mean is important to keep in mind as we move towards a description of how it is an agent may go wrong in regards to animals. Rather than evaluating only in relation to a singular aspect of our human existence, we have available to us a multiplicity of aspects, each of which can fall out of line with the proper way to be an excellent agent. In this subsection I focus on the object and its quantity, and then follow by a description of passions and desire, rationality and will, and the formula of choice and reasons, to fill out the action guidance given by neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics.

In the following sections I will enumerate the role of desire and feeling, and then the function of “the right people” to act toward. Here it is important to clarify the sense of “right object”, and how one may miss the mean by mistaking the kind of object that they should focus on/go in for. The idea is not immediately clear if we think of “right object” as evaluated on a singular line of evaluation. For example, a temperate person eats the right food, which in one way can be described as the food that is good for their health, but, if they come across the kind of food that is good for health but in this case it belongs to someone else it cannot be the right object of their desire. A vicious agent, one who is not acting in accord with the doctrine of the mean, would not notice this, or, noticing it, would not care.¹⁶ This example comes from temperance, and there are still more when we consider other virtues, such as courage.

Courage modulates fear (the corresponding passion of courage), but it is also concerned with fear towards the proper objects. Aristotle claims that there are only three things that a courageous person ought to fear: death, torture, and severe physical harm. That is to say, there are three things that ought to be feared by humans, and to not fear these things, or to fear them too much (to the point that one is paralysed by fear, say) is to be vicious in relation to courage (cowardly or reckless). In the same way that one may have a proper conception of what is the right meal to eat, speaking in relation to health, but then fail to recognize that this is not the right

¹⁵ Hursthouse, Rosalind, “A False Doctrine of the Mean,” in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, New Series, Vol. 81 (1980 - 1981)*, pp. 57-72

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 62-65

instance of that meal to eat (e.g. when it belongs to someone else, and eating it would be stealing) so too one can have the proper conception of what to fear, death, but the improper conception of when that is genuinely a possibility, say someone who is afraid of drinking tap water for fear of germs. And, in another way one can go wrong in respect to the objects of courage, consider someone who is afraid of death, torture, and bodily harm, like the virtuous agent, but is also afraid of mice and squirrels, despite neither of these being proper objects of human fear. If this person who is afraid of mice and squirrels is never in a position to interact with either a mouse or a squirrel and so never has the opportunity to experience the fear they would invoke in the agent, and so they fear only the death, torture, and physical harm in the way a virtuous person would commonly fear it, they are still not actually virtuous, i.e. they are still cowardly in a way that a virtuous agent would not be. But here cowardly does not point, as it normally does, to experiencing an excessive amount of fear, for the agent who fears mice but there are no mice around, is not in a state of fear but is still cowardly for *potentially* being in a state of fear. Rather, it notes how the idea of excess and deficiency is not merely a sliding scale of experience. We can go wrong in a way associated with the objects of our attention in how they relate to the human condition generally, as opposed to the specific passions that they invoke in any one agent. “To many of the virtues there correspond vices which consist simply in being disposed to feelings about wrong objects, as I have illustrated. The objects are not 'too many' or 'too few', but just plain wrong; the vices are not excesses or deficiencies but just ways of going wrong.”¹⁷

The mean as just described is a concept that pertains to the framework of a virtue, and only touches on the actions of a virtuous agent when we are abstracting from the act that is done and interpreting it in light of a virtue framework. This is to say, a virtuous agent will know about the mean as a concept towards which they ought to aim their actions only if they have studied Aristotle’s philosophy. However, a virtuous agent does not need to have studied philosophy. Rather, a virtuous agent is someone that will act for the mean even if they are unaware of the mean as a concept of moral philosophy and right action. They will “see” the mean as, perhaps, just the right thing to do, and they will be correct about this ascription. This relationship of virtue framework to virtuous agent is different than the relationship of desire, will, or choice to the virtuous agent. In the latter three, each are powers that derive from the kind of thing a human is. While the virtuous agent need not be able to formulate the relationship of these powers in terms commonly used by moral philosophers, they cannot be as unaware of their existence as they are about the doctrine of the mean. If someone were unaware of their existing desires, and their power to act on and change those desires, as well as being aware that other people may have conflicting desires and that not all desires are equally weighted, morally speaking, then they would be unaware of something that they ought to be aware of - they are not seeing the whole picture and so are not ideally virtuous. One may be unaware of the doctrine of the mean because

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 71

it is a concept that is only explicable in moral philosophy, but one may not be unaware of the constitutive role that human emotion and powers have in one's life if one is to be virtuous.

It appears that the mean will be the same for everyone on this format. All humans have a proper end, eudaimonia, and the order of goods to that end is, presumably, a stable hierarchy. So it would follow that the procedure of action for one agent is agreeable to another, and another, and so on. The virtuous mean, in this sense, becomes a stable, legal like construct, one which any moral agent can learn to follow properly and so become good by doing so. This is not the case. The mean is not a legalistic concept, sitting in abstraction to be filled in in the same way by one agent in the same way as any other. Rather, "relative to us the intermediate is what is neither superfluous nor deficient; this is not one, and is not the same for all" (1106a32-33). The mean is formed in relation to each agent as an individual in any one context or situation where certain particular objects may differ, e.g. today I have the choice of eating two eggs or two dozen eggs, so I choose to eat, and that is the proper object; while tomorrow my choice is between one or none, and so one is now my proper object to choose, rather than two which has become impossible.

Thinking of the virtue as a mean in this way admits of the role of the individual agent, again relaying the practical, non-legalistic idea of moral philosophy for Aristotle. Further, the parts of the mean he enumerates indicate the role of one's doing the right action for the right reasons *with the right feelings*. He explicitly states, "By virtue I mean virtue of character; for this is about feelings and actions" (NE 1106b17-18). The next task of laying out the structure of a virtue is to say why it is that the feelings one has are important. In the following section I discuss the role of feelings in a virtuous life employing the terms "desires" and "passions". Each of these terms refers to the same phenomena of human life, and the use of multiple terms is required for grammatical ease as philosophers have written on this phenomena using the terms "desires" and "passions." IN each case, though, I am referring to the same concept that Reeve translates Aristotle as calling "feelings."

1.2.2 Desire

Talbot Brewer introduces an essay on the importance of desire in virtue theory by writing, "Having a virtue must involve having certain characteristic desires, since otherwise having a virtue would not suffice to impart a distinctive and laudable shape to characteristic actions. Desires, then, are essential components of virtues; hence, we shall be able to understand what a virtue is only if we understand what a desire is."¹⁸ Desire matters for virtue because desire

¹⁸ Brewer, Talbot, "Three Dogmas of Desire," in *Values and Virtues: Aristotelianism in Contemporary Ethics*. Edited by, Timothy Chappell. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 257-284. p. 257.

is an aspect of the human condition. It is only when someone has a desire to do something that we can say they are acting wholly from their own impetus (see voluntary action below). Desires are controllable, changeable, and powerful. They fulfill an explanatory role as to why someone would do something, or avoid doing something, and an agent is responsible for their desires in many cases. Habituation and development is, in no small way, a mastering of desire, of bringing them into line with reason and human goodness.

In one sense, desire is a modern term that is used to designate the swath of passions endemic to the human experience. A desire is fulfilled by action or by object, e.g. I am hungry so I eat some food (object), I am tired so I go to sleep (action). What it is we desire comes from the kind of beings that we are, naturalistically, as well as the kind of beings we develop into. While not unique to the human life form, the process of habituation and change is central to being human. For example, when we are babies we have a desire to eat and the only object that will satisfy that desire is breast milk; when we are adults that same desire is not fulfilled by the same object. We develop our desires as we develop ourselves. Virtue is a perfection of powers, and in the case of the moral virtues it is a perfection of desires as well. Understanding the role of desire in virtue ethics is to understand the development and habituation of desires, and the relation that our desires have to our actions. Desires are a central aspect of the life of a living, thinking being. If we fail to organize our desires then we will never properly be said to have organized our life.

This is for two reasons, at least: first that the way we live our life is relevant for our own comfort and peace of mind, and second, because someone cannot be trusted if they harbor vicious desires. Both of these aspects are matters of consistency. In the first case, one's inconsistency can lead them to do things that are bad, thinking them good - or desiring them despite knowing they are bad. In the second, the failure of consistency is a failure on the part of the agent to engender trust from other agents. Imagine Joe, a well-respected politician who votes in the interest of the people, as his constituents want him to, he doesn't lie, he doesn't cheat, and he doesn't steal, but he *always* has the desire to lie, cheat, steal, and vote in his interest. The constant desire to harm his constituents may alone be enough reason for someone not to vote for Joe in the upcoming election, citing that he cannot be trusted to continue in his record of being for the people if he is constantly tempted by his desire to harm them. While his desires may not be absolutely controlling his actions, we can recognize in Joe a kind of moral failing - there is no way we could rely on him to help out in a pinch if we know that he doesn't want to, but may if he thinks it will be better some calculation of success or perpetuation of his station. Desires are the locus of our actions - it is from desire that we "see" what there is to be done, and recognize what we want to go out and do. A virtuous person is one who sees the way(s) in which they may act well and then *wants* to go out and act in that way. Desires are contiguous with human experience and human livelihood, and also, on a neo-Aristotelian account, are contiguous with moral decision making.

Morality is an endeavour of reason, practical reason is a perfection of virtue, and it is often thought that desire and reason are separate entities in the human experience. An account is needed as to how they come together for virtue ethics. The distinction of acting from reason and

acting from desire is not to be totally discarded, though. There are important points to draw from the accounts that separate them, as they point towards genuine differences between what a naive account means by acting from desire and the kind of desirous action that a neo-Aristotelian says is mandatory for a virtuous agent. There is a helpful parallel to find here between the accounts of acting like a child and acting like an adult. Hursthouse notes that we often refer to acting from desires as acting childishly or impulsively, the very type of act that we reject a mature, reasonable moral agent could get away with. In the discussion of acting from reason and acting from desire there is given a “technical and highly contentious [set of necessary and sufficient condition], whereas the distinction between being mentally an adult and mentally a child is neither.”¹⁹ This parallel is worthwhile to entertain here because it serves to distinguish what an adult is doing that a child is not, and to see how desire is not removed from the adult’s action, but qualified by reason accordingly; desires are responsive to reason.

When a child acts there is a sense of desire that is immediately fulfilled. The desire can be for a specific object - I want that cookie - or for a more general sense of need - I am hungry - which can be filled in by many different things. The child has the desire and immediately goes to fulfill it. The immediacy of the motion to fulfillment is what is characteristically childish. However, when we act from desire as morally developed, rational adults we are not left without this desire to be fulfilled. Rather, we are able to mediate our desires with reasons, accepting that they are not to be fulfilled immediately in all cases. The feeling of hunger is not justification to take someone else’s food, though it is a reason insofar as it explains a part of the action. Desires in moral agents are reasons that explain part of the constitution of a human action, and in some cases are sufficient justification for actions. It is important to recognize that we can have these two meanings of desire because they relate to moral action and reason in distinct ways. In the first sense, the desire is already fully formed as to a certain object (or action) that will fulfill it, where nothing else will do. In the second sense, though, there is a general desire that may be fulfilled by a slew of objects or actions. The child, as it were, treats both senses of desire similarly. By this I mean, they experience the desire for a specific object as they experience a desire that is a more general sense of need. They are not able to amend the more general desire into a kind of desire for specific objects or actions, though, despite the generality of the desire initially.

Here the distinction is important for a rational agent. Feeling a general desire is to make that desire available to reason as a problem to solve given the particular instance one finds themselves in. If I am generally hungry, and I find myself in a grocery store, I am able to fulfill my desire in any number of ways. My power of reason is able to pick out the discrete possible objects that can fulfill my desire, where any number of them would be the “right” choice. Whereas a specific desire, say to eat a grilled eggplant sandwich, cannot be fulfilled at this grocery store. A specific desire is not devoid of reason, though. We can relate them in two ways, first by reason’s power to change the desire, and second by reason’s power to prefigure our

¹⁹ Hursthouse, Rosalind, *On Virtue Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. p. 15.

desires. In the first case, I may desire this one sandwich, but in my current state I am unable to go and get that sandwich, so I speak to myself in that tone of reasonable discourse and say, “look, you can’t have this right now, so there’s no point in tearing yourself up over it. If you’re hungry just get something else, and if you’re not then there’s even less reason to want that sandwich, as much as you may enjoy it.” A child cannot, of course, perform this task of self-control and reasonable dissuasion. In the second sense, of developing a specific desire, let us think again about that sandwich, but this time about how I came to desire for it. My specific desire for the eggplant sandwich comes from a choice I had made to eat that sandwich at one point in my life, and the compounding of that desire through consistent subsequent choices manifest in action. Through this reinforcing behaviour I come to have a specific desire for this one object (eggplant sandwich) as the fulfillment of my general need (hunger). I continue to choose this object through my power of voluntary action (as opposed to involuntary action) because I have thought it reasonable to go out and pursue this object.

But what is the exact relationship of desires to flourishing, to a eudaimonist ethic? Desires, when fulfilled, provide happiness in one’s life. Aristotle calls happiness a kind of activity, by which he means the activity of fulfilling the desire that one has. The kind of happiness and the amount of happiness one derives is dependent upon the activity itself. There are some desires that are good to have and whose fulfillment is proper human happiness, and others that are not worthy of consideration within a good human life:

Few would agree that pleasure would make their lives go better if it were taken in the gratuitous torturing of small children, or that such malevolent activities conduce to the good of those who desire to engage in them. These conceptions of the good life are preludes to nihilism, not proper guides for the enhancement of some purely personal form of human flourishing.²⁰

Further, Aristotle claims that desires and pleasures are set in a hierarchical order, with those that last the longest at the top, because they are most perpetual and that which is most perpetual must be most good as it does not need and is not predicated upon a structure that could fail. This is why Aristotle places the pleasure of contemplation as the highest human good, because it deals with those things that are everlasting, truth and its relations, while acknowledging the good and proper pleasure that can be found in exercise, say, and at the same time maintain that it is better, generally, to live a life that excels in rational activity rather than a life of bodily pleasures.

As the project of moral philosophy is to find the perfections of these human powers while not denying the existence or value of those that may not be as perfect, it does not follow that some pleasure that is generally founded on a less perfect desire is not worthwhile. But it does mean that it is not as worthwhile as a higher order pleasure-desire pairing. One example of a

²⁰ Brewer, *The Retrieval of Ethics*, p. 7.

powerful but lower level desire is the desire to eat, the gustatory pleasures. Humans can and do get genuine pleasure from this source, and it is not outside the purview of moral philosophy on Aristotle's view to have a perfection of this desire. Were one to forego higher order desires and pleasures in pursuit of this variety, though, they would be doing something wrong; they would be inappropriately valuing the desire to eat or drink over the desire they ought to have to help someone, say, or to spend time in contemplation. In this way, desire does have a normative component to it, but it is a component that only emerges because pleasure and desire are necessary to virtue proper, in their ordering towards the good, flourishing human life. We ought to control our desires in some sense, rule them rather than have them rule us, but we ought also to follow them where they are appropriately proportioned and aimed. The virtuous agent will have proper desires, and so their acting on impulse, when they are habituated to do so, will mean acting properly.

Thus, our desires are necessary for our flourishing and our experience of happiness, and they are responsive to reason. We can, therefore, shape and alter our sense of what will make us happy. As we have seen in the previous section, the sense in which a human can flourish has an objective standard. This means that our reason having shaped our desires can make it easier or more difficult for some agent to genuinely flourish; if, for example, they think that amassing wealth is the only path to happiness and so their desires are always to hoard money. If someone acts for the wrong desire, then they are not acting for the right reasons. And insofar as virtue is determined by right practical reason, an agent needs their desires to be sorted properly in order for their actions to be virtuous.

1.2.3 The will - rational choice and voluntary action

I say above that in shaping desire I am talking about voluntary action. Aristotle says that part of virtue is "doing something in the right way..." the impetus is on understanding what it is to "do something". Virtue is a developmental condition of the human life, and is formed through action producing habit. Virtue is a condition of an agent, it is the source of actions done by a virtuous agent as one's bad character is the source of badness in a bad action (By source I mean, if someone were to ask, "why did they do that?" the answer "because they are courageous," would be a complete explanation of the reason why). I will here describe this constitutive aspect of virtue under the term "will." By "will" I mean "a voluntary action performed by a human agent." The function of the will is to make one's desires into action at the behest of the rational control of the agent. Martin Rhonheimer isolates the concept in the following passage:

However, before we attempt to describe "raising an arm" as an action, it might be helpful to begin by posing Wittgenstein's question: "What is left over if I subtract the fact that my arm goes up from the fact that I raise my arm?" We would have

to say that what is left over is, at least, my wanting to raise it. This does not in any case mean that an action is a mere “bodily movement” that is caused by a (foregoing) “willing,” in the way one billiard ball hits another and sets it in motion. The willing that is “left over” in this case is rather a component of the action “raising the arm.” This action itself, as a corporeal movement, is also an act of the will (in the phase of carrying out what is willed), so that, if we abstract the mere fact of the arm’s rising, conceptually the willing of the raising-of-the-arm is left over. This willing was already present before the situation came about “that my arm rises” (as can also occur when someone only attempts to raise his arm: he does this, without the fact of “the rising of the arm” ever taking place). In any case, such a willing is always a “willing to raise my arm.” The willing itself, as this willing and no other, cannot be described without relation to the raising of the arm. Therefore, the “willing” and the “raising of the arm” are identical in a certain sense.²¹

The object of inquiry in this case is that aspect of self-will that is left over when the “ontic” action is removed. The ontic action is the physical, mechanistic happening, such as the physical arm being raised by the muscles, sinew, and ligaments at the behest of an electric impulse. The whole of the action must be understood in order to recognize the goodness or badness of character that is the source of the action itself.

Speaking on voluntary action, Aristotle writes, “voluntary action seems to be what has its principle in the agent itself, knowing the particulars that constitute the action” (NE 1110b22). Aristotle is concerned specifically with voluntary action because it is only voluntary action that an agent can control. We are concerned only with actions the agent can control because we are concerned with the character of agents. A voluntary action on the agent’s part, as Aristotle indicates, draws together the particulars of some context and action to know what constitutes the action. By this he means several things. For one, he is saying that the agent is self-aware of what they are doing, that their action is under their control as a meaningful choice. He also means that they are aware of how to properly do something so that the end they desire comes about. For example, if someone wants to play Beethoven’s ninth symphony on the piano they need to know how to play the piano and the notes in the proper sequence, and they have to have the meta-cognitive consideration of “wanting to play Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.” In other words, an agent needs to have an end to their action so as to account for ‘why’ they act, and the knowledge of ‘how’ to act; within the how is the proper amount, the right time, and towards the right being. The involuntary contains all actions that occur outside of this structure through no fault of the agent.

²¹ Rhonheimer, Martin, *The Perspective of Morality: Philosophical Foundations of Thomistic Virtue Ethics*, translated by Gerald Malsbary. The Catholic University of America Press, 2011. p. 102.

To have said this, though, is not to excuse all agents who fail to have the ends of their actions and the proper idea of how to act. There is still normativity of what should be voluntary action. For example, an act is not voluntary if the agent is ignorant of its outcomes when those outcomes cannot possibly be known to the agent, such as saving someone's life but accidentally triggering an avalanche as a result. However, there are many times in which ignorance is not exculpatory, such as when they have not taken the proper care to find out about the consequences of their action, e.g. trying a new beer, enjoying it and ordering two more, thinking that because that is how much they normally drink on a night out they will be fine; in this case, though, the new beer is a stronger percentage than their average order and as a result they become excessively drunk. This is a case in which they could have prevented themselves from being intemperate and by not taking the care to discover the consequences of their actions they have acted badly, despite them acting involuntarily in one sense. There are cases in which the sufficient condition for an involuntary action is brought about as a result of the agent's character, as a flaw, rather than a circumstantial aspect of the world that the agent is not responsible for. So to say, in the case of non-exculpatory involuntary action the agent has brought about the circumstances under their own power, and so they are actually acting voluntarily.

An involuntary action is exculpatory when it is performed due to coercion or control. That is to say, when the agent is not left over after the physical act is subtracted from the moment in the way that Wittgenstein indicates. Aristotle gives the example of a man coerced by a tyrant to perform an act that he would never would have done otherwise (NE 1101a1-25); Anscombe employs a thought experiment of a paralysis machine that forcibly paralyzes someone when they would act other than in line with their promises or the law.²² Each of these cases are meant to illustrate the removal of agency on the part of the performer of the action. Neither case reveals to us anything about the character of the agent; at most we are told something about their physical capacities - they can perform action x - or it tells us something about the mechanism controlling the action - the tyrant wants x, the machine does y. Here I have spoken about the exculpation of an agent from their production of "bad" acts, but the formulation also works for the production of good acts. If an agent does something well or good but it does not come from their own agency then it is not attributable to them. For example, temperance being the virtue that determines the proper amount to eat, one is not properly said to be temperate or to perform a temperate act if the proper amount of food has been laid out for them by another (like a parent to a child), and they are prevented from attaining more even though they want to. In this sense, the agent does not have the proper end in sight, presumably as they do not desire the right amount of food and they do not take the proper amount of pleasure from it when it presented to them. Though they might have the proper idea of the 'how' of the good action, e.g. they may know that eating this much is good for them and despite knowing that they actively desire to eat more or less.

²² Anscombe, G. E. M. "Modern Moral Philosophy." *Philosophy* 33, no. 124 (1958): 1-19.

So we must keep in mind the standard of action that a virtuous agent will be performing. To reiterate, we are concerned solely with voluntary actions in the pursuit of virtue, as it is only the voluntary action that indicates the character of the agent acting. Within a voluntary action there will be desire, pleasure of completion of the action, reason, and understanding. Further, the voluntary action is an expression of the will. Will here refers to that power that a human has to bring about or act upon the desire, reason, etc. that drives them to the action. A desire may lay inert and fail to be acted upon if it fails to engage the will, but once the will is engaged it brings the agent into a role of acting, and it is in such a role that we see the agent's character come to light.

1.2.4 Choice

Following the idea of the will and voluntary action it is pertinent to discuss the power of choice. Much of the literature surrounding virtue ethics delineates the human power of choice from a baser "animal instinct" to act. In these writings the authors draw on comparisons between a rational human agent and an irrational animal to indicate that the human is in fact choosing to act how it does, whereas the animal does not have the ability to make a choice in regards to their action. It has become apparent in recent decades of study that such distinguishing is likely erroneous. Thankfully, though, distinguishing along such lines is unnecessary for proving the point that the theorists are making. The central theme of human choice is that the human agent is one who can actively change their actions in regards to their perceived circumstances and reasons. The use of animals as a counterweight to this claim is best understood as an illustration of the human power when held in relief of those beings thought not to have such a power. That animals can rationally choose as well (this is the point debated today) does not bear on the intrinsic necessity that choice has to human action. Here I will describe that necessity, paying particular attention to the constraints that circumstances play in making choices as a human agent.

Choice is similar to a willed, voluntary action, and in many respects they can be described in the same way. Both involve the rational, desirous aspect of the human, both require a comprehension of the circumstances of action, and both are necessary for an action to be considered virtuous or at least indicative of someone's character. Where they differ, though, is in their scope of explanation as to the reason for the action taken. A voluntary action, as we have seen, is a specific single action with an end, a means, and supporting reasons. When we talk of choice, though, we are talking about the power an agent has to produce/comprehend multiple different lines of potential action, each with an end, means, and supporting reasons, and then to decide on which one the agent ought to go for in this particular instance. That is to say, the power of choice is what makes voluntary action possible in some respects. Timothy Chappell indicates the limitation of voluntary action that does not accord to choice in the following passage:

His [Aristotle] reason for calling actions under duress involuntary is, apparently, to do with considerations about second-order choice. It is clear that no one would choose to choose between having their relatives slaughtered and cooperating in a tyrant's atrocities: no one would voluntarily enter a situation where these were the only options on offer for voluntary choice. Neither option is the kind of thing that one would ever choose to do, for its own sake and considered in its own right. Hence action under duress is (he says), in a way, both voluntary and involuntary.²³

Aristotle is noting the higher-order considerations that go on with the concept of choice that are necessarily present before the idea of voluntary action comes out. Within some circumstances that one would not choose, there can still be voluntary action.

What are the relations of circumstance to choice? In the same way that a voluntary action is limited to what is within one's power to act upon, so too choice is limited by the possibilities that are presented to an agent. Where there is difference in these two is noted by Chappell in his phrasing "No one would *choose to choose*...". Where the voluntary action is concerned with the immediate moment, where speaking about it in another sense would be to wish rather than to reason, choice is given a longer leash. When we discuss choice we are discussing a power of abstraction and consideration. In order to be able to conceive of multiple ends and possible routes of action the power of choice has to be able to think more widely than the immediate moment. We can produce choices for actions whose "yield" will not be noticed for many years, such as they choice to send our children to a language school so that they may become bilingual. A choice occurs in a circumstance, but it can also admit of reasoning outside of the circumstances one is in - as a choice, as a meta-voluntary understanding of ends-means reasoning. Choice, then, is the power we have to reason about the complexity and potentialities of the world when acting. As a human power intimately connected to action it is deeply connected to virtue.

Where are we at the end of this description of virtue? Have we eliminated the possibility that virtue is concerned with animals from this framework? It appears not. So far we have just seen that there are conditions to be met by an agent to think about and engage animals in a way that would indicate a virtuous character. They must be able to reason about animals, that animals' are or participate in some good that the human can share in through participation or as a consequence of, and that the agent's individuality will determine much about the interactions they have with animals and the consequent moral ascription one can provide of those

²³ Chappell, Timothy, *Aristotle and Augustine on Freedom: Two Theories of Freedom, Voluntary Action and Akrasia*. London: Macmillan Press, 1995. p. 13

actions. Before moving on I wish to discuss particular virtues by name in order to see which, if any, seems to have purview of our actions involving animals.

1.3 Cardinal Virtues

The thesis I pursue in this paper focuses on the vices of cruelty and callousness, and, as we have just discussed under the doctrine of the mean section, vices are opposed to virtues. In this section I define the four cardinal virtues, which all other virtues stand in relation to, e.g. honesty is a sub-virtue of justice. Each of the cardinal virtues falls into one of two categories, and controls its own sphere or field of action. Thus, each virtue is meant to pick out some way in which the human good can be realized; they each control one way in which a human ought to be able to operate well.

Virtues come in two forms: intellectual and moral. There are four cardinal virtues, from which specific categories of virtue are derived. These cardinal virtues are prudence, temperance, justice, and courage. Virtues such as chastity, in Aquinas' view for example, are a derivation of the virtue of temperance, because the virtue of temperance deals with the concupiscible passions; whereas a virtue of honesty derives from the virtue of justice, because justice is concerned with proper conduct towards others in general, and honesty is concerned specifically with the proper conduct of truth telling towards others.

We can already see two further categories of virtues emerging. One category deals with the self, while the other deals with acts towards other people. In the first category are the cardinal virtues of courage and temperance, as they are concerned with the passions, what Aquinas divides into the concupiscible and the irascible passions. In the second category are the cardinal virtues of justice and charity, whose good function directly benefits other people. Animals adhere to each of these cardinal virtues as proper objects, even if they are not adherents to all derivations of the cardinal virtues, i.e. temperance is concerned with animals even if chastity is not. But before showing exactly how that is, I will here sketch the cardinal virtues in their general operation.

In speaking of these virtues as discrete structures of some human good I am necessarily staking out ground for each, and it may appear that the virtues do not overlap. This is not the case. It is possible, and likely, that a failure in one virtue, temperance say, will go hand in hand with a failure in another virtue, such as justice. For example, if I am unduly ruled by my desire to eat good food, but I find myself short on funds for some reason, it is possible that I will steal the desired in order to fulfill my seeming need. This is a case of intemperance, assuming the food is not needed, and injustice, insofar as stealing in this case is properly unjust. In this case it is obvious that my viciousness in respect to one virtue has led me to act badly in respect to another as well. I note this here, before discussing the cardinal virtues individually, to dissuade rebuttals that would claim a failure of specificity as a mark against the virtue ethicists taxonomy of

virtues. That is to say, I wish to preempt the rebuttal that would say “in this case you say that someone is acting dishonestly, but it could easily be said that they are acting cowardly, and in lieu of a single answer we have no reason to accept your muddled claims of what is going wrong”. Rhonheimer puts the matter thusly:

“Prudence,” “justice,” “temperance,” and “courage” are not a mere collection of various “rules of action,” isolated basic attitudes or normative principles floating in a void, but are instead components of an acting-organism, of a life story or biography (whose soul is the reason-guided will), as well as definite kinds of practice in society.”²⁴

In what follows, I begin with temperance, followed by courage, justice, and finally prudence.

1.3.1 Temperance

Temperance is the virtue that guides our concupiscible passions, the urge to eat, drink, have sex, and generally engage in the physical pleasures. We master the virtue of temperance by bringing our passions to bear under guidance of our reason. Hence, one is only temperate when they are deciding their actions that deal with the concupiscible passions by bringing these passions into line with reason. I will here enumerate the scope and outlook of temperance as described by Aristotle, in order to show that the description of the virtue does not preclude care for animals. Aristotle writes of temperance, “temperance then is a mean concerned with pleasures” (NE 1117b25)... “will be about bodily pleasures” (NE 1118a2)... the pleasures that concern temperance and intemperance are shared with the other animals and so are slavish and bestial” (NE 1118a25). Temperance, it appears, is concerned about the pleasures arriving from touch. More specifically, it is concerned with correcting our relation to the kinds of touches that give us pleasure, and how much we seek. A properly temperate agent does not recognize the same array of pleasures as an intemperate agent. Rather, the temperate agent derives pleasure from the objects in the world that are better suited to the human pleasure, i.e. those that accord to or lead to the human good.

This is necessarily connected to the human good because it in part determines the kinds of pleasures one experiences in life, and it shapes one’s desires (the strength of) to go in for these pleasures. Aristotle says that temperance is a preserver of justice just like reason, “The virtue of temperance, which is not a shutting off of passion, but its insertion into the ordering of the reason, is, as Aristotle remarks, the real ‘preserver of prudence’ (NE 1140b 10-22).”²⁵ Temperance deals with the way in which one goes about enjoying the sensual pleasures of the world, but it also, as a stable character trait, maintains a consistency of action that constantly places what is really good as the end of one’s actions, rather than placing the trivial pleasures of

²⁴ Rhonheimer, *The Perspective of Morality*, p. 182.

²⁵ Rhonheimer, *The Perspective of Morality*, p. 243.

touch as the final end that one is working for. Temperance, therefore, is the basest moral virtue in one sense, in the sense that it deals with touch and is therefore most animal in us, and the highest in another sense, in the sense that it orders our entire life with its power.

Temperance deals in the desires an agent has and the objects that they go in for to fulfill their desires. This occurs in two ways. The first is to make it so that one's desires are in the right amount. So to say, it is to ensure that one does not desire too much or too little. If one desires too much then they are intemperate, too little and they are insensible. The second is object fulfillment requirement, which is to define the kinds of objects that will fulfill one's desire. This aspect cannot be wholly separated from the desire itself, for our development occurs such that we come to desire specific objects. One may experience an appropriate amount of pleasure due to an inappropriate object, e.g. experiencing a characteristically appropriate sexual pleasure from sleeping with your friend's spouse.

It is easy with temperance to see the connection to animals: in the vast majority of human civilization, past and present, animals are food. And this connection is not trivial. That humans eat animals is enough to claim that temperance is concerned with animals, but it only lends itself to the question of quantity, not yet of object. Animals provide humans with nutritional necessities and so there is at least one clear connection to the human good that eating them achieves. However, that they are in one way connected to the human good does not mean that they are necessarily connected, or sufficiently connected. So to say, the connection to the human good that eating animals establishes is not an infeasible good. Hursthouse offers up one reason not to eat animals in western society, which follows from the role that temperance plays in ordering our desires and making us receptive to going in for the good and worthwhile. She says that we ought not to eat factory farmed animals because the process of factory farming is cruel and unnecessary for human health, for the most part.²⁶ That we do produce factory farmed meat at an alarming rate is due to the demand for the product, a demand that is driven by intemperate (viciously excessive) desire rather than nutritional necessity. Clearly, temperance deals with animals and humans interacting.

1.3.2 Courage

The virtue of courage is also known as fortitude or bravery; Aquinas discusses the Aristotelian virtue of courage by reference to fortitude, while other commentators may translate the term as bravery. I will here be referring to the virtue as courage, and shall insert the choice translation in any quotes that differ. Following the same course as our inquiry into temperance, let us begin by looking at the scope of courage.

The virtue of courage exists as a standard to prevent someone from forsaking the good in times of difficulty. It deals with our irascible passions, which flare up in relation to the fearful

²⁶ Hursthouse, Rosalind, "Virtue Ethics and Our Treatment of Other Animals," in *The Practice of Virtue*, edited by Rebecca Welchman.

matters of the world. A courageous person must have a view of the good, and be willing to stand against their fears in order to protect that good. As such, courage has three components: a view of the good, a resolve to protect it, and something that threatens the good. When all three are present we can say that there is true courage.

The object of courage is different than the object of temperance, though, because courage has a dual structure to it where temperance does not. For courage, there is the passion of fear that needs to be controlled (expunged where appropriate) and there is the passion of cheer.²⁷ Fear is the negative passion that stifles action, preventing someone from doing what is right in situations where it is present in too high a degree. While cheer is the motivation to do what is right, or, at least, to do what would could be right. At first it appears as though fear and cheer stand in a simple relation to one another that allows us to easily and clearly pick out the vices when both are out of balance. Cowardice, it seems, is just too much fear and too little cheer, while rashness or recklessness is too much cheer and too little fear. However, Charles Young dissuades us of this simplistic picture, which already rings false from Hursthouse's work to dispel the easy picture of the mean as a scale for which every virtue has merely two vices that crop up in easily understood iterations of imbalanced passions. To understand courage we need to understand the objects that cheer and fear properly attend to, and how control of these passions operates in a virtuous agent.

Fear, according to Aristotle, attends properly only to three objects: death, bodily harm, and torture (NE 1115a5-1115b5). A courageous person would feel fear at the prospect of any one of these, for, "they are beyond the human level [to endure without fear]" (NE 1115b10). This is an interesting aspect to courage as well, for it means that courage is not the absence of fear (that is its own failure of human action). Instead, fear is necessary for a courageous person, but they must be in control of themselves and their actions despite this fear. Aristotle writes that in the face of death a courageous person feels real fear, but they do not feel overwhelming fear. It would be foolish for someone to not fear for their life in the face of death; it would represent someone who is unable to value their life. As it stands, then, a courageous person does feel fear, but only in relation to three distinct objects, and these because they represent the end of a good human existence - they are "objects" who destroy human happiness when they are realized. Young phrases it as such: "Fear is... *pain* occasioned by what strikes one as an imminent *evil*."²⁸ Thus, fear is representative of a proper valuing of what is good, and it strikes the courageous person to be afraid to lose what is genuinely good.

Cheer is not as clearly defined by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Knowing that cheer is the opposite of fear, according to Aristotle, Young posits three possibilities at the content of cheer:

²⁷ Young, Charles M., "Courage," in *A Companion to Aristotle*, edited by Georgios Anagnostopoulos. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007. p. 442-456

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 448.

- B) *Pleasure* occasioned by what strikes one as an imminent *evil*
- C) *Pleasure* occasioned by what strikes one as an imminent *good*
- D) *Pain* occasioned by what strikes one as an imminent *good*

Young disagrees that it could be (B) as that would mean courage has some aspect that desires evil to exist, if only to provide the opportunity to conquer the evil. This is not compatible with a concept of courage that is denied to mercenaries, for a mercenary would certainly desire evil to exist in order that they could profit off of its existence. When we see someone who seems to take pleasure in overcoming evil it is not the true spirit of courage we are seeing but a vice. Courage certainly does have an aspect of overcoming evil, and taking pleasure in doing so, but that is not the sole object of cheer. Instead, Young argues, (C) is the proper object of cheer. Instead of finding pleasure in the overcoming of evil, it is the final end of that overcoming that is the true object of cheer, producing some good. Like fear this may be overstated in someone's mind, and in such a case of excess they may act badly. An example of this is the case of someone who thinks that some danger has truly passed and so acts with what could best be described as recklessness, as they misunderstand or misrepresent to themselves the severity of the danger they are in.

So far I have spoken of the good to be preserved as a prevention of death, torture, or physical harm, but that is not an exhaustive list of threats to the good. Courage, in its pursuit of the good and the fine, should value some non-physical dangers as well. After all, it is not only the physical facts of life that can prevent us from living good human lives. We may also fail to pursue good ends, or to protect those goods that we have realized if we are faced with situations that threaten us in non-physical ways, or strip from us some of the essential human goods that are not solely physical. For example, if someone takes it that freedom of expression is a central human good, that human life cannot be lived well when their ability to express themselves is forced to capitulate to censors or sensitive rulers, and then, when they find their freedom threatened, fold in their belief for no reason other than they may be disenfranchised, chastised, or disliked for holding it, they would act cowardly. In this case, the person in question could not be said to possess the virtue of courage for they do not act for the good that they see. They have rightfully recognized something as a good, and then, when that good is threatened, they have given it up for lost in order to protect some other interest or good that they see (a good that, *ex hypothesi*, is not as worthwhile as the good they give up).

Courage is required for the pursuit of human goods. In Aristotle's time the most common threat to these goods would have been physical harm - death, torture at the hands of enemies, and physical harm from the world at large. In our modern world, though, we recognize the wider variety of harms that can be inflicted upon a human life, one such being the destruction of one's fortitude (I use this term purposefully) in their convictions of what is required for a good life. In regards to animals, I shall make the small point here that many people devote their lives, at great sacrifice to themselves, to stand up for the lives of oppressed and suffering animals, often at the cost of their own life. This strikes me as courage equal to the courage that members of Standing

Rock, BLM, Abolitionists, and any other advocate for oppressed groups must exhibit in order to produce real, meaningful change in the world.

In order to exclude animals from being the concern of courage it would have to be the case that animals play no role in any of the three aspects of courage. Clearly, an animal cannot be someone's resolve to stand in defense of the good; that must be the person's own will. Yet for both other components of courage it appears that animals are connected to the virtue. An animal may threaten the good in some way; traditional fears of large, violent animals are certainly justified fears, and if the good being protected is bodily security, then being eaten by an animal would pose a legitimate threat to the good. As well, the idea of the good does not preclude the idea of animals. As we have seen above, there is good reason to consider animals to be a part of the minor and major goods of human life. Braving a harrowing situation in order to save an animal does seem to be a common sense act of courage, in that one has faced bodily harm/death in order to preserve some good, the life of another being. And so on two of the components of courage, it appears that animals are included rather than excluded. Hence we are justified in believing that on this description of courage animals play a role in virtue.

It appears that neither courage nor temperance exclude the possibility of being concerned with animals in some way. These two cardinal virtues govern the human passions, and so we can say that our passions do not preclude the concern for or about animals in some way. The next virtue to be discussed is the virtue of justice, followed by the virtue of charity. Where temperance and courage were self-directed, having to deal with regulating or regimenting the proper relation of self to world, the latter two are concerned with the other as their object, and so are other-directed virtues.

1.3.3 Justice

Justice is a moral virtue, like temperance and courage, but it is not of the same genre of passions, as delineated by Aquinas. The passion related to justice is the kind that produces undue self-importance if unchecked. Justice is the virtue that accords to the proper valuing of other individuals and their goods, needs, and desires. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle considers justice to be a complex formula of distribution, and in the modern interpretation we understand the concept of rights to play a central role in the virtue. In both cases, justice circumscribes the space of the human world that involves actions towards others, and so is an other directed virtue (as opposed to courage and temperance which are self-directed virtues). Being a moral virtue, justice in its perfect form is a reflexive habit to give to others and to treat others as they deserve to be treated.

As a prelude to a discussion of justice Young writes, "Aristotle argues in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that justice (in one use of the term) counts as the whole of virtue and that (in another use of the term) it is the virtue that expresses one's conception of oneself as a

member of a community of free and equal human beings: as a citizen.”²⁹ It is this second sense I want to focus on here, as it presents a potential reason as to why animals would not be the object of justice. If justice is forming a correct conception of oneself as a member of a community of *human beings* then it would seem that animals cannot be the object of justice as they are not human beings. Before treating this question directly, Let us look at what justice is doing within the human community.

These two senses of justice are given the distinguishers universal and particular justice. Particular justice is what we now look at. Within particular justice there are two kinds of justice to be further delineated: distributive and corrective. Distributive justice is concerned with the action of giving to one what they deserve, and so it takes as its object the thing that one is acting toward:

...that just action in distribution distributes equal shares to equal persons. Here the kind of equality is what mathematicians call “geometric” equality or equality of ratio: A distribution involving two parties, Socrates and Plato say, will be just if and only if the worth of the share distributed to Socrates is to Socrates’ worth as the worth of the share distributed to Plato is to Plato’s worth, where worth is measured by whatever are the correct standards³⁰

Corrective justice on the other hand, “is concerned not with distributions but with restoring the equality between people when one has wronged the other. In such cases, the worth of the people involved does not matter,”³¹ or as Aristotle puts it, “It makes no difference whether a good man has defrauded a bad man or a bad man a good one...; the law looks only to the distinctive character of the injuries, and treats the parties as equals where one is in the wrong and the other is being wronged” (NE, 1132a2–6). It is in this latter sense that I wish to push the project of justice relating to animals forward. In the second sense justice is a matter of power relations, wherein one can wrong another sometimes by their power to do so even if it is within the law. Though Aristotle writes that the law does not care about the requisite powers of the perpetrators, it is also the case that the powers relatively held by these individuals can be the determinant factor as to whether or not some injustice occurs.

Cora Diamond interprets Simone Weil’s writing on this matter, to elucidate on how injustice can take place well within the law but be caused by the unequal relation of power between two individuals, rather than employing the terms of rights or the geometric relationship of giving and taking. On this view of justice, one acts badly (unjustly) when they fail to

²⁹ Young, Charles, “Justice,” in *A Companion to Aristotle*, edited by Georgios Anagnostopoulos. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007. p. 457-470. p.457.

³⁰ Ibid. 461

³¹ Ibid. 462

appreciate and attempt to avoid acting a manner that can harm someone by taking from them some intrinsic good in their life. Diamond interprets Weil's position as such:

Weil claims, then, that the attempt to give voice to real injustice in the language of rights falters because of the underlying tie between rights and a system of entitlement that is concerned, not with evil done to a person, but with how much he or she gets compared to other participants in the system. She criticized, for example, the use of the language of rights in formulating demands on behalf of workers. The dignity of physical labour was among her particular concerns, along with the fact that in modern conditions - factories speeded up to maximize productivity - in physical labour is degraded. And she takes that to be a serious injustice.³²

Weil is here noting the kind of harm that is done to someone when they have some good in their life taken from them at the hands of someone more powerful, who is able to control and limit the good as, in this case, the worker is able to participate in or experience the good. This is a matter of injustice because the constraint on the workers good is only produced at the behest of the more powerful person, in this case the factory worker. Discussing the wrong in terms of giving and receiving, i.e. saying that the worker deserves a greater share of the economic boon from their production, while true, is not sufficient to encapsulate the whole sphere of justice. It is true that there are aspects of justice that are economically relative, and are properly "geometric" as Aristotle conceived part of particular virtue, and it is also the case that the whole of our justice concept cannot be fit into a mathematical idea of proper or improper portion.

Diamond uses this idea to describe how animals can be taken within the concept of justice. They stand in relation to humans in that we keep animals in our thrall for our own goods and desires. This is superficially compatible with Aristotle's theory in its similarity to the second form of particular justice. I will press this similarity to do more work for my thesis in ch. 3, in a discussion of cruelty and callousness. For now I believe that showing the similarity between the original Aristotelian justice and the kind of justice that the modern thinkers employ is enough to show that there is a way in which we are able to speak about animals and justice; this is especially important as justice is an other directed virtue, and so is meant to delimit our actions in their power to affect other beings.

1.3.4 Practical wisdom

Practical wisdom is an intellectual virtue that pertains to moral virtues. In this thesis I will not survey the entirety of the debate that surrounds the virtue of practical wisdom, but here look to provide a simplified and useful account of the virtue, in both function and value. Practical

³² Diamond, Cora, "Injustice and Animals," in *Slow Cures and Bad Philosophers: Essays on Wittgenstein, Medicine, and Bioethics*, edited by Carl Elliott. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001. 118-148. p. 121.

wisdom is called the “unifying virtue” because it is the virtue that, when properly developed, unifies all other virtues and provides the agent a justification (set of reasons) for action. As such, it is the perfection of our capacity to practically reason.

Aristotle says that practical wisdom is an intellectual virtue, because it is the perfection of the intellect’s power of determining courses of actions. Thus, while it is an intellectual virtue, it has close ties to the qualities that we differentiate moral virtues by, namely a connection to human actions and passions/motivations; it does both of these things by regulating the considerations that turn into reasons. Considerations are states of affairs that we can call facts. Neutral in character in some sense, they are capable of affirming action or standing as reason for action (as well as being justification for *not* acting in some way). The virtue of practical wisdom connects to passions because it is the perfection of the power by which we may control our actions that would be based in passions. It connects to motivation because it is one’s practical reasons that turn considerations into a set of reasons for acting in any given way; that is, one’s practical reason offers them a set of reasons for acting in a certain way, or doing some particular thing, and thereby provides the motivation. This way of speaking about practical reason makes it seem as though practical reason were a tool, but that is not the case. Rather, we are partly constituted by our reason; how an individual thinks through their actions is a part of them, intrinsically, and importantly a part of their character.

To have perfected practical reason is to have perfected the power one has to turn considerations into reasons for actions. When one is presented with considerations, though, one is always presented with a plethora of considerations at once, and so the first role of practical reason is to parse these considerations into those that are relevant, relevant to this instance, and irrelevant. For example, if I am at a bowling alley and I see someone drop a ball on their own foot and fall over, there are a number of considerations that are present to me all at once. I am, charitably, aware of the colour of the bowling balls, the fact that the people around me are all wearing similar coloured shoes, that the floors are made out of hardwood, that someone has just dropped a bowling ball on their foot, that bowling balls are heavy, that I don’t want to drop a bowling ball on my foot, and many other number of things (bowling costs such and such, etc); I do not consider all of these pieces of information in the same way, though. In this situation it is fairly clear that the morally relevant aspects of the situation are that someone has dropped a bowling ball on their foot and the attending facts about how heavy a bowling ball is and how much weight a foot can take comfortably. These alone are what I think about when rushing over to offer help. These are not the only facts that attend to the matter though, as I have listed above. If I rush over to help having recognized these two facts (that the ball is heavy and has been dropped on a foot) then I have pared down the set of considerations that are available to me and I am acting on a subset, those that have moral relevance in this situation. I need not be doing this, and that I am is the functioning of practical reason.

In the same situation as given above, it is possible to imagine someone not acting on the described reasons for action, or, acting on completely different reasons. For example, it is possible to imagine that I recognize that someone has dropped a ball on their foot and I have

decided to rush over to see if they're okay, not because I make the connection of bowling ball on foot means pain because bowling balls are heavy, but because I think that pain is caused by something blue touching a human foot, and this bowling ball happens to have been blue. In this case I am acting on some set of reasons derived from the considerations that I recognize in the given moment, but in some way I am mistaken about what is relevant, in the moral sense, to the situation, and what it is that should affect or inform my action. And, although I produce the "proper" action deriving from them, i.e. the same action that someone operating on the proper set of reasons does, I would have failed to act in accord with good practical reason and so failed to act truly virtuously as a result. Here is a puzzle of practical reason that I will not further pursue. The role of this discussion has been to show how practical wisdom, which is an intellectual virtue that defines the good operation of moral virtue through proper practical reason, pares considerations into reasons in order to influence action, and how even the same action determined from two different sets of reasons can be said to not be virtuous (although perhaps not vicious) due to the reasons that inform them. That is, good acts alone are not enough, they must be informed by proper reasons. Practical wisdom is centrally important to any virtue ethic that is concerned with human virtue, and is particularly important to a neo-Aristotelian view of the theory.

Practical wisdom is a virtue of virtues, as "our function is completed in accord with practical wisdom" (NE 1144a7-9). Where the fields of the moral virtues are distinct and do not overlap, practical wisdom (phronesis) must have a hand in all actions of all other virtues because it, "is indeed the virtue concerned with things just and noble for a human being and these are the ones it is characteristic of a good man to do" (NE 1143b 20-25). This is why Aristotle says, "virtue makes the target [of actions] correct, and practical wisdom furthers it" (NE 1144a7). Proper practical wisdom is the virtue of the rational aspect of the soul that is concerned with actions. It is present in a character that has developed the moral virtues, which set the correct target of action (the mean), and is itself concerned with deducing the proper form of action to achieve the proper end as set by the moral virtue. Practical wisdom, then, is a power to move oneself toward an end. This is not to be confused with a mere "cleverness," which is "the sort of thing that, when it comes to the things that further hitting a proposed target, is able to do these and to hit upon them" (NE 1144a23-25). However, cleverness can be directed towards ends that are not noble and so it cannot be practical wisdom, though, "practical wisdom [...] is not the capacity of cleverness but does not exist without this capacity" (NE 1144a27).

The intellectual virtue of practical wisdom cannot exist without the moral virtues, but the moral virtues cannot be fully present in some agent without the intellectual virtue of practical wisdom, either. The moral virtues present the target of action while the intellectual virtue is required to achieve the target in action, through reason. This is why Aristotle says, "it is evident that it is impossible to be practically-wise without being good" (NE 1144a35). As cleverness led to but was not equated to practical wisdom so too do natural virtues lead to without properly being full virtues. A natural virtue is a tendency to be good, and to act in the way that the

properly virtuous agent would, but still to miss out on the full rationality of the action substantiated by proper understanding (NE 1144b1-11). Aristotle states the connection as such:

But if someone should acquire understanding, it makes a difference in his action; and his state, though similar to the one he had, will then be full virtue. So, just as in the case of the part that forms the beliefs there are two forms of condition (cleverness and practical wisdom), so also in the part responsible for character there are two (natural virtue and full virtue), and of these, full virtue does not come into being without practical wisdom. That is why indeed some people say that all the virtues are types of practical wisdom. (NE 1144b12-17)

Again we see a combination of ontic action, the doing of some act, with internal structures of the human condition such as desire, wanting to do the good thing, and an overarching rationality to the whole of the act, the reason giving force that can justify a desire. When one develops practical wisdom they have developed the ability to take the considerations that form a circumstance and justify some act or desire as reasons for following through with that act or desire. Following from our discussion of eudaimonia above, there is a genuine normativity to what considerations are true justifications for action, and so there is a normativity to the goodness of one's reasoning.

Foot argues that there are basic facts that provide *pro tanto* reasons for acting in a certain way - of avoidance or going for these things. Physical harm, for instance, is always a *pro tanto* reasonable thing to avoid, and so every rational agent has a reason to avoid injury. This is because, "hands and eyes, like ears and legs, play a part in so many operations that a man could only be said not to need them if he had no wants at all."³³ Our bodily continuity is such a basic good that it is irrational to think it not worthwhile to protect, for we cannot act as good, noble humans if we do not have the ability to do so, and our bodily continuity is such a power to make these kinds of actions possible. Practical rationality will be the same for everyone on this point, that bodily safety will always provide a reason for action, though not necessarily an indefeasible reason. Bodily continuity provides this reason because it is a basic human good, and practical wisdom is about reasoning and acting towards the achievement of human goods. There being more than just the physical good in human life, there are an array of possible goods to act for, such as autonomy, freedom to be creative, contemplation, study, friendship, fulfilling labour, etc. And while at times these may come into conflict, it does not defeat the claim that there are competing claims that it would be irrational to deny. Hence, practical rationality has a structure of normativity alike the eudaimonistic structure discussed above. Each is built on the idea of natural norms of humankind.

In what follows, if I speak of "practical wisdom" I am referring to the phenomena of an individual acting on the proper set of reasons that justify their action. It is, in some sense, an

³³ Foot, Philippa, *Virtues and Vices*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002. p. 122.

idealistic structure, but as this work is predominantly concerned with showing that animals are the proper object of virtues in a general framework of virtue, the discussion of practical wisdom as a specific virtue is supererogatory and potentially detracting. I do not want to present or substantiate a picture of objective reasoning standards regarding animals. Rather, I would like to highlight the role that practical wisdom plays in our virtue ascriptions of individuals insofar as it is the virtue that is responsible for describing to an agent a particular set of right reasons. This sense of “describing a set of right reasons” will become centrally important in distinguishing the vice of callousness from the vice of cruelty. When I discuss a sense of virtues and vices in regards to animals, one way in which an agent can be said to be vicious rather than virtuous is when their set of reasons for action are inadequate to justify the action. Further, a distinguishing factor between the two vices I will discuss (cruelty and callousness) will be the set of reasons that each agent acts from, or fails to act from.

1.4 The self and other: why virtue is concerned with other people

Above I have laid out the four cardinal virtues, demonstrating the reasoning and the role of each virtue in a human life. These four virtues and their subsequently recognized minor virtues (that is, virtues that are specific expressions of cardinal virtues when acted on within certain spheres of life, such as honesty as a subset of justice) can further be split into two categories: self-directed and other-directed virtues. Both of these categories of virtue are equally important when we think of developing virtue as a holistic development of character. While it is common to today’s sensibilities to say that morality only concerns those acts one may perform insofar as they can affect other people, neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics follows Aristotle in recognizing the moral relevance of prudence and those virtues concerned with the self. Temperance and courage are the cardinal virtues predominantly concerned with guiding one’s actions as they concern the self, while justice and charity are the virtues directed primarily towards others. In this section I intend to elaborate on the interplay of these two categories of virtue. Describing why this concern with the self is important in moral concerns, as well as discussing a general framework for how the self and other virtues interact and/or overlap one another; for instance, it may be tempting to think that as a rule the other directed virtues are more important and so trump a self-directed virtue whenever they come into conflict with one another, but this is not the case.

I begin by describing and defending the idea and the need for self-directed virtues. Foot notes that Aquinas recognizes a clear difference between the self-directed virtues and the other-directed virtues, namely that the self-directed virtues are correctives of passional dispositions. By passional dispositions (passions) she is referring to the passion that, for example, drives us to eat, often excessively, and needs to be tempered by what we call the virtue of temperance. Courage, similarly, corrects the passion of fear. In some cases it provides us with the appropriate levels of fear, such as when facing a life threatening situation that needs to be approached carefully, and

other times it represses the fear that is inappropriate, such as the fear one may feel when seeing a mouse. The process of these virtues acting on the agent's reasoning involve control over the impulses that arise from passions in the agent.

Virtues are excellences that will lead to a flourishing life, but not all excellences are morally relevant. My ability to play the piano, for example, may be integral to my flourishing as an individual, playing the piano may have become an activity so integral to my life that to go without it would be a great loss, but that does not make this activity one that is morally relevant. That is to say, just because some activity is a part of an agent's flourishing does not necessitate that the activity is morally relevant or has a morally relevant aspect to it. The connection between controlling passions and moral flourishing needs to be made explicit.

They connect at the point of practical reason. Foot claims that the human excellence constitutive of eudaimonia in the sense that imparts a moral connection is the perfection of practical reason, as rationality is a characteristic manner of living for a human. As described above, a practical reasoner takes certain ends to be the proper aims of their actions, and their life more generally, and also deliberates on the proper or appropriate means of getting there. What they recognize as ends worth aiming for is partly constituted by the kind of character that they have developed. An honest person sees the value in being honest. Similarly, lying to produce some benefit in their life is not recognized as a viable means for accomplishing some other, worthwhile goal.³⁴ They are limited in their conception of the good ends of the world, the good means to achieve those ends, and their relationship to both. The virtuous agent, a proper practical reasoner, ex hypothesi understands these ends, means, and relationships. And, as they are only revealed to the agent because the agent is able to recognize them, recognition being predicated on character, the agent's character will have to be properly shaped to be able to recognize the good ends of their action and of life more generally.

The contrary of this ideal virtuous agent who sees the good ends and means of life, is the vicious or akratic agent who is either unable to see what is genuinely good, or, seeing it in some hazy way, does not take the steps to go in for achieving the end. In the former case, imagine someone who takes it as a given that the best thing in the world is money; they are oblivious to the argument Aristotle gives that money cannot be the good because we get money in order to get other things, proving that money cannot therefore be the good that all actions aim at (NE 1096a5). In this case their desires misrepresent to them the end that they should go in for, and so they order their life to produce money at the cost of other genuine goods such as family and friends. This is a moral failing before the agent transgresses anyone else's rights in their pursuit of money. It is a failing of practical rationality in the first place, and then of actions in the subsequent cases. Self-directed virtues are genuine concerns of morality in this case because they are necessary for guiding one's life toward the good ends and means that will fulfill a

³⁴ This is not to say that there are no circumstances that call on one to lie, or that lying is absolutely wrong in all instances. There are times when lying is required, such as lying to SS officers in order to protect the lives of Jewish refugees, so Foot argues in *Virtues and Vices*.

eudaimonistic vision. Controlling one's passions and developing the self-directed virtues is an important balance for the agent to develop in their life in regards to the complex nexus of living a good and flourishing life that is the goal of a eudaimonistic ethics.

A philosopher who does not agree with a eudaimonistic view of moral inquiry would not be convinced by this line of thought, as the connection the self-directed virtues have to morality is that they develop a character to live a eudaimonistic life. Without eudaimonia as a meaningful moral concept, the connection is suspect at best. Within a eudaimonistic view, though, it is easy to see how self-care and virtues that are solely concerned with the self are a part of the moral sphere of human action. Foot argues that the logical similarity between other and self-directed virtue language bridges the divide between a eudaimonistic ethic and a non-eudaimonistic ethic. Specifically, Foot argues, "that there are features common to all these evaluations that may be labelled 'evaluations of the rational human will'."³⁵ I follow her argument here to fill out the role of self-directed virtues and their connection to practical wisdom and perforce to moral theory.

The first condition of similarity between these two evaluations is that they are both voluntary. As we have seen, the idea of a voluntary action is the idea of human action proper, and it is the Aristotelian project to provide an account of how human action can be made good. In a voluntary action the agent is aware of the end and the means of their acting, and goes in for some series of actions in order to achieve this end by these means. Whether these actions will be for someone else or for their own good, the structure of a voluntary act remains intact. In the case of acting for someone else's good, the end that one recognizes is that other person, and the means one goes in for in this case will have to be suitably appropriate as well. In the same way, when acting for one's own good there is an end that one must aim for and means that one must match in appropriateness to the end. The major difference is, of course, that in one case the end is one's own good and in the other it is someone else's good. This difference is superficial in relation to making one set of actions morally relevant and the other not; it is a matter of assertion rather than argument, at this point. Both being voluntary acts means that we can ascribe an agent as the source of each, and so in some way each action is representative of the agent's character.

The second parallel that Foot establishes, rounding out the logical structure of other and self-directed virtues as the same, is the continuity of the three formal features that make some act good or bad. These are: the nature of the action itself, the end for which an act is done, and the relation of an agent's judgment of whether the act is good or bad to the nature of the goodness or badness of the act objectively speaking. In each case the logic is the same in other regarding acts and self-regarding acts. She writes:

Firstly, goodness can come from the nature of the action itself - from what it is that is done. So, in general, an act of saving life is good in this respect, while an act of killing is bad. Secondly, the end for which an action is done is an independent source of goodness or badness in it. A good (even obligatory) action

³⁵ Foot, Philippa, *Natural Goodness*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001. p.69

may be bad in that it is done for a end, as a blackmailer may save the life of his victim in order to continue his extortion... A third source of goodness or badness in an action lies in its relation to the agent's judgment of whether he or she is acting badly or well.³⁶

This last point requires more explanation. In an erring conscience or will what has gone wrong is the rational connection one has to their actions in each of these possible ways of erring. If someone wants to do X because they think it is good, but they go about it in a manner that is actually bad, such as killing one person to save five, then they have gone in for the wrong action and are wrong in this respect. If they think that X is a good end, but are mistaken about this, then the complexion of their actions takes on a pallid tone. If they think that X is the good thing to do and they don't go in for it then they are wrong in the sense that they are weak willed, unable to follow through on this conviction for goodness that they hold; further, to act against what they see as good is to act in a way that they must think is bad! Foot cites Aquinas on this second matter, saying, "Even an erring conscience binds, he says, because in going against conscience the will tends to an action as something evil in that reason has proposed it as evil."³⁷

In each of these formal features there is a self-directed and an other-directed illustration we can make. In regards to the first, an action may be good or bad for one's self as it can be for another. In the same way that, generally speaking, killing someone is bad and saving someone is good (other directed), drinking an appropriate amount of water is good and drinking gasoline is bad (self-directed). In regards to the second, like the end of extorting money is the wrong reason to do the right thing of saving someone's life, so too is the desire to outlive your rival the wrong reason to adopt a healthy lifestyle - living well out of spite is not really living well. Lastly, one may mistake the relation they have to their judgment of goodness in thinking that it is good for them to kill one to save five and so go in for it, and one may be mistaken in the judgment they have that living a short life full of drugs and alcohol is better than a longer life of meaningful relationships. In each case, to deny that the other directed actions have something to do with morality in a way that the self directed relations do not is to assert that it is only other directed actions and relations that matter in the first place; the belief that other directed concerns are "moral" and that self directed concerns are not is merely to provide stipulative definitions of the terms.

To bring this into clearer focus we should think again about the evaluation of action that is going on in the neo-Aristotelian view. An action that is characteristically how some being operates is good insofar as it is not a failing of that operation. In the same way that a tree's roots grow properly as long as they do not have some disease or

³⁶ Foot, *Natural Goodness*, p. 74-75.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 75

natural failure, so too does a human act well as long as they do not run afoul of the concerns enumerated above. In the case of human action there is the further complication of reason and decision making to operate in respect to, but the principle of “good if not bad” seems to hold here as well. For reasoning is an aspect of all human action no matter the role, and reasoning properly means to not make mistakes in reasoning. This is admittedly unexciting as a thesis of action, but it does hold. When we recognize that it is a matter of practical reason to act well for ourselves, and that practical reason is the guide to a virtuous life, then it becomes clearer that self directed actions are contained in the moral sphere. Any moral theory that advocates for rational action would seemingly have to agree with such a claim.

The other-directed virtues compose the sphere of human action that is necessarily concerned with acting towards others, and that is undoubtedly a matter of a good human life. In much of Foot’s earlier writing she struggled with the thesis that Thrasymachus poses in the *Republic*, that justice is not choiceworthy for the powerful, that no one should want to limit themselves when it does not benefit them. Thrasymachus’ sentiment is compelling, and in its own way explains the preoccupation with the powerful fear that we may not have a genuine reason to limit ourselves in the face of our own benefit. Thrasymachus’ point is thus, we get along in society in order to benefit ourselves as individuals, because most of the time we are genuinely benefited by others thinking that they have reason not to interfere with our actions. But this individualistic drive is what we really ought to cherish, and so when we have true power over others, when their actions could not negatively impact us, we are fine to do away with justice and go on servicing our own ends by whatever means necessary. Justice is an instrumental good for Thrasymachus, a good that is gone when the end that it is for can be achieved by different means.

This cannot, for Foot as well as for any neo-Aristotelian, be the right way to think about justice as the paradigmatic other-directed virtue. Justice is a virtue because it is a particular aspect of the human good, and within the human power, to live in a social group. Living in a social group means navigating complex social issues, at the personal and the societal level. There will be times when different desires from other people counter each other. Justice is, in these times, limiting. A properly just individual will give up what they have or what they want to do if going through with it will produce an injustice in someone else’s life. In this sense justice is limiting. But this produces the question of why it should be choiceworthy and rational to limit one’s self, which Foot attempts to answer, and whose answer justifies the necessity of an other-directed virtue.

Again we come back to the fact that the human good is wrapped up in the social nature of human life. Foot defends justice on the fact that “we will all profit if our actions instance a practice defined by mutual respect and fidelity to promises, and this profit is one we all must want, given that our desiring things predictably occurs within a social

matrix.”³⁸ It is, again, a matter of rational desire to see justice as necessary in the strict sense, rather than in an instrumental sense. To see the good of justice as instrumentally good is to see it as a replaceable effect for some further end. However, it is a good in the same way that our physical continuity is a good: necessarily and universally for all. John Hacker-Wright puts it this way:

Still, as a rational agent, I must want justice, inasmuch as I want to reliably get the object of my desires without interference from other agents, and under conditions that I can reasonably expect to face. Justice may require me to forego opportunities to acquire things, and it may ask of me to perform tasks that are costly in terms of the required time and effort. Yet, what is gained through surrendering these possible benefits and accepting the burdens of justice is an ability to strive for one’s desires within such constraints, with a claim on either the cooperation or the noninterference of others.... Ultimately, the successful defense of her early position depends on defending the view that we should not be focusing on the rationality of individual actions, but rather on the rationality of adopting the disposition to be just.³⁹

The other-directed virtues and the self directed virtues are both present in the virtuous agent as dispositions; they influence each other in an important, definitive manner. What is unjust can never be temperate and vice versa; what is courageous will not be unjust. Further, they have the same source, the proper practical reason of the virtuous agent that recognizes the human good, eudaimonia, as the final end of their actions. This shared end realizes the self and other-directed virtues as one set of virtues, rather than two competing sets. Collapsing the distinguishing terms is here important, because it helps us to see how the different virtues pull each other into place, and are all necessary for the virtuous agent. If the virtuous agent did not have the human good as the their ultimate end they would be incapable of discerning the proper steps to achieving that end - it is therefore necessary to have a harmony involving all aspects of the human good, the end of practical reason, and this means all the virtues, self and other, in harmony. That is why I have spent time here describing and defending the self-directed virtues before describing the structure of the other-directed virtues. Because both sets, to return to that terminology briefly, have isomorphic logical structures, it is helpful to see why the self-directed virtues are needed before turning to the other-directed virtues. In discussing the other directed virtues, I will spend more time developing the idea of the object for which one acts, i.e. why it is that one should act for the good of another, why and how one decides which other is the proper being to act for the good of.

³⁸ Hacker-Wright, John, *Philippa Foot’s Moral Thought*. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011. p. 54.

³⁹ Hacker-Wright, *Philippa Foot’s Moral Thought*, p.55.

Part of the need for other directed virtue is a need to make living with others a smooth process (as smooth as possible, at least). And in part that is why it seems Animals should not be included in justice, because they cannot reciprocate and so there is a loss of equality in the process. But think again about the way in which Weil conceived of justice. It is not because the worker can give equal treatment to the owner that should make the owner want to need just to them; to think that way is to fall into Thrasymachus' mindset again. The possibility of removing a particular instance of reciprocation is not enough to justify removing justice as a necessary attitude to adopt in general.

It is easy to fall into a way of thinking about the virtuous action as a lot of distinct, individual actions, each equal to one another in any given situation. This is especially true with the other-directed virtues. But Foot especially urges us to think instead of dispositions and attitudes to adopt and develop. This is true to the project of ethical inquiry as it appears Aristotle conceived it. The genuine disposition to be just, to be temperate, to be courageous, will mean that one is holistically responsive to the demands of the world and is able to operate consistently in response to the varied issues that present themselves, such as social and individual goods.

In the case of self-directed virtues the object was always set, it is the self who is acting. In the case of other-directed virtues the object for which one is acting is always some other being. By using the term object here I am equivocating on some common virtue ethical terminology. Object tends to refer to the object of an act that is a component of one complete human action but not its end, e.g. the dinner I eat is the object in my temperate act, while my end of action is my health. In the sense that I am using the word "object" here I am referring to the being for whom an act is done for, i.e. object here refers to the thing whose good is being acted for, such as the other person whom I help out in an act of charity.

The question of whose good is to be acted for is described in modern moral theory as "moral status." Insofar as moral theory is concerned with actions towards others it is still constrained by a scope of who can be considered worthy of concern. A being who has moral status is considered worthy of moral concern, while a being without moral status is not worthy of concern in the moral sense. I will discuss the relationship of moral status to virtue ethics in the following chapter, but for now it is enough to note that other directed virtues are conceptually available to characterize relationships of action towards non-humans, as long as those beings have some good that should be promoted.

1.5 Why virtue does not exclude concern with animals

In order to prove that the virtues are not capable of dealing with animals it must be shown that there is no space for concern over animals to fit into the framework of the virtues; if the virtues cannot be used to describe our conduct towards animals then they are not capable of

dealing with animals, otherwise they are capable. This would mean showing that each virtue, or that virtue more generally, cannot exist in a situation where someone is acting towards an animal. Rather than virtue in such a situation, one would be drawing on a sentimentality that is individualistic and not applicable as a normative standard. For example, I may say “it is cruel to kick dogs” and someone could respond that that is just my sentimentality towards dogs creeping in to my reasoning, and that there is no genuine reason that holds for people in general to think the same. Showing that my sentiment is a misconstrual of virtue terminology means showing that the virtue terms do not pick out actions that have as their end the good of some animal, or some genuine care or desire for an animal’s well-being. In this section I aim to show why this is not the case, why we have good reason to think that the virtue terms are properly applied to actions that involve animals as the object/end of the action.

There is an obvious reason for thinking that the virtue terms would not be able to do this, wouldn’t be able to maintain their structure when aimed at animals, and this is the concept of the human good, which we have said is the proper end of reason for which some virtuous agent would act. The issue is that the idea of a “human” good standing as the unifying reason for acting in such and such a way, and only when that reason is recognized is a virtuous action produced, and a virtuous character recognizable. The human good appears at first to not include animal good, by the grammar of the idea. If this is so, then there cannot be a truly virtuous act done toward an animal because the animal’s good would always be overruled by the human good. That is to say, minimally, the human good being a eudaimonistic life would perforce not include the good of other animals in the same way that it does include the good of other humans, and so by would exclude the necessity of an agent being aware of and concerned with animal good in a flourishing human life. Maximally, the good human life would not include the good of animal lives because there are cases where the two goods conflict, such as the practice of eating meat.

It is not the case that animal goods come into direct conflict with human goods in an intractable manner, though. Even in the most direct cases, such as eating animals, the conflict that arises is the need for sustenance that a human has, and the life that the animal has. This is not an intractable conflict because it is not the case that the only way to fulfill this human need is to eat said animal. To see this conflict as intractable is to deny that there are diets a human can flourish on that do not involve meat. However, to show that there is a general avoidance of intractable conflict does not mean that all individual cases are resolvable. There are instances where one must, say, eat an animal, where it is the only way to fulfill the specific need that the agent has and cannot sate in another way, such as the case of a physical ailment that renders the body incapable of deriving iron or protein from plant based sources. The virtue framework can accept that there are individual cases where a certain intractability surrounds a problem that in general is resolvable. This instance of an individual needing to eat animal protein to survive does not mean that in all cases of human existence we need to eat animal protein to survive (and certainly not in the quantities that we do). So, the idea that the human good and the animal good are intractably related is shown, even in the toughest situation to not be true. This resolves the maximal concern.

The minimal concern has two forms: first that there is a contradiction in the general form of understanding a virtue (the theoretical structure), and second that there are no instances in particular that guide our conduct towards animals by reference to the virtues. From what has been argued so far, a virtue in the sense I mean to talk about it is a stable character trait that perfects some power of the human agent. These virtues correct our desires, are responsive to reason, and fit together to form a nexus of acceptable means-ends reasoning. When speaking about virtue's logical form we have not filled in any specific virtue with definite objects. That is to say, when discussing temperance's logical structure it is sensible to talk about a general category such as "the right object to see as food" without filling in what that object is, without defining what specific objects will populate that category. This is why the logical framework does not deny the possibility of virtue directing us in our conduct toward animals, because the virtues' generality need real life objects to fill in the specific instances of virtue *in situ*. In this section I argue that inserting "animals" as the object in the framework of virtue that we have seen does not produce a contradiction within that framework. By this I mean; when I place the object "my dog" in the framework of justice, I do not produce any contradictory elements into the framework, such that there are genuine acts of justice that can be performed towards "my dog" (that I can correctly be called "just" when I do such and such for/to my dog and unjust when I fail to). I.e. that I am rational in recognizing the necessity of acting for the good of my dog, even in some cases where doing so is against my interests (such as rescuing them from a fire). The second issue to be resolved in this case is the application of virtue terms to animals in specific instances.

For animals to be outside the purview of virtue terms it would have to be the case that referencing virtues in individual cases does not yield guidance on how to conduct ourselves towards animals. In a common sense manner this is clearly not the case. This would mean that there is a way in which the stable character traits that are meant to guide the human life toward the good, that are in their existence the human living well, would be unable to produce action guidance or direction in regards to animals. I say that this is commonsensically untrue because virtue ethics advocates for a real-life application of virtues, i.e. developing virtues necessarily will guide us in our day to day lives, which are invariably hold interactions with animals. For example, compassion and justice are both other-directed virtues and both seem to hold in cases of treating a dog with due concern. Justice has to do with power, and wielding it properly towards those beings that are significantly less powerful, a category that dogs in society generally fit in. Because the virtues are referencing human character, rather than states of affairs outside of the control of the agent it must be the case that the agent evaluations a virtue ethicist is interested in would be indicative of a character in all cases of that character acting. Compassion and justice are available to be seen when someone acts towards an animal as well as a human because both are instances of someone voluntarily acting, and so acting from their character. The only way in which acting toward an animal would not be a matter that is expressible in virtue ethical evaluations is if animals are simply not the kind of thing that could be acted well toward,

like a stone. The term that is commonly understood to denote this quality is “moral status.” In section 2.2 I provide a detailed discussion of moral status in virtue ethics.

In the following chapter I address four arguments that come from outside the virtue tradition, each of which pose a significant challenge to the applicability of virtue to animal ethics. 2.1 treats the challenge of intrinsic vs. instrumental reasoning in virtue ethics. 2.2 discusses the current thoughts on moral status as a concept for virtue ethical reasoning. 2.3 defends virtue ethics from the charge of egoism, and 2.4 defends it from the more specific charge of anthropocentrism.

CHAPTER 2

This chapter is meant to address several concerns that modern commentators have raised against the neo-Aristotelian position. These issues are sometimes specifically against neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, such as the charge of egoism, and sometimes have to do with the role of ancillary moral concepts to the problems that neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics will address, such as the moral status argument. I take up these challenges to neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics in order to strengthen the claim that neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics is an appropriate theory for treating the

questions and problems of animal ethics, as well as maintaining that work on neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics is appropriate for practical ethics more generally.

I begin by addressing a worry that is central to the critique of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics: that all moral value in the world is only recognized as derivative of the value it has to human life. So to say, the claim that there is no intrinsic value in the world outside of human agents. As the argument goes, if we accept the eudaimonistic account of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics then the only value we can see in non-human agents is an instrumental value that is derived from non-human's relationship to humans. I argue that this interpretation confuses the role eudaimonia plays in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethical theory. Rather than it being the case that non-humans have merely instrumental value, it is that we cannot talk about human action without offering up the human action as intrinsically valuable to the human life. This does not prioritize human action and desire over all other values, for as we have seen, there is a sort of measure that we ought to bring our desires into align with in the first place. It is merely a grammatical tick of our moral language that the human agent is placed centrally, and especially so when we discuss a eudaimonistic ethics, but this does not translate to a metaphysical claim that would deny non-human value.

I then discuss the role of moral status as it relates to the specific question of animal ethics. A common topic in modern animal ethics literature is what the cut off is for moral status: who has it, who doesn't? Despite the preponderance of research going on today on the topic, some virtue ethicists have denied the need for moral status as a concept. For example, Rosalind Hursthouse claims that the use of moral status as a concept in moral philosophy is a waste of time that gets us farther from understanding what really matters in discussions of moral right and wrong.⁴⁰ Despite this resistance, the moral status argument is still important to address; there is not a consensus agreement between neo-Aristotelian ethicists as to whether moral status can truly be dismissed for a virtue ethicist. I do not here intend to lay the argument to rest, but to sketch its two sides and reveal the conflict of thinking about moral status as a virtue ethicist. I conclude that whatever side of the debate one falls on, whether moral status matters for neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics or not, is irrelevant to the project at hand. Despite this conclusion, it is important to treat moral status here for it is a concept that dominates moral philosophy today.

Following the arguments of value and status, I turn to two arguments against the conceptual structure of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, both of which threaten the practical application of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. The first is the egoist charge, which, similar to the instrumental value argument, claims that the virtuous agent is essentially a self-obsessed person who is unable to care about the good of others, despite the theories' seeming adherence to such a claim, e.g. the existence of other directed virtues. The agent is, they claim, necessarily concerned first and foremost with their own flourishing, an issue that extends to all eudaimonist ethics. If the agent's flourishing is the end goal for developing virtues, then when one acts virtuously they

⁴⁰ Hursthouse, Rosalind, "Virtue Ethics and the Treatment of Animals," in *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics*. Edited by Tom L. Beauchamp and R. G. Frey. 119-147.

are acting for their own good. The egoist charge is another case of mistaken interpretation of eudaimonist virtue ethics. One cannot truly act virtuously if they are selfish, egoistic, just like one cannot truly act virtuously if they do not want to do the right thing. Commentators equivocate on the idea of virtue and its connection to flourishing when they argue otherwise.

Lastly, I will look at the charge of anthropocentrism. Anthropocentrism is akin to egoism, in that it is an argument raised against the virtuous agent because the detractor sees in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics a commitment to some manner of reasoning about action that they believe excludes from consideration certain concerns that have genuine moral merit. Where the egoist charge says that the virtuous agent cannot be properly concerned with the good of any other being, the anthropocentric charge claims that the virtuous agent cannot be properly concerned with the good of non-humans specifically. This charge is obviously an important one to overcome in a defense of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics as a candidate for animal ethics. If neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics is structurally anthropocentric then it would seem to be unsuitable at avoiding selfish impulses that favour humans in conflict with animal's interests. I draw on the discussion of chapter one, where I describe the logical structure of the virtues and the rational component of virtue to argue that neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics is not an inherently anthropocentric position.

2.1) Intrinsic vs instrumental value

The concepts of instrumental and intrinsic value are commonly employed in moral philosophy. Instrumental value is value that something has in order for some other thing to be brought about. It is a purely relational value, and can be considered a value as a means, rather than an end. Intrinsic value, conversely, is value as an end.⁴¹ Something with intrinsic value is valuable outside of any relational structure. Objects, concepts, relationships, and things in general are able to be categorized in relation to one of these two values. It is possible that something may have neither instrumental value nor intrinsic value, such as money in a post-economy society. It is also possible for something to have both intrinsic and instrumental value, such as a person who is also helping one accomplish a task; they are intrinsically valuable qua personhood and instrumentally valuable in respect to the completion of the task. In these cases it is important to understand which aspect one is drawing out when reflecting on the relationship, e.g. I may speak about a fireman as though they were merely instrumentally valuable when I discuss how they were instrumental in saving me from my house fire, but to do this is not to deny that they are intrinsically valuable as a person; similarly, we may discuss animals as instrumentally valuable, such as a horse that pulls the plow, without saying that this animal has exclusively instrumental value.

⁴¹ Korsgaard, Christine, "Two Distinctions in Goodness." *The Philosophical Review* XCII No. 2 (April, 1983). 169-195. p. 170.

The issue at hand here is whether or not virtue ethics is able to recognize intrinsic value in non-human beings. If it cannot, then it seems to fail a basic decency requirement for an ethic that applies to human relations to non-humans. There are legitimate worries to raise against an ethic that cannot account for non-human value outside of the human relationship it is placed within. For example, if we deny intrinsic value in non-human beings as a general class, then we must say that the ocean's health is of no value as long as its state does not negatively impact the human life. In this view, the ocean is a merely instrumentally valuable being. Its value derives from how humans use it, what value it has to the human life - perceived or genuine. The problem with this is an epistemic one. If there is an intrinsic value, but the framework we use to interpret or recognize value does not allow us to see it, then we are getting something wrong.

By use of the terms perceived or genuine, I mean to differentiate a value that is purely subjective, perceived, versus objective, genuine. In a perceived value the worth of the object is relative to the subjective desire that someone (in this case some human) has for the object. For example, a child's doll gains sentimental value to a specific child, and perhaps their family as well, through some relational bond that grows between the child and the object. Taken outside of that bond, the object has no value. Conversely, a genuine value refers to the value that some object has regardless of any special or individualistic relationship that springs up around the object. For example, drinkable water has a genuine value to human life, it keeps us alive, and it does not take a special, individual relation to any one person for that to be the case; even if someone hated drinking water, wished that it did not have to be a part of their life, and despised its very existence, it would still have a genuine instrumental value in that person's life. Both instrumental and intrinsic values may be perceived or genuine.

Instrumental values are generally more easily defeasible than intrinsic values. This means that something of instrumental value ought to be given up or neglected when it comes into conflict with something of intrinsic value. So to say, we ought to choose an end rather than choose the means to that end. There are cases in which choosing an intrinsically valuable thing comes at the cost of choosing one or many instrumentally valuable things, though, and even in such cases it seems that the choice ought to go for the intrinsically valuable thing. Intrinsic value defeats instrumental value in decisions that only involve the two things to weigh against one another, and in cases where one intrinsically valuable thing is weighed against many instrumentally valuable things.

It is this second case that is particularly difficult for an ethic that is attempting to curb human impulse in regards to the non-human world. On a eudaimonistic account of ethics it seems plausible to think that the only thing we can be sure is intrinsically valuable happens to be human life. Rank ordering of instrumental values are relative to their connection to the intrinsically valuable thing that they relate to, and so something closer to human life, such as entertainment for a human, has more value than something farther away, such as a creek one will never visit. Thus, there is a further puzzle to solve, that a value can only be noticed if it is relative to a human, and therefore all non-human value comes from various relations to other humans, presenting a set of negative and positive rights to non-human via their relational status.

For example, the creek may not have a special instrumental value in my life, but it may in the life of Abes (in the same way that the doll has a special relational value in respect of the child who loves it). In such a case, I would be restricted from harming the creek because to do so would be to harm Abes in some way. This level of concern for non-human entities is not strong enough for the task aimed at here. I want to prove that a virtuous agent has reason to avoid cruelty or callousness to animals regardless of the relation those animals have to other humans.

The charge is that virtue ethics is unable to account for intrinsic value in any being that is not human. The distinction is important to animal ethics and environmental ethics literature because it is commonly taken to be a clear and inviolable distinction to draw between those beings that stand as ends in their own right (intrinsic value) and beings whose status is valuable merely as a means (instrumental value). Tom Regan, for example, writing on animal ethics, says, “what is fundamentally wrong [about cases of animal suffering for human ends] isn’t the pain, isn’t the suffering... [though] [t]hese compound what’s wrong. The fundamental wrong... is viewing animals as *our resources*.”⁴² Regan is professing a view of value that posits animals as ends in their own right, believing their intrinsic value as beings is violated when we treat them as property. His dismissal of the value the animals have as subjects able to experience pain assures that they are not valued merely as vessels for some higher order value (e.g. pain). Were it the case that the animals’ value was wholly accounted for in their ability to feel pain, i.e. the only sensible claims we could make about moral action regarding animals focused on their pain sensitivity, then we would not be talking about animals as morally relevant, but only about pain as morally relevant. This is clearly an important issue to get straight. If we are unable to talk about animals in any way other than as vessels for pain, or as instrumental to some other, more foundational good, then we will be unable to break from a property-owner relationship, and in such a relationship the moral demand made on an agent to treat an animal well is far less than the robust demands that I aim to posit on the virtuous agent.

Bearing this in mind, it is strange to read Hursthouse’s agreement with Regan’s sentiment, followed by her claim that “we had better not do so by taking on the blanket ascription of inherent or intrinsic value, because that will take us straight back into moral status territory.”⁴³⁴⁴ Hursthouse disposes of this terminology in virtue ethics by claiming that

⁴² Regan, Tom, “The Case for Animal Rights,” in *In Defense of Animals*. Edited by Peter Singer. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985. p.13.

⁴³ Hursthouse, Rosalind, “Applying Virtue Ethics to Our Treatment of the Other Animal,” in *The Practice of Virtue: Classic and Contemporary Readings in Virtue Ethics*, edited by Jennifer Welchman. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2006. 136-155. p. 151.

⁴⁴ Hursthouse begins this paper with a treatment of moral status, of which she is avowedly against. I discuss moral status in the following section because, broadly speaking, discussions of inherent and intrinsic value occur at a level of higher generality than moral status arguments. When a moral status argument comes into play is only after some group of beings has been labeled as instrumentally valuable, when we are then discussing whether or not they are the kinds of beings that can be used as we would want to use them)

we can recast talk about things having intrinsic value as talk about their being worth our pursuing or having or preserving (or bringing into being, protecting, maintaining, restoring, desiring, loving...) for their own sake, and there is no reason why virtue ethicists shouldn't agree with Regan that the good of other animals is such a thing and thereby has intrinsic value in that sense.⁴⁵

The issue Hursthouse takes with intrinsic and instrumental value is different from the issue that proponents of these terms take against virtue ethics' possible use of them. Hursthouse is concerned with their limitations, thinking them too narrow to capture the full swath of reasons for acting in such and such a way; the full swath of reasons that could justify virtuous action.

Conversely, the issue that theorists take with virtue ethicists in this case is the belief, implicit in Hursthouse's expansion of value terms, that (eudaimonist) virtue ethics cannot allow for an account of value that is ever akin to intrinsic value, rather than merely instrumental value. As the argument goes, a eudaimonist virtue ethic places human flourishing at the center of value, therefore all value that the theory can recognize is derivative of the value intrinsic to the human life. Rolston Holmes III claims that for a virtue ethic, "Nature only serves as an occasion for the construction of human virtues"⁴⁶ Animals and plants are only instrumentally valuable insofar as they have value for some human at some time. On their own, the argument goes, virtue ethics sees in plants and animals no value separate from what they can provide the agent in some situation. But in this way they are replaceable, serving merely as some vehicle for an instance of virtue to be realized. The value being in the instance of virtue, and not in the vehicles that can bring it about. The need for intrinsic and instrumental distinctions is seen as a need for limits on human use and abuse of non-human beings. If a theory is able to recognize that there is intrinsic value in a being then it perforce has reason to act for the good of that being. And the arguments of the sort Holmes III forwards believe that the virtue ethicists cannot claim that there is any consistent position to recognize intrinsic, rather than merely instrumental, value in non-human beings.

This thought, however, comes from a mistaken reading of the eudaimonist position. It is not the case that the entirety of the non-human world would have no value outside of being good for humans in some way. Rather, eudaimonism states that the study of ethics is the study of human good. This does not deny the existence of other goods, and it does not follow from the need to study the human good that it (the human good) would exclude the goods of other beings. There are cases where what is good for some human, genuinely good in an objective sense, comes to a head with what is good for some other non-human entity. But this possible circumstance does not lead to a universal claim that *all* cases of human goods are exclusionary to non-human goods. It is this latter sense that critics of virtue ethics espouse when they claim that

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 151-152.

⁴⁶ Holmes, Rolston III, "Environmental Virtue Ethics: Half the Truth but Dangerous as a Whole." In *Environmental Virtue Ethics*, ed. Ronald Sandler & Philip Cafaro. Rowman & Littlefield, 2005. pg. 62

a virtue ethics cannot recognize the intrinsic good of other beings and so must discuss all ethical norms in terms of instrumentalizing non-human entities.

In what sense does a virtue ethic discuss the non-human goods as intrinsically valuable, then? It is not immediately clear. Hursthouse says that there is an obvious good in the livelihood and industriousness of plants and animals, the fact alone of which ought to be motivating for a virtuous agent, but she does not offer a full system of understanding such goods. Bernard Rollin argues that the idea of non-human goods, in the case of animals specifically, is best understood with a common sense teleology. In Rollin's view, each animal⁴⁷ has a specific telos that it tries to realize in its life. Realizing one's telos, i.e. living a life that fulfills the telos of the individual, constitutes a happy life for this individual.⁴⁸ This is the same idea that is central to Aristotle's conception of ethics, where the human telos is happiness discovered through rational activity. Animals, broadly speaking, do not have the same fulfillment of telos as humans. And every species of living thing will have a different telos from the next; some require rational activities in order to flourish, such as the human, the higher apes, and cetaceans, while others may be said to flourish in a more basic, physical sense, such as insects or lower forms of reptiles and mammals. In all cases, though, flourishing in relation to one's telos is the end (purpose) of one's life.

The idea of animal telos connects with our concept of virtue ethics by extending the grounds that we recognize value in the human life to the case of animal lives; remembering that the good of the human life is understood teleologically by Aristotle. Insofar as fulfillment and flourishing is good in the human life, it would stand that it is good in the animal life, as well. Here the parallel of human to animal is both clear and complicated. Both cases have a telos, the realization of which constitutes the flourishing life for an individual. Both cases, though, have different conditions in coming to realize their teleological end. It seems that, substantively, our inquiry can only come to the general claim that fulfilling ends are good in the human case, and the reason why they are good holds in the case of fulfilling animal ends as well. That is to say, if we are consistent with the idea that there is a good in the human life that can only be realized by the fulfillment of one's telos it is because of a metaphysical surety that this is what good means; again we return to a naturalistic standard of evaluating the good of an individual. To think of goodness in this way is then relevant in the case of animals, as they are further instances of natural beings whose fulfillment is relative to their realization of a telos. Consistently applying our terms leads to the conclusion that there is a good in the case of animals in the same way that there is a good in the case of humans, and so rational consistency demands we speak of this intrinsic good as just what it is, an intrinsic good that we are able to recognize. In applying these terms, then, there appears to be reason to think that a neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics is able to recognize intrinsic value in non-human beings. But it is not settled that these terms are necessarily important to the debate at hand.

⁴⁷ Rollin is discussing animals specifically, but one could substitute the term "living being" here and maintain the teleological structure.

⁴⁸ Rollin, Bernard E. *A New Basis for Animal Ethics: Telos and Common Sense*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2017.

Again I turn to Hursthouse to try to understand what the best way to talk about this issue could be. As quoted above, Hursthouse thinks that we ought to avoid the terms inherent and instrumental value because of the oversimplification of our moral reasoning that such concepts insist upon; wherein beings are either inherently valuable or instrumentally valuable, as though our recognition of these tags were ontologically or metaphysically objective and separate from the conditions of our interacting with the world. Rather, she asks us to think about intrinsic value as something that is worth pursuing, protecting, cultivating, etc... As though to ask us to reevaluate the confines of language we represent this question as existing within. If we think about intrinsic value as being, strictly speaking, value that is objectively reason-giving for a human while standing wholly outside of the relationship of human viewer to the object it is viewing (e.g. this thing is red no matter whether anyone ever looks at it), then it does seem to mean that a virtue ethicist can never talk about intrinsic value if they endorse a eudaimonist view that places actions and objects in relation to the human subject. In this case there is no way to produce the desired objectivity that one means by “intrinsically valuable.” Hursthouse is saying that this objectivity is a false desire that cannot actually be fulfilled. Strictly speaking, we can never talk about something as wholly removed from a relationship to us and yet still try to imbue the thing with objective, reason giving qualities for our own lives, especially when we take reason giving to mean prompting a desire to act.

What I am saying is that the pro-intrinsic value crowd that argues eudaimonist virtue ethics cannot account for intrinsic value, insisting that all must become instrumental value in the face of human flourishing, has assumed too narrow a sense for what intrinsic value represents. Hursthouse does offer us an expansion of that sense. For example, it makes sense in Hursthouse’s framework to say that the care I put into my garden, the concern I show for my tomato plants, is not *due to* the fact that I may eat the fruit later, it is not *due to* the fact that gardening relaxes me and keeps my blood pressure down, nor is it *due to* the fact that tomato plants are beings with intrinsic value that is able to be rationally conceived as so presents a motivating factor for my actions. Instead, we have a recognition that the tomato plant needs to be cared for in order to flourish, flourishing is good for this plant and I want it to flourish because I recognize the good in its flourishing, external to any benefit I may derive from it, though certainly I do derive benefit from it flourishing in the form of food and pleasure. If someone argues from a position that takes intrinsic value to be the only way to speak about value such that it motivates morally appropriate action, then they are making a mistake. They want a metaphysically external fact to rationally motivate some action in a manner that is universally applicable, though potentially defeasible. But this is not the road for virtue ethics and how a virtue ethicist understands ethical inquiry, action, and the rationality of moral motivation. While intrinsic and instrumental value is not a settled issue in virtue ethics, it is not a search for status or category of being as it so often is in deontic and consequential structures. In the following section I discuss the idea of moral status, which is another presentation of a categorizing approach to which beings ought to be granted moral concern.

2.2) Moral status debate

In this section I discuss three approaches to moral status: the uni-criterial, the multi-criterial, and the virtue ethical. The first two of these approaches share in the belief that moral status is a metaphysically distinct quality that is present under specific ontological conditions. The virtue ethical position, of Hursthouse⁴⁹ and Hacker-Wright⁵⁰, claim that moral status is not a metaphysical quality, and that moral reasoning becomes confused when it distracts itself looking for this quality; that, rather than a metaphysical claim, the concepts available to us by thinking about the species-specific facts about living beings are enough to grant us moral guidance. Generally speaking, the term “moral status” refers to the concept that a being or a thing is a part of a community of morally relevant beings, and as such deserves (demands) consideration in moral reasoning; without moral status, there is no reason to extend moral consideration to some being or thing and with moral status there is compulsion to extend consideration in moral reasoning. I begin here by describing the uni-criterial approach to moral status.

The uni-criterial approach is employed by popular theories such as utilitarianism and Kantianism, and has been employed by modern thinkers in both of these traditions to account for moral duty toward animals.⁵¹ In each case, the justification for our caring about some being turns on that being having moral status. A being has moral status if they possess a certain quality or trait; which quality or trait is needed is determined by the particular uni-criterial theory. For example, utilitarians look for the quality of sentience to justify moral status, where sentience means “can feel pleasure or pain”. Thus, on a utilitarian view, moral concern can be extended only to those beings that possess sentience.⁵² On the utilitarian view of moral status, then, a dog has moral status but the Mona Lisa does not; a mouse has moral status, but a corpse does not. Alternative qualities for granting moral status include but are not limited to, rationality, dignity self-consciousness, language use, and the ability to form relationships. Each uni-criterial account considers all beings who have moral status to exist in a flat plane of moral value. That is to say, there will be no differentiation between individuals on the line of their moral worth, so far as they possess the quality or trait that grants them moral status (there may be some differentiation along lines of preference, or closeness of relationship, though, but this is not to say that there is an intrinsic moral difference between the individuals).⁵³

⁴⁹ Hursthouse, “Applying Virtue Ethics to Our Treatment of the Other Animals,” “Virtue Ethics and the Treatment of Animals.”

⁵⁰ Hacker-Wright, John, “Moral Status in Virtue Ethics,” in *Philosophy*, 2007, Vol.82(3), pp.449-473.

⁵¹ For example, Peter Singer’s utilitarian “Animal Liberation,” and Tom Regan’s Kant-inspired “Animal Rights” positions.

⁵² Singer Peter, “Animals,” in *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy*, edited by Dale Jameson. Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2001..416-425.p. 419

⁵³ Warren, Mary Anne, *Moral Status: Obligations to Persons and Other Living Things*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. p. 20.

Here I devote time to explicating three faults in the reasoning of uni-criterial accounts: their legalistic structure, oversimplification of reasons, and the tight-corner cases. The issues found in uni-criterial accounts of moral status are parallel to the issues that are found in their respective moral theories more generally, as well. As such, in the following discussion there is a level of generality about these issues, particularly the legalistic issue, which holds against moral theories such as Kantianism and utilitarianism, first noted by Anscombe in “Modern Moral Philosophy.” I draw on Anscombe’s arguments against these frameworks in general to motivate the issue that I recognize as occurring again in the moral status arguments that the frameworks then postulate.

The first issue has to do with the structure and justification of moral status, and how it relates to action guidance. Conceiving of moral status in the manner of a uni-criterial account is to conceive of it like a law, or political protection. Certain entities fall under the scope of the law, and so an agent is constrained in their actions towards these entities; meanwhile, any entity that falls outside the purview is open to be treated in any manner whatsoever without there being any moral issue. This raises the question of grounding the moral claims that derive from a status. What is the metaphysical ground for status’ existence, and for that existence to bind our actions in some way? Defining some quality or trait as defining its possessor as a bearer of moral status does not answer either of these questions. There is no way in which moving from a disputable metaphysical fact, this being has moral status, leads one to the claim, I ought not hurt them. One needs another line in the syllogism to motivate an inference to action that maintains a semblance of rationality. Without that condition there is nothing but an order to justify acting or not acting in some way. And that asks the question, where does the order come from? The legalistic problem is the same one that Anscombe noted in “Modern Moral Philosophy.” Without the idea of a lawgiver there is no coherent way to express absolute moral laws, which the concept of moral status relies on. Therefore, the rationale behind the uni-criterial moral status fails without a suitable metaphysics that accounts for a lawmaker to give absolute prohibition against certain actions. The legalistic issue sits in the background of the further two issues, as well, as it is a foundational misconception of moral reasoning.

The two other issues, oversimplification of reasons and tight-corner cases, are derivative of the rigid, legalistic structure that uni-criterial moral status represents. The oversimplification of reasons issue looks like this: the only reason to do/avoid doing X to a being who possesses moral status is the fact of that moral status. This means that there is a singular reason to avoid certain actions, and when that reason is not present there is nothing to stop an agent from going through with that action. Cora Diamond represents this idea in her paper “Eating Meat and Eating People” by discussion of the “reasons” why we don’t eat people, and how they differ from the reason(s) we have to avoid eating meat. On the uni-criterial view there is good reason not to eat the flesh of animals that possess moral status through their possession of some quality or trait, say sentience; the law says that all beings with sentience are morally equivalent and so we cannot kill one being with sentience only to eat it. This does not hold as a reason to not eat the meat of a cow killed by lightning, or by an accident (such as a fall) - and so, Diamond argues,

the moral argument forwarded by a vegetarian on this axis (sentience) does not hold as a reason to avoid eating meat if the animal's death is not constituted by an action traceable to some human agent; in that way there is no agent who breaks the law in order to bring about the state of affairs that make eating the animal reasonable.⁵⁴ When we transfer to the case of humans we find that the same reason not to eat a human holds, we should not eat a human because they are sentient creatures and sentient creatures have moral status. The same consequent occurs though, i.e. we can imagine a scenario in which a human has been killed through accident, and as such we would not transgress their moral status when we eat them. There are two points to this argument: that the purported moral status restrictions are absurd in many cases, and that they are limiting in the reasons they make available. We do not avoid eating humans who have died through accident for any reason relating to the moral status of the corpse, rather we have genuine reasons beyond the didactic truth making power of the legalistic moral order. If we take the uni-criterial account to be correct then there is nothing necessary beyond the fact that the lawmaker has made the law in such and such a way. And so in the case of eating human persons who have died through accident, there would be no possible fact to draw on that would make it impermissible to eat said person. Diamond posits that we do not eat other humans in any state because it is not a part of our form of life to do such a thing, an idea that is at home in a naturalistic virtue ethic that claims one's reasons for action come from discussion between self and world (form of life and worldly circumstances).⁵⁵ Thinking otherwise is to oversimplify the field, and to point to an unduly reductive set of reasons for action.

The final issue with the uni-criterial account of moral status is the tight-corner case. This is when there is some individual who does not possess the requisite trait or quality to grant it moral status, but they belong to a group whose members generally do possess the trait or quality. For example, take the uni-criterial view that values sentience: humans are sentient creatures generally speaking, however some individuals are not, such as a coma patient who is not able to be woken. In these cases, on a uni-criterial view that values sentience, the individual is not a part of the moral community for they do not possess the required trait or quality. In the other direction, the issue appears when two members of the moral community have contradictory needs or rights, and so a resolution requires transgressing the status of one individual. These cases involve disingenuity in both directions. In the one we deny moral status and so moral concern to some individual if we are to follow the letter of the law directly, and in the other we cannot seem to follow the letter of the law for it leads to contradiction. It is for the three reasons discussed here that Hursthouse calls moral status a confused concept that does nothing to help us in our moral reasoning.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Diamond, Cora, "Eating Meat and Eating People," in *Philosophy*, Vol. 53, No. 206 (Oct., 1978), pp. 465-479.

⁵⁵ Specifically, she is arguing that the term "human" is a thick concept, which cannot be employed appropriately if one thinks that "I can eat this" follows from "human." I am not here concerned with her defense of thick concepts, and so I will not discuss this further.

⁵⁶ Hursthouse, "Virtue Ethics and the Treatment of Animals," p. 124

In addition to the uni-criterial view there is also the multi-criterial view, most notably that forwarded by Mary Anne Warren in *Moral Status: Obligations to Persons and Other Living Things*. Warren posits moral status as a pyramid rather than a flat plane of equality. At the top of the pyramid are the full moral agents, humans, and at the bottom are non-sentient living beings, such as plants. Between the top and the bottom are various steps of living beings, differentiated by their qualities, traits, or the relative power of these things. Where these lines of difference are drawn is determined in relation to multiple criteria. This means that there may be two distinct individuals included in the pyramid as bearers of moral status but that they are not included for the same reason, e.g. a dog has moral status because it is a self-aware being, while a mouse has moral status because it is able to form relationships. This seems to solve the tight corner problem that the uni-criterial account came up against. However, the multi-criterial view does not release our reasoning from the legalistic view of morality, and so it fails to release us from the oversimplification of reasons problem.

Warren's view maintains the legalistic understanding of status because it takes as justification and guidance the singular fact of some being's participation in the moral status community. Allowing for a varied understanding of what counts as admission to the community does not absolve the theory from the conceptual issues of the metaphysical or ontological existence of status giving traits or qualities in the first place. Rather, Warren is merely allowing that there may be more living beings in the circle of concern than a uni-criterial view can acknowledge. Entrance into the circle does not solve the issues that the conceptualization of such a circle brings about in the first place, though. Further, although Warren's account does allow that there are multiple conditions for entry into the moral community, it does not allow that non-living beings could be members. This omission leaves us in the same position as the uni-criterial view left us when looking at the reasons against eating deceased humans. The issue of the legalistic structure is resolved when we abandon a rule-based understanding of moral action; when we understand that "acting morally" does not merely equal "following moral rules," where moral rules are deductible from non-moral matters (i.e. are laid overtop of an amoral world in order to produce or prompt the proper moral action).

Hursthouse, alternatively, argues that moral status is not coherent, necessary, or even a metaphysical truth that could bear on moral reasoning. She claims that we ought to think through moral problems with the full breadth of human reason and virtue terms in order to recognize the often disparate facts that can bear on a situation. She is, in other words, rejecting the legalistic view that leads to an oversimplification of moral reasoning. Hursthouse explains moral status as such, "it is supposed to divide everything into two classes: things that have moral status and are within 'the circle of our moral concern' and things that do not, which are outside the circle."⁵⁷ By reference to the "circle of our moral concern", both the uni and multi criterial accounts come under the fire of Hursthouse's critique. For what she finds problematic about the moral status accounts is their inability to recognize non-universal reasons for action. In other words,

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 120.

Hursthouse thinks that the need for universal, rule based moral reasoning in the moral status accounts is a significant flaw that leaves the theory untenable.

In place of moral status, Hursthouse argues that we need only apply the “v-rules” to the problems we treat in order to discover the way we ought to act, and what kinds of actions we ought to avoid or go in for. A “v-rule” is a general rule for acting, that is not universal and so does not bind in all cases. Compassion is a virtue, and so its according v-rule is “be compassionate”. Clearly there is still a lot of work for the agent in this case to fill in the action they ought to go in for. What is unnecessary is some pre-existing status of the being towards which one is acting before the v-rule comes into play: “No group of beings has to be rubber-stamped as belonging “within the circle of our moral concern” before we know whether our v-rules apply to its members; we know that if we know how to use the terms.”⁵⁸ Knowing how to use a virtue term means knowing the content of the virtue, the relative facts about the world that call on this virtue (its field), and the corroborating desire and motivation to act for it (as has been described above). This is, essentially, the opposite of the moral reasoning asked for in the deductive moral status form.

Hacker-Wright describes the difference by drawing on McDowell’s work:

The legalistic view of moral status joins up with what John McDowell calls the ‘deductive paradigm’ of moral thinking. Under the deductive paradigm, moral thinking can be conveyed in syllogisms... with moral commitments contained in the major premises. Moral principle sought then to be applicable to factual matters that are, by themselves, non-moral, to generate consistently sound arguments and rational judgments. McDowell holds that this view contains prejudice about rationality, namely, that rationality involves acting in view of a formulable universal principle. This prejudice leads us to deny what should be obvious: that any ‘reasonably adult moral outlook’ can be contained in rules that hold only for the most part. Resisting this prejudice means embracing some form of particularism or non-codifiability. Instead of our moral outlook being contained in watertight moral principles that give of algorithmic application, advocates of non-codifiability hold that moral rationality is to be identified with practical wisdom; that is, holding the correct view of what is worthwhile in life and having knowledge of basic means of enacting those values.”⁵⁹

Following the lead of Hursthouse, Hacker-Wright argues that the legalistic structure of both the uni and multi criterial accounts of moral status fail to properly represent moral reasoning. By drawing on McDowell’s thoughts here, Hacker-Wright emphasises the need for a non-codifiable moral theory to navigate difficult moral issues. The advancement of what is worthwhile in life is what characterizes a good moral action (and so good moral reasoning), and

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 124.

⁵⁹ Hacker-Wright, “Moral Status and Virtue Ethics.” p. 456.

this presents itself in a varied manner that resists being slotted into general principles or universal rules. The appeal to the deductive model, it seems, is that it staves off the “terror that many are subject to upon realizing that our moral conceptions depend on a fragile, contingent transmission from generation to the next of a form of life, and that morality is not imposed on us by a formulable dictate of reason.”⁶⁰ That is to say, the appeal that moral status has to our mind is like a preventative balm, soothing us and making it appear as though we don’t need anything else. While, really, the issue is still present and our thought is only enervated by reliance on the moral status concept.

Rather than an overarching, ideal standard of moral rule, Hacker-Wright follows McDowell in claiming that our moral reasoning ought to be attuned to reality, and the genuine values recognized therein. He writes, “What we will not find in a virtue-ethical account of moral status is an appeal to a set of facts fully salient prior to the adoption of a moral perspective that grounds our moral judgments. Rather, our moral commitments, what McDowell calls our ‘conception of how to live’ informs which facts have salience, and makes some facts more or less easily accessible to us.”⁶¹ Moral status is superfluous, then, because it both limits the salient facts available to a moral agent and claims to exist as a fully formed fact outside of a developed perspective. It presents the issue as though there is merely one fact that must be looked at, whether or not the being has moral status, and that this fact of their existence is an objective, non-moral fact that becomes morally relevant when the appropriate moral rule is presented as a major premise in the syllogism (e.g. that they have sentience is not a moral fact, but it still bears on morality). Hacker-Wright thinks that this formulation is mistaken in general, and in regards to virtue ethics, it is a misleading and inappropriate way to describe how a virtuous agent would reason about the issue. There are facts that do not relate to the being one acts towards, but are instead relevant facts about certain values in one’s life - if I value being a compassionate person then I am preoccupied with acting compassionately instead of trying to figure out if there is some right I need to respect or need not respect in this or that situation. The moral status of the uni and multi accounts are concerned essentially with establishing grounds for beings having rights, and this is not the full extent of what we ought to be thinking about according to the Hacker-Wright and Hursthouse.

If Hacker-Wright and Hursthouse are to be believed, then it would appear as though neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics does not need to employ the concept of moral status in its moral reasoning about non-humans; all actions done by humans should be considered in terms of the v-rules, and should be a form of proper practical reason, neither of which rely on the concept of moral status. Further, if we take moral status seriously, then we are misleading or confusing ourselves. There is no metaphysical or ontological truth to the existence of moral status and our reliance upon the term only stagnates our moral imagination. However, Rebecca Kornegay argues that both Hursthouse and Hacker-Wright are too quick to dismiss the concept in full. She

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 456.

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 459.

claims that, in their haste to remove the need of moral status from our moral philosophy, they overlook its presence within their own theorizing in the first place. While moral status may not have the grand place in moral philosophy that the uni and multi criterial accounts imagine for it, it does seem to have some metaphysical or ontological veracity that ought be respected rather than overlooked.

Kornegay's argument draws on Hursthouse's paper addressing abortion, in which Hursthouse argues that the debate of whether or not a fetus has moral status is irrelevant to virtue ethics, which will look, rather, at the biologic facts of abortion and what matters in a human life generally speaking.⁶² That the question of abortion turns on these points, neither of which asks about the metaphysical status of the fetus, subsumes the debate that generally surrounds the question of abortion, whether or not the fetus is a person, and so whether or not it has a right to life. However, Kornegay points out, Hursthouse does claim that the later in the pregnancy, the harder it is to make the decision to abort.⁶³ That is to say, when the fetus is more developed, abortion is a tougher decision to make. Kornegay argues that this change in thought cannot be supported unless there is some metaphysical change over time in the fetus; unless the fetus becomes something with more of a claim to moral status as it develops. Kornegay further claims that Hacker-Wright mistakes the role of status in Hursthouse's article when he collapses the claim of a fetus' development under the claim of the value of pregnancy in human life.⁶⁴ That is to say, Kornegay is claiming that there is something going on in the case of a fetus' development that makes a moral difference in one's reasoning, but that is not captured by the importance pregnancy has in human life. Following Hursthouse and Hacker-Wright's arguments, Kornegay claims that they overstep in their conclusion. What they have been able to show is that the concept of moral status is not the sole concern one ought to base their actions upon. But, she argues, they do not show that it is of no concern at all, that it doesn't exist. Rather, they have made good cases for limiting the hold that moral status has on our reasoning, but they should not dismiss it entirely. The issue of a fetus' developmental status points to the pervasiveness and veracity of moral status. If, as Hursthouse writes, the later on in a pregnancy someone is, the harder it is to justify getting an abortion, then there does appear to be a sense in which moral status is relevant to the virtue ethicist, as well.

Hacker-Wright and Hursthouse argue that the facts of life, both those of the specifically human life that we encounter in deliberation of abortion and the facts of natural life that we encounter when we deliberate about our actions towards non-human lives, are sufficient and exhaustive for moral reasoning. There is not only no need for an appeal to a metaphysical concept such as moral status, but talk of such a concept is confused and impedes our moral reasoning. Kornegay responds that both Hacker-Wright and Hursthouse appear to be ignoring an

⁶² Hursthouse, Rosalind, "Virtue Theory and Abortion," in *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 1 July 1991, Vol.20(3), pp.223-246

⁶³ Kornegay, Rebecca, "Hursthouse's Virtue Ethics and Abortion: Abortion Ethics without Metaphysics?," in *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 2011, Vol.14(1), pp.51-71. p. 52.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 56.

underlying current in their thought that justifies taking moral status seriously. That is, Kornegay believes Hacker-Wright and Hursthouse are ascribing the qualities of moral status to non-metaphysical facts, which does not disprove the existence of or need for moral status. The description of an abortion as a weightier consideration the further along in a cycle of pregnancy one is serves as proof for Kornegay that moral status is an important concept for moral reasoning, for, she argues, if there weren't some metaphysical aspect to a developing fetus than it would not make a difference to moral reasoning as Hursthouse describes the process.

Where does this leave my argument that a virtuous agent will show concern for animals, and will not act viciously towards them? In some ways, it leaves us exactly where we began, wanting to piece together the aspects of virtue that would justify or deny such a thesis. What this discussion has revealed, though, is that the issue of moral status is not clearly inside or outside the purview of a virtue ethicist. This is to say, moral status arguments, finding its grounds for existence and the hold that it should then have on our reasoning, are genuinely important for the development of virtue ethics and moral philosophy in general. The end of those arguments will not unseat the thesis I present here, though. For if moral status is a metaphysically and ontologically existent quality of living things, then it is a fact that a virtuous agent ought to be aware of in their reasoning process; they need to know whether or not the thing has a status and what the status is, in the same way that they would need to know if some animal required specific dietary needs to live, i.e. it is a fact of reality that ought to generate some moral conclusion when a virtuous person reasons on the matter. On the other hand, if moral status is superfluous or misguided, as Hacker-Wright and Hursthouse argue, then the virtuous agent need not include it in the set of facts relevant to their reasoning. Instead, they would, as Hacker-Wright argues, pull from the many other facts of reality that make up their world as they navigate through their lives. Neither of these possibilities deny that a virtuous agent would be unconcerned with animals, even if they do not have moral status, for what has been shown by Hursthouse and Hacker-Wright's papers is that virtue ethics would not take moral status as the sole basis for moral reasoning regarding other beings.

2.3) Egoism

I will now turn to the argument that claims virtue ethics is egoistic. This charge comes up against eudaimonist virtue ethics in general, and holds against the specific form of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics that I am here defending. The egoist charge says that a virtue ethic cannot properly account for agents acting for the good of another, that all of their actions will be based in an egotistical, self-serving justification. This is a two-fold charge against neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. On the one hand it charges the theory with failing to reach standard grounds of a moral theory, i.e. a moral theory ought to account for caring for other people for no

reason other than that they are other people, and neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics fails to do this. On the other hand, the charge directly challenges the other directed virtues as neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics conceives of them. If the charge of egoism is unable to be overcome then neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics is not: a) a suitable moral theory, and/or b) incoherent in its own structure. I here argue that the egoist charge fails on both accounts: neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics is a suitable moral theory, and it is coherently structured. To show how this is so I draw on the works of Mark LeBar and Julia Annas who posit an argument for two level and developmental virtue theory respectively. These accounts are not exclusive and illuminate the way in which virtue operates such as to make clear how the charge of egoism stems from a misrepresentation or a misunderstanding of eudaimonist virtue ethics.

Egoism is essentially concerned with the reasons one could have for acting, and it is as such a concern for virtue ethics generally, as compromised reasons for acting well are clearly compromised qualities of a virtuous agent. The charge of egoism is levied against the reasons given for action. If one acts for the reason of their own flourishing, then their action is inherently selfish. This depends on the structure of a human action that we have discussed earlier (1.3) in which the ends, intentions, and means are all a part of the full action. As such, if the end or intention is off then the act is off. In the case of an egoistic motivation, the argument goes, the agent has the wrong intention or motivation for acting. They are acting for their own good, when they ought to act for the good of another. For example, if I see someone dying of thirst on the side of the road and stop to give them water, it appears that I am doing it to help them, but it is possible to imagine that I am only stopping in order to increase my chances of gaining something in the future, whether that something is a “flourishing life”, the chance of getting into heaven, or even just to quiet my conscience that would annoyingly nag me if I didn’t stop to help. Each of these is the wrong reason for my action; my action has the wrong motivation or intention behind it. Understood in this way the charge clearly sustains a) and b). A) because the ideal moral theory will care about others for their own sake, and when I help the thirsty person I am helping them for my own sake; that is, I see them as a means to fulfill my own ends. B) because, again, the selfishness expressed in this action does not operate in accord with the purported concern for others that makes up other-directed virtue; again, I see others only as means to further my own ends, rather than as something worthwhile in their own right. It is this dilemma that makes Thomas Hurka claim about neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics theory, “But it [neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics] is what I will call foundationally egoistic, insisting that their [the agent’s] reasons to act and be motivated in these ways derive ultimately from their own flourishing.”⁶⁵ This clearly states the issue at hand here, the claim that eudaimonist virtue ethics is essentially a form of ethical egoism.

Egoism in some form is consistent with some virtue revivalist writings. Anscombe and the early Foot, for example, both hold that we ought to act justly because justice is a part of flourishing, and we want to flourish (we ought to want to flourish, at least). Both the

⁶⁵ Hurka, Thomas, *Virtue, Vice, and Value*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. p. 232.

Anscombian and the early Footian writings are closer to the modern welfarist position that I have briefly discussed above. The egoist critique attacks the welfarist position of eudaimonia more easily than it does the excellence position. This is because on the welfarist line there is a more explicit connection between one's own flourishing and the reason for some action; as we have seen above, the welfarist claims that virtue is the best bet we have to live a good human life, and so it appears to be a means to the end of living well. Further, on the excellence position the egoist charge remains as a critique of the concept of a virtue in the first place. If we are to act in accord with the virtues so that we may be excellent individuals, it appears that we are again acting well first and foremost for our own good.

In defence of the eudaimonist position I here draw on the argument provided by Mark LeBar and Julia Annas. LeBar engages with the question of "second personal reasons," a concept that the reasons of other's, the good of others or their desires, are genuine reasons that are able to challenge the reasons internal to an agent, and that a virtue ethic can recognize these reasons as equal or greater than one's own desires because virtue ethics is a "two-level theory." LeBar's position offers a suitable defense for a welfarist position. For, if second personal reasons are genuinely recognized by virtue it follows that even when virtue is a means, it can only be properly used if suitable concern is observed for others, sometimes at the cost of one's own self-concern. Following this, I turn to Annas' defense against egoism, in which she argues that virtue is developmental. Annas argues that the egoist charge is fundamentally flawed in what it asks an agent to be able to do; she presents the critique as demanding an agent live a life that is essentially not their own, that it claims one can only be good if they are able to completely extract their own life from their control. This is, she claims ridiculous, and so not suitable as a genuine critique.

LeBar is responding to criticism from Cokelet, who writes that a virtue ethical position cannot understand second personal reasons as providing deontic constraints upon any agent. A second personal reason is a reason derived from another being, such as, "I shouldn't do that, it will hurt Julie." This is second personal because the act will have no negative consequence for the agent performing it, at least, it will have no negative consequence that is immediately recognizable in the moment for an individual. Cokelet believes that the two classes of reasons that are recognized by this, first personal and second personal, exist in two different categories.⁶⁶ Further, he believes that the distinction between them is to see one as real, the first personal, and one as wholly constructed, the second personal. Those that are real have objective existence while those that are constructed have merely subjective existence. This is a type of egoist critique because it is saying that an agent does not have reason to act for the good of others without reference to their own good, while they always have real, objective reasons to act for their own good. If this were true, the virtue ethicist would be left without recourse to justify their claims that the virtuous agent genuinely cares for others; it would reimagine the other-directed virtues as

⁶⁶ Cokelet, Bradford, "Two-level Eudaimonism and Second Personal Reasons," in *Ethics*, 01 July 2012, Vol.122(4), pp.773-780

merely instrumental derivations of self-love. That is, the only reason we have to treat others well is that it will make us flourish for having done so, thus making other people instruments of our own benefit. The only manner in which second-personal reasons affect an agent are as “derivative” reasons, deriving from a first-personal reason such as one’s own good, or the chance one has to flourish.

LeBar disagrees with Cokelet’s interpretation of the virtue position that leads him to this conclusion, rather than disagree with the conclusion itself. If Cokelet is correct, LeBar claims, then he is correct in the conclusion he draws, and in the problem that virtue ethics faces because of it. However, LeBar claims, Cokelet is mistaken in a fundamental way:

Cokelet claims that my model denies that Dan’s second-personal reasons are “fundamental”, and perhaps that underwrites his concern here. Cokelet worries that, on my view, second-personal reasons do not have “non-derivative authority”. That is simply a mistake. It manifests a misunderstanding of the nature of final reasons: that for the sake of which we do what we do. Though more needs to be said about what it is in us that gives us second personal authority, or to which we are responding when we see others as providing us reasons for which we are accountable to them, one natural vocabulary for doing so within the Aristotelian tradition is that we see others as final ends: as beings for the sake of whom we can and do act.⁶⁷

LeBar disagrees with Cokelet’s interpretation of what can be said to be a reason on a virtue ethical view. This mistaken interpretation is the same sort that we have seen in each critique of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics so far treated. To think that other agents should only be the concern of the virtuous agent insofar as they wish to flourish is to ignore the necessity of rational extension that one ought to operate with as a good human agent. The good of another is a final end of action in its own right, and does not require reference to the self in order to find objective justification. It may be the case that someone only comes to recognize that the good of someone else is such an end by thinking about their action through a “golden rule” thought process, “would I want them to treat me in this way?”, but this does not make the good of the other agent derivative in its own right. Even if the virtues are the best means to achieve a flourishing life, their rational structure does not permit others to be seen as mere means to one’s flourishing, as Cokelet appears to see them.

Rather, LeBar is forwarding a two-level theory for understanding virtue’s demand in the case of second personal reasons. The first level of understanding virtue is its connection to eudaimonia; virtue constitutes living a eudaimon life, it constitutes human flourishing. The second level is understanding the demands of specific virtues. So, while the first level posits that we adopt a virtuous lifestyle so that we may flourish as individuals, the second level fills in the

⁶⁷ LeBar, Mark, “Virtue and Second Personal Reasons: A Reply to Cokelet,” in *Ethics*, 01 October 2015, Vol.126(1), pp.162-174. p. 167-168.

specifics of what that lifestyle would look like. For example, it is true that justice is a virtue, and it is true that we must habituate all the virtues in order to flourish, therefore we must habituate justice in our life. The specific demands of justice, though, involve concern for others, recognizing rights, contracts, social norms and goods, etc. So to say, the specific demands of justice are the kinds of second personal reasons that Cokelet and LeBar are discussing. If we cannot flourish without developing the virtue of justice, and the virtue of justice demands recognizing second personal reasons then we cannot flourish without recognizing second personal reasons. On the two level theory the second level is not derivative of the first in a way that makes it less important; it is essentially zooming in on an aspect of the larger framework. The zoomed in picture is not derivative, though, in the same way that the nose on the Mona Lisa is not derivative of the whole painting. ma

LeBar offers that Cokelet, and others like him, may confuse Aristotle's claim that we seek somethings for both their own sake and for the sake of other, further things, as denying the good in the thing being sought:

Perhaps what confuses Cokelet here is that it is possible (as Aristotle argues) to seek something not only for its own sake, but also for the sake of something further. Aristotle offers as examples honor and virtue, which we seek for their own sake, and contrasts them with wealth, which he is thinks is sought not at all for its own sake, but only "for the sake of something else." That something else, of course, is living well (eudaimonia). But, crucially, he thinks that the fact that we seek honor and virtue for their own sake does not conflict with the idea that we also seek them for the sake of living well. Those two thoughts are not incompatible.⁶⁸

This is perhaps what is happening in Cokelet's case, as well as in the case of someone raising an egoist critique more generally. Cokelet's thought appears to place any end that can also be said to be a means into the position of second class reason, necessarily derivative to a first class reason, then believing that the relationship between these two makes the second class reasons less worthy than first class reasons. What LeBar is arguing is that the reasons that are both ends and means are no less ends because they are also means. To think that they are is to discredit their objective standing, which is recognized in Aristotle's tradition. That these things can be both ends and means is noted as much in the fact that there is a class of virtues directed at others, and that this class of virtues is just as significant in the virtuous person's life as the self-directed virtues. There is no account of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics that dismisses justice as a second class virtue because its nature is to deal with second class concerns; other directed virtues more generally are not merely means to one's self-interested ends, as the egoist would interpret them to be.

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 168.

Annas' defense against egoism is similar to the LeBar defense, but differs in a crucial manner. Where LeBar is concerned with the reasons that one may have to act virtuously, Annas is concerned with the ontologic starting point of ethics, i.e. the self. The egoist critique is, on Annas' view, a nonsensical claim about how moral reasoning ought to exist. In *Intelligent Virtue* Annas writes, "We have come to have a vague feeling that morality, or ethics, is essentially about the interests and concerns of others, and that concerns with myself, whatever form it may take, can't be moral or ethical. Since the virtuous person, in a eudaimonism account, is concerned with making herself a virtuous person, this can alert the vague feeling that something must be wrong about the whole idea."⁶⁹ Living well is altogether too self-centered of an approach to the moral landscape because it appears to be overtly egoistic in its concern for one's own happiness.

What this "concern for one's own happiness" is, though, is a mistaken concept on the egoistic critique. For Annas, the connection of virtue to happiness is not a means-end relationship whereby one gains happiness from virtue. Rather, virtue and so happiness is an activity that the agent participates in, as opposed to a static state that one achieves.⁷⁰ Still the selfishness is not shaken by this, for one can understand that happiness is an activity rather than a state, and so do away with the means end connection that would threaten the value of virtue, but one may still see an egoism in the matter. Annas presents the last gasp of the egoist when she writes, "a last desperate version of the objection might claim that it's my life, not yours, so there is at bottom something egoistic about it."⁷¹ But, in response to this point she makes the bluntly obvious claim, "What life can I live other than mine?"⁷² Here is the nonsense of the egoistic critique's last attempt to unseat an excellence approach to virtue. The idea that a moral theory that cares about the self has to be egoistic because it cares about the self is then making the only acceptable standard of a moral theory one that cares not for the life of the agent who ought to abide by the theory. One of the advantages of a eudaimonistic virtue ethics is that its engagement with an individual life is truer to the experience of every moral agent; we are all operating from our individual perspectives, incapable of complete escape from our embodied experience. Annas' argument rests on the necessity, the truth, of this claim. And if this truth is reprehensible because of some worry of egoistic principle, then it would seem that all moral knowledge is reprehensible.

Granted this has been a very cursory sketch of only two major formulations of the issue and the responses possible to each one, I hope that it provides the reader with enough justification for dismissing the critique as it applies to humans. In the following section I treat a subset of the egoist critique, the anthropocentric critique. The anthropocentric critique is more closely related to my thesis, but follows closely the reasoning of the egoistic critique.

⁶⁹ Annas, Julia, *Intelligent Virtue*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. p. 152.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 156.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

2.4) Anthropocentrism

Anthropocentrism shares several qualities with the egoist critique, but differs in one significant way. They both see in the eudaimonist approach to ethics as a failure to afford genuine concern to others, believe that care for self is irrelevant to ethics, and claim that the proper approach to alleviate these issues is to adopt a disinterested position of third party objective rational truth to guide moral reasoning. Where anthropocentrism differs is in its specific concern that the human moral agent is failing to afford animals the kind of rational extension of care that they deserve. That is to say, where egoism thinks that eudaimonism fails to extend concern specifically to other humans, anthropocentric charges claim that eudaimonism cannot extend concern for non-humans, though it may be able to present genuine concern for other humans. In this section I treat the argument that virtue ethics is anthropocentric and so unable to rationally extend concern to non-human animals.

There are two manners of dismissing animals from the concern of moral philosophy: absolute and relative dismissal.⁷³ Anthropocentrism has two correlative distinctions, strong anthropocentrism (absolute dismissal) and weak anthropocentrism (relative dismissal). While there are no practical arguments that support the absolute dismissal position that remain popular today, it is important to recognize what commitments may lead one to adopting this position. For this reason I begin by locating the commitments of the absolute dismissal position before discussing the more commonly accepted weak anthropocentrism/relative dismissal of the modern scene. I contend that the separation of animal from human is spurious and fails to hold up against rational scrutiny. Denying the concerns of animals while maintaining those same concerns in other humans is a failure of rational consistency.

For absolute dismissal, a group must be cordoned off as different in some way that is taken to be morally significant. In the case of animals there are many qualities that appear to provide prima facie reason for sectioning them off from the human and so there appears to be prima facie justification for dismissing their claim to moral concern. Three major claims about animal lives are often used as prima facie justification for their inability to be a part of a moral world: their lack of reciprocity for moral actions, their lack of language, and their lack of reason. Midgley treats each of these in turn, considering the lack of language and reason as a subset of reasons that prevents the animal from being morally reciprocal beings. The basis of dismissal is to claim that there is a genuine difference, and so when the validity of this difference dissolves there is no room to maintain that the different group should be separated and to maintain rational continuity. In one sense, the absolute dismissal position is an extension of a uni-criterial moral status argument. In the moral status argument we must find a certain quality or trait to extend moral concern to some group, and so absolute dismissal is just the other side of this thought; if

⁷³ Midgley, Mary, *Animals and Why They Matter*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1998. p. 12-13

one does not fit into the circle of moral status then they are absolutely dismissed from moral concern.

The first quality I will look at that is cited as necessary for entrance into moral community is the idea of reciprocity of action. Midgley treats this idea as a central component of the contractarian moral framework, and I here recreate her argument against this view in order to show how absolute dismissal fails due to its oversimplification of reasons, as discussed in general in 2.2. I believe it is worthwhile to a discussion of virtue ethical reasoning to recognize the kinds of reasons that have generally been accepted throughout philosophies history. Authors such as Foot, Annas, and McDowell (among others) have all noted that our concepts of what is reasonable are influenced by our shared human narrative, such that popular beliefs that have influenced the moral teachings we have grown with in our lives can impact the conceptions we have of what would be reasonable in the sense of a virtue. That is to say, discussing absolute dismissal and the reciprocity system of morality that has most recently been the foundation of absolute dismissal has value for a virtue ethical account as the popularity of the reciprocal system in recent history makes it likely that there are threads of thought that appear reasonable and conducive with a virtue account, but are actually contrary.

Reciprocity of moral action is given as a justification for the removal of animals from our moral sphere under a contractarian framework. The argument goes, morality is a matter of give and take amongst relatively equal individuals. The reason to be good to another is so that they can be good to you in the future. Given that animals are incapable of reciprocating the good acts we perform for them, we need not think that we have a duty to perform those acts. This is essentially a contractarian view of the matter, and it offers us a view of absolute dismissal that is semi-popular, although often relayed as though it were a relative dismissal. In this case, animals are dismissed as not being a part of morality because they do not possess the power of reciprocation. They do not possess this power because they cannot *mean* to reciprocate. The distinction of meaning to act in such a manner and accidentally doing so needs to be made because one could imagine a scenario in which some animal is the beneficiary of some good human action and then later, unbeknownst to the animal, acts in a way that benefits the human. In this case there does not seem to be grounds to say that the animal meant to act as such, did not mean to help the person in their way. If the animal is incapable of meaning to reciprocate the concern shown to it then there is no reason to think that they will reciprocate. Reciprocation is a system of balancing benefit and harms between moral agents. If a moral agent is incapable of entering into such a system then they are not proper recipients of the benefits of the system. Because animals cannot mean to reciprocate actions undertaken on their behalf they are improper recipients of such action and so cannot be considered acting members in the moral system. As such, any action one undertakes for the benefit of the animal would be supererogatory rather than a proper moral action, for there can be no moral demand on the agent to act for the good of an agent that cannot reciprocate that action.

Reciprocal morality is a flawed system of thought, according to Midgley, as it rests on the idea that any being incapable of reciprocating some good is therefore undeserving of that

good.⁷⁴ Thinking like this, she argues, would rule out caring for children, the aged, or anyone whose reciprocation is not certain. The reciprocity thought to be necessary for morality is actually just the reciprocity of the trade contract, and in the case of the non-reciprocal being, “this duty is different in kind, and the situation is never the symmetrical one of a commercial bargain.”⁷⁵ If we take the reciprocal argument to be true, to designate a genuine line in the moral sand as to who ought to be treated with concern and who ought to be dismissed, then it would follow that practices central to the human life, such as child rearing, would be wholly outside the purview of this account. Alone, child rearing seems to be too great a casualty in this exchange to make the position one we ought to take seriously: “parental motives and duties should not puzzle anyone except a dogmatic egoist, and dogmatic egoists need only look round at the general parental behaviour of birds and mammals to see the implausibility of their dogmas. Good egoists make bad parents.”⁷⁶ This is a representation of how the absolute dismissal position recreates the oversimplification issue and so fails to generate a reasonable position of consistent moral thought.

The absolute dismissal position is an all or nothing claim about how we ought to consider moral thought in our interactions with animals. The basis is that the animal is different enough from the human that our moral concern cannot be said to engage with animal life in the same way that it engages with human life, and from that concludes that animal life cannot be a part of our moral concern. In one sense this is a grammatical claim about the ways in which our moral terminology operates, that it becomes nonsensical when applied to animals and so reason would demand that we only apply moral terms to actions involving other humans. But in another sense this is a claim about the metaphysical standing of animal life. This latter sense is what makes the question of moral status appear to be so important. If it is a metaphysical question rather than a grammatical one there ought to be some truth that can settle the question, without having to rely on the slippery ground of human concepts. I.e. there is something we are getting right or wrong and there is a third party, objective standard to lean on for justification. However, to think this way is to defer the duty of reason in our moral lives. Our moral terms are grammatically founded, but their justification of use comes from our form and our flourishing, which is an internal and personal justification, not a third party one. So to say, if the matter were a truly objective, third party truth functionality of moral terms then if a dolphin were to spontaneously develop the ability to ponder moral matters they would have to conclude that they need not care for their family and friends as they would, presumably, be other dolphins. So to say, a dolphin thinking like a human thinks now would have to conclude that they need not concern themselves with the good of their family, friends, children, etc. merely because they were an animal species and not a human species. A dolphin that had this spontaneous power to reason and did not come to this conclusion would be making a mistake, would be getting something wrong, if it was true

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 82-86.

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 84.

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 84-85.

that there is a divide at the metaphysical level between humans and all other animals, and that reason is truth functional in relation to this metaphysical fact.

To try and suss out the grounds of metaphysical absolutism in relation to moral concern is to denounce the form of moral reasoning that a virtue ethical account forwards, and that I have defended in the first chapter of this thesis and throughout this second chapter by drawing on the works of Hursthouse, Foot, and others. On a virtue ethical account we are necessarily tied to our rationality as specifically human agents, and we ought to recognize this in our moral reasoning. Because we are so tied to rational continuity we are tied to consistency in our reasoning. This being the case, there is no reason to separate the human and animal life and to mark the human as justifying concern while denying that animals are due the same (or at least similar) concern when we consider the reciprocal account of absolute dismissal. To think otherwise is to appeal to a concept that does, as Hursthouse claimed, only serve to confuse the agent who is caught up in it - who is taken by the concept. Given this line of argument, strong anthropocentrism can be recognized as a genuine mistake in reasoning, and combined with the arguments regarding moral status above we can conclude that a genuinely virtuous agent, one who has practical reason, will not be taken in by a strong anthropocentrism.

Yet, because neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics has a form of human specific reasoning built into it, it appears to be a proper target for a weak anthropocentrism critique. The alternative form of anthropocentrism, the weak anthropocentrism or relative dismissal is similar to the strong counterpart in that one needs to conceive of human and animal life as distinct enough to merit different treatment; taking a reason in the case of a human to warrant a level of concern that the same reason would not raise in the case of an animal. For example, the eating of animals is considered common and acceptable practice, because animal flesh is a source of nutrition for humans. The same nutrients (broadly speaking) could be obtained from eating human flesh, and, insofar as there is no further difference between the two cases, they ought to then have the same action following from the same reason. However we know that this is not the case. We do not eat humans, and the reason we don't has nothing to do with the nutritional content of the human body.

In "Eating Meat and Eating People," Cora Diamond argues that we do not eat humans because the term "human" is a thick concept that entails certain types of action (or denies certain types of action) as acceptable ways of acting towards a human. Diamond's argument is meant to show how the kinds of arguments that authors such as Singer and Regan forward are incoherent. The arguments she has in mind are those of the form: P1) Human have qualities a, b, c; P2) there are moral duties towards humans' P3) animals have qualities a, b, c; C) therefore, we have moral duties towards animals. What Diamond wants to draw out in her argument is that this view misconceives the reasons we actually provide for or against ways of treating people and animals. We do not treat people with moral concern because they are bearers of qualities a, b, c, but rather because they are "people," a category of being that has thick concepts surrounding it and that we recognize as a course of grammar. Animals, similarly, can have these kinds of thick concepts built up around them. This is most notable when we think of the term "pet" or "partner" (as in

the case of a guide dog). These classificatory terms are also thick concepts that bear on our moral sensibilities and prohibit certain actions, such as eating the being in question. But it is not the case that all animals fall into these categories, while it is true that all humans fall into the category of “human.” So not all animals fall into the category that makes it wrong to eat them, while all humans do fall into the category that makes it wrong to eat them. This is not a weak anthropocentrism, of the sort that Singer and Regan want to avoid because it does not follow that we treat two beings with the same qualities differently merely because they are different beings. Rather, the kinds of qualities that are being called on are linguistic categories and conceptual holds on our reason.

Diamond’s argument is pertinent to the virtue ethicist because it notes the power of our language and the kind of beings we are in influencing our proper functioning in the moral sense. Someone who is unable to distinguish the term “human” as a thick concept that entails moral demands would be failing to properly employ the term in a consistent, rational manner. Similarly, someone who is unable to determine the moral demands that come from a relationship to a pet, but that do not similarly occur in relationship with a feral cat, is getting something wrong. In getting something wrong, though, they are not acting weakly anthropocentrically, for weak anthropocentrism is to take the human and animal as the same in some moral sense, and yet to plump so that the human comes out ahead of the animal as an object of moral concern. That is to say, weak anthropocentrism is to take the same reason in both cases and interpret it differently due to the fact that the human is one thing and animal the other, but where the mere fact of difference has not been shown to merit different treatment. Because neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics has a form of human specific reasoning built into it, it appears to be a proper target for a weak anthropocentrism critique. However, understanding Diamond’s argument against the Singerian structured argument relieves us of thinking that the virtuous agent is thinking in weakly anthropocentric terms when they treat animals and humans differently; it further corroborates the need for context specific and sensitive reasoning tools, such as the virtue terms. Virtue ethical reasoning is not necessarily weakly anthropocentric merely because virtue ethicists acknowledge a human centered form of moral reasoning as opposed to a third party objective view. Rather, by acknowledging that there are demands on the human agent to act in certain ways towards other humans *because* they are human, demands that do not hold in the case of animals, a virtue ethical account recognizes there are genuine differences between animals and humans that make a moral difference. This is not weakly anthropocentric because a weak anthropocentrism is essentially an unjustified plumping in favour of human interests when there is no moral justification for such a thing. Diamond reminds us that we must investigate the terms we employ in moral discussions in order to understand the demands our moral language places on us, and the neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics view of moral terms as demanding care and understanding follows this argument.

In the case of strong anthropocentrism, we wanted to avoid it because it was a matter of rational consistency. But in the case of weak anthropocentrism, it would appear that our distinct form of human reasoning may allow for one to hold seemingly conflicting positions as to what

kind of action ought to follow from some reason provided by virtue, without causing a genuine contradiction; it is the same form as “I must take care of my kids, but I need not take care of yours.” This being so, why should we be concerned with a weakly anthropocentric charge? While the “weakly” anthropocentric position does not suffer from the same failure of rational extension, it is still a failure of rational extension when taken to be a universalizable facet of moral reasoning, a failure to account for genuine facts that ought to matter to the moral agent and their decision making. This alone is enough to concern an ethical framework that is built around proper reasoning. How are we to resolve this, then?

The first step is to look at the problematic point of practical reasoning. In this case it is an issue that arises from reasoning towards our final end, human flourishing. Because we must reason for our own end, our own flourishing it seems to be the case that this will entail thinking about ourselves (and humans more generally) as worth more than the non-humans. That is to say, in a practical reasoner that has as their final end their own flourishing, it appears to be sensible to say that their own end has an inflated sense of value when compared to the end of another. This inflation is justifiable but leaves us with a relativism of value; the human end is worthwhile, the non-human end is worthwhile, but the human end is more worthwhile merely due to it being a human that is thinking through the valuation of these ends. The egoist makes a similar claim, above, to which the virtue ethicist responds with a concept of the human good as intrinsically tied to the good of other humans, being social creatures as we are. But here that line does not seem to be available, as the non-human does not have the same social relationship to the human as other humans do; at most, perhaps, we can bring pets and other such domesticated animals into the fold, but certainly we would be wrong to bring in the raccoon or skunk.

What one is appealing to in the case of rational extension, though, is not whether or not some other object is helpful in their life and benefits them personally. Rather, the appeal is to a consistent valuing of certain facts or categories of existence. By this I mean to say that someone who is properly rationally extending their moral concerns recognizes that pain is bad for them *and* for others, not because the other’s pain is bad for them but because pain is bad categorically, and so should be avoided when possible. To extend this concern to animals is not to say “this is a category of being to which I ought to be concerned because they are beholders of certain qualities” (status arguments), but rather to understand that virtue terms such as compassion and justice do not fail to hold in cases that involve non-humans, and so to act virtuously is to continue to act compassionately or justly towards non-humans. To do otherwise is to misunderstand the terms. A developed practical reasoner will be able to appropriately apply these terms in their life and know the demands a term such as justice places on them, in the same way that a Diamondian reasoner will know the demands that the term “human” places on them and so by knows that they ought to name their children.

CHAPTER 3

In this section I forward a positive claim about the nature of treatment to animals that a virtuous agent would avoid. Up to this point my arguments have been focused on rebutting arguments that would limit the applicability of virtue ethics to animal ethics. I have so far shown that the framework of virtue ethics does allow for us to talk meaningfully about virtuous actions directed towards animals, and I have defended the theory from detractors who, if correct, would pose nearly insurmountable objections to the virtue ethicist attempting to promote animal ethics. Here I want to turn the arguments I have established so far into a positive move towards establishing substantive reasoning as to why a virtuous agent would avoid acting viciously to animals. That is, the kind of reasoning a virtuous agent would produce to justify avoiding acts that are ostensibly vicious to animals.

In one sense, a virtuous agent would not act viciously towards animals because a virtuous agent would not act viciously perforce. The goal of this section is to fill in what could specifically qualify as a vicious action towards animals, in a substantive sense. To this end I describe two vices that are most commonly at play: cruelty and callousness. These vices encompass the internal and external wrongs that an agent may engage in, in both excessive and deficient degrees, when acting toward another being, animal or otherwise. My aim here is to provide definitions and descriptions of use for these vice terms. Cruelty, for example, may be present in excess when someone acts with an excess of force that causes undue harm without realizing; they may act cruelly also when recognizing that they are going to cause harm and relishing that fact. Similarly, callousness is able to be recognized in matters of both deficiency and excess. One may be callous if they show a deficient motivation to alleviate suffering, or an excessive willingness to cause harm to get at the end they recognize as worthwhile. In what follows I will provide substantive definitions for both cruelty and callousness, defining when and for what reasons we can justify evaluating certain acts as, and so certain characters as, callous or cruel. I focus on these two vices because of their prominence in the wrongs we commit to animals.

Following my discussion of cruelty and callousness I turn to the role of both these vices in a welfarist and a eudaimonist account of eudaimonia. Following from my earlier chapters, this discussion is meant to provide a preliminary discussion of practical virtue ethics in both camps of eudaimonist virtue ethics. Cruelty and callousness are vices of human character for both welfarist and excellence eudaimonist theories, and by defending their role as vices in both of these camps I hope to make it possible for a wider swath of virtue ethics literature to take up the discussion of animal ethics in virtue terminology.

3.1. Cruelty

The goal of this section is to come to a substantive definition of the vice of cruelty. I argue that this vice is a flaw of the passions and desires that motivate agents. To show this I draw on the writing of Aquinas and Hursthouse, who do not always agree on the scope and function of cruelty, but who illuminate key aspects of the vicious attitude and the viciousness of the acts of cruelty. Cruelty is considered by both to be a hardness of the heart; this refers to the way in which one's motivations and desires are developed towards acrimony rather than love and compassion. Cruelty being a passional response does not cover the full swath of wrong actions and developments of character that are relevant in the case of animal ethics, and so I provide a definition of a further term, callousness, in section two of this chapter.

3.1.1 - Aquinas on cruelty

Aquinas argues that cruelty is opposed to clemency, which is strange for many to think, he claims, because clemency is a part of temperance, rather than justice (ST II-II Q159 A1)⁷⁷. Cruelty *prima facie* appears to relate to justice, as a vice of deficiency, but Aquinas likens it to clemency because he considers the hardness of heart that allows one to mete out cruel punishment as a matter of one's preferences for pleasure, and thus relate to temperance, rather than reason or lawfulness of justice. That is to say, Aquinas is differentiating an important aspect of cruelty from a common misunderstanding of it. Cruelty is not solely a part of justice because justice means lawfulness in some sense, and Aquinas is noticing that one can act perfectly lawfully yet still operate with a cruel heart. Were it merely a deficiency in one's sense of justice then it would be correctable by following the law. But because there is an aspect of one's own will that makes up an important part of a cruel action there must be a correlate deficiency (or excess of hardness) in the agent acting. The will that acts cruelly by taking too much pleasure in meting out justice cannot be acting in deficiency of justice, and, since there is a pleasurable aspect to the act and why they do it, cruelty has a relation to temperance.

This distinction is important to make as well due to the relation of cruelty to punishment. Aquinas writes that, "cruelty denotes excess in exacting punishment," making it seem as though it must relate primarily to justice insofar as justice is concerned with the giving to others what they deserve, and some people deserve punishment, on the Thomistic line (ST II-II Q159 A1). Justice refers to the general ability to perceive and evaluate accurately what is deserved/owed, "while it belongs to clemency to mitigate another's unhappiness by the cessation of punishment" (ST II-II Q159 A1). So to say, justice is to perceive rightly the punishment someone is due and clemency is to show love as God might and alleviate the punishment that is due. Clemency in

⁷⁷ Reference to St. Thomas Aquinas' work will always be to: St. Thomas Aquinas The Summa Theologica, Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, unless otherwise noted.

this sense is a power of love and forgiveness. Aquinas is positioning cruelty as a vice of unforgiving hardness of heart. He relates it to the cardinal virtue of temperance rather than justice as it relates to the pleasures one derives from the world. A hard heart derives pleasure from suffering and a gentle heart derives pleasure from forgiveness. Temperance is the cardinal virtue that surveys the realm of pleasure and so temperance is the cardinal virtue that cruelty relates to, through its relation to clemency.

In spelling out cruelty we can look to the ontic and the passional aspects, what can be called the external (the ontic) and the internal (the passional) components of the vice. One way in which cruelty is said to be present is when one punishes in excess of what is appropriate, and this is an ontic failure, a failure of proportion enacted in the ontic representation of an act. For example, if someone is caught stealing, they ought to be punished in accord with the wrong they have committed. This retribution is the basis of one sense of justice, and, whether or not it is the correct form of conceiving the matter, it is a self-consistent system in which we can find norms and constants. Within this system, then, there can be clear amounts and kinds of retribution to fit each crime. Believing that retributive justice is part of the world and hence amenable to human virtue, Aquinas is thus able to describe cruelty as, sometimes, taking the form of one who produces a punishment that does not fit the crime committed. The imbalance of crime to punishment is cruel because it is a genuine wrong in the amount or degree of some action that in fact has a proper proportion to it; like how there is a correct amount of medicine to take in order to be healthy, and to get that proportion wrong is sufficient for the wrongness of the act. In this sense, cruelty is sufficed by what could be an honest mistake. Someone can act cruelly by accident when they mistake the crime committed and so produce a punishment that would be appropriate for the crime they believe to have been committed, but in this case is too great for the crime actually committed.

The other way one can be cruel for Aquinas also comes from a hard heart and is still opposed to clemency. This other way is to enjoy the proper punishment too much. Here the failure is again a matter related to clemency. In the first case the cruel act was opposed to clemency because it failed to follow through on a calling of forgiveness and love; the failure was to fail to act on the power to love and forgive someone for a wrong they have done. In this case one is again failing to act on this power, but the failure is taken to a greater extreme. Rather than mere neglect of one's power it is a matter of having habituated oneself to a disposition that takes pleasure in the opposite of love and forgiveness. In order to enjoy someone else's punishment one must desire pain in others, which is a willing rather than a passive failure to act correctly. One's acting wrongly through an active will is worse than a passive failure to act well, like hurting someone on purpose is worse than failing to recognize that someone is hurt, though both are bad.

Cruelty taking on these two forms, then, is one sense of the vice we are looking out for. I am arguing that a virtuous agent would avoid either of these ways of going wrong when acting toward animals. Where animals will play the role of "being who is being punished." Generally speaking, then, on a Thomistic understanding, the vice of cruelty is an inability to forgive one the

punishment they deserve, or to take too much pleasure in the punishment they do deserve meted out fairly (ST II-II Q159 A1-2).

The central idea of Thomistic cruelty is an excess of punishment, but animals, it can be argued, are not generally the kinds of things that we can punish in the manner Aquinas is using the term. Punishment requires a reciprocal nature of understanding cause and effect; it is toward some end that you punish, either to train or to right some wrong. There are some cases, such as domestic pets, where punishment is sensible, such as punishing your dog for defecating on the carpet, in an attempt to train them to go outside. However, this does not seem to make sense when we think of the relationships we typically have to wild animals. Attempting to punish a bison for defecating where you did not want them to would be ridiculous, rather than cruel. I will say more about this aspect of cruelty, but I would like to note that this insensibility of the term at this juncture is one of the reasons for the need to find the vice of callousness, as it seems better able to cover the swath of action that is not cruel, but still admits of viciousness in attitude or action by the human.

Aquinas did not talk about animals in any fleshed out way, a notable lack for his usually lengthy treatise on subjects. Cruelty to animals has been given a brief treatment in the modern literature, almost exclusively by Hursthouse. In the next section I recreate Hursthouse's definitions in order to compare them to Aquinas' idea and to synthesize and bring into focus the wrongs that are present in a cruel act and a cruel character.

3.1.2 - Hursthouse on a cruel character

Hursthouse's work on practical virtue ethics is mostly by way of describing virtues as v-rules. A v-rule is a thick concept description of a virtue that is meant to give the agent guidance in respect to the domain of a single virtue.⁷⁸ For example, "do what is just" where just is described as "giving one what they deserve," provides a basic action guiding principle for the agent to adopt. V-rules are necessarily non-codifiable, though, as they do not present the agent with an explicit decision procedure for determining what the right action is in any particular case, and, because they are impossible to state in such terms that a non-virtuous person could understand and act perfectly virtuously simply by following the rule.⁷⁹ V-rules come in the form of a virtue, giving positive guidance, e.g. "do what is just," or in the form of a vice, giving negative guidance, e.g. do not do what is unjust."⁸⁰ Hursthouse's discussion of cruelty is as a description of a v-rule; that is, non-exhaustive of the subject matter, non-codifiable, and requiring a certain perspective in order to be understood. With this in mind, I exposit Hursthouse's discussion of cruelty, bridged across multiple articles, here, before moving on to a

⁷⁸ Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*, 35-62.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p. 39-40.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p. 36.

discussion of callousness, which I believe fills in the virtue ethics picture of human-animal interaction more fully than cruelty alone is capable of doing.

Hursthouse claims that, “a cruel person is indeed someone who takes pleasure in or is indifferent to inflicting suffering on others. However, it can also mean “a cruel act,” and a cruel act is nothing but the infliction of unnecessary suffering.”⁸¹ She is noting two different ways to interpret the term cruelty. The first as a character trait of a cruel person, which is characterized as taking pleasure in or being indifferent towards suffering. The second as a cruel act in and of itself, which she claims is nothing but the infliction of unnecessary suffering. This second sense does not reference the emotional state of the doer to be understood as cruel. I will discuss both of these applications of the term cruelty, and I will challenge the paradigm that Hursthouse employs to determine what is and what is not necessary suffering. Note the parallel in the Thomistic description as well, though, where the cruel act is the one that gets proportion wrong and the cruel character is one who takes pleasure in the suffering of others. In both Hursthouse’s and Aquinas’ account, it is the cruel character that will manifest a cruel act regularly, but it is not only a cruel character that is capable of committing a cruel act.

Firstly, let us look at the character ascription of cruelty and see how Hursthouse’s character ascription differs from Aquinas’. Virtue ethics is concerned with developing good character traits and avoiding the development of bad character traits. Cruelty is a vice, standing opposite clemency, on Aquinas’ view, and opposite compassion on Hursthouse’s view, as she follows the Greek tradition, which, “deplored cruelty to animals and espoused vegetarianism simply on the grounds that it was required by the virtue of compassion or love.”⁸² The virtues of love and compassion are concerned with suffering and the pain of others; hence cruelty is a vice that is concerned with suffering. A cruel person is going wrong in their inability to properly ascribe value to the suffering of others.

There is a significant difference to note between Hursthouse and Aquinas already. Aquinas’ concept of cruelty involved an aspect of suffering that comes from punishment, while Hursthouse’s concept of cruelty takes suffering unqualifiedly as something to respond to with compassion. It seems that Hursthouse’s definition of the concept is broader than Aquinas’ because suffering unqualifiedly is a greater category than suffering derived from just punishment. To think of cruelty towards animals as an improper response to the just punishment of the animals requires positing a concept of animal punishment that can be considered just in a sense bound up with legality and society; this is not absurd, but restrictive. There is historical evidence of animals standing trial for crimes in the same way that a human member of society would.⁸³ And, in such a case, one could get the punishment for the crime wrong in the sense that Aquinas had in mind. However, it is a tendentious idea that animals can actually play such a role,

⁸¹ Hursthouse, “Virtue Ethics and the Treatment of Animals,” p. 134.

⁸² Ibid. p. 124.

⁸³ Girgen, Jen, “The historical and contemporary prosecution and punishment of animals,” in *Animal Law, Annual, 2003, Vol.9, p.97-133*

and I will proceed under the current orthodoxy that they cannot. In 2.2 I reviewed a short segment of Midgley's work that aimed at dispelling the notion that animals needed to be in an explicit social contract with humans in order to be considered morally relevant beings; similarly, a notion of the social contract is required to justify standing the animals in trial and we have seen how the notion is absurd. In this respect, it appears we are on better grounds to follow Hursthouse's cue here and adopt a sense of cruelty that involves the full swath of suffering that can exist in the world, and ask that a human be able to respond to all cases (not uniformly, of course, but appropriately).

Hursthouse says that a cruel character is indicated by someone taking pleasure in the suffering of others, or in being indifferent to their suffering. This notes two ways of going wrong, both of which are passion responses. The first is an excess of passion, finding too much joy in something's suffering. In this case, a person ought to feel no or little pleasure, but this person feels an amount of pleasure in the suffering of another that is greater than is called for by the situation. Hence the cruel character can be expressed as a vice of excess. However, Hursthouse also notes that indifference toward suffering indicates a cruel character, as well. In this case, it is representative of a cruel character to fail to feel a stir at the suffering of another, i.e. to feel no welling up of empathy or pleasure. In this way cruelty manifests as a vice of deficiency for one is deficient in the response they ought to have to a situation.

The duality of cruelty as both a deficient and an excessive vice is mirrored in Aquinas' consideration of the matter as well, and, I believe both thinkers are noting something important about the cruel character when they point to its different manifestations as excess and deficiency. Aquinas has said that cruelty comes from a hard heart. By this he is pointing to the kind of a person who has developed their desires in such a way as to think it fine to take pleasure in the suffering of others or to fail to be motivated by the suffering of others. Hursthouse has a similar concept implicit in her ascription of a cruel character. One who is cruel is indifferent or exuberant in relation to the suffering of others. The source of these responses is the desires that the individual has cultivated in their life and hence the emotions that they are habituated to experience because of their desires.

A further similarity to be drawn between these two accounts, and another that I believe aids in our illustration of what is important about getting cruel acts to animals out of consideration for the virtuous agent, is the relationship of cruelty to the cardinal virtue of temperance. Aquinas claims that cruelty is related to temperance, rather than justice, because it is concerned with the pleasure one derives from watching punishment. Hursthouse similarly notes the relation of cruelty to temperance in her description of paradigmatic failures of concern for animals. Notably, she writes that the relationship of vegetarianism to virtue is one that intersects temperance and cruelty. In her treatment, though, she is considering temperance as it relates to the right object of one's desire for food, claiming that an animal that has been raised and killed for consumption through cruel practices can never be the proper object of a temperate agent. This is because the cruelty in the practice that provides the animal as food means that in this context of relating to the animal there is necessarily a cruel dimension that is not intrinsic to but bears on

the situation, the ignoring of which is cruel in Hursthouse's terminology. Aquinas sees something intrinsically wrong with taking pleasure in the punishment of others, while Hursthouse is saying that there is something conditionally wrong with enjoying eating meat, and conceivably if that condition was removed then it would be an acceptable pleasure (whether or not that condition could be removed is another question.)

This description of cruelty, in regards to eating meat, will appear to fit more easily under the description of callousness as I will describe it below. For callousness is the failure to recognize a certain set of facts, such as the fact of causing suffering for example, as providing motivation for action in the human agent. What facts these are will change with the circumstances one acts within. Therefore, on the account I am forwarding, this case that Hursthouse is describing is better described as being an instance of both cruelty and callousness, rather than cruelty achieved in two ways. In case of a cruel character, the agent feels pleasure in the harm that befalls the animal, taking a special pleasure in the fact that meat is produced by killing, in addition to the sensual pleasure of eating. In the case of a callous character, one may recognize but be unmotivated by the fact that the food they are eating is derived from suffering, and merely recognize in it the sensual pleasure of eating. In the cruel character there is a further, willed pleasure that comes from the agent interacting with the world and deriving some feelings that they ought not derive; while in the second case there is a failure of reason that is indicative of a bad character. I will elaborate more on this difference between cruelty and callousness below.

The cruel character is a matter of desire, then, as it relates to the temperate aspect of our character. Both Aquinas and Hursthouse leave space in their concepts of cruelty for the role of the individual's desire to act in such a way. The way in which desire is used in these cases is to mean:

There is one sense of "desire" or "want," such that whenever you act (where the idea of action implies that it was in some sense free, intentional, voluntary, etc.), we can say you had a "desire" to do what you did. In this sense of "desire," it is logically impossible to do something without "having a desire" to do it. To attribute a "desire" in this sense is just to attribute motivation to the agent, as the conceptual correlate of action.⁸⁴ (Tamara Schapiro, *What are Theories of Desire Theories of?*, pg. 136)

In this sense, the desire one has is a generally motivating desire to act, rather than the converse, passive desire, which is described as:

But there is another sense of "desire" or "want," that allows for the possibility of doing something without having a desire to do it. When you take out the garbage even though you do not feel like taking out the garbage, you do something even though you have no desire, in the second sense, to do it. You lack a certain kind of motivation. But we can

⁸⁴ Schapiro, Tamara, "What Are Theories of Desire Theories Of?" in *Analytic Philosophy*, 55 (2):131-150 (2014). P. 136.

still attribute to you a desire to take out the garbage, in the first sense. Nothing forced you to take out the garbage. You made yourself do it, but you did that of your own accord... “desire” here simply takes the place of an explanation of how the agent, rather than something external to the agent, is its source.⁸⁵

The sense of desire that comes out in the cruelly vicious action is the former sense, where one is motivated by the desire; where desire and motivation are one and the same. In this case the problem is wholly internal to the agent acting. Their internal state makes it so that they perceive the ontic affairs in such a way as to make them act disproportionately to what is appropriate. The focus on the internal character of the cruel action is more pertinent to my inquiry because I am concerned here with human acts, rather than merely ontic acts. For this reason, cruelty is typified, I argue, by a desire to do harm, by a pleasure in the presence of harm that is vicious when manifested in human action.

What this leaves out is a sense of vicious action when that pleasure is not present, but the ontic act is equally reprehensible, or, when that pleasure is not present but there is another kind of internal failing that is at hand; I designate the term callous to cover this other sense of viciousness and describe the vice in the following section.

3.1.3 - The need for the vice of callousness in virtue terminology

So much for the character ascription that is going on in Hursthouse’s writing. She also provides criteria for understanding an act as cruel. The value of uncovering an ontic representation of cruelty here is that one may not know in a holistic, character driven sense that they are avoiding improper desires and habituated stances, but it is possible to know when one is participating in a cruel act in the ontic sense of the term, and so there is value in avoiding acts of this sort to prevent the development of a cruel character. Knowing that this sort of thing is generally bad is the first step to preventing the adoption of these kinds of acts, as a general rule can be the first step to practically reasoning correctly about difficult matters. An act is cruel, Hursthouse claims, if the good end it brings about is less good than the harm that is caused by the act.”⁸⁶ This formulation is a definition of cruelty as a “v-rule”; a kind of phrase that one uses to begin to understand how virtue terms may inform us of how to act, but that one goes beyond if they are fully virtuous (a phronimos).

Hursthouse’s description of a cruel act is as a v-rule: in general, if some act produces more good than harm and is gone for in order to achieve the end that is good, then it would be a mistake to describe it as cruel. Contrariwise, if thinking about how to act one may reflect on their potential choice and recognize it as cruel if it does produce more harm or is gone in for for the wrong reason. The v-rule construction is a beginning to a developed practical wisdom, a start of to the process of habituation that will produce a virtuous agent. Because Hursthouse is speaking about cruelty as a v-rule it is necessarily an incomplete description of the vice - it is not an

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

exhaustive description of how every case of cruelty will exist, nor does it provide a substantive reason for avoiding acting as such. A phronimos may define/describe cruelty differently, but the knowledge they draw on to do so is not transferable to the layperson, or to the lay philosopher, as it exists as part of an evaluative stance of the world that is inseparable from the character of the agent in question.⁸⁷ This knowledge is inherently anti-codifiable, and so cannot be expressed such that each agent merely follow a rule phrased in just such a way as to lead everyone to the “correct” action in any circumstance.⁸⁸

So to say, the role of a v-rule is twofold: to teach a developing agent a general structure of what to do/not do, and to provide some guidance for action generally speaking:

We can now see that it [virtue ethics] comes up with a large number of rules. Not only does each virtue generate a prescription - do what is honest, charitable, generous - but each vice a prohibition - do not do what is dishonest, uncharitable, mean... For it pinpoints a condition of adequacy that any normative ethics must meet, namely that such an ethics must not only come up with action guidance for a clever rational adult, but also generate some account of moral education, of how one generation teaches the next what they should do.⁸⁹

The role Hursthouse’s discussion of cruelty plays in her practical philosophy is to provide an understanding of cruelty as though it were a v-rule, able to be taught to a child and understood by a clever adult looking for action guidance. My discussion of callousness, in what follows, aims to do the same.

I believe it is important to discuss callousness as well as cruelty because callousness, as I will argue, accounts for an aspect of human action toward animals that cannot be captured by the v-rule of cruelty as Hursthouse has described it here, nor by the description of cruelty as a character trait that she has forwarded. Callousness is a vice that manifests even when an agent is performing an act that is not cruel, i.e. performing an act that would not run afoul of the cruelty v-rule. If we imagine two experimenters, each conducting research on animal subjects for some medical benefit such that the harm they produce is less than the good they are achieving, then it would appear that neither is acting cruelly in the basic sense that Hursthouse has described. Further, if neither is pleased by the fact that they are causing pain, and merely going through the motions of their research, then they are not manifesting cruel characters. However, if one of them is unable to register that they are causing pain or suffering in the subjects of the experiments or thinks that anything of this sort is completely subsumed in the good that the research is for, while the other is aware of and feels rightly about this fact, then

⁸⁷ Hursthouse, “What does the Aristotelian Phronimos Know?”, in *Perfecting Virtue: New Essays on Kantian Ethics and Virtue Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. p.38-57

⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 39-43

⁸⁹ Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*, p. 36-38.

there is a distinct difference in the attitudes of these two agents. It is this difference that the term callous describes. The former researcher is callous while the latter is not.

3.2. Callousness

3.2.1 - Defining callousness

In this section I aim to sketch a concept of callousness as a v-rule, in the same way that Hursthouse has provided a v-rule understanding of cruelty. There is good reason to think of callousness as a parallel, complementary vice to cruelty. Hursthouse's description of cruelty as a v-rule focuses on the time before and the time during an act. By this I mean to say that Hursthouse claims that any motivation to act that rests on a desire to cause harm (the before of an act) or any act that is imbalanced in the harm/benefit production (the during) will be cruel. What she does not discuss is the possibility of a demand on agent to act or feel a certain way after the fact. In other writing she addresses this concept under the moniker "moral remainder." Moral remainder is, "the remorse or regret, or the new requirement to apologise, or whatever," that accompanies the action of the agent who finds themselves in a dilemma.⁹⁰ For example, one may find they are in a position in which they must tell a friend a painful truth, as it will be better than hiding it and causing the friend greater pain in the future. In this moment the agent telling the painful truth is acting honestly and so by acting virtuously, although they are causing their friend some pain in the immediate moment, as the bearer of bad news. However, acting virtuously does not end in the moment of speaking the painful truth to one's friend. Feelings of empathy and love for one's friend would mean that one feels regret for having to have caused the friend pain, even though it was justified. The remainder in this moment is that the agent feels for their friend after having delivered them bad news, a feeling that may be accompanied by some set of actions such as staying to comfort the friend or whatever may be appropriate. Moral remainder, as such, is an understanding that moral demands extend beyond the individual act.⁹¹

Hursthouse, in her discussion of cruelty, does not mention moral remainder. However, I believe that it is an important concept in thinking through matters of animal ethics. We are placed in a world in which humans use animals for a variety of tasks that are necessary to our survival: medical advancements, nutrition in the form of food, and as companions and work tools. That we are placed in such a relationship by the necessity of our forms of life does not mean that we can feel any which way about how we treat them in these relationships, nor that we can feel any which way about how we must treat them in some relationships. In the same way

⁹⁰ Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*, p. 44.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* p. 47.

that the virtue of honesty makes it necessary to tell my friend a harmful truth but does not thereby excuse me the responsibility of feeling bad for them and offering comfort, so too does the necessity of using animals in ways that are undeniably harmful to them in pursuit of genuine human goods not excuse us from feeling regret or remorse, or what have you, over this fact. The failure to register regret or remorse, or what have you, is a failure of human character that I call callousness. It is a vice to be avoided just like cruelty is to be avoided.

Callousness is a vice that manifests wholly within the agent; that is, it is a matter of the internal constitution of a character. One may act callously in one of two ways: they may be callous in their reasoning, or they may be callous in their desire/motivation. A callous character may be typified in one instance by an agent who does not recognize that a certain situation calls for their concern or empathy (reasoning); or, a callous character may recognize that a situation is one that does call for their concern or empathy and yet feel no desire or motivation to lend themselves to that end. The first is a failure of reason, the second is a failure of desire/motivation, and each feeds back into one another in the habituation process - a matter I will discuss in the following section.

Callousness is a vice that is internal to the agent, and that we can recognize as a pertinent moral matter when we reflect on moral remainder. Hursthouse gives an example of how moral remainder may be cast into a v-rule phrase when she writes:

I begin by ... stressing the point that virtue ethics can be regarded as supplying a whole lot of rule - the v-rules... Virtue ethics concentrates on the *agent* rather than the *act*... And since one cannot decide to feel regret, and feeling regret is not an *act* in the required sense, they [Deontologists and Utilitarians] thereby cut themselves off from thinking of bringing in that sort of 'remainder'. A proponent of virtue ethics, concentrating on the questions, 'What would a virtuous agent do in this situation?', is, given the concentration on the agent and the wider scope of "do", all set up to answer (for example), 'x, after much hesitation and consideration of possible alternatives, feeling deep regret, and doing such-and-such by way of restitution.'⁹²

Hursthouse is here describing the kind of v-rule phrase that takes account of moral remainder that is necessary to describe callousness as a v-rule, and to thus provide some action guidance in the form of the v-rule. Callousness, being a vice, will provide negative action guidance of the form "do not do..." and, emerging from moral remainder, will refer to the agent's response to some situation. So, we may formulate the v-rule callousness provides as, "do not fail to feel empathy or concern even when a harmful act is necessary or unpreventable."

Callousness is opposed to the virtue of compassion (or, as Hursthouse noted previously, love). Compassion is an other directed virtue that manifests in care and concern for others. Where a compassionate person wants to help others, to alleviate their suffering where possible

⁹² Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*, p. 48-49

and is affected by it appropriately when it is impossible to relieve, the callous person cares neither to relieve suffering nor is affected by it as they should be when they witness it. Knowing what virtue the vice is related to and the basic v-rule statement that defines the vice, it is possible to move forward and think about the vice in a manner that is able to provide action guidance in matters of animal ethics.

3.2.2 - Callousness' relationship to practical reason

Left to be described in the account of callousness is its connection to practical reason; that is, how the vice habituates our reasoning and so our character. I claim that callousness has both a reasoning component and a desire/motivational component. These come together in a reinforcing manner, such that an agent may first manifest callousness in one way and in that way begin to produce it in the other; presumably, a fully callous agent would produce both, regularly. In order to discuss this connection I draw on Michael Sherwin's account of love and its connection to practical reason in Aquinas' philosophy, arguing that the connection of callousness to practical reason is the same, being that callousness is a vice related to the virtue of compassion (love).

Michael Sherwin, in *By Knowledge & by Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, argues that the connection of love to the intellectual power is essentially a feedback loop that adapts one's intellect, the source of guidance for action, and the will, the source of motivation for action proper, such as to entwine the agent acting and the object acted toward. By "entwine," Aquinas, Sherwin argues, means that the object that is loved imparts its form on the agent that loves it, such that, "the form of the loved object [is] received into the appetite [of the one loving]." ⁹³ By receiving the form of the loved object the agent is changed, not in their form as forms cannot be said to change, nor can any object have more than one form, ⁹⁴ but in the way they direct themselves at the world. When loving, the good of the object loved is a salient, sensible reason for the lover to act. ⁹⁵ If there is something an agent can do to promote the good of an object that is loved then it will be the case that the agent's intellect will recognize this and so direct the will towards this good in a manner that would be impossible (not seen, not understood, and/or not desired) by some agent that was not loving in this way. Love, as such, is a moral virtue that reflects on the process of practical reason guiding our actions.

Callousness, I argue, has a similar relationship to practical reason as this virtue: it is a vicious attitude that makes it so that an agent will fail to recognize motivational reasons to act for

⁹³ Sherwin, Michael, *By Knowledge & by Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*. 2005. p. 68.

⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 66-70.

⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 65.

the good of some other being, and/or that makes it impossible to recognize the good of another as justificatory reason for action. That is to say, callousness is a moral failing, a matter of the will, that redounds in the rational perspective one takes up in practical reasoning, and so callousness, while being a moral failing has a rational representation making it appear to be a matter of intellectual vice as well. Though it relates to the intellect it is not an intellectual vice proper. Callousness is a failing of compassion with similar properties as cruelty that would relate it to temperance. It is helpful to understand what callousness is capturing by contrasting it with cruelty. I believe that it is a complementary vice to cruelty, i.e. one that captures corner cases that are not properly described as cruel but are wrong in a similar way; it is especially appropriate in use regarding human-animal interactions because of the varied ways in which we interact with animals in our society, ways which are not always cruel but are still wrong.

In her discussion of eating meat, Hursthouse writes that, “when we are honest with ourselves, we must accept that a certain path of action is unnecessary for us to embark on, though we may want to, and that embarking on it is actually to cause or be party to cruelty in a way that we could avoid.”⁹⁶ She is using this description to further her claims of cruelty, and to argue against the current conditions of factory farming in the west as cruel and so the kind of thing a virtuous agent would not partake in. However, I think that it would be more apt to say that the agent who is unable to be honest with themselves about their need for eating meat that has been produced by factory farming, when they have so many other options to fulfill their nutritive needs, is a callous character, and that the lack of honesty they show in their reasoning is a symptom of a callousness rather than of cruelty.

Thinking of callousness as interacting with our reasoning in the manner Sherwin describes we can see that the relationship is not of a willed dishonesty, as Hursthouse characterized it, but rather of a formal mistake in reasoning that cannot be undone by a singular act of will as it is more deeply seated in the agent’s character and so their view of the world than is conveyed by Hursthouse. The agent who can be changed by opening up an honest dialogue with themselves regarding their actions and their effects, and so change their course readily is better characterized as an akratic character, who has a semblance of an idea of the good, but chooses wrongly in favour of pleasure, for example, and so foregoes the good. A habitually vicious agent, however, has undergone a change to their character, and so their perspective of the world, that is beyond the merely akratic. As such is much more difficult to displace for the very reason that their practical reason has warped such that their view of the good is more strained than the akratic. The akratic knows that what they are doing is wrong and may be persuaded to change their ways through an appeal to reason, whereas the truly callous agent cannot be swayed by reasons in this vein, because they do not recognize as reasons the very facts a virtuous agent would be drawing upon.

The agent who is truly callous has, as I have said, two manifestations of this vice: one being a lack of motivation to alleviate suffering or pain where they see it occur, and the other

⁹⁶ Hursthouse, “Applying Virtue Ethics to our Treatment of Other Animals,” p. 142.

being a lack of belief in the fact of suffering occurring. In the first case one is wrongfully ignorant of something that should be a motivation for them to act. Hursthouse's discussion centers on eating meat when she describes it as a lack of honesty that makes one carry on their vicious activity, but I believe it is helpful to return to the animal experimentation example in this discussion. Take an experimenter who is attempting to find a cure for a serious human illness that affects millions a year, often resulting in death. The use of animal models in finding a cure for this disease is widely held to be a legitimate source of finding a cure for the human model, and less problematic morally than experimenting on humans. By our criteria of cruelty, supplied by Hursthouse, the experimenter is not perforce acting wrongly as they are directing their goal at a genuine human good and through the means to reach the good are not ideal (in that they cause suffering to others whose suffering matters) the reason to go in for them is justifiable of the means one must take up. The agent may be honest with themselves that they are causing suffering, but this act of honest self-reflection need not deter them from their actions, as they are still going in for them because they are a proper good - human health. If the experimenter does not recognize their acts as genuine causes of suffering, though, then there is no matter of honesty that could reveal this to them, for honesty requires seeing some truth and conveying this truth. However, if one does not believe in the suffering caused there can be no matter of honesty in representing it to oneself. This is meant to describe how the first manifestation of callousness, the inability to recognize suffering in another is connected to practical reason, i.e. that it makes matters of "honesty" insufficient conditions to getting things right, as Hursthouse had put it in one piece. A deep seated callousness, the kind that has been properly habituated such as to be a character trait cannot be gotten over by appeals to honesty, as honesty requires the ability to see things truly and cut through a facade with this truth, uncomfortable as it may be, while proper callousness necessarily denies the ability to see things truly in the first place.

In the second case of callousness, the lack of motivation to end/help/feel compassion for some suffering being, the callous character again differs from the merely akratic in relation to practical reason due to the redounding effect of the vice on our practical reason. Where the akratic may see the suffering and feel the push to some sort of action, even if they resist that push, the callous does not even waver when they see some suffering. This has to do with practical reasoning because it is the power of practical reasoning that links our comprehension of the world, our reasoning about the world, to our acting in response to what we comprehend. Aristotle describes practical reason about the world to take form of a practical syllogism of the form: 1) Major Premise: All men should take exercise; 2) Minor premise: I am a man; 3) conclusion: I should take exercise. An agent who has become callous is unable to form this syllogism in regards to suffering. Where they should recognize: "1) I recognize suffering in another. 2) At the recognition of suffering I ought to act in such and such a manner. 3) I shall act in such and such a manner." They do not form this syllogism because they do not form the second premise. The second premise is formed from the internal constitution to help that is perfected in compassionate persons. As callousness is contrary to compassion it follows that this second premise is unable to be formed by the callous individual. Compare this to the merely akratic who may be able to form

the syllogism but is then unable to follow through on it; they grasp the proper end and in this case even the means, but then through a weakness of will fail to actualize the reasons they know they ought to live in accord with.

3.3. Why the vices are bad on an excellence account

So far we have established that callousness and cruelty are vice terms that apply to our relationships with animals, and so are meaningful terms for a virtue ethic to theorize about. What is left to be established is the final justification for this thesis: that a virtuous agent will not act cruelly or callously towards animals as a matter of course in their lives. What I aim to establish in these following sections are two arguments that make clear the way in which a virtuous agent has motivation to adhere to these principles on both a welfarist and an excellence account. Doing this will solidify the value of this thesis within the internal context and motivation provided by the theories themselves. First I describe the excellence account and the reasoning internal to it as to why a virtuous agent would not be cruel or callous towards animals, and I then move on to the welfarist account. It is worth noting now that the welfarist account proves a more difficult topic of conversation, and may leave the reader feeling dissatisfied with the argument. The excellence account provides a better description of virtue's connection to eudaimonia, in my view, and so the issues that may be present in a welfarist account need not be seen as defeasible reasons against my thesis more broadly. One of the downsides of engaging within the welfarist account is the need for inferential claims as to how one may find themselves flourishing. Because the welfarist account believes that the role of virtue is a best bet to flourishing, there is always the argument that some standard claim of how one should act fails to actually capture what will in fact make one flourish in this case; conversely, the excellence account is deductive, considering reason to be the foundation of both virtue and eudaimonia and so drawing them together.

The excellence account of eudaimonia claims that the virtues are excellences of the human form. Eudaimonia, on this view, is excellent functioning in all the ways that a human ought to function. As we have seen, this is especially related to the function of reason in the human life. Rationality, generally speaking, is the characteristic way for the human to get on in life. Theoretical reason is an intrinsic good, and the power by which we are able to know things about the world, and practical reason is how we are able to discern the way we ought to act. The moral excellence of proper practical reason for the human on the neo-Aristotelian account is akin to the excellence of deep roots in an oak tree. The natural basis for good functioning in the human life is the same as the natural basis for the good functioning in the nonhuman life, i.e. determined by standards of the natural form of the being in question. Excellence is good

functioning, and good functioning is flourishing; a virtue is a consistent character trait that denotes the good function of a certain power in the human life.

A virtue, then, denotes how it is one is acting well in light of a certain power. Temperance, for example, denotes the good function of the human agent in regards to their passional responses to the world, directing neither too much attention nor too little to the physical pleasures that humans are capable of experiencing. As previously discussed, there are two types of virtues: moral and intellectual. Practical reason is the intellectual virtue that leads to proper functioning of reason in determining action. It is the paradigmatic virtue of the human life, under which all other virtues are said to exist. Without the guidance of proper practical reason the human action is not virtuous. This is because the human ability to practically reason about their actions involves the powers required for a human action to take place. A virtue on the excellence account, then, is a properly reasoned action, habituated to be a character trait, that exhibits the proper functioning of the human agent. Habituating the virtues and living a life of virtue is the only route to eudaimonia on the excellence account.

Conversely, a vice is an action that exhibits bad functioning of the human agent, either in their reason, their execution, their timing, or their choice of action. A vice ought to be avoided because it is perforce bad for an agent. It is bad for an agent insofar as virtue is excellence and so flourishing, and viciousness is necessarily opposite virtue. On the excellence account it is enough that an act be recognized as vicious for there to be reason to avoid performing it, and so too for the development of a vicious character trait such as gluttony or dishonesty. Vices on an excellence account prevent the human from flourishing *as a human ought to flourish*. They are irrational acts that habituate an irrational character.

Cruelty and callousness, then, insofar as they are vices, ought to be avoided by a human agent on the excellence account of eudaimonia simply for the fact that habituating them as character traits denies the agent the chance to flourish as a human. It follows from the logic of an excellence account that vices are to be avoided whether or not one is concerned with flourishing, because the good of flourishing and the route to flourishing are objectively given. This differs in the welfare account, to be addressed below, that would require a further motivation on the part of the agent to justify why acting so as to prevent flourishing is a bad thing in the agent's' life, or why they would want to avoid such a thing. Because the excellence account is objective and consistent the good of virtues and the bad of vices are enough to justify the promotion of acting virtuously and to present the vices as necessarily objects to avoid.

3.4. Why the vices are bad on a welfarist account

On a welfarist view, virtue plays a 'best-bet' role in human flourishing. This means that developing virtue will not guarantee flourishing qua human life form in the individual case, but that every human has reason to go in for virtuous activity as it is the most likely route to flourishing. Flourishing, in this view, is a state one may live in (as), the same way one may live

in Delaware; there are many routes to get to Delaware from where you are, but some are more reliable, quicker, and certain than others. The virtues, on this view, are the super highway to Delaware. Eudaimonia is the end, while virtue is merely the means.

Anne Baril argues that this view is superior to the excellence account because on this view we have motivation to adopt the virtues internal to our own benefit (we have self-motivation internal to us as individuals because the virtues will direct us to living well, which we all want to do.)⁹⁷ We have this motivation insofar as a human agent wants to flourish. And, when we imagine flourishing to mean living well, living happily, being content, then it appears to be a *prima facie* truth that this is a genuine motivator to human action. The virtues are to be developed because they are the best bet to flourishing, and every individual has a self-standing, independent reason to want to flourish; therefore everyone has an independent reason to develop the virtues. On this view it is rational to go in for eudaimonia because it is a self-standing independent good that everyone ought to recognize as worthwhile and go for. It is therefore rational to go in for acting virtuously (to develop the virtues) because they are the most reliable route to eudaimonia. The value of the virtues on this account is derivative. Flourishing is the ultimate end, and virtue is not the only way to achieve it; if virtue gets its value from a relation to flourishing then it follows that other, non-virtuous things could also have derivative value from their connection to flourishing.

Thinking about the reasons for virtue and vice in this way leads to an issue in motivating an agent to adopt and take seriously the claim that they ought to avoid cruel actions to animals. There are two ways in which thinking about virtue as a means-end relation to flourishing may serve to act against the thesis that a welfare eudaimonist would adopt the thesis I am proposing. Firstly, a vicious attitude to animals may bring about some good for an agent, and, insofar as the good it brings about is real the agent has reason to go in for it. Because our motivation for action on the welfarist account is the individual good we may achieve/experience it is justifiable to move away from what is the best bet in general and go for the more sure thing in the immediate. For example, I know that I cannot flourish if I am dead, and so I have *pro tanto* reason to avoid death seemingly at any cost (this is a tendentious claim in itself, but it is helpful for conceiving of this puzzle); if I am concerned predominantly with my own flourishing and care not for the means that achieve it, then I will not care that my life is prolonged by acts that are cruel in nature, such as animal experimentation. Animal experimentation may be cruel, and cruelty may generally be the thing to avoid if one wants to flourish, but in this case it is required to live (*ex hypothesi*) and we cannot flourish if we're dead so I must go in for being cruel as the only route to flourishing in this instance. This is a general claim about the human condition, and so call this the general defeat of cruelty claims.

The second issue is similar in that it positions good as the achievable goal against the means that one takes to get there, but it is at once more subjective than the previous issue. Call this the subjective defeat of cruelty claims. In this claim it appears that an individual would have

⁹⁷ Baril, "The Role of Welfare in Eudaimonism."

reason to go in for vices in any case that their subjective happiness/subjective idea of flourishing entails vice. For example, if it is cruel or callous to participate in eating meat in the western context then there is reason to avoid doing so as it is likely to deny one the possibility of flourishing. However, it is also possible to imagine an individual who gets so much pleasure out of eating meat that they genuinely believe that their life would be diminished if they had to give it up. In this case, the agent is weighing a possible good end of flourishing in an undefined manner in the future, that can only be achieved by giving up something that they consider in the moment to make up part of their living well, against the immediate good as they perceive it, and that they believe is a part of their flourishing. This is to say, when the idea of virtue and flourishing is separated it is reasonable to think that for different people flourishing can be substantiated differently. If one agent's substantive account of flourishing involves an act that is generally cruel there seems to be no recourse on the part of a welfare eudaimonist to claim that they ought to avoid such an act. This is because the reason for habituating virtue on a welfarist account is to flourish, and so if one flourishes in another way, by another means, there is no longer reason to go in for virtue.

There is still reason to think that the welfarist account is able to promote the habituation of virtuous activity towards animals, or, at least, deny that vicious attitudes towards animals can be acceptable. Welfarist eudaimonia is still a naturalistic account of eudaimonia, which is to say, human flourishing is still substantiated by natural norms. The 'best-bet' account just means the best bet to living as a human should; to experiencing the state of flourishing as the human is capable of experiencing it. Finding pleasure in community, intellectual life, friendship, and love, for example, are all characteristic parts of human flourishing on a welfare account because these are basic goods of the human life form. The virtues on a welfare account are seen as the best bet to realizing these goods. Goods of this sort are major goods in the human life. Goods that are merely subjective pleasures, such as eating meat, may be goods, but they are only minor goods. If a major good comes up against a minor good where choosing the minor good would deny the major good then one ought to go in for the major good. Psychological and sociological studies have shown that cruelty to animals is a marker for developing antisocial behaviour. Antisociality means that one misses out the major goods of social life, and to go in for a minor good that involves cruelty to animals (or vicious action to animals more generally) at the cost of the major good of social connection is irrational on the welfarist account. The welfarist account cannot promote the minor good even though one subjectively appreciates it because it comes at the cost of the major good; the major good is representative of the genuine flourishing of a human life, which is the ultimate end at which one should aim. If some means produces a minor good but at the cost of the ultimate end then it cannot be gone in for on a welfarist account. Therefore the vicious actions towards animals that may produce minor goods in the human life cannot be promoted on a welfarist account as they come at the cost of the overarching reason/motivation for action, flourishing.

Here the psychological accounts indicate something important for the welfarist virtue account. If harming animals is indicative of a character that will have difficulty connecting with

humans, then it follows that this person will have difficulty realizing the human goods of community, love, friendship, etc... That is to say, it is corroborated in empirical studies that developing what are vicious attitudes towards animals is a precursor to, and cause of, developing vicious attitudes towards humans. Viciousness is the antithesis of virtue. If the welfarist has reason to go in for virtue, then they have reason to avoid viciousness. Therefore, on a welfarist account, we have reason to avoid the kinds of actions that would habituate a vicious character.

Within a eudaimonist view of virtue we have reason to avoid acting viciously towards animals because acting viciously towards animals will likely entail acting viciously towards humans. This is regrettable because to act viciously towards humans is to give up the possibility of developing virtue. Virtue is our best bet for flourishing, so to act viciously towards animals impacts our chances of flourishing. It is *prima facie* individually established that we have reason to want to flourish, and so we have individual reason to avoid acting viciously to animals on a welfarist account.

The goal of this chapter was to establish an understanding of a virtuous agent's relationship to animals in terms of the vice terms of cruelty and callousness. I argued that the terms cruel and callous provide us with v-rules understandings of action guidance. That is, a general sketch of how not to behave in regards to animals. Therefore, a virtuous agent would not act viciously towards animals because a virtuous agent would not act viciously. The virtuous agent, the *phronimos*, does not operate merely by reference to v-rules, as a non-virtuous agent will. The goal of investigating into the v-rule structure of these vices is to make clear to a non-virtuous agent what about these vices is wrong, how they are manifested in action, and why they are to be avoided. My first section investigated the vice of cruelty in its historical context through the writings of Aquinas as well as its modern context in the writings of Hursthouse; I agree with the modern context that Hursthouse provides for the vice and adopt her v-rule description of the vice. To be cruel is to cause unnecessary or uncalled for harm or suffering, or to take too much pleasure in the due harm or suffering that befalls some other. Cruelty is related to temperance due to its relationship to pleasure. That there are cases in which harm or suffering is justifiably caused to beings whom it would normally be wrong to harm is an issue that may require greater depth of discussion. For now, though, as virtue ethics generally operates without a concept of moral status, the contextualization of our actions makes it so that there are cases in which the good achieved by causing harm is absolving of the need to cause said harm, such as in the case of medical experimentation. From this discussion on cruelty and its relationship with necessary harm emerges a gap in the way cruelty allows us to talk about the wrongness of human actions towards animals, and to fill this gap I argue that we need to develop an understanding of the vice of callousness.

In the second section I defined callousness as a vice opposed to the virtue of temperance, that is typified by a lack of empathy or concern for the harm caused to another being. An act may not be cruel if it is necessary to achieve some good, say, but that is not the only metric by which we may judge the human action. If the agent is unaware of the harm they are causing, or does not care that they are causing harm then they are callous. They are callous and in contrast to

compassion because it is a matter of compassion to care for the pain of others, to alleviate it when possible and to regret the necessity of it when not possible. A callous agent, then, does not regret the causing of harm, considering the greater good that is achieved because of it justification enough, or they fail to recognize that what they are doing is the kind of thing that causes harm. Both of these cases are to be avoided, as callousness is to be avoided; this is the action guidance that the v-rule of callousness provides us.

The third and fourth section of this chapter focused on the excellence account of virtue and the welfarist account, respectively. Specifically, they focused on where the vices of cruelty and callousness fit into the greater architectonic structure of a neo-aristotelian virtue ethic on both accounts; why each are vices and why they are to be avoided in both accounts. An excellence eudaimonism account of virtue compels one to avoid acting viciously because to do so is against reason. Virtues are perfections of reasons for acting, habituated as consistent character traits through action, which can then be counted on in the future. A vice, then, is necessarily an unreasonable action. An agent may think that they are being reasonable, or they may be able to provide “reasons” explaining why it is they acted in such and such a way, but these are not reasons in a substantive sense. That is to say, they are explanatory as to why the agent acted this way, they describe the thought process the agent went through, but they do not justify the action as proper reasons would. Both cruelty and callousness are vices, and so they are both unreasonable and to be avoided on an excellence account.

Lastly, I addressed the welfarist account of virtue and how cruelty and callousness fit into this eudaimonist structure. A welfarist view understands virtues as necessarily beneficial to their possessor; a virtuous agent will be a happy agent. In this case, cruelty and callousness stand as hindrances to happiness. This account relies on natural norms of human beings to establish what can or cannot lead to a flourishing state. On this view, the vices of cruelty and callousness are to be avoided because they necessarily deny the human goods of compassion, in the case of callousness, and temperance, in the case of cruelty. An agent who has habituated themselves to living cruelly or callously will be doing so at the cost of a natural good, and so will be denying flourishing in accord with their natural norms. As the virtues are means to flourishing in this account, the vices are hindrances, and as flourishing is the goal, what hinders flourishing is to be avoided.

In this section I have been concerned with the general account of the vices of cruelty and callousness in order to obtain a clear picture of how these vices manifest and why they are to be avoided. Although I use examples of common practices in order to illustrate the vices in context, I do not provide a substantive account of the vices in practice. That is to say, although I employ generally recognized practices in sketching these vices, I do not work through the practices in detail to make pronouncements on the actions that make up these practices. The practices of meat eating, animal experimentation and pet keeping are a selection of issues that these vice terms bear on, and that a more detailed account of practical virtue ethics that wished to focus on animal ethics would now be able to discuss with these terms at their disposal.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this work was to present an account of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics so as to promote the viability of this ethical theories' use in engaging the modern issues of animal ethics. In order to prove this I claimed that there are virtue terms, in the form of the vices of callousness and cruelty, that apply to human-animal relationships. A virtuous agent, as such, would not act cruelly or callously towards animals. These vices are to be avoided if one is to live well, if one is to develop the virtues. I went about this thesis in three parts.

The first part dealt with the theoretical underpinnings of a neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. My goal in this chapter was to elucidate for the reader what virtue ethics is about, and how it differs from Deontological and Utilitarian theories of ethics, which are the dominant theories one finds in animal ethics today. I explicated the concepts of eudaimonia, the structure of a virtue, and the other as well as self-directed virtues, before claiming that virtue so understood does not exclude animals from its scope of concern. Understanding the role each of these aspects of the theory play when conceiving of what a virtue ethic is, is integral to understanding the arguments I develop in chapters two and three.

I began my first chapter by describing eudaimonia, the good life for which our acts as humans must aim if we are to flourish, and how it is that acts towards animals can be counted among those acts that are necessary for a flourishing life. Eudaimonia is the underpinning of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics as Aristotle argued, and his contemporary defenders maintain, that there is an architectonic structure to our actions. That is to say, we act so as to be happy, so that happiness is the end of our actions. The study of moral philosophy, Aristotle maintains, is a study into becoming good humans by learning how we ought to act. The objective understanding of human flourishing that allows for such claims to be made is known as naturalism. Though a contentious subject, naturalism underlies neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics and is indispensable to thinking about natural human goods, norms, and assessments. I do not present a detailed description of this concept as it would be far outside the scope of this paper. Nonetheless, neo-Aristotelian ethics are eudaimonist ethics and are supported by the claims of naturalism. The central thesis of virtue ethics is that one ought to act so as to habituate themselves to virtue and so flourish as a human is capable of flourishing.

After describing eudaimonism and its role in virtue ethics, I defined the structure of a virtue as the neo-Aristotelian tradition understands the term. Virtue is a mean condition, whereby one acts with neither excess or deficiency; acting in the right way, for the right reasons, towards the right person, at the right time. It is a voluntary action, performed under the agent's power and so stems from their desire. Desire, as such, is of great importance to virtue ethics as it is an explanatory phenomenon that delineates human action proper (that is, what we are concerned with when talk about so and so *doing* this or that) from accidental action that is described wholly in physical terms, e.g. someone tripping on carpet and falling.

Following this discussion of what a virtue is, I described the two kinds of moral virtues: other and self-directed virtues. Virtues can be other directed, such as in the case of justice or charity, or they may be self-directed, such as in the case of temperance. An other directed virtue realizes a human good in something that is outside of the individual agent but that necessarily includes them as a part of the relationship, e.g. the fact of being a member of a society that thereby informs a sense of justice. Whereas self-directed virtues see the good of the human agent in the agent themselves, such as the proper sense of health that is the goal of temperance. The virtues and vices that are most referenced in this thesis fall into both categories; cruelty is opposed to temperance, a self-directed virtue, while callousness is opposed to compassion, an other directed virtue. The virtues and vices that I discuss in relationship to animals, therefore, fall into both of these categories.

In chapter one I also make clear why we ought to think that animals are a proper concern for virtues. Following an explication of the cardinal virtues - temperance, courage, justice, and prudence - I argue that animals, broadly construed, fulfill the role of "proper object" in the same way that humans would. For example, for someone to act justly there must be someone for them to act justly toward. When we understand desire and voluntary action in the way that the virtue ethicist uses the terms it becomes clear that an animal can be the object towards which wicked or just desires or actions attach - and so too temperate, compassionate, courageous, etc. desires and actions. We are just as justified in saying so and so acted compassionately when describing their action towards a dog as we are when describing their action toward a human agent, because both cases require a specific combination of internal motivations (desires, etc.) and external actions (the voluntary acting) backed by proper reason (prudence). From this groundwork I moved on to direct challenges levied against virtue ethics' potential applicability to animal ethics.

The second chapter addressed four arguments that a virtue ethicist must be able to answer if they are to write about animal ethics. These arguments were: the issue of intrinsic versus instrumental value, the problem of moral status, the issue of egoism in virtue ethical reasoning, and the issue of anthropocentrism in virtue ethical reasoning. These issues were either addressed explicitly in philosophy literature, such as the anthropocentric rebuttal, or are anticipated issues that I believe must be addressed in order for this account to be complete, such as the moral status debate.

I began by addressing the challenge of there being intrinsic versus instrumental value. The issue at hand here is whether or not virtue ethics is able to recognize intrinsic value in non-

human beings. Because eudaimonist virtue ethics is concerned with studying human flourishing it appears that there must be a sense in which all other flourishing, i.e. all other goods, must be derivative to the value of the human good. But this is not necessarily the case. Rather, what is necessarily the case is that the study of eudaimonist ethics is the study of the human good. This need not deny that there are other intrinsic goods, nor need it deny that there are other goods that a human may act for. All that a eudaimonist virtue ethic defends is that the virtues are good for, or make a human good as, a human. That there are other intrinsic goods, such as the good of a flower that can photosynthesize, is not denied by this inquisitive stance.

Following this discussion I turn to the issue of moral status. Moral status is often called upon in animal ethics to justify or condemn actions or practices towards animals. If a being is said to have moral status then there are certain rights they have, which cannot be violated; if a being does not have moral status there are no rights that need to be respected in regards to the beings in question. Virtue ethicists such as Hursthouse and Hacker-Wright contend that moral status is non-existent, and that other moral philosophers who insist on employing the term are only confusing their moral reasoning tools by looking for something that isn't there to be found. Kornegay argues that both Hursthouse and Hacker-Wright's arguments leave unexplained certain assumptions in their thinking about the case of abortion - Hursthouse's paper on abortion being the central text in this debate - and that the existence of moral status is the only sound justification to their assumptions. This debate is not closed. Whatever may be the case, though, whether moral status exists or not, will not bear on what I claim in this thesis. It will not bear because if there is no moral status then thinking through moral issues in terms of virtues will not be affected, as this move is contingent only on there being virtues rather than there being moral status, and if there is such a thing as moral status then the debate as to whether or not animals are bearers of this quality is its own debate that need not involve virtue terms in its resolution.

An issue that, if true, would pose a problem for applying virtue ethics to animal ethics is the issue of egoism in virtue ethical reasoning. Similar to the issue of intrinsic versus instrumental value, the charge of egoism against virtue ethics claims that virtues cannot be properly concerned with anyone other than the agent acting, as one acts virtuously in order to flourish, and so the charge goes, one is always truly acting for themselves rather than the other. I draw on the arguments of LeBar and Annas to respond to this criticism. LeBar is forwarding a two-level theory for understanding virtue's demand in the case of second personal reasons. The first level of understanding virtue is its connection to eudaimonia; virtue constitutes living a eudaimon life, it constitutes human flourishing. The second level is understanding the demands of specific virtues. At the first level there is a genuine issue of egoism because it appears as though we are always necessarily concerned with our own flourishing, but when we recognize the importance of the second level, namely the demand of certain virtues to be selfless in action and intention (e.g. some cases of justice, compassion) then the only way in which we will be able to flourish is by denying any egoistic tendency. Annas responds to the egoist critique by pointing out the absurdity of asking an individual to remove themselves from themselves when acting. We have only our own life to live, we cannot live another's life.

Anthropocentrism is a subset of egoism, though in this case the charge is that a virtue ethics specifically cannot handle the demands of caring for non-human agents. Whereas egoism may be gotten around by recognizing the importance of other humans and their respective goods, both as individuals and as in the greater human good of community, the animal cannot fulfill this role. Anthropocentrism takes two forms: absolute dismissal or relative dismissal. Absolute dismissal is not common amongst moral theorists today, while relative dismissal is still quite common in academic moral thought. I rebutted the concept of relative dismissal by way of the concept of rational extension. Rational extension is the consistent valuing of certain facts or categories of existence. By this I mean to say that someone who is properly rationally extending their moral concerns recognizes that pain is bad for them *and* for others, not because the other's pain is bad for them but because pain is bad categorically, and so should be avoided when possible, for example. Similarly, virtue terms have a consistency to their usage such that they are properly applied to other humans *and* to animals simply by the meaning of these terms. To do otherwise is to misunderstand the terms. Anthropocentrism, as such, is an issue that fails to hold in the case of virtue ethics, because virtue terms do not have a strict species boundary, at least not when speaking of the objects of concern for each virtue term.

The third chapter defined the vices of cruelty and callousness, and situated them in a welfarist and an excellence account of eudaimonia, a concept foundational to virtue ethics. In this chapter I explained what a v-rule is, and how it can guide our actions at a developmental level. I explicated the vices of cruelty and callousness, describing their relationship to the virtues of temperance and compassion respectively, as well as providing a v-rule description of each vice. Lastly, I placed each vice in the relationship to human flourishing that the welfarist and the excellence accounts of eudaimonia posit; in each case, these accounts corroborated that the vice was to be avoided, and as such, a virtuous agent would not act cruelly or callously towards animals.

Much of this work has been synthesis and exposition of contemporary writing on virtue ethics. There is not currently a range of writers treating the subject of animal ethics from a virtue ethical perspective. There is, as well, only a limited pool of writing that treats concerns of practical ethics from a virtue ethical perspective. Because of this, I have limited my engagement to a degree more cursory than is possible. It is certainly possible to draw stronger conclusions to many issues that I have presented here, and to argue more rigorously than I have on some subjects, but to do so would require a focus on the subject matter that I did not have the space for here. My goal was to answer one question as best I could: Is there good reason to think that a virtuous agent would avoid cruel or callous actions towards animals? In answering this question I have begun lines of argument that are themselves worth treating more fully than I was able to here. The moral status debate, for example, is one that deserves a more in depth treatment than would have made sense for my purposes here. Whether or not the concept of moral status does have a role in moral thought generally, or in virtue ethical thought specifically, is not settled, as I said, but may bear importantly on work moving forward. Further, while I have presented an account of the vices of cruelty and callousness I have not described the prevalence of social

activities and norms that these vices may be exhibited in; animal experimentation, for example, is an issue that extends beyond the moment of experimentation and reaches into almost every interaction we have with the medical industry in the west. An in depth treatment of the practices common to our lives that explicitly or implicitly involve animals in ways that may be cruel, callous, or otherwise vicious (or virtuous) would be a great boon to the virtue ethical discourse. I hope to have produced a piece of writing that may serve as an aid to someone interested in animal ethics, who finds themselves interested in virtue ethics, or is simply dissatisfied with the contemporary discourse of animal ethics' over reliance on the deontological or utilitarian frameworks of moral reasoning.

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